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## ARISTOTELIAN EUDAIMONISM AND PATRIOTISM

### ABSTRACT

This paper concerns the prospects for an internal validation of the Aristotelian virtues of character. With respect to the more contentious trait of patriotism, this approach for validating some specific trait of character as a virtue of character provides a plausible and nuanced Aristotelian position that does not fall neatly into any of the categories provided by a recent mapping of the terrain surrounding the issue of patriotism. According to the approach advocated here, patriotism can plausibly, though qualifiedly, be defended as a virtue, by stressing its similarities to another loyalty-exhibiting trait about which Aristotle has quite a bit to say: the virtue of friendship.

**Keywords:** Aristotle; patriotism; friendship; eudaimonism; virtue ethics; internal validation; Alasdair MacIntyre; Marcia Baron.

1. This paper concerns the prospects for an internal validation of the Aristotelian virtues of character. As a sample case I will consider the prospects for validating the much more contentious trait of patriotism as a virtue. I do so by revisiting the criticisms launched by Marcia Baron against the defiant account of patriotism defended by Alasdair MacIntyre.<sup>1</sup> This internal approach for validating some specific trait of character as a virtue of character provides a plausible and nuanced Aristotelian alternative to the accounts of patriotism defended by MacIntyre and Baron; but this alternative does not fall neatly into any of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Baron, M. 1989. "Patriotism and 'Liberal' Morality." In: *Mind, Value, and Culture: Essays in Honor of E. M. Adams*. Weissbord, D. (Ed.). Atascadero: Ridgeview, 269–300; and MacIntyre, A. 1984. "Is Patriotism a Virtue?" Department of Philosophy, University of Kansas, presented as the Lindley Lecture. Regarding MacIntyre's position, Igor Primoratz emphasizes that "anyone familiar with MacIntyre's book *After Virtue* will take [MacIntyre's] profession of neutrality with a grain of salt, and will interpret the argument of the lecture as a defence of patriotism." See Primoratz, I. 2008. "Patriotism and Morality: Mapping the Terrain." *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 5 (2), 204–226.

five categories provided by Igor Primoratz in his recent mapping of the terrain surrounding the issue of patriotism.<sup>2</sup> According to the position advocated here, patriotism can plausibly, though qualifiedly, be defended as a virtue, by stressing its similarities to another loyalty-exhibiting trait about which Aristotle has quite a bit to say: the virtue of friendship.

A philosophical validation of the virtues can, first of all, be either internal or external. An external validation of the virtues of character attempts to demonstrate that possession of the virtues is necessary in order to secure some good, or to avoid some harm, where the good in question, or the harm, is recognizable as such independently of the particular evaluative outlook provided by possession of the virtues themselves.<sup>3</sup> The validation will thus rely on resources that are external to the particular evaluative outlook to be validated. By contrast, an internal validation of the virtues would be one according to which the good unattainable without the virtues, or the harm unavoidable without them, is only recognizable as such from within the evaluative outlook provided by possession of the virtues themselves.<sup>4</sup>

Consider, for instance, the idea that certain traits of character amount to virtues of character because they serve a useful corrective function.<sup>5</sup> On an external validation, the harm to be avoided is recognizable as such independently of

<sup>2</sup> See Primoratz, I. 2008, op. cit. The position I recommend falls between MacIntyre's extreme patriotism and Baron's moderate patriotism, a seemingly uncharted area in Primoratz's cartography; but the position also bears a resemblance to the different type of patriotism suggested by Primoratz himself, although I do not invoke the idea that patriotism might be a moral duty.

<sup>3</sup> For this formulation of the relevant contrast, see Birondo, N. 2015. "Aristotle and Virtues of Will Power." *Southwest Philosophy Review* 31 (2).

<sup>4</sup> The most influential advocate of this line of thought is arguably John McDowell, although more recent defenses of virtue ethics also embrace it. See McDowell, J. 1980. "The Role of *Eudaimonia* in Aristotle's Ethics," In: *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*. Rorty, A. O. (Ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press, 359–376; and McDowell, J. 1998. "Two Sorts of Naturalism," In: idem. *Mind, Value, and Reality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 167–197. See also Nussbaum, M., 1995. "Aristotle on Human Nature and the Foundations of Ethics." In: *World, Mind and Ethics*. Altham, J. E. J., R. Harrison (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 86–131; Hursthouse, R. 1999. *On Virtue Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; and Russell, D. C. 2009. *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. McDowell insists that an external reading of Aristotle's ethics amounts to a "historical monstrosity," making this polemical claim (in at least one place) with MacIntyre specifically in mind: see McDowell, J. 1994. *Mind and World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 79, n. 11; also: idem. 1998, op. cit., 195.

<sup>5</sup> See von Wright, G. H. 1963. *The Varieties of Goodness*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; and: Foot, P. 1978. "Virtues and Vices." In: idem. *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1–18. MacIntyre appeals to this corrective thesis in articulating the basic structure of an Aristotelian ethics: see MacIntyre, A. 1981. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. MacIntyre later maintains that human beings need the virtues because we are, in various ways, crippled: see MacIntyre, A. 1999. *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*. LaSalle: Open Court.

the specific evaluative outlook provided by the virtues. Courage, for instance, corrects for the harm of fleeing in battle, temperance corrects for the harm of having yet another cocktail, and so on. The corrective function in each case is thought to validate the status of certain traits of character as virtues.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, the harm to be avoided by courage might be thought to be the “internal” harm of cowardice, apparently making the corrective thesis trivial. The difficulty here obviously lies in explaining how an internal validation could ever amount to a genuine validation, something more than mere theoretical bootstrapping, precisely because the validation restricts itself to resources available only from within the evaluative outlook whose credentials are under scrutiny.

2. We can make some headway on this general issue by considering MacIntyre’s defense of patriotism in particular. According to MacIntyre, patriotism comprises two main features. First, although patriotism belongs to a class of loyalty-exhibiting virtues (along with, e.g., friendship) patriotism does not amount to a mindless devotion to one’s country that “has no regard at all for the characteristics of that particular nation”.<sup>7</sup> The patriot should be able to cite various merits and achievements of her country that provide reasons for her loyalty to it. Second, the country to which the patriot confers her loyalty must be her country: The reasons for me to be loyal to my country are not reasons for anyone to be loyal to it. Moreover, the gratitude that patriots feel toward their country can be “no more than *partially* supporting reasons, just because what is valued is valued precisely as the merits of *my* country [...] or as the benefits received by *me* from *my* country ...” Hence the particularity of such patriotic loyalty is “essential and ineliminable.”<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to the version of patriotism embraced by what he calls “the morality of liberalism,” MacIntyre emphasizes the historically-situated community that allows someone to apprehend the rules of morality at all.<sup>9</sup> He maintains that a genuine form of patriotism can only plausibly be defended by reference to this community-bound morality. For patriotism “requires me to regard such contingent social facts as where I was born and what government ruled over that place at that time [...] as *deciding for me* the question of what virtuous action is,” adding that this is true “at least insofar as it is the virtue of patriotism which is in question.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, MacIntyre insists that:

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<sup>6</sup> For skepticism about leveraging an external validation from this corrective thesis, see Birondo, N. 2015. For her own reasons, Paula Gottlieb also criticizes this corrective thesis: see Gottlieb, P. 2009. *The Virtue of Aristotle’s Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>7</sup> MacIntyre, A. 1984, op. cit., 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, my emphasis.

“my allegiance to the community and what it requires of me—even to the point of requiring me to die to sustain its life—could not meaningfully be contrasted with or counterposed to what morality required of me. Detached from my community, I will be apt to lose my hold upon all genuine standards of judgment. Loyalty to that community [...] is on this view a prerequisite for morality. So patriotism and those loyalties cognate to it are not just virtues but central virtues.”<sup>11</sup>

Because of its intimate connection with the community in which someone learns to apprehend moral standards at all, only this “morality of patriotism” can coherently defend patriotism as a virtue. By contrast, the morality of liberalism can only defend a version of what MacIntyre considers “emasculated” patriotism: a version of patriotism constrained by impartial morality.

3. Two questions naturally emerge about MacIntyre’s account of patriotism. Does patriotism actually emerge from MacIntyre’s account as an exemplary trait of character, as a virtue? Can the morality of liberalism plausibly defend patriotism without draining it of substantive content? The answers to those two questions, according to Baron, are “No” and “Yes.”

Consider Baron’s answer to the question whether liberalism can offer its own plausible defense of patriotism. Baron’s strategy is to enlist two separate levels at which impartiality might be invoked. At the first level, special attachments of the loyalty-exhibiting type do not require impartiality. Exhibiting a special loyalty to one’s own country, family, or friends remains perfectly morally acceptable. One is justified in advancing their interests ahead of the interests of some country to which one does not belong, or ahead of the interests of total strangers. But this is only because, at a second, more abstract level, such special attachments can indeed be justified from the impartial and impersonal perspective of liberal morality. Hence Baron says that patriotism could “be recognized as a virtue by a moral theory which emphasizes impartiality and impersonality, as long as that theory does not require impartiality and impersonality at level one”.<sup>12</sup> Baron argues that this two-level account does not drain her conception of patriotism of substantive content. But it does leave her account “emasculated,” in MacIntyre’s sense, since the patriot’s loyalty remains constrained by liberal morality: the partiality exhibited on level one must be certified as morally permissible by the liberalism of level two. How damaging is this to Baron’s account?

The question turns us to Baron’s main criticism of MacIntyre. For Baron insists that patriotism, unconstrained by impartiality, looks downright vicious. While MacIntyre insists that a patriot have reasons for her loyalty, so that her

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Baron, M. 1989, *op. cit.*, 277.

loyalty is not mindless, Baron maintains that, “In another respect it is mindless,” since it is overly partial. That is: “On any matters which concern her country, the question for MacIntyre’s patriot will be ‘What is best for my country?’. Considerations about the effect on other countries, or on individuals are ignored.”<sup>13</sup> Now the criticism invoked here might, as Baron realizes, strike someone as unfair. Perhaps MacIntyre could allow that loyalty to one’s country only amounts to *a* reason (not necessarily decisive) for supporting it. Other considerations (e.g. about the rights of foreigners) might outweigh the reasons of patriotism. Baron anticipates this response but nevertheless rejects it.<sup>14</sup> She does so because she thinks that the only way of weighing the interests of my country against the interests of people outside of it is by appealing to an “external” standpoint, one that transcends the particularity and contingency of my own community. This would have to be, Baron thinks, the standpoint of impartial and impersonal morality. She therefore issues what we might call Baron’s dilemma:

“Either [1] patriotism isn’t a virtue, because it doesn’t allow the patriot to take into account [...] considerations other than those of his community’s interests, *or* [2] it allows this and in so doing recognizes it to be right to adopt an ‘external’ standpoint, and to try to judge impersonally and impartially.”<sup>15</sup>

Baron therefore concludes that avoiding “emasculated” patriotism is impossible, unless one abandons the very idea—as she thinks MacIntyre’s account ultimately does—that patriotism is a virtue. In the remainder of the paper I want to highlight the ways in which an Aristotelian account of friendship escapes Baron’s dilemma, and therefore offers a model for an account of patriotism that would constitute a plausible and nuanced Aristotelian alternative.

4. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*<sup>16</sup> VIII–IX, Aristotle articulates his conception of perfect friendship. He does so because he thinks friendship contributes to *eudaimonia*, friendship being a virtue or implying virtue (*esti gar aretê tis ê met’ aretês*).<sup>17</sup> Perfect friendships differ from friendships secured for mutual advantage or mutual pleasure, since the best type of friendships stem from a mutual recognition of moral goodness. While it is sometimes thought that character-based friendships are only available to those who attain perfect virtue,

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 279. Stephen Nathanson proposes a similar criticism of MacIntyre: see Nathanson, S. 1993. *Patriotism, Morality, and Peace*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 79–84.

<sup>14</sup> Baron takes the suggestion from Andrew Oldenquist: see Oldenquist, A. 1982. “Loyalties.” *Journal of Philosophy*, 79 (4), 173–193. See also Nathanson, S. 1993, *op. cit.*, 109–110.

<sup>15</sup> Baron, M. 1989, *op. cit.*, 282.

<sup>16</sup> Hereafter *NE*. The translations are from David Ross.

<sup>17</sup> *NE* 1155a4.

there are strong textual reasons for thinking that this best type of friendship can also exist between people of imperfect or unequal virtue.<sup>18</sup> First, Aristotle discusses under this class of friendships cases in which the friendship is based on an epistemological mistake: someone might discover that her friend does not in fact possess the good character that she thought he had.<sup>19</sup> Second, as John Cooper has argued, this type of friendship can exist in cases in which a virtuous person clear-sightedly recognizes that her friend is only good in some respects, just as she might recognize that someone is a pleasurable drinking companion, but not a pleasurable tennis partner.<sup>20</sup> Third, when Aristotle discusses friendships that are unequal in virtue, he recognizes that a friendship might be dissolved by the eventual maturation of only one partner's character, apparently suggesting that both partners in a character-based friendship might initially be considerably less than fully virtuous.<sup>21</sup> Hence perfect virtue is not a requirement of character-based friendship.

Friendships based on a mutual recognition of moral goodness also exhibit certain characteristics. Time spent together will build trust; such time will benefit each partner in the friendship; and they will derive pleasure from their association. But the most important aspect of character-based friendships, for this discussion, is that each partner exhibits the attitude of wishing well (*eunoia*) for her friend. When someone exhibits this attitude, she wishes good things for her friend, trying to bring them about where she is able; and she does these things for her friend's own sake.<sup>22</sup> Aristotle says that the two friends must be "mutually recognized as bearing goodwill and wishing well to each other for one of the aforesaid reasons," where the "aforesaid reasons" are the friend's being, to one degree or another, advantageous, pleasant, or good.<sup>23</sup> Cooper helpfully glosses this passage by saying that "a character-friend wishes his friend to prosper because he recognizes his good character and thinks it is fitting for those who are morally good to prosper."<sup>24</sup> Notice that, aside from social contingencies like the amount of time spent together, this recognition of someone's good character is the basis for wishing a friend well and wanting to do well by her. Hence, without this recognitional basis, one friend's wishing well to the other might eventually evaporate. This account does seem to explain the allegiance that someone feels toward her friends; and since the number of friends she can have is limited, it also explains her special devotion to them as opposed to anyone, even if

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<sup>18</sup> The points that immediately follow in the text are indebted to John Cooper's influential discussion of Aristotle on friendship: see Cooper, J. 1980. "Aristotle on Friendship." In: *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*. Rorty, A. O. (Ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press, 301–340.

<sup>19</sup> *NE* 1165b13.

<sup>20</sup> Cooper, J. 1980, op. cit., 305–308.

<sup>21</sup> *NE* 1162b6–13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 1157b32–34, 1166a3–5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1156a3–5.

<sup>24</sup> Cooper, J. 1980, op. cit., 311.

the others are similarly (or even more fully) virtuous. Does this account of friendship fall victim to Baron's dilemma?

On the first horn of that dilemma, friendship so construed will not amount to a virtue at all, since, according to Baron's line of thinking, a virtuous person would not be able to take into account considerations other than those of her friend's interests. But while a virtuous person will wish her friend well and try to promote her friend's interests, what she is prepared to do in order to promote such interests is obviously constrained both by her own character and (given the account above) by the character of her friend. Those are, after all, the two main ingredients that constituted their mutual attraction in the first place. Consider how this might happen with respect to each of these elements.

First, what a morally good person is prepared to do for her friend is notably constrained by, for instance, her sense of justice. This sense of justice would explain certain acts of partiality (e.g., helping a friend in need rather than a stranger); but it would also constrain that partiality, in order to avoid, say, acts of nepotism. Hiring my friend over a more qualified candidate rather obviously enacts an injustice, even though it promotes my friend's interests (according to a crude understanding of what those interests amount to). Other Aristotelian virtues (e.g., temperance and courage) also operate as constraints on the actions that a virtuous person will perform in the name of promoting her friend's interests. This way of interpreting Aristotle's account of friendship means that my character-based friendship with someone emerges as a virtue only to the extent that I possess other virtues of character that prevent my loyalty from amounting to a disposition merely to maximize my friend's interests.<sup>25</sup>

Second, the goodness of my friend's character might genuinely begin to deteriorate: after his divorce he might come to be more cynical, even misogynistic, and certainly less generous and forgiving. I may therefore stop enjoying the goodness that I once saw in him, since it no longer seems to exist. In that case, my willingness to promote his interests (by my lights) hinges on whether I think his downward spiral is hopeless, or, alternatively, whether he is just weathering some rough flying. But there is clearly a point of no return: this explains why Aristotle says that "what is evil neither can be loved nor should," and that one's friends might become "incurable in their wickedness"—but that if they are capable of being "reformed," then "one should rather come to the assistance of their character."<sup>26</sup> Not that it would be in any way strange or unnatural (*atopon*) for someone to break off a friendship of this sort: "for it was not to a friend of this sort that he was a friend; when his friend has changed, therefore, and he is unable to save him, he gives him up."<sup>27</sup> What all of this demonstrates is that, on

<sup>25</sup> For a similar account of the viewpoint of the virtuous person, also regarding maximization, see Foot, P. 1985. "Utilitarianism and the Virtues." *Mind*, New Series, 94 (Apr), 196–209.

<sup>26</sup> *NE* 1165b15–21.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 1165b21–23.

Aristotle's account, both one's own character and the character of one's friend constrain one's wishing well to that friend. They also therefore constrain one's loyalty to that friend. Hence a virtuous person's *eunoia* is not, as Baron's line of thinking seems to suggest, like the love of the Christian God: It is not unbounded.

On the second horn of the dilemma, friendship emerges as a virtue only if it takes into account, as the above conception of friendship clearly does, considerations other than those of the friend's interests. But it can do so, Baron suggests, only by recognizing that it is "right to adopt an 'external' standpoint, and to try to judge impersonally and impartially."<sup>28</sup> Has the Aristotelian conception of friendship somehow enlisted the standpoint of what MacIntyre excoriates as the morality of liberalism? Has it enlisted a standpoint "external" to the evaluative outlook provided by the virtues themselves, replete as those virtues are, in certain ways, with particularity? It has not.

What justice requires of me with respect to this specific friendship, remains something that I can determine only from the perspective of the character I actually have, or from the advice of someone whom *I* trust to be more discerning than I am of the requirements of friendship and justice. In either case, the specifics of the relationship will be indispensable; and the extent to which I embody *phronêsis* (practical wisdom) crucial.<sup>29</sup> No attempt has been made to determine what my friendship requires by reference to some good that the friendship allows me to attain, or some harm that it allows me to avoid, which is recognizable as such independently of the perspective afforded to me by the specifics of this very friendship and of the virtuous dispositions that are its basis. The good unattainable without friendship is *eudaimonia*; and *eudaimonia* is rational activity in accordance with virtue.<sup>30</sup> Hence the good that is unattainable without friendship is virtuous activity, something that is not recognizable *as* a good (of course) independently of the particular evaluative outlook provided by the virtues. Nevertheless, such friendships do not require me to regard the social contingencies that shape my friendships as "*deciding for me*" (as MacIntyre says about community) the question of what virtuous action is. This account of friendship can therefore avoid both over-partiality and the external standpoint of the morality of liberalism. Since character-based friendship emerges as a virtue when underwritten by other virtuous aspects of the two friends' characters, this account also escapes Baron's dilemma.

<sup>28</sup> Baron, M. 1989, op. cit., 282.

<sup>29</sup> This conception of friendship, and the attendant conception of patriotism, will thus remain sufficiently undiluted to avoid the charge of being "watery." See Nussbaum, M. 2013. *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, ch. 8, § IV. The allusion is to Aristotle's *Politics*. 1262b15–23 (cited by Nussbaum).

<sup>30</sup> *NE* 1098a16–19.

This suggests that friendship can serve as a model for a plausible account of patriotism. The suggestion here is not that patriotism is a form of friendship.<sup>31</sup> But patriotism does emerge as a virtue quite clearly, as it seems to me, when exhibited by a virtuous person towards a country or community that is also morally good. In this and in other respects, patriotism parallels friendship.<sup>32</sup>

First, the patriotic person, like the virtuous friend, wishes well for the object of her loyalty. As in friendship, the other virtuous aspects of her character constrain such well wishing and its manifestation in actions supportive of its object. Since someone's country will of course be good only in certain respects, her own good character serves to temper the enthusiasm with which she supports her country when it engages in morally dubious actions or policies. Hence there is no reason to suspect, as Baron does about MacIntyre's patriot, that the virtuous person's wishing well for her country can only take into account the interests of her country and its inhabitants, as opposed to the interests of those outside her country. Such a blinkered perspective runs contrary to the virtuous perspective that, we are supposing, she fully possesses. (Indeed, it may be that an appropriately patriotic action considers the interests of one's fellow citizens and the international community over a merely crude understanding of the interests of one's own country, or anyway of the interests of its current rulers. Since 2013, for instance, the American, Edward Snowden, has released thousands of classified documents exposing the massive surveillance operations of U.S. intelligence agencies, even on U.S. citizens, claiming that, "My sole motive is to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them."<sup>33</sup> In such a case, the object of one's patriotic loyalty can indeed be thought to be one's country, bolstered or underwritten especially by the merits of its legislative ideals, rather than by the ideals and interests of the country's current rulers, or by a crude understanding of the country's current interests.)<sup>34</sup> What this last point means is that a good question remains about whether patriotism falls short of being a virtue in someone whose other aspects

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<sup>31</sup> I say this in spite of Aristotle's own strained attempt to stretch *philia* to cover relationships between citizens and rulers, by analogy with his already strained attempt, in keeping with common usage, to use that one concept to cover relationships between family members: see *NE* VIII.10–11. In a modern nation-state, someone's patriotic regard remains (in the vast majority of cases) unrecognized by her country; nor can we plausibly pin down a sense in which her country wishes well specifically for her, for her own sake, etc. Hence in a modern nation-state, patriotism cannot ultimately be any form of Aristotelian friendship. (For encouraging me to sharpen this point, I thank Jeffrey Hershfield, Xiufen Lu, and David Soles.)

<sup>32</sup> The following discussion assumes Nathanson's four main elements of any plausible account of patriotism (Nathanson 1993, ch. 3). Those four elements are: (1) a special affection for one's own country, (2) a sense of personal identification with the country, (3) a special concern for the well being of the country, (4) a willingness to sacrifice to promote the country's good.

<sup>33</sup> *The Guardian*, 9 June 2013.

<sup>34</sup> What counts as a merely crude understanding of interests must be assessed, here as elsewhere, only from a substantive evaluative outlook.

of character fail to constrain her loyalty to, and her wishing well for, her country. In that case her patriotism falls well short of being a virtue.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the extent to which patriotism remains a virtue in any particular person hinges, for this very reason, on the extent to which she possesses other relevant virtues: Quickness is no virtue in a blind horse.<sup>36</sup>

Second, patriotism seems also to be constrained by the moral goodness of the object of one's loyalty. I can of course remain loyal to my country in spite of its moral shortcomings, just as I can remain loyal to my friend in spite of the moral failings in her. But there are limits. The limits might not extend to certain injustices committed against people outside one's country. They might not extend to certain injustices inflicted against one's fellow citizens, or against oneself, injustices that betray the thought that living well (*eu zēn*) is the reason for the state's existence.<sup>37</sup> Determining the appropriate limits of one's loyalty again requires the possession and exercise of *phronēsis*, since no appeal has been made, here or elsewhere, to Baron's external standpoint. But the virtuous person still cannot, and should not remain loyal to what is evil.<sup>38</sup> Patriotism is no virtue in an incurably unjust state.

This last point differs from the point made in the first horn of Baron's dilemma. There the point was that unconstrained patriotism is no virtue. Here the point is the opposite: that precisely because ethical considerations constrain the workings of patriotism (e.g., about the moral goodness of its object), patriotism is, in many cases, very far from being a virtue. Someone's loyalty to her country might be largely or exclusively based on the merits of its apparent military invincibility. But it might be that an honest history of the uses of that military power, a history of which she might be only culpably ignorant, reveals that her loyalty to her country, exhibited on that basis, shows a grave defect of character. In that case her patriotism falls well short of being a virtue.

Despite these cases of patriotism gone awry, my aim has been to initiate an internal validation of patriotism as a virtue. This account proceeds only from within the evaluative outlook provided by possession of the virtues. It relies on substantive conceptions of justice, courage, temperance, and so on. But the

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<sup>35</sup> The word "patriotism" can be used to denote exclusively the virtuous disposition that avoids both excessive and deficient loyalty to one's country, or also to denote a disposition that runs, say, to an excessive loyalty to it. The broader sense seems appropriate here, in spite of the Aristotelian context, because it seems to accord with normal usage.

<sup>36</sup> Since I do indeed take it as obvious that wishing well for one's country and its projects need not be excessive, this conception of patriotism can answer the objections [a] that patriotism involves a disposition toward "bad faith," and [b] that patriotism is ethically analogous to racism. See [a] Keller, S. 2005. "Patriotism as Bad Faith." *Ethics* 115 (3), 563–592; and [b] Gomberg, P. 1990. "Patriotism Is like Racism." *Ethics*, 101 (1), 144–150. Regarding [b], see also Primoratz, I. 2008, op. cit., 221.

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., Aristotle, *Politics* 1280b39.

<sup>38</sup> *NE* 1165b15.

account that emerges is not trivial. It articulates constraints on patriotism from two sources: the moral character of the patriot and the moral goodness of the object of her loyalty. This approach offers a plausible alternative to the extreme and moderate positions discussed here, and perhaps also to the other positions that constitute the recent terrain. According to this approach, patriotic activity, exhibited by a morally good person toward a morally good country, just is what (with respect to the state) *eudaimonia* ultimately is.<sup>39</sup>

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