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# The emotional dimension of friendship: Notes on Aristotle's account of *philia* in *Rhetoric* II 4

*La dimensión emocional de la amistad: notas sobre la consideración aristotélica de la philia en Retórica II 4*

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**Abstract:** This article endeavors to give an answer to the question whether and to what extent *philia* (friendship), as it is treated by Aristotle in *Rhetoric* II 4, can be considered a genuine emotion as, for example, fear and anger are. Three anomalies are identified in the definition and the account of *philia* (and of the associated verb *philein*), which suggest a negative response to the question. However, these anomalies are analysed and explained in terms of the specific notes of *philia* in order to show that *Rhetoric* II 4 does allow for a consideration of friendship as a genuine emotion.

**Keywords:** Persuasion, rational desire, good will.

**Resumen:** Este artículo se ocupa de dar una respuesta a la pregunta de sí, y hasta qué punto, la *philia* (amistad), tal como es tratada por Aristóteles en *Retórica* II 4, puede considerarse una genuina emoción tal como son, por ejemplo, el miedo y la ira. El autor identifica y discute, en tal sentido, tres anomalías en la definición y el tratamiento de la *philia* (y el verbo asociado, *philein*) en este texto, que podrían inclinar hacia una respuesta negativa a la pregunta inicial. No obstante, cada una de estas anomalías es analizada y explicada en términos de las notas específicas de la *philia*, para mostrar que, en efecto, la presentación de *Retórica* II 4 permite considerar de todos modos a la amistad como una genuina emoción.

**Palabras clave:** Persuasión, deseo racional, benevolencia.

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The various senses of the word *philia* in Aristotle can be subsumed under different categories ('categories' in the Rylean rather than the Aristotelian sense).<sup>1</sup> Above all, *philia* designates a relation, a specific way two personal subjects are related to each other; furthermore, it is a more or less permanent trait, a property, of each of the friends: the property of being a friend with someone else. Since, according to Aristotle, friendship in the proper sense is something that must be fostered or cultivated, real *philia* is to be actualized in episodes of friendly contact and encounter, while there are other, less rigid senses of *philia* in which it is regarded as a mere disposition. Due to the notorious question whether *philia* is a kind of virtue or a virtue of a kind or something that is not a virtue but closely connected with virtue, one could wonder whether *philia* is sometimes an achievement or effort and sometimes more like a capacity, namely the capacity to make friends and maintain existing friendships. Finally, the word *philia* occurs in a category that seems to be quite different from or even excluded by some of the aforementioned categories: the category of emotions or affections. Of course, one might wonder whether *philia* in its fullest sense will comprise several aspects, such as a relation, a character trait (*hexis*), a capacity, disposition or affection, but *philia* qua affection is not to be confused with *philia* qua relation or qua character trait, etc.

The somehow bewildering ambiguity of the word *philia* in Aristotle might be seen against a much broader background concerning the general character of friendship in antiquity. There is an

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1. The first version of this paper was read at a conference on *philia* organized by Pierre Destrée at the Universities of Louvain-la-Neuve and Leuven in May 2004. At this conference I had the opportunity to learn about the views of David Konstan, who in his paper defended an idea that was quite similar to mine (though, of course, not with the same arguments), namely the idea that one has to refer to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in order to defend the emotional aspects of *philia*. I am also grateful for the opportunity to deliver a revised version of this paper at the University of Exeter in February 2008. For the final revision of my paper I was in the fortunate situation that I could already make use of D. KONSTAN, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks. Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2006) and *Aristotle on Love and Friendship*, "ΣΧΟΛΗ" 2/2 (2008) 207-212, in which his theses from the 2004 conference were discussed at greater length and in a broader context.

on-going debate about whether ‘friendship’ in the ancient world was primarily seen as a pragmatic relationship involving mutual exchange, the expectation of mutual support, etc., in which affective elements did not play any remarkable role, or whether friendship essentially consisted in affective bonds between friends. Some supporters of the former view seem to think that the accentuation of emotional elements rests on an anachronistic picture of ancient friendship and tends to read our modern expectations concerning the requirements for genuine friendship into an altogether different ancient notion of friends.<sup>2</sup>

Against this background, it might indeed be pertinent to note that there are passages in Aristotle where he unambiguously mentions *philia* and its cognate *philein* as instances of *pathê*, i.e. affections or emotions. In *Nicomachean Ethics* II 4, 1105b21–23, and *De Anima* I 1, 403a16–18, *philia* and *philein* are even mentioned in lists that are meant to illustrate what it means to be an ‘affection of the soul’ (*pathos tês psuchês*). From passages like these it clearly follows that for Aristotle *philia* can be an emotion—at least in some of its multiple usages. Still, it is possible that *philia* is just homonymous, meaning the relations between friend in one usage and the emotion in another independent usage. This sheer homonymy, it seems, can be excluded by the usage of *philia* and *to philein* in *Rhetoric* II, chapter 4: Here again, Aristotle clearly lists *philia* and *to philein* among *pathê* such as anger, fear, envy, pity, gratitude, indignation, shame, etc. At the same time the definition of *philia* refers to the relation between friends, so that there is an important, perhaps even essential mutual nexus between the emotion of *philia* and the relation between friends.

The purpose of this paper is to explore whether and to what extent *philia* is actually meant as an emotion or sentiment in chapter II 4 of the *Rhetoric*. There are some obstacles to this view; for exam-

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2. D. KONSTAN, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997) has defended an “affective” reading of friendship. However, this does not seem to be the majority view, as M. PEACHIN (ed.), *Aspects of Friendship in the Greco-Roman World*, “Journal of Roman Archaeology” Suppl. 43 (2001) attests. Some reactions to Konstan’s reading are reported in D. KONSTAN, *The Emotions* cit., and *Aristotle on Love and Friendship* cit.

ple, one cannot help but notice that there are certain differences between *philia* and other emotions in the *Rhetoric*. In the course of the paper these differences as well as other difficulties for the view that *philia* is pictured as a genuine emotion will be addressed and dealt with. I will not attempt to tackle the more general questions concerning the nature of friendship in the ancient world,<sup>3</sup> nor will I try to compare the treatment of *philia* in the *Rhetoric* to the much more extended and famous account of *philia* in Aristotle's ethical writings.

## I.

Perhaps we should start with some general remarks about the purpose of the emotions in the second book of the *Rhetoric*. Aristotle's inquiry into the elements of persuasion in *Rhetoric* I and II leads to the conclusion that there are exactly three technical means of persuasion; they are derived either from the character of the speaker, or from the argument (*logos*) itself, or from the emotional state of the hearer.<sup>4</sup> Regarding the latter means of persuasion, Aristotle emphasizes that we do not judge in the same way when we grieve and rejoice or when we are friendly and hostile. Thus, the orator has to arouse emotions exactly because emotions have the power to modify our judgments: to a judge who is in a friendly mood, the person whom he is going to judge seems to have done little or no wrong; but to the judge who is in an angry mood, the same person will seem to have done the opposite (cf. *Rhetoric* II 1, 1378a1 et seq.). Many interpreters writing on the rhetorical emotions were misled by the role of the emotions in Aristotle's ethics: they suggested that the orator has to arouse the emotions in order to motivate the audience or to make them better persons (since Aristotle requires that virtuous persons do the right things together with the right emotions). The first thesis is wrong for the simple reason that the aim of rhetorical per-

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3. Even in the *Rhetoric* there are clear references to friends and friendship in the merely or mostly pragmatic sense just described. For example, in *Rhetoric* II 5, 1383b1-3, Aristotle points out that people with many friends have less reason to be anxious, because they can expect their friends to support them in dangerous situations.

4. *Rhetoric* I 2, 1356a1-20.

suasion is a certain judgment (*krisis*), not an action or practical decision (*probairesis*). The second thesis is also beside the point, because moral education is not the purpose of rhetoric nor could it be effected by a public speech: In the final chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says: “Now if speeches were in themselves enough to make men good, they would justly, as Theognis says, have won very great rewards ... but as things are they are not able to encourage the many to nobility and goodness.”<sup>5</sup>

How is it possible for the orator to bring the audience to feel a certain emotion? Aristotle’s technique essentially rests on the knowledge of the definition of every significant emotion. Let, for example, anger be defined as “desire, accompanied with pain, for conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous insult that was directed against oneself or those near to one, when such an insult is undeserved.”<sup>6</sup> According to such a definition, someone who believes that she has suffered an insult from a person, who is not entitled to do so, etc., will —*ceteris paribus*— become angry. If we take such a definition for granted, it is possible to deduce circumstances in which a person will most probably be angry; for example, we can deduce (i) in what state of mind people are angry and (ii) against whom they are angry, and (iii) for what sorts of reason. Aristotle deduces these three factors for several emotions in *Rhetoric* II 2-11. With this equipment, the orator will be able, for example, to highlight those characteristics of a case that are likely to provoke anger in the audience. In comparison with the tricks of old-fashioned rhetoricians, this method of arousing emotions has a striking advantage: the orator who wants to arouse emotions need not even speak outside the subject; he need not confuse or distract the audience; it is sufficient that he detect and highlight those aspects of a given subject that are intrinsically connected with the intended emotion.

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5. *Nicomachean Ethics* X 9, 1179b4-10.

6. *Rhetoric* II 2, 1378a31-33.

## II.

Against this background, it is easy to imagine situations in which it is useful to arouse friendly or hostile feelings in the course of a public speech and to describe either one of the litigants, or one of the political opponents, or the person of the orator himself as the proper target of such emotions. Of course it is not required that the respective person actually deserves these feelings. This is clear from the remark that concludes this chapter:

“From this, then, it is obvious that it is possible to demonstrate that people are enemies or friends and to make them so when they are not and to refute those who claim that they are and to bring those who oppose us because of anger or enmity to whichever side one might prefer. — φανερόν οὖν ἐκ τούτων ὅτι ἐνδέχεται ἐχθροὺς καὶ φίλους καὶ ὄντας ἀποδεικνύειν καὶ μὴ ὄντας ποιεῖν καὶ φάσκοντας διαλύειν, καὶ δι’ ὀργὴν ἢ δι’ ἔχθραν ἀμφισβητοῦντας ἐφ’ ὁποτέραν ἂν προαιρηταί τις ἄγειν.”<sup>7</sup>

Concerning this quotation, one has to be aware that this very last sentence of the chapter is the only remark in the entire chapter that explicitly applies the general definitions and distinctions concerning *philia* to rhetorical purposes. Since this is a characteristic of so many chapters in the *Rhetoric* on various concepts, it is tempting to think that those catalogues (about *eudaimonia*, pleasure, good, better and worse, the different emotions, the different types of character, and so on), which are so typical of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, were composed independently from the specific functions they finally received within the *Rhetoric*. And if this, again, is at least partly true, it is not possible to explain all the anomalies of the *Rhetoric* and all the ways it differs from other writings just by its rhetorical-pragmatic purpose. This should be kept in mind for the following discussion.

Let us continue with the passage just quoted above (1382a16-19): If it is possible, as Aristotle says, to make people friends or en-

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7. *Rhetoric* II 4, 1382a16-19. Translation based on G. A. KENNEDY (ed.), *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1991).

emies when they are not, this cannot mean that the orator creates real stable friendships; it must mean that the orator is able to bring about the emotions that typically accompany friendship in the proper sense. Hence, we can *prima facie* assume that the concept of *philia* in *Rhetoric* II refers to an emotion that is either an ingredient or a precondition of the fully fledged relation of *philia* that is discussed in the ethical writings.

Nevertheless, we cannot just take it for granted that in the rhetorical context *philia* is always the emotion and not the relation of friendship; there are several reasons why we should be cautious. One of these reasons lies in some anomalies in the discussion of *philia* and *echthra* (hate) with which we will soon be faced. Another reason is that the list of emotions that Aristotle gives in the *Rhetoric* includes more than one item that cannot be seen as real emotion at all. For example, in the previous chapter (*Rhetoric* II 3) he mentions *praotês* (calmness, gentleness, or softness) which figures in the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics* not as emotion, but as virtue. And, what is probably even more telling, not even in the *Rhetoric* does Aristotle succeed in proving *praotês* an emotion; everything he says about it concerns the question of how we can calm down an angry person. Similarly, the states of mind which are said to be opposed to the emotions of shame (in chapter II 6) and gratitude (in chapter II 7) are either the absence or the termination of those emotions, but are not themselves emotions in the strictest sense. Thus, the mere fact that Aristotle mentions *philia* as an item in a list of emotions is an important indication that *philia* is somehow meant to be intimately connected with emotions, but this is not yet reliable evidence that *philia* itself is a real emotion in the context of the *Rhetoric*.

### III.

To get to the bottom of the problem we have to discuss the definition of *philia* in *Rhetoric* II 4:

“Whom people love and whom they hate, and why, let us say after having defined ‘friendship’ and ‘loving’. Let ‘loving’ be wanting for someone what one regards as goods, for his sake

but not for one's own, and being productive of these (goods) as far as one can. A friend is one who loves and is loved in return; and they think that they are friends when they think that their mutual relation is of this character. — Τίνας δὲ φιλοῦσι καὶ μισοῦσι, καὶ διὰ τί, τὴν φιλίαν καὶ τὸ φιλεῖν ὀρισάμενοι λέγωμεν. ἔστω δὴ τὸ φιλεῖν τὸ βούλεσθαι τινὶ ἃ οἶεται ἀγαθὰ, ἐκείνου ἕνεκα ἀλλὰ μὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν πρακτικὸν εἶναι τούτων. φίλος δ' ἐστὶν ὁ φιλῶν καὶ ἀντιφιλούμενος<sup>8</sup> οἷονταί δὲ<sup>9</sup> φίλοι εἶναι οἱ οὕτως ἔχειν οἰόμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους."<sup>10</sup>

It is striking that this opening passage mentions not only *philia* but also the verbal form *philein*;<sup>11</sup> it is likely that the verb *philein* is meant to refer to the emotion rather than to the relation or the property. In *Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b21f., Aristotle calls *philia* itself a *pathos* (affection, emotion);<sup>12</sup> in a similar context in *De Anima* 403a16-18 he replaces *philia* by the verb *philein*, although the previous examples were given as nouns — obviously in order to avoid the ambiguity of the noun *philia*.<sup>13</sup> It is true that *philein* can also refer to the outward, visible effects of an affectionate attitude, but since it is defined here as a kind of wanting or wishing, it cannot exclusively mean the outward dimension of a sympathetic attitude; further, it is opposed to *misein* (to hate), which clearly indicates an emotional attitude.

Further, the passage in question (1380b34-1381a3) distinguishes between the definition of '*philein* – to love, to have friendly

8. R. KASSEL (ed.), *Aristotelis Ars rhetorica* (De Gruyter, Berlin, 1976), regarded the words [[φίλος ... ἀντιφιλούμενος]] as a later addition by Aristotle himself.

9. Spengel suggested γάρ instead of δέ.

10. *Rhetoric* II 4, 1380b34-1381a3.

11. I have translated the Greek verb '*philein*' with 'to love', which is, I know, a quite arbitrary translation; I have done so just to avoid a paraphrase such as 'to have friendly feelings'.

12. *Nicomachean Ethics* II 4, 1105b21-23: "... By affections I mean appetite, anger, fear, boldness, envy, joy, love, hatred (φιλίαν μίσος), longing, emulation, pity and generally all that is followed by pleasure and pain".

13. *De Anima*, 403a16-19: "Even all the affections of the soul, anger, gentleness, fear, pity, confidence, and, joy, loving, and hating (τὸ φιλεῖν τε καὶ μισεῖν) seem to be together with the body". Although there is a clear tendency to prefer to *philein*, when it comes to the sentiment or emotion, the above-quoted use in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b21f. shows that *philia* can also be used to refer to the emotion.

feelings’ and the definition of being a friend or of thinking one is a friend. Kassel’s edition of the *Rhetoric* indicates that the sentence “A friend is one who loves and is loved in return” (1381a1-2) is a later addition by Aristotle; obviously, Kassel regards this sentence as a redundant parenthesis, because an additional definition of ‘friend’ does not seem to be required. But we could also argue for keeping the sentence in the text, because the first sentence of the chapter announced a definition of *philein* and of *philia* as well, and the definition of the *philos* comes close to a definition of *philia*. Hence, no matter whether we accept Kassel’s suggestion or not, it is clear that the present passage proceeds from a basic definition of the verb *philein* to the definition of a friend or of the state in which we feel like we are being friends. While the basic definition of *philein* mentions that we want or wish good things for the other person and that we try to promote such goods for the person we love, the definition of what it is to be a friend mentions two further aspects: first, that the friendly affection must be reciprocal (what is called ‘*antiphilêsis*’ in the *Nicomachean Ethics*), and second, as the last sentence implies, that friends must be somehow aware of the other person’s friendly attitude.

But let us start with the basic definition of the verbal form ‘*philein* – to love’. The first criterion, that we want or wish for someone what we regard as good and that we want it for her sake and not for our own, is, of course, crucial for the Aristotelian concept of friendship; in the *Ethics* this is exactly what is called ‘*eunoia* – good

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14. *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII 2, 1155b31-1156a5: “...people say that one wish a friend good things for his sake. Those who wish good things for someone else like this are said to have goodwill (τοὺς δὲ βουλομένους οὕτω τὰγαθὰ εὔνοιας λέγουσιν) if the same is not forthcoming from the other party as well; friendship, they say, is goodwill between reciprocating parties. Or should one add that it must not be latent? For many people have goodwill towards those whom they have not met, but suppose to be decent, or useful; and one of these might in fact be in the same position in relation to them. Goodwill, then, is what these people evidently feel towards each other; but how could one call them friends, if they are not aware of their mutual feelings? Therefore, friends must have goodwill towards each other and must wish each other goods, being aware of the other’s doing so, for one of the mentioned reasons”. Translation based on S. BROADIE (ed.), Ch. ROWE (trans.), *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002).

will'. According to *Nicomachean Ethics* 1155b31ff.,<sup>14</sup> those who wish good things for someone else are said to have good will, and good will, in turn, seems to be a necessary precondition of friendship. And according to the same text, good will as such is not sufficient for friendship, because friendship requires mutual good will and awareness of it. This account is completely in line with the passage in *Rhetoric* 1380b34ff., and it almost seems as if we could equate good will with the concept of 'loving – *philein*' in the *Rhetoric*. But in *Eudemian Ethics* 1241a10f. it turns out that there is also an important difference between mere good will and loving:

“But goodwill shows itself in merely wanting, friendship in also doing what one wants. For goodwill is the beginning of friendship; every friend has goodwill, but not all who have goodwill are friends. Whoever has goodwill resembles a person who is only about to begin; and therefore it is the beginning of friendship, but not friendship. — ἀλλὰ τοῦ μὲν εὐνοῦντος βούλεσθαι μόνον ἐστί, τοῦ δὲ φίλου καὶ πράττειν ἅ βούλεται. ἔστι γὰρ ἡ εὐνοια ἀρχὴ φιλίας· ὁ μὲν γὰρ φίλος πᾶς εὐνους, ὁ δ' εὐνους οὐ πᾶς φίλος. ἀρχομένῳ γὰρ ἔοικεν ὁ εὐνοῶν μόνον, διὸ ἀρχὴ φιλίας, ἀλλ' οὐ φιλία.”<sup>15</sup>

So, good will can be the beginning of friendship, but real friendship presupposes specific activities that are the outward signs of good will. But exactly these activities are mentioned as the second criterion of *philein* in our *Rhetoric* passage, where it is required that the friend be productive of the wished-for goods as far as he can; we can conclude, then, that '*philein* – loving' implies significantly more than mere good will. One secondary characteristic of loving is that it involves appropriate actions that express good will and are not only the beginning or trigger of a friendship but also concomitants of an existing friendship.

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15. *Eudemian Ethics* VII 7, 1241a10-14.

In *Nicomachean Ethics* 1166b30ff. and 1157b28,<sup>16</sup> Aristotle contrasts good will with another notion of loving, namely *philêsis*. It is therefore tempting to ask whether this *philêsis* corresponds to *philein* in our *Rhetoric*-passage, as we expect both *philêsis* in this passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *philein* in the *Rhetoric* to be something more ‘passionate’ than the rather rational and perhaps even ‘cold-blooded’ good will. Indeed, Aristotle says of *philêsis* that it is more like a passion or emotion, while good will is more like a disposition, and things being done out of good will rely on a decision and are not necessitated by an emotion. For example, the spectator of a competition can suddenly feel good will for one of the contestants without being inclined to help or to cooperate. Furthermore, *philêsis* is said to involve a sort of tension and desire, while good will does not.

This is a remarkable characterization. What does it imply? And is it applicable to *philein* in the *Rhetoric*? First of all, the Greek word for tension, ‘*diatasis*’, does not occur very often in Aristotle; when it does, it is in physiological contexts, with one occurrence clearly referring to digestion;<sup>17</sup> as for the aforementioned passage, I found

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16. *Nicomachean Ethics* IX 5, 1166b30-1167a10: “Goodwill seems to be a feature of friendship, but is not the same as friendship, for goodwill occurs even for people we do not know and without their being aware of it, while friendship does not. We spoke about that earlier. Nor is it loving, for it includes neither tension nor desire (ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ φίλησις ἐστίν. οὐ γὰρ ἔχει διάτασιν οὐδ’ ὄρεξιν), while those things are implied by loving. And loving involves familiarity, while goodwill can occur all of a sudden, as it happens e.g. towards contestants, for people start to feel goodwill towards them, and want together with them, but they would not cooperate with them, since, as we said, the goodwill occurs suddenly and their love is superficial. Goodwill seems, then, to be the beginning of friendship, just as the pleasure gained through sight is of being in love: no one is in love without first having felt pleasure at the way the other looks, but delighting in someone’s looks does not mean that one is in love, which is rather a matter of longing for him when he is not there and wanting him to be there; just so, then, while it is not possible for people to be friends if they have not felt goodwill towards each other, feeling goodwill towards each other does not make them friends, since if a person feels goodwill he only wishes for good things for the other, and he would not cooperate, or go to any trouble on his behalf”. *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII 7, 1157b28-33 (Rowe’s translation): “Loving resembles an affection of the soul, whereas friendship a disposition (ἔοικε δ’ ἡ μὲν φίλησις πάθει, ἡ δὲ φιλία ἔξει) for one can feel love no less towards inanimate than towards animate objects, but reciprocal loving involves decision, and decisions flow from dispositions, and when people wish good things for these they love for these others’ sake, this is not a matter of affective state but of disposition.”

17. *De partibus animalium* III 3, 664a33.

myself unable to decide whether it is a metaphorical expression for longing or whether it literally refers to a sort of physiological change. In general, such physiological changes are typical for episodes of emotion; however, the *Rhetoric* is in general silent about the physiological aspects of the various emotions—even in cases that clearly involve specific bodily alterations. Hence, the association with *diatasis* is apt to lead one to picture *philêsis* as more passionate than good will, but there is no hope of finding a corresponding characterization in the *Rhetoric*.

Next, *philêsis* is said to be a sort of desire (*orexis*), while good will is not. In general, Aristotle uses *orexis* as a generic term for two non-rational and one rational kind of desiring; the non-rational kinds are *epithumia* and *thumos* and the rational kind is ‘*boulêsis*—wanting’. Sometimes, however, it seems as if Aristotle wants to deviate from this prevalent usage; this happens when he regards *orexis* as being opposed to *nous* or *logos* and, thus, also to the rational form of desiring, i.e. wanting.<sup>18</sup> In the generic sense of *orexis*, which explicitly includes rational desire or wanting, it would be awkward to say that good will does not involve desire, given that good will is defined as a sort of wanting. For this reason one might be inclined to think it is the non-generic sense of *orexis* that matters in this context. Indeed, the notion of non-rational desires would be quite useful to contrast the more passionate *philêsis* with the more detached good-will. However, on this reading of *orexis* the notion of *philein* in the *Rhetoric* would rather side with good will than with *philêsis*, since *philein* is defined—just as good will—as a sort of wanting, i.e. as a sort of rational desire. And this is exactly one of the reasons why people have wondered whether *philein* in the *Rhetoric* is really meant as a genuine emotion or whether it rather boils down to a sort of intending.

Another way of deciphering Aristotle’s remark that *philêsis* and good will are different, because the former is a sort of *orexis*, while the latter is not, could be this: for Aristotle, intentional action al-

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18. Sometimes *De Anima* 434a12 and *De Motu Animalium* 701b1 are thought to exemplify such a non-generic use of *orexis*.

ways involves a preceding *orexis*. One or the other sort of desire is involved in each instance of purposeful acting. Therefore, saying that good will does not involve desire, while *philêsis* does, could be just another way of indicating that good will alone does not lead to appropriate actions, while other positive affections do. On this alternative reading, *philein* in the *Rhetoric* would rather side with *philêsis* than with good will. And wherever there is *orexis*, there is an accompanying physiological alteration, so that *diatasis*, physiologically interpreted, could be a concomitant to desire.

Now as a matter of fact, the only emotion in the *Rhetoric* that is explicitly defined as a sort of desire is anger, for anger is seen as a desire for revenge. Loving (*philein*), by contrast, is defined as a sort of wanting; hence, it seems that loving can only be said to be a sort of desire in virtue of its being a sort of wanting and in virtue of the Aristotelian doctrine that wanting or wishing is a sort of desire. Now, it may seem somehow awkward to say that *philein*, being defined as wanting good for someone else, is thought to be connected with desiring, while good will, being also defined as wanting good for someone else, is not. Indeed, if such an interpretation is seriously pursued one would have to say something to the effect that whether a wish involves an appropriate course of action or not (which, as we have said, is the difference between *philein* and mere good will) defines two different kinds of wanting or two different degrees of it: motivating wishes on the one hand, which involve desire as they result in action, and mere preferences or wishful attitudes on the other hand.<sup>19</sup>

#### IV.

Whereas other emotions are defined as a sort of pain, or agitation (*tarachê*), or as mixtures of pleasure and pain, *philia* is the only emotion whose definition does not even mention pleasure and pain; rather, it is the only emotion that is defined as a kind of wanting (*boulesthai*). Though Aristotle nowhere offers a straight definition of

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19. Immanuel Kant assumes a similar distinction between 'wollen' and 'wünschen', the former of which involves appropriate efforts, while the latter does not.

*pathos* (emotion or affection), it is not coincidental that the other emotions are defined by reference to pleasure and pain, because every time Aristotle introduces *pathê* in the sense of emotions he stresses that they are followed by pleasure and pain, as we already saw in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b21. Obviously, he prefers to introduce *pathê* by a list of examples, and not by a proper definition; these lists are not even constant; it is striking, for example, that *epithumiai* are sometimes mentioned as emotions and sometimes not. It seems to be especially important that there is one feature shared by all emotions: that they are followed by pleasure and pain. Once, he even says that *pathê* are determined (*diôristai*) by pleasure and pain, which comes close to a definitional requirement.<sup>20</sup> There is only one passage, in the *Eudemian Ethics* (1220b12-14), where Aristotle says that they are not always, but for the most part followed by pleasure and pain. Of course, we could claim this exception for the definition of *philia*, but is very unlikely that this concession was meant to cover *philia*, especially since *philia* is not even mentioned in this context.

It seems then that while all other emotions (at least the ones defined in the *Rhetoric*) are characterized by a typical relation to either pleasure or pain or both, it is an anomaly of *philia* (together with its corresponding opposite *misos*) that it is not connected with pleasure and pain; and this again might be seen as a further reason for thinking that at the end of the day *philia* is no real emotion or that no real emotions correspond to the relation of friendship. My suggestion for solving this problem is the following:

Aristotle does not revive the Platonic tradition according to which pleasure and pain are the highest genera of emotions; rather, pleasure and pain are among the components of fully fledged emotions, but it is nowhere determined what functional role they are supposed to play. I take the formula ‘are followed by pleasure and pain (*hepetai*)’ not as temporal succession, but as something like an implication: if there is an emotion, there are also occurrences of pleasure and pain —no matter how they are related to the other components of the emotion. Fear, for example, is said to be identi-

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20. *Eudemian Ethics* II 4, 1221b37.

cal with pain or painful agitation derived from the imagination of a future harm, but in the case of anger Aristotle insists that the pain derived from an insult or humiliation is the cause of the anger in the narrow sense. Or, to take another example, the emotion called *charin echein* (to be grateful or thankful) only has an indirect relation to pleasure and pain, since the feeling of being grateful is always caused by a favour someone did for us, and the favour again is something that relieves us of a burden or pain.<sup>21</sup> If we generalize the observations made in these examples, we can say that the occurrence of emotions is somehow connected with pleasure and pain, but that there are various ways in which pleasure and pain are related to other components of the complex state called emotion.

This account would be flexible enough to accommodate the problematic emotion of *philein* or *philia*, for in *Rhetoric* 1381a3-8, which immediately follows the definition of *philein*, Aristotle makes an endeavour to prove that the wish or wanting *philia* consists in has immediate implications that can be described in terms of pleasure and pain:

“This being assumed, a friend is necessarily one who shares pleasures in good things and distress in painful things, not for some other reason but because of the friend. For all rejoice when the things they want come to be, but are pained when the contrary happens, so that pains and pleasures are signs of what we want. — τούτων δὲ ὑποκειμένων ἀνάγκη φίλον εἶναι τὸν συνηδόμενον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ συναλγοῦντα τοῖς λυπηροῖς μὴ διὰ τι ἕτερον ἀλλὰ δι’ ἐκεῖνον· γιγνομένων γὰρ ὧν βούλονται χαίρουσιν πάντες, τῶν ἐναντίων δὲ λυποῦνται, ὥστε τῆς βουλήσεως σημεῖον αἰ λῦπαι καὶ αἰ ἡδοναί.”<sup>22</sup>

As soon as we are really concerned about our friends, we cannot avoid feeling pleasure and pain about the things that happen to them. Thus, we have a link between *philia* and pleasure and pain that is not

21. *Rhetoric* II 7, 1385a22-23.

22. *Rhetoric* II 4, 1381a3-8 (translation based on Kennedy).

weaker than in the case of other emotions, such as anger and gratitude. But isn't the same true of mere good will? In a sense, yes, because good will is characterized by the same structure that is crucial for friendship too, namely wanting for someone else what we regard as good. On the other hand, if Aristotle says, as for example in an aforementioned passage, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1166b30ff., that good will is something that suddenly occurs and vanishes and that does not lead to appropriate action and cooperation, it seems (again) as if he regarded good will alone as a mere theoretical preference; since pleasure and pain have the natural tendency to pursue or maintain the pleasant state and to avoid or terminate the unpleasant one, it seems clear that good will that does not lead to action is either without pleasure and pain or beyond the relevant level of these feelings. Also, since we have the tendency to pursue or maintain the pleasant state and to avoid or terminate the unpleasant one, desire enters the stage as soon as pleasure and pain come in. Now, since we have shown in what respect *philia* is prone to feelings of pleasure and pain, we have yet another<sup>23</sup> reason for thinking that *philia* or *philein* occurs together with a sort of desire —at the very least the sort of desire that is directed towards the pursuit of pleasant states and the avoidance of unpleasant ones. Given that the association with pleasure and pain is crucial for the Aristotelian concept of an emotion, we are now much closer to seeing why Aristotle could rate *philia* and *philein* among emotions —in spite of its apparent anomalies.

## V.

Here is another anomaly of *philia* and *philein*: the definition of each of the other emotions implies a specific trigger or reason we have to be aware of; in the case of anger, we have to be aware of an unjustified insult that happened to us, in the case of pity, of an undeserved misfortune that happened to someone else, in the case of indignation, of the undeserved well-being enjoyed by someone else, in the

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23. 'Another reason', because we have already seen in the previous passage that if *philein* involves appropriate actions, there must be a kind of desire that precedes these actions.

case of fear, of an imminent evil, and so on. It is only the definition of *philein* that does not mention such specific reasons; when we are told that *philein* is wanting for someone what we regard as good, there is no reason given for why we have this sort of wish. It is entirely possible that this anomaly in the treatment of *philia* corresponds to an anomaly in the emotion of love. For example, one might assume that a person's likeable or loveable qualities could serve as a reason for love or, more precisely, as a reason for falling in love; however, a long-standing loving attitude will not instantly vanish when some of these lovable attitudes disappear. Similarly, a long standing loving attitude to a certain person who has a set of lovable qualities cannot simply be redirected to a twin or clone of this beloved person even if this twin displays exactly the same set of lovable qualities or even a higher degree of the same set of qualities, etc. All this is not to say that there are no reasons for love or for falling in love; however, it seems plain that the causes of love (or what we regard as its causes, e.g. lovable qualities) do not play quite the same role as the causes of, say, fear or anger; we do not terminate love in the absence of the original cause in the same way as we terminate fear or anger when the cause is gone; and while the same qualities or the same behaviour could bring about anger and fear regardless of the person who displays such behaviour, our loving attitude always concerns particular persons.

However that may be, one might be concerned about the difficulties that the absence of a proper cause in the *Rhetoric's* treatment of *philia* might bring about for Aristotle's technique of persuasion. If the orator can arouse, for example, the audience's pity (only) by making them believe that someone has suffered an undeserved misfortune (i.e. that the proper reason for pity is given), how could he possibly arouse friendly feelings in the audience, if he is unable to tell for what reason we have a friendly or loving attitude? Although the existence of this anomaly in the definition of *philein* cannot be disputed, Aristotle seems to provide something like a substitute for what we have called the 'reasons' of an emotion:

After the brief definition of *philein* as such Aristotle adds, as we have already heard, some remarks on the *philos*. He says that the friend is the one who loves and is loved in return and that people

think that they are friends when they think that their mutual relation is of this character (1381a2-3). Assuming that what Aristotle wants to define here is not just any sort of loving or liking, but the sort of loving or liking that is typical for friends, it is legitimate to assume that the remarks on friends are actually meant to complete the definition of *philein* and *philia* and are meant to specify what has been said in the first sentence of the definition about *philein*. The loving attitude that is typical for the *philos* is always reciprocated by the same loving attitude of the beloved friend. And it also seems to be essential for being a friend that the friends are aware of the friendly and benevolent attitude of the other. In this reading, the full definition of *philein* is divided into three steps: the first step is given in the basic notion of *philein*, the second adds reciprocity, and the third adds the awareness requirement. If we take *philein* to be an emotive attitude which, by definition, is an attitude between friends, it seems an important part of the definition of this emotive attitude that it is directed towards somebody whom we take to have the same benevolent attitude towards ourselves. Accordingly, the benevolent attitude of the other, i.e. the fact that the other person wishes for us what he or she takes to be good, plays the same role for our loving attitude as, for example, undeserved misfortune plays for the emotion of pity —provided that we are aware of the other's benevolent attitude, and the awareness of the other's friendly and benevolent attitude is facilitated by the other's friendly and benevolent actions. The advantage of this reading is that *philia* is not the only emotion that is left without a proper reason.

At this point one could raise the objection that reciprocity and mutual awareness of the other's benevolent attitude is, strictly speaking, a characteristic of the friend and the relation of friendship, not of the emotion of *philein*. Well, if we assume that *philein* is meant as the kind of loving emotion that characterizes the relation between friends, this distinction cannot really be upheld. Indeed, in what follows the definition of *philein* and *philia* Aristotle gives an enumeration of which sorts of people we take to be friends or which sorts of people we love —where 'thinking that someone is a friend' comes down to 'having friendly feelings for him' (for this is what the orator wants to achieve by these *topoi*, namely to arouse friendly feelings

in the audience by making them think that certain other people behave like friends; of course, it is not the intention of the orator to establish friendships or to really make people friends, if they are not).

Similarly one could object that on this account it is hard to imagine how friendship can ever come about, if the precondition of the first friend's friendly feelings is the awareness of the other friend's friendly feelings and the other friend's friendly feelings again can only come about through the awareness of the first friend's already existing friendly feelings. Probably something like the following clarification is required at this point: the awareness of someone else's good will may bring about a first friendly feeling if the good will or the benevolent actions are taken as an indication of this other person's benevolent and friendly attitude (and this is the effect that the entire discussion of *philia* in *Rhetoric* II 4 is after), while the relation of friendship in the fullest sense is only given when the mutual friendly feelings rely on the awareness of the other friend's friendly attitude. Something like this could be the rationale behind the previously quoted remark from the *Eudemian Ethics* that good will is the beginning of friendship, but not yet the real thing.

## VI.

The next anomaly in the treatment of *philein* and *philia* concerns the structure of chapter *Rhetoric* II 4, where this emotion or, rather, the *topoi* for arousing this type of emotion are presented. Right at the beginning of the discussion of emotions in *Rhetoric* II 1 Aristotle made clear that in order to arouse a specific emotion in the audience the orator has to know toward which sort of people we feel a certain emotion, in what state of mind we are disposed to feel it and for which reasons we feel it.<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, most of the following chapters that are dedicated to the exposition of one particular type of emotion (or one particular emotion together with its opposite, as for example shame and shamelessness) have a similar structure: they start off with a definition of the particular type of emotion and then

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24. *Rhetoric* II 1, 1378a23-28.

introduce (in different orders) descriptions of people to which an emotional attitude is directed, of different states of mind in which we feel a certain emotion and, finally, of reasons why we feel a certain type of emotion. In most cases the exposition of these three factors for the arousal of each emotion is followed by a shorter description of what Aristotle introduces as the opposite to the basic emotion. In chapter II 4, for example, the exposition of *philein* and *philia* is followed by a brief treatise on hating and hate. A certain understanding of the opposite emotional state seems to be crucial for modelling the emotional state of an audience; for if, for example, the audience happens to be in a hostile mood, the orator who wants to excite friendly feelings must in the first place handle the pre-existing hostile or hate-filled state of the audience.

In any case, Aristotle is explicit about the point that one has to know the three aforementioned factors for each particular type of emotion —(1) target persons, (2) state of mind, (3) reasons— if one wishes to elicit an episode of this emotion. For this reason it is remarkable that of all the emotions treated in *Rhetoric* II 2-11 the treatment of *philein* and *philia* most significantly deviates from the described structure; instead of going through the three aforementioned factors —target persons, state of mind, reasons— chapter II 4 merely introduces the definition of *philein* and *philos* and then immediately turns to a list of descriptions of people who in the light of the given definition are necessarily friends (*Rhetoric* II 4, 1381a4) and —what turns out to be the same in this context— of people whom we love in the sense of *philein* (*Rhetoric* II 4, 1381a12). This is to say that of the three factors of each emotion Aristotle discusses only one in the case of *philein* —namely the sort of persons whom we take to be friends or whom we love. The enumeration of such sorts of people stretches from the definition of *philein* and *philos* almost down to the transition to the treatment of hostility and hate in line 1381b37 (we will revisit the qualification “almost” shortly), without mentioning the state of mind in which we feel love for friends and without dealing with the reasons (*dia ti*) for this particular type of emotion. By contrast, most of the other chapters on emotions dedicate approximately one third of their main exposition to each of the three factors.

Only four lines before the introduction of hostility and hate Aristotle switches from the enumeration of the sorts of people whom we love to two other topics: In lines 1381b33-34 he briefly mentions three kinds of friendship, in lines 1381b35-37 he announces “things that are productive (*poiêtika*) of friendship”, but strictly speaking he mentions only one such thing, namely doing favours for others; he points out that the favour should be done for the sake of the other person, that one should do the favour without being asked and that one does not have to shout it from the housetops, etc.; it seems obvious that the mentioning of different kinds of friendship cannot be meant as a substitute for the two missing factors<sup>25</sup>; in principle, “things that are productive of friendship” could be meant as a contribution to the missing account of reasons for friendship.<sup>26</sup> However, the two or three lines in which this topic is dealt with cannot replace a proper discussion of this factor; and the doing of favours to which these lines refer is just one possible way to prove one’s benevolence, while the treatment of other emotions includes a variety of items that could serve as proper reasons for the particular emotion. It cannot be denied, then, that the treatment of *philein* and *philia* in *Rhetoric* II 4 is anomalous in comparison to the treatment of other emotions in the same book. How can we account for this anomaly? Or is this once more a possible indication that *philia* is not meant as a genuine or regular emotion?

It seems that the anomaly in the treatment of *philia* precisely corresponds to the specific nature of *philein* and *philia*, without there being any reason to doubt the emotional dimension of *philia*, since

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25. Kennedy, who to his credit tries to indicate the structure of the chapters on emotion in his translation of the *Rhetoric* also seems to have noticed that the structure of the present chapter is different from the others; hence, he seems to be looking for the first available possibility to indicate the end of the long enumeration of people toward whom we have friendly feelings and inserts the subtitle “The causes of friendship” just before Aristotle mentions the sorts of friendship. This is certainly misleading, even if the following remarks on things that are productive of friendship may touch on an aspect of the “causes of friendship”.

26. It might also be remarkable that in the other chapters on emotions the reasons or causes for a particular emotion are never introduced with this wording. Things that are *poiêtika* of friendship are rather factors that are helpful or supportive for acquiring somebody as a friend.

the absence of the two missing factors—in which state of mind we are attached to other people on friendly terms and for which reasons—can be explained as follows. Due to the reciprocal character of friendship and of the corresponding friendly feeling in the fullest sense of the word, *philein* is a symmetrical emotional attitude in a sense, as the one friend is supposed to have the same sort of sentiment that the other friend has. In this respect loving in the way friends love each other differs from the other emotions that are treated in the *Rhetoric*; if A pities B, there is no reason to assume that B also pities A, and if A feels anger against B and wishes to take revenge on B, there is no reason why B should also wish to take revenge on A; but if A loves B in the way friends do, then B is also supposed to love A in the same way. For this reason there is also a symmetry between those who love (in the way friends do) and those who are loved (in the way friends do); and if this is so, the “state of mind” or the general situation of people who have or who are disposed to have friendly feelings is the same as that of those toward whom we have such friendly feelings. And if this is so, two of the three factors coincide and the state of mind of people who love can be inferred, as it were, from the state of mind of people who are being loved.

The question remains why there is no proper treatment of the reasons *why* we love other people as friends. Obviously, the fact that there is no such discussion in the course of chapter II 4 corresponds to the observation that we made in the previous section, i.e. that the definition of *philein* does not mention such causes. And accordingly, the required explanation can draw on the results of the previous section; since *philein* includes that we want for our beloved friends what we regard as good, and since *philein* in the proper sense is not just one-sided good will but a mutual sentiment, our friendly feelings can be elicited by the awareness that someone else has the same benevolent, friendly feeling toward ourselves. Possibly, such benevolent behaviour on the part of others is not strictly speaking *the reason* for why we wish what we regard as good for this other person; furthermore, it is possible that we might start having a benevolent attitude toward someone else without reciprocating a perceived benevolent attitude of this other person. Notwithstanding, we came to see in the previous section that if we love someone in the way friends do,

this loving attitude is directed to the equivalent attitude of the friend. And the conclusion we drew was that friendly feelings can be elicited if one simply pictures other people as behaving like friends or behaving like people who want to become friends.

When Aristotle in the course of chapter II 4 lists various groups of people whom we love (in the way friends do) or whom we are inclined to love, it is indeed one essential criterion that these people actually behave like friends or behave like people who want to become our friends: for example, he mentions people to whom the same things are good or bad (1381a8-11) —this seems to be a precondition for mutually wishing for the other what one takes to be good— or people who have provided benefits to us (1381a11-14) and people who have virtues that are beneficial (1381a20-26) and people who are zealous to please us, to admire us, etc. (1381b10-14). The general idea in all these cases seems to be that we are inclined to have friendly feelings for those who behave like our friends or like people who want to be our friends, and that the identified groups of people display the sort of benevolent behaviour that is a defining feature of friendship. Since friendly feelings are directed toward friends or people who behave like friends, such behaviour —or, strictly speaking, the awareness of such behaviour— can elicit our friendly feelings, thus playing a role analogous to that played by the proper reasons in the case of other emotions. Similarly, as we imagine friends as people with whom we wish to spend time and whose company is pleasant, Aristotle identifies several groups of people who display certain qualities of, say, friendly company: for example, people who are cheerful (1381a29-33), people who like to joke and are able to get a joke (1381a33-6), people who are not resentful, but rather forgiving, etc. (1381b2-10). These people display qualities that we expect from friends and thus elicit the same sort of feeling that we have toward our friends. Again, the groups of people whom we love are identified by various sorts of friend-like qualities and behaviour, and since the perception of such qualities or behaviour disposes us to have friendly feelings toward them, there is no need to give additional lists of “reasons” for love.

Finally, since friendly feelings in the Aristotelian definition is a mutual liaison, Aristotle seems to be happy in his enumeration to switch from the description of people who wish to be friends with us

(indicating this wish by their benevolent or pleasant behaviour) and people with whom we ourselves wish to be friends.<sup>27</sup> For example, we wish to be friends with people who are esteemed, respected or admired (1381a26-29). One could try to construe such examples as saying that we love these people because of the virtuous qualities for which such people are admired, so that the virtuous qualities of these people would serve as the direct reason for our loving attitude. This reading would seem to be akin to the well-known doctrine of *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII 2, where Aristotle says that the good, the pleasant and the useful are the likeable (*philêton*) qualities (1155b18-19). If the treatment of *philia* in *Rhetoric* II 4 were to proceed in accordance with this doctrine, Aristotle could simply insist that we love people for either good or pleasant or useful qualities and could then explore the causes or reasons for love by enumerating qualities that fall into one of these three categories. However, nowhere in the *Rhetoric's* treatment of *philia* is this doctrine invoked. He rather sticks to the description of types of persons who want to be friends with us or with whom we would like to be friends. In the case of persons we admire, we would like to have them as friends not just *because of* their virtuous qualities, but, e.g., because the benevolent attitude of such people would give us the impression that part of the good things they value would apply to us.<sup>28</sup>

We have explained then why the *Rhetoric's* treatment of *philia* and *philein* can do without an explicit passage on the presumable reasons for love and how the unusual structure of *Rhetoric* II 4 can be traced back to the very nature of the emotion of *philein* as it was determined by the definition of *philein* and *philos* at the beginning of the chapter.

## VII.

We have pointed out why *philein* and *philia* in the *Rhetoric* are actually meant as a genuine emotion, although the word *philia* is mostly

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27. When Aristotle introduces for the first time a group of people with whom we ourselves wish to be friends, he hastens to add the proviso "given that they seem to want it" (1381a26-27).

28. Cf. *Rhetoric* I 10, 1371a18-20, where Aristotle explains why being loved is pleasant.

used to refer to the relation of friendship and not to a sentiment or emotion. In the account of *philein* we gave, this ambiguity might to some extent be intentional, as Aristotle is not out to formulate general definition of all kinds of loving affection, but of the kind of friendly feeling that can be found only between friends. In comparison to other emotions in the *Rhetoric* the treatment of *philia* exhibits a series of anomalies, with which we have dealt one by one. None of these anomalies, however, provided a serious obstacle for regarding *philia* as a genuine form of emotion. It still remains unclear why other emotions are regarded as non-rational and involuntary, while *philein*, as a kind of wanting, seems to be rational and deliberate. As for its voluntary character, it is true that according to Aristotle the beginning of reciprocal love is a matter of decision (according to passage from *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII 7 quoted above), while we expect episodes of other emotions to be something that happens to us without any decisive action on our part. It even seems to be a crucial point in Aristotle's theory of moral development and education that we cannot instantly decide to feel the appropriate emotions in a given situation. Rather, the emotions we happen to experience indicate how we have lived so far and what long-standing attitudes we have acquired. Now, in the case of *philia* it is, first of all, not quite clear what exactly we decide to engage in: a relation, an attitude or an episode of emotion. Also, what seems to be even more significant, once we are friends or once have been friends for a period of time, it is no longer up to us whether we suffer together with our friends or not: being friends, we rejoice or suffer for the good and bad things that happen to our friends whether we like it or not. And this particular trait of an established friendship can also be used to account for the degree of non-rationality or even irrationality that seems to be connected with emotions in general; wanting the good for our friends and wanting them to avoid any evils, we are unable to treat them impartially, and this is why the judges who have to judge people they like or love are disposed to think, as Aristotle remarks (*Rhetoric* II 1, 1378a1 et seq.), that they have done either no wrong at all or only negligible wrongs. And if they thus end up judging partially because of their friendly feelings and in spite of opposing evidence, this would clearly be an irrational effect of *philia*.