

ARISTOTLE ON INTRA- AND INTER-SPECIES FRIENDSHIP

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Forthcoming in S. Connell, ed., *Philosophical Essays on Aristotle's Historia Animalium*.

ABSTRACT: Although there is much scholarship on Aristotle's account of friendship (φιλία), almost all of it has focused on inter-personal relationships between human animals. Nonetheless, in both Aristotle's ethical and zoological writings, he documents the intra- and inter-species friendship between many kinds of animals, including between human and non-human animals. Such non-human animal friendships establish both an indirect basis for establishing moral ties between humans and non-human animals (insofar as we respect their capacity to love and befriend others) and a direct basis for establishing such ties (insofar as Aristotle provides a framework for thinking about utility and pleasure friendships between human and non-human animals). My paper defends Aristotle's limitation of inter-species friendships to only utility and pleasure friendships and responds to scholars who claim that Aristotle recognizes no moral ties between human and non-human animals.

Keywords: Aristotle, friendship, *philia*, non-human animals, animal ethics

Word count: 11,711

Now, as Eumaeus and Odysseus talked on, a dog that lay there
Lifted up his muzzle, pricked his ears.
It was Argos, long-enduing Odysseus' dog
He trained as a puppy once, but little joy he got
Since all too soon Odysseus shipped to sacred Troy...
But the moment Argos sensed (ἐνόησεν) Odysseus standing by
he thumped his tail, nuzzling low, and his ears dropped,
Though he had no strength to drag himself an inch
Towards his master...
But the dark shadow of death closed down on Argos' eyes
The instance he saw Odysseus, twenty years away.¹

It is hard to imagine anyone reading or hearing the recognition scene that takes place between Odysseus and his dog Argos in *Odyssey* 17 without being touched by the poet's doleful tribute to their companionship. Argos recognizes Odysseus before anyone else in Ithaka (including his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus), and yet upon that moment of recognition—after twenty years of waiting for his human companion to return—he passes from life to death. It is also hard to imagine that those to whom Homer spoke did not share his view about the bonds possible between human and non-human animals. And indeed cultural historians have noted that the evidence of poetry, vases, and grave stelai make clear that respect and admiration for non-

¹ Homer, *Odyssey*, 17. 291–94, 301–04, 326–27. R. Fagles trans., adapted. Most (2013) documents the enduring power of the Argos scene across generations of Homer's reception.

human animals runs deep in ancient Greece culture.² Philosophers as diverse as Xenophon, Plato, Diogenes of Sinope, Plutarch, and Porphyry appear to concur.³

It is thus initially surprising to read Newmyer's claim that Aristotle thought that "animals are made for man's use, a view which presupposes the absence of any moral ties between the species" (2011, 75).⁴ Such a claim seems especially stark if one takes it to mean that Aristotle denies inter-species friendship (φιλία), since Aristotle believes that friendship typically generates moral ties between the parties of the friendship.⁵ But although Newmyer and others have

² See Lazenby (1949a), Lazenby (1949b), Lonsdale (1979), Jennison (2005, 10–27), and the numerous individual contributions in Campbell (2014) and Fögen and Thomas (2017), which also includes an extended bibliographic essay. Kindt (2017) provides an extensive review of current classical scholarship on non-human animals. Whiting (2022) surveys visual images of dogs in Athenian material culture.

³ Xenophon's essay "On Hunting" repeatedly refers to the intelligence of hounds (e.g., 3.7-10), ascribes them moral qualities (4.5, 7.4), and highlights their importance for inter-species human education (12.1-21). Plato famously likens the guardians of the *Republic* to hounds (2.375a–376a, 3.404ab, 3.416a, 5.451a). Hotes (2014) and Long (2015), survey the extent to which commentators take that remark literally. According to a scholium on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (quoted in Dudley 1937, 5), "There are four reasons why the *Cynics* are so named...The fourth reason is that the dog is a discriminating animal which can distinguish between its friends and enemies. So do they recognize as friends those who are suited to philosophy, and receive them kindly, while those unfitted they drive away, like dogs, by barking at them." Although Porphyry's *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* never discusses inter-species friendships, he draws upon Aristotle for support in his critique of killing animals (3.6.5, 3.6.7, 3.7.1, 3.8, 6–7, 3.9.5, 3.12.4). Newmyer (2007), (2017), and Clark (2010) survey how non-human animals are viewed in ancient philosophy more generally.

⁴ Fröding and Peterson (2011) also claim that Aristotle fails to recognize moral ties between human and non-human animals. Henry (2018) and Cagnoli Fieconi (2021) detect inconsistencies in Aristotle's position: Henry (2018, 23–25) concurs with Newmyer's interpretation, but argues that Theophrastus rejects Aristotle's view and Cagnoli Fieconi (2021, 220–221) suggests that the *Eudemian Ethics* and *Politics* are at odds with the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

⁵ *Philia* is a notoriously broad notion in classical thought, stretching from unconscious cosmic forces to filial affection and self-love. I will translate the term consistently as "friendship" or leave it transliterated. Konstan (1997) provides a good general overview of the broad terrain.

speculated about Aristotle's view of the moral status of non-human animals, there has been almost no scholarly examination of Aristotle's views about intra- and inter-species friendships, including those between human and non-human animals.⁶ Rather, the claim that Aristotle denies any moral ties between species is largely based on two controversial passages: *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.11, which appears to deny any justice or friendship between human and non-human animals (1161b1–4), and *Politics* 1.8, which appears to claim that non-human animals have only instrumental value for humans. Nonetheless, an examination of works throughout Aristotle's corpus makes clear that he recognizes intra-species friendships among numerous forms of animals, including birds, fish, and mammals, many of which exhibit moral characteristics, such as shared suffering with and self-sacrifice on behalf of another. Indeed, Aristotle recognizes not only intra-species friendships but also inter-species friendships, including utility and pleasure friendship between human and non-human animals. Aristotle explicitly describes such intra- and inter-species friendships in moral language and in his ethical treatises he often uses such examples to illustrate the normativity of human friendships. Such claims seem inexplicable if one believes that Aristotle denies inter-species moral ties. Although Aristotle denies that non-human

⁶ Although Sorabji (1994), Steiner (2005), Osborne (2007), Clark (2010), Lloyd (2013), Newmyer (2014), and several of the essays in Keil and Kreft (2019) seek to determine the extent to which Aristotle viewed human and non-human animals hierarchically or anthropocentrically, there is rarely discussion of inter-species *philia*. Steiner (2005, 62), Newmyer (2007, 162), Lloyd (2013, 288–89), Kreft (2019, 191–194), Brill (2020, 148–150), and Cagnoli Fieconi (2021, 219–221) are very brief exceptions. Santas (2014) seeks to establish a “biophilia” on the basis of an Aristotelian discussion of friendship, but is not focused on the exegetical nuances of Aristotle's texts. Newmyer (2011), a Sourcebook of texts on ancient attitudes towards non-human animals, includes a chapter entitled “Animals as Friends,” but only includes texts from Homer, Diogenes Laertius, and Plutarch. It omits entirely Aristotle's discussion of intra- and inter-species friendship.

animals are the moral equivalents of human animals, he clearly envisions moral ties between species. To paraphrase Jeremy Bentham, I think Aristotle would agree that “The question is not can they reason? Nor can they talk? But, can they love?”

A complete understanding of Aristotle’s view of inter-species moral ties must go beyond isolated passages like those in *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.11 or *Politics* 1.8 which, when taken out of context, provide a misleading view of Aristotle’s position. I claim that an examination of Aristotle’s remarks about intra- and inter-species friendships in both the ethical and zoological writings shows that he endorses inter-species moral ties. In order to support such a claim, my paper first examines Aristotle’s discussions of intra-species friendships, especially in the case of parental friendship (between parents and their offspring) and spousal relationship (between reproductive partners or mates). Aristotle’s discussion of intra-species friendship makes clear that non-human animals exhibit many of the characteristics found in human intra-species friendship, which is the main reason Aristotle refers to them not only in the zoological works but also in the ethical works. In the second part of my paper I examine the evidence he provides for inter-species friendships, first between non-human species (for instance, the crocodile and the plover bird), and secondly between humans and non-humans. But although Aristotle explicitly identifies inter-species friendship between human and non-human animals, he limits the claim to utility and pleasure friendships, a limitation I explore and ultimately defend. Finally, in the third part of my paper I consider and contextualize Aristotle’s apparently speciesist remarks in *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.11 and *Politics* 1.8 that appear to deny inter-species friendship between

human and non-human animals and reflect on the different perspectives of the ethical and zoological works.

Part I: Intra-species friendship in Aristotle's ethical and zoological works

Aristotle's numerous observations about intra-species friendship among non-human animals are important for two main reasons. First, Aristotle's remarks in both his zoological and ethical writings suggests that he was keenly aware of the similarities between the psychological capacities of human and non-human animals that constitute friendship, such as shared suffering with and self-sacrifice on behalf of another. Such patterns of paternal and spousal friendship are neither anthropomorphic nor metaphorical.; rather, they are normative for humans: the appeal to examples of friendship between non-human animal helps constitute Aristotle's teaching on human ethical behavior. The similarities between the forms of friendship found among human and non-human allow Aristotle to use the latter to elucidate the former. Since Aristotle believes that friendship is a normative concept, the attribution of friendship to non-human animals suggests that they have normative status that generates inter-species moral ties.

Secondly, inter-species comparisons speak to a broader debate in the study of Aristotle's zoological works. The zoological treatises claim that animals exhibit "traces" (ἵχνη—literally, "footprints") or "likenesses" (ὁμοιότητες) of human characteristics such as ethical virtue, technical ability, and even intelligence.⁷ By contrast, some passages in Aristotle's ethical writings

⁷ HA 8.1.588a28–30, 9.1.608b4–8, 9.1.610b22. HA 8.1 claims that some animal characteristics differ from human characteristics by degree or "the more-or-less," for example: a lion might exhibit more natural courage than a human. Other characteristics, such as craft (τέχνη), wisdom

dwell upon human and non-human animal cognitive differences and deny that non-human animals participate in εὐδαιμονία or human flourishing.⁸ Tension between the two parts of Aristotle's corpus has generated scholarly debate about whether Aristotle viewed the difference between humans and animals as a gradual continuum or a strict demarcation.⁹ But if there is ambiguity between the zoological and ethical/political works about such difference with respect to cognitive ability, no such ambiguity exists with respect to intra-species *philia*.¹⁰ In both the zoological and the ethical/political works, Aristotle recognizes that non-human animals exhibit complex social behaviors that he calls *philia* without qualification.¹¹

In the ethical treatises, examples of non-human intra-species parental and spousal friendships are normative for humans, which seems difficult to explicate if human and non-

(σοφία), and intelligence (σύνεσις) differ between animals and humans by analogy, for example: a spider constructs a web in a fashion analogous to how a human constructs a dwelling (8.1.588a22–31). Lloyd (2013) is devoted to evaluating the validity of this distinction.

⁸ On human and non-human cognitive differences, see: *EN* 1.7.1097b33–98a4, 3.2.1111b6–10, 6.2.1139a19–20, 7.3.1147b2–5, 7.6.1149b30–35, 9.9.1170a16–17; *EE* 2.6.1222b18–29, 2.10.1226b21–25. On the denial of non-human eudaimonia, see: *EN* 1.9.1099b32–1100a1, 10.8.1178b24–28; *EE* 1.7.1217a24–29.

⁹ Sorabi (1993, 13), claims that Aristotle's gradualism nonetheless “allows for a sharp intellectual distinction between animal and man”; by contrast, Steiner (2005, 76), argues for “Aristotle's recognition of a continuum between human beings and animals while seeking to distinguish human beings on the basis of their rational capacities.” See further Newmyer (2011, 6–9).

¹⁰ The case may be different with respect to inter-species *philia*, although I argue in Part II of my paper that the difference there is internal to the ethical/political works: whereas the *Eudemian Ethics* ascribes inter-species friendships to humans and non-human animals, the *Nicomachean Ethics* generally fails to discuss them.

¹¹ Aristotle's ethical/political and zoological works also chronicle the “political” nature of human and non-human animals (*HA* 8.1.589a1–3, 8.13.598a29–30, 9.10.614b18–27, and 9.48.631a15–16; *Pol* 1.2.1253a7–15; *EN* 1.7.1097b11, 8.8.1162a17, 9.9.1169b18; *EE* 7.10.1242a24). Scholarly discussion of Aristotle's “political animals” is immense and goes beyond what I can examine in this paper. For recent discussions, see Ober (2013), Abbate (2016), Labarrière (2016), Karbowski (2019), and relevant papers in Adamson and Rapp (2021),

human animals share no moral ties. Let us first look at examples of intra-species parental friendship. Consider, for example, the following claims found in the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian*

Ethics:

T1: Friendship seems to be naturally present in parent for offspring and offspring for parent, not only among human beings but also among birds and most of the animals and among members of the same race toward each other—most of all among human beings (which is why we praise lovers of mankind). (*EN* 8.1.1155a16–22)¹²

T2: Some people think that it is strange if mothers don't love their children, for love is obviously present even in animals (ἐν τοῖς θηρίοις);¹³ at any rate, they choose to die on behalf of their offspring. (*EE* 7.1.1235a33–35)

T3: We will register it as a mark of affection (τι ἀγαπᾶν) that someone shares in the suffering of another, not for some other reason (like slaves with regard to their masters, who act cruelly when in pain), but for their sake, like mothers with children and the birds who share each others' sorrow. (*EE* 7.6.1240a33–36)¹⁴

¹² Translations of *EE* and *EN* are my own, based on Bywater (1894) and Mingay (1991), but informed by Reeve (2014), and Inwood and Woolf (2013). Translations from the zoological works follow, with occasional emendation, Peck (1965), Peck (1970), Balme (1991), and Peck (1942).

¹³ In the ethical treatises, Aristotle uses the terms ζῷον and θηρίον (and their cognates) interchangeably to describe non-human animals. He does recognize a category of blameworthy character called θηριότης which is commonly translated as “bestiality” (*EN* 7.1.1145a17–33, 7.5.1148b19 ff.), but it is incorrect to claim that by θηρίον he means something like “lower animal” (see, for instance, *EN* 3.8.1118b2–4, 6.2.1139a19–20; cf. *EN* 1.7.1098a1–3). Indeed, almost all his examples of “bestiality” in *EN* 7.5 come from human rather than non-human animals. Aristotle, of course, does ascribe greater and lesser degrees of intelligence and other human-like qualities to non-human animals, but the terms ζῷον and θηρίον do not serve as markers of those differences. See further Natali (2009) and Anton (2022).

¹⁴ *HA* claims that dolphins also show pity and are protective of their youth who have died (9.48.631a16–20). *Eudemian Ethics* 7.5 also claims that “voices, conditions, and pastimes of kindred people are most pleasant to each other, and the same goes for the other animals” (*EE* 7.5.1239b18–20). Such a text seems to support the claim that non-human animals exhibit communication, a claim also asserted several times in the *Historia Animalium* (9.1.608a18–19, 9.10.614b23–25; cf. *PA* 660a35–b). Nonetheless, *Politics* 1.2.1253a9–11 denies that non-human animals possess speech. See further Diana Quarantotto's contribution to this volume.

T1, T2, and T3 characterize friendship or “love” between parents and their offspring; T2 and T3 explicitly note that such friendship has an other-regarding aspect that is directed towards the protection and shared suffering of the other (in both cases, from the parent and on behalf of the parent for the child).¹⁵ All three passages use the examples of non-human animals to elucidate a point about human animals and all three passages attribute friendship to non-human animals without any sort of qualification. The point is perhaps most clear with T3, which seeks to establish a defining characteristic of “affection” (τι ἀγαπήν) namely that affection involves shared suffering with one who is suffering.¹⁶ The shared suffering of birds does not elucidate the definition of “non-human animal” affection; rather, such avian suffering elucidates both human and non-human affection, or more simply, “animal affection.” If avian suffering elucidates human suffering, it must be because birds have moral characteristics that could serve as the basis for inter-species moral ties.

Both the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian* accounts of friendship examine the problem or puzzle concerning whether beneficiaries or benefactors love the other more (and if so, why). Both accounts conclude, somewhat paradoxically, that benefactors love their beneficiaries more than the other way around, even though the beneficiary receives the benefit. The *Eudemian*

¹⁵ See further Connell (2019, 9–11).

¹⁶ *EE* 7.6 surveys different things said about the φίλος or “friend,” but in T3 Aristotle uses the verb ἀγαπάω (1240a33–34), which I translate as “affection.” I take it the change in terms is insignificant, because the next sentence asserts the same point about the φίλος, namely that the friend wishes to share the pain of the friend (βούλεται...συλλυπεῖσθαι ὁ φίλος τῷ φίλῳ [1240a36–37]).

passage T4, which discusses the problem, explicates the parental love described in passages T1, T2, and T3. It states that:

T4: There is a puzzle about why those who benefit others love their beneficiaries more than the beneficiaries love their benefactors....For activity (ἐνέργεια) is more choiceworthy and here the product (ἔργον) and the activity stand in the same relation: the beneficiary is, as it were, the product of the benefactor. This is why animals too display concern (σπουδῆ ἐστὶ) for their offspring, both to produce them and to preserve them once they are born. (*EE* 7.8.1241a35–36, a40–b4)

Although the *Eudemian* argument is somewhat abbreviated, its general contour is clear enough from the more expanded *Nicomachean* iteration (*EN* 9.7.1168a1–10): existence is lovable and choiceworthy and entities most fully exist when they are in activity; but the product represents that activity and thus is more choiceworthy. Natural offspring are such a product, hence the benefactor loves the product more than the product (i.e., the offspring) loves the producer. But although the *Nicomachean* version notes that this is the case “for everyone” (πᾶσιν [1168a6]), the *Eudemian* passage T4 makes use of the general pre-eminence of activity to explain parental love for non-human animals. The choiceworthiness of actuality—and thus the lovability of offspring—is a natural aspect about animals rather than an anthropocentric feature of human friendship.

Aristotle’s zoological treatises, especially *Historia Animalium* Book 9—a repository of observations about the characteristics (τὰ ἴθη) of animals—augment and further explain the intra-species parental friendship described in texts T1–T4. For instance, *Historia Animalium* 9 notes that a wide range of animals, including mammals, birds, and fish, make sacrifices to protect their young because of their parental love; additionally, young storks, who are fed by their

parents, reciprocate and feed their parents in their old age.¹⁷ Amongst horses, when one mare has died the mares that graze together raise the orphaned foals and exhibit a natural intra-species parental affection (φιλόστρογον).¹⁸ But the zoological treatises do not simply provide examples of parental friendship; they also provide teleological explanation for such love, along with explanation of its differentiation among a wide range of animals. For instance, the *Generation of Animals* claims that:

T5: Birds' eggs, being more fragile, need the mother bird. It looks as though Nature herself desires to provide that there shall be a feeling of care (αἴσθησιν ἐπιμελητικὴν) for the young offspring. In the inferior animals (τοῖς χείροσι) this feeling which she implants lasts only until the moment of birth; in others, until the offspring reaches its perfect development; and in those that have more intelligence (φρονιμώτερα), until its upbringing is complete. Those which are endowed with the most intelligence show intimacy and friendship (συνήθεια καὶ φιλία) towards their offspring even after they have reached their perfect development (human beings and some of the quadrupeds are examples of this).
(GA 3.2.753a5–14)

Whereas the *Eudemian Ethics* (in passage T4) sought to explain the love of offspring—based in the choiceworthiness of existence—for all animals, the *Generation of Animals* (in passage T5) seeks to explain the differentiation of parental friendship among animals as a function of intelligence. But the feeling of care that is the root of parental friendship, according to T5, is a commonplace across different species. Non-selfish other-concern, which (as T3 noted) is a defining characteristic of the affection of friendship, is a natural “fact,” as it were, rather than an anthropomorphic projection or a merely qualified sense of friendship.

¹⁷ HA 9.6.612a32–33, 9.8.613b13–15, 9.37.621a21–33; 9.13.615b23–26.

¹⁸ HA 9.4.611a10–14. Aristotle also notes that phene birds provide inter-species parental care to eaglets evicted from their nests (HA 9.34.619b23–25).

Whereas the ethical treatises provide ample evidence of intra-species parental friendship, some scholars have taken the description of intra-species spousal friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* to limit it primarily to human animals.¹⁹ Common to the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian* explanation of spousal friendship is the claim that:

T6: Between a man and a woman, friendship seems to hold by nature, since a human being seems to be by nature more couple forming than political to the extent that household is prior to and more necessary than city, and reproduction is a characteristic more common to animals (κοινότερον τοῖς ζώοις). Now with the other animals, their community (κοινωνία) only goes as far as reproduction, whereas human beings share a household not only for the sake of reproduction but also for the sake of various things necessary for life. For straight from the beginning their functions are divided, those of a man being different from those of a woman, so they assist each other by putting their special ones into the common enterprise. Because of this, both utility and pleasure seem to be found in this form of friendship. (*EN* 8.12.1162a16–25; cf. *EE* 7.10.1242a24–27)

At first glance, the claim that “reproduction is a characteristic more common to animals” seems to differentiate humans from other species and afford utility and pleasure friendships solely to humans. But passage T5, from the *Generation of Animals*, makes clear that even if paternal friendship is a function of reproduction, that in no way invalidates the claim that it is a form of intra-species utility friendship and Aristotle explicitly identifies non-human animal reproductive couplings as an instance of κοινωνία, Aristotle’s technical term for mutually beneficial communities.²⁰

Indeed, Aristotle’s observations about the mating habits of pigeons make clear that non-human animals exhibit intra-species “spousal” friendship within the framework of reproduction

¹⁹ See, for instance, Fröding and Peterson (2011, 62-65).

²⁰ See especially *EN* 8.9.1159b25–27. I examine the evidence at length in Lockwood (2007).

in a fashion that is reminiscent of intra-species paternal friendship. Thus, the *Historia Animalium* claims that

T7: [Pigeons] are neither willing to pair with more than one, nor do they abandon their partnership (τὴν κοινωνίαν) prematurely except through becoming a widower or widow. Over the birth-pangs the male cares (θεραπεία) for her and shares her distress (συναγανάκτησις); and if she shows weakness towards entering the nest because of the birth, he strikes her and forces her to go in. When the nestlings have come, he gives thought (φροντίζει) to suitable food, which he chews up and opening the nestlings' mouths spits into them, preparing them in advance for feeding. When the male bird is about to expel the young ones from the nest he cohabits with them all. Now as a rule they have this kind of family devotion (στέργουσιν) towards each other, but occasionally a female will cohabit with other than her mate. (*HA* 9.7.612b33–613a7)²¹

Although Aristotle characterizes the spousal relationship with the verb στέργω rather than φιλεῖν (or a cognate), the affection in question is selfless other-regard that includes shared suffering. The male parent “co-parents” with the female pigeon (perhaps with a bit more tough-love than is acceptable among human animals) and remains with the nestlings until they are ready to leave the nest. The pigeon spousal friendship quite clearly is a utility friendship. But if the activity of spousal love manifests itself most visibility during the extended practice of reproduction and upbringing, the pigeons are remarkable because of their usually monogamy. Perhaps such monogamy derives from the pleasure friendship between individual pigeons, a possibility Aristotle mentions in the *Eudemian Ethics* (7.5.1239b18–20).

Based on the ethical and zoological works, Aristotle clearly and explicitly attributes parental and spousal friendship to diverse forms of non-human animal life, friendships that

²¹ *HA* 9.7 analyzes the “lives” (βίοι) of animals, especially insofar as they mimic that of human life (612b18–20).

exhibit shared suffering with and self-sacrifice on behalf of another. If friendships generate moral ties between members of a friendship, it seems unavoidable to acknowledge that there are moral ties between non-human animals.²² If non-human animals have intra-species moral ties, it seems reasonable to propose that they also have inter-species moral ties. Nonetheless, one might try to deny such a claim by saying that intra-species friendships are only “quasi” friendships or “metaphorical” friendship, perhaps similar to the way that Aristotle attributes to non-human animals less complicated ethical qualities, such as voluntary action rather than full praxis, which only mature humans can generate.²³ For example, Aristotle claims that non-human animals exhibit “natural virtue” or “natural courage,” namely laudable characteristics that do not require choice or reason.²⁴ Indeed, Aristotle explicitly notes that we can call animals moderate or self-indulgent in a metaphorical sense (*EN* 7.6.1149b31–32). It is thus all the more striking that the ethical works repeatedly use examples of non-human parental and spousal friendships that are normative for human beings. Unlike his discussion of natural courage, for instance, Aristotle never claims that the friendships of non-human animals are only approximations or forms of quasi-friendship. As I will show in the next part of my paper, Aristotle limits animals to utility and

²² *EN* 8.13–9.1 (= *EE* 7.9–10) is an extended examination of claims of justice (πῶς δίκαιον [*EN* 8.12.1162a31–32]) between different kinds of friends (including between human animals and the gods [*EN* 8.14.1163b15–20, 9.1.1164b3–6, 9.2.1165a14–16, 24–26]). Unfortunately, Aristotle provides no examples of claims of justice between human and non-human animals.

²³ Although Aristotle denies that animals and children are capable of praxis, which presupposes choice and deliberation (*EN* 3.2.1111b9, 3.8.1116b23–17a5, 6.2.1139a18–20, 7.1.1145a25–27; *EE* 2.6.1222b15–20, 2.8.1224a20–30, 2.10.1225b27–28, 2.10.1226b20–23), he attributes to animals voluntary action (ἐκούσιον) (*EN* 3.1.1111a26–30, 3.2.1111b9). See further Sorabji (1993, 108–10) and Morel (2013).

²⁴ *EN* 2.6.1106a19–21, 6.13.1144b8–9, 3.8.1116b23–17a2; *EE* 3.1.1230a21–26. See further Lennox (1999).

pleasure friendships, but as he makes clear in both the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian* accounts of friendship, utility and pleasure friendships are fully forms of friendship, even if they are not the primary or complete friendship based on virtue.²⁵ The utility friendship that two animals possess is no less a form of friendship than that which two humans possess. When Aristotle asserts that “birds of a feather flock together” is a linguistic adage to illustrate friendship based in likeness, his description of the flocking characteristics of birds in the zoological works makes clear that there is nothing “metaphorical” in his example.²⁶

Part II: Inter-species friendship in Aristotle’s ethical and zoological works

As noted in the introduction, I suspect that Aristotle would support a slightly revised Benthamite argument: “The question is not can they reason? Nor can they talk? But, can they love?” The first part of my paper has made clear that Aristotle attributes both parental and spousal forms of friendship to certain kinds of non-human animals and that in those friendships non-human animals exhibit moral characteristics such as shared suffering with and self-sacrifice on behalf of another. Such characteristics could indirectly justify moral ties between species based on the claim that forms of life that exhibit the other-regarding characteristics of friendship are

²⁵ *EN* 8.4.1157a25–b4, *EE* 7.2.1236a17–33. Kreft (2019) is one of the few works that recognizes that non-human animals can have pleasure and utility friendships, and yet she argues that “what Aristotle considers to be proper friendship is indeed a uniquely human type of relationship” (which she believes requires *voũς*) (182). But such an interpretation must dismiss all the passages in which Aristotle insists that pleasure and utility friendships truly are friendships (e.g., *EE* 7.2.1236a17–33; cf. *EN* 8.4.1157a35–b6)

²⁶ *EN* 8.1.1155a35–b1; *EE* 7.1.1235a5–13; *HA* 9.10 describes the intelligence (*φρόνιμα*) and leadership (*ἡγεμόνα*) of flocks of cranes (614b18–27).

themselves worthy of moral considerability. Such a claim would afford moral status to non-human animals more broadly than reason-based accounts of moral personhood, yet less broadly than bio-centric species egalitarianism.²⁷ Nonetheless, I do not think intra-species friendships among non-human animals exhaust Aristotle's contribution to the question of inter-species moral ties. Aristotle's account of inter-species friendship between human and non-human animals suggests that humans may have direct moral ties with non-human animals.

Indeed, the *Eudemian Ethics* explicitly and without qualification asserts that non-human animals exhibit not only intra-species but also inter-species utility and pleasure friendships, namely those forms of loving based on mutual utility or mutual pleasure. The *Eudemian* account of animal *philia* is unambiguous:²⁸

T8: Primary friendship is reciprocal friendship (ἀντιφιλία) and reciprocal decision (ἀντιπροαίρεσις) among good people. For what is loved is dear to the one who loves it and someone who loves in return is also dear to the one who is loved. This kind of friendship is found only among human beings (for they alone are aware of decision [μόνον γὰρ αἰσθάνεται προαιρέσεως]), but the other kinds are also found among animals; and usefulness is even apparent to some small degree between tame animals (τοῖς ἡμέροις) and humans and between tame animals and each other, as Herodotus says that the plover is useful to the crocodile and as diviners talk about the gatherings and separations of birds. (*EE* 7.2.1236b3–11)²⁹

²⁷ See Schmidtz (1998) for the environmental ethics theories of biocentrism, species egalitarianism, and the moral considerability of non-human animals.

²⁸ T8 has no equivalent passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Although it goes beyond my paper to document the differences between the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian* accounts of non-human animal friendship, the paper includes an Appendix which records the different statements in the two works and briefly speculates on the sources of their differences.

²⁹ Herodotus discusses the crocodile and plover bird in his *Histories* (2.68). *HA* 9.1608b26–30 explains Aristotle's reference to diviners (animals associate or disassociate—and so offer “signs” of the gods' will—on the basis of their eating habits). Later in *EE* 7.2, Aristotle reiterates his claim that although primary friendship is limited to humans, “the other kinds of friendship are also found in children, animals, and base people” (1238a30–33).

In both the *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean* ethical treatises, Aristotle consistently denies that non-human (and immature human) animals lack “choice” or “decision” (προαίρεσις), since choice (and “reciprocal choice” [ἀντιπροαίρεσις]) presuppose deliberative rationality absent in non-human animals. As I will discuss further below, I think it is plausible that Aristotle distinguishes the rational intentionality of human and non-human animals and denies complete or primary friendship to the latter. Nonetheless, the *Eudemian* passage T8 still ascribes utility and pleasure friendships to non-human animals, presumably (in the former case) based upon the “usefulness apparent” (τὸ χρήσιμον...τι φαίνεται) between non-human animals.³⁰ What might T8 have in mind?

Aristotle’s zoological writings are especially useful to explicate the claim that non-human animals are aware of usefulness and pleasure because they depict several kinds of inter-species friendships. Consider, first, Aristotle’s expanded discussion of the symbiosis between crocodiles and plover birds mentioned in T8. *Historia Animalium* 9.6, which is devoted to illustrations of animals acting intelligently (φρονίμως) by seeking out beneficial remedies, expands upon Aristotle’s example:

T9: When crocodiles gape, the plover birds fly in and clean their teeth, and while they themselves are getting their food the crocodile perceives that it is being benefited (ὁ δ’ ὠφελούμενος αἰσθάνεται) and does not harm them, but when he wants them to go he moves his neck so as not to crush them in his teeth. (*HA* 9.6.612a21–24)

³⁰ *EE* 7.5 claims that “voices, conditions, and pastimes of kindred people are most pleasant to each other, and the same goes for the other animals” (1239b18–20); presumably such shared pleasures are the basis for the pleasure friendships Aristotle ascribes to non-human animals.

Although the *Historia Animalium* does not explicitly characterize this inter-species interaction as a utility friendship (as does *EE* 7.2), its invocation of what is beneficial (ὠφελούμενος) certainly suggests that it is consistent with (and perhaps the source for) the *Eudemian* text. The crocodile possesses sufficient aesthetic awareness not only to perceive what is beneficial and pursue it in an inter-species friendship; the crocodile is also capable of weighing the long-term consequences of forgoing the consumption of the plover bird, which presumably is also beneficial in the short term, as food.³¹

A second example of inter-species friendship discussed in T8 is found in Aristotle's discussion of the "peaceful cooperation" (φίλος) between species within ecological niches.³² As both the *Historia Animalium* and the *Eudemian Ethics* note, "war" (πόλεμος) is not a natural or a necessary condition between different animals; rather, it is the result of a scarcity of food amongst animals that live in the same place and get their living from the same things; were their unlimited sources of food, as Aristotle thought there was in Egypt, even the wildest animals would live with each other peaceably.³³ Thus, the eagle and the dragon-snake are at war (because

³¹ Several other examples in *HA* 9.6 support such an interpretation of non-simplistic utility calculations: For example, hounds experiencing stomach pains eat a particular grass to induce vomiting, even though the vomiting is unpleasant (*HA* 9.6.612a6–7).

³² Brill (2020, 148–150) is one of the few texts that consider these remarks in light of non-human animal friendships.

³³ *HA* 9.1.608b19–24, *EE* 7.1.1235a19–20. Aristotle also claims that lions attack humans only because of an inability to obtain food (*HA* 9.44.629b25; cf. *Pol* 8.4.1338b19). *Politics* 1.5 claims that "domestic animals are by nature better than wild ones" since their domestication provides a permanent food supply and mitigates aggression (1.5.1254b9–15; cf. *HA* 5.8.542a27–28, 6.18.572a2–3, 9.1.608b19–09a3).

the eagle takes the food of the dragon-snake) as are the crow and the owl (since both try to capture each other's eggs for food). So too

T10: The merlin [a species of small falcon] is at war with the fox: it strikes and tears at it and kills the young, for it is crook-taloned. But raven and fox are friends (φίλοι) to each other, for the raven is at war with the merlin, hence it comes to the fox's aid when it is being struck. (*HA* 9.1.609b29–34)

Admittedly, the friendship between the raven and fox sounds more like one between Senator Mitch McConnell (R. KY) and the former President Donald Trump during confirmation hearings for Republican Supreme Court nominees. But Aristotle also identifies numerous species that are “friends” because of their feeding habits or ways of life rather than as simply the enemy of another enemy, including many species of shoaling fish.³⁴

A third example of inter-species friendship helps explicate the *Eudemian* claim in T8 that “usefulness is even apparent to some small degree between tame animals and humans” (1236b7–9). Aristotle notes that several species—include woodcocks and the thos (a kind of jackal)—are φιλάνθρωπον, which in this context appears to mean exhibiting a natural tameness towards humans.³⁵ Somewhat more startling is his claim that dolphins exhibit erotic love (ἔρωτες) and desires (ἐπιθυμία) towards young boys (*HA* 9.48.631a9–10).³⁶ But the clearest

³⁴ *HA* 9.1.610a10–14, a34–35; *HA* 9.2.610b2.

³⁵ *HA* 9.26.617b26–27, 9.44.630a9–10; the *Nicomachean Ethics* claims that people exhibit φιλάνθρωπια when they meet strangers on the road, presumably by greeting each other (*EN* 8.1.1155a16–21). Xenophon's “On Hunting” also ascribes φιλάνθρωπον to hounds (3.9, 6.25).

³⁶ What he seems to have in mind, based on Pliny's *Natural History*, which makes the same claim (9.8.24–26), is the phenomenon of dolphins following a ship carrying a specific passenger or appearing at the same place on the shore to greet a human. Konstan (2013) explores this unusual example at length.

example of an inter-species utility friendships involving human animals is Aristotle's account of human-hawk cooperation:

T11: In the part of Thrace once named as belonging to Kedriopolis men hunt the small birds in the marsh in partnership (κοινωνία) with the hawks. The men hold sticks and stir the reeds and brushwood to make the small birds fly, while the hawks from above appear overhead and chase them down. In fear they fly down again to the ground; the men strike them with the sticks and take them, and give the hawks a share in the prey; they throw them some of the birds and the hawks catch them. (HA 9.36.620a33–b6)³⁷

Although Aristotle never calls the relationship between the Thracian hunters and hawks a friendship, their hunting arrangement quite clearly is a mutually advantageous utility friendship. Clearly, Aristotle is aware of symbiosis between human and non-human animals: The *Eudemian Ethics* posited such a relation and the *Historia Animalium* provides a specific example of it. That Aristotle describes the humans working “in partnership (κοινωνία) with the hawks” strongly suggests that they have a “community” (κοινωνία), just like the reproductive/spousal friendships described in T6 and T7, discussed in the first part of my paper. Since “community” generates moral ties between its members, the relationship between the hunters and hawks furnishes direct evidence of moral ties between human and non-human animals.

Although Aristotle recognizes inter-species utility and pleasure friendships, *Eudemian* passage T8 denies that non-human animals can form complete or primary friendships, namely friendships grounded in virtue. To evaluate fully Aristotle's account of inter-species *philia*, it is necessary to consider his delimitation of it. At first glance, one might suspect that Steiner (2007,

³⁷ In the sequel, Aristotle provides another example of “cooperation”: fisherman from the Sea of Azov share part of their catch with wolves and the wolves refrain from destroying their nets (HA 9.36.620b6–10).

62) is correct to argue that Aristotle delimits virtue friendship between human and non-human animals because of his belief that the highest form of human activity is rational contemplation. Both the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics* deny that animals are capable of participating in εὐδαιμονία or “flourishing” because they lack that divine part of the soul which is a prerequisite for contemplation.³⁸ But such a claim seems hasty (or at least in need of qualification). Aristotle ascribes a virtue friendship to husband and wife, if they are both virtuous, based on their complimentary characteristics, but it is far from clear that they possess a friendship grounded in philosophical contemplation (*EN* 8.12.1162a24–30). His description of the shared activities of those who live together includes philosophy, but it is not limited to philosophy (*EN* 9.12.1172a1–5). Thus, it is not only an animal’s inability to contemplate philosophically that precludes complete friendships between human and non-human animals.

Human and non-human animals appear to be incapable of complete friendships for two slightly different reasons: first, because Aristotle believes that different species exhibit different characteristic pleasures and secondly because non-human animals lack decision. In the first case, even if non-human animals lack reason and are incapable of achieving eudaimonia, that does not undermine the claim that they experience pleasure or possess well-being.³⁹ In Aristotle’s words:

T12: Each sort of animal seems to have a pleasure that properly belongs to it, just as it does a function (ἔργον); I mean the pleasure that is in accord with its activity. This will also become evident if we look at each. For horse, dog, and human being have different pleasures, and as Heraclitus says, “donkeys prefer sweepings to gold,” since food is more pleasant to donkeys than gold. So animals that differ in form also have pleasures that differ in form, and if they are the same in form, it is

³⁸ *EE* 1.7.1217a21–29, *EN* 1.9.1099b32–1100a1, 10.8.1178b24–28.

³⁹ *EN* 3.10.1118a23–26, 3.11.1119a7–10, 7.5.1148b15–17, 7.11.1152b19–20, 7.12.1153a29–35, 7.13.1153b25–26.

quite reasonable to expect their pleasures not to be different. (*EN* 10.5.1176a3–9; cf. 1.7.1097b33–98a4)

As Osborne 2007 notes, with respect to well-being Aristotle has a “non-hierarchical hierarchy” (127), viz. a *scala naturae* with respect to different species pleasures and well-being that does not admit of trans-species evaluation.⁴⁰ Although happiness is not identical with pleasure, the pleasures that a species exhibits establish the framework for that species’ well-being. For example, although human and non-human animals share the pleasure of touch, humans are not limited to that pleasure.⁴¹

The second reason that Aristotle denies inter-species complete or primary friendship between human and non-human animals is based on his claim that only fully mature humans possess “decision” or “choice,” viz. what Aristotle calls προαίρεσις, or the peculiar mix of reason and desire that is constitutive of *praxis* (a mode of existence only available to mature humans).⁴²

⁴⁰ More controversially, Osborne (2007, 102–109), argues that scholars have misread those passages (e.g., *Pol* 1.5, *EN* 10.8) that seem to imply an anthropocentric hierarchy which elevates human reason above all other forms of happiness.

⁴¹*EN* 3.10.1118a23–27. Rowland (2011, 77–79) makes a strong case that Aristotle should recognize the relationship between he and Hugo, his dog, as a virtue friendship; but I still think that Aristotle would recognize between Rowland and Hugo a pleasure friendship. Indeed, as Huizinga (1950, 1) notes in his definition of play, “Animals play just like men. We have only to watch young dogs to see that all the essentials of human play are present in their merry gambols.” I believe the same is evident to anyone who has ever watched a dog play with a human being.

⁴² *EN* 6.2.1139b4–5. Aristotle claims that non-human animals (and immature human animals) act voluntarily, but that they lack προαίρεσις (*EN* 3.2.1111b9, 3.8.1117a5; *EE* 2.10.1225b27–28, 2.10.1226b20–23, 7.1.1236b5–10). See Lloyd 2013: “Putting the point in its most simplistic terms, animals have certain *natural* capacities and characteristics; humans alone add *moral* ones and ones that depend on φρόνησις, practical reasoning and the capacity to give an account. We have προαίρεσις (choice), other animals just αἴρεσις (a type of choice not based on moral deliberation) (*Politics* 1256a26–7)” (290, italics in the original). See further Newmyer (2017: 80–81) and Carron (2019).

Thus, as noted at the beginning of this section of my paper, the *Eudemian* passage T8 ascribes utility and pleasure friendships to non-human animals, but claims that animals are delimited from sharing in complete or primary friendship because only humans are “aware of decision” (*EE* 7.2.1236b6]). What difference does “decision” make in T8? The *Nicomachean* definition of friendship, I think, can shed some light. Friendship is similar to goodwill (εὔνοια), in that it involves wishing what is good to the other for the other’s own sake. But Aristotle adds:

T13: Or should we add “that does not go unawares” (μὴ λαυθάνουσιν)? For many have goodwill towards people they have never seen but take to be decent or useful, and one of the latter might feel the same way towards one of them. That these people have goodwill toward each other is evident, but how could we call them friends when they are unaware of how they are mutually disposed? Hence friends must have goodwill (that is, wish good things) for each other because of one of the things we mentioned [i.e., utility, pleasure, or ethical excellence], and not be unaware of it (βούλεσθαι τὰγαθὰ μὴ λαυθάνοντας). (*EN* 8.2.1155b33–1156a5)⁴³

The crocodile and the plover apparently are both aware of the usefulness they perform for the other: both are “aware” that removing food from the crocodile’s mouth is beneficial (as is feeding the plover), just like a sick dog is “aware” that eating grass will beneficially induce vomiting. That the crocodile indicates to the plover when to leave and that the plover is aware that the crocodile’s neck movements convey such a desire further shows that they are aware of each other. The hawk who aids the hunter senses not only the advantage that accrues to the hawk but also the advantages that accrue to the hunter for participating in a mutually advantageous hunt. Presumably, the claim that Argos “sensed” that Odysseus was nearby (ὥς ἐνόησεν Ὀδυσσεῖα

⁴³ Carol Atack notes to me that Xenophon, in the *Cyropaedia*, extends both happiness and εὔνοια to non-human animals (8.2.4, 8.2.14).

ἐγγύς ἔόντα [*Od.* 17.301]), is similar: Argos as a puppy had taken pleasure in hunting with his companion and his awareness allowed him to distinguish his human companion from other strangers.

By contrast, when the *Eudemian* passage T8 claims that “primary friendship is reciprocal friendship (ἀντιφιλία) and reciprocal decision (ἀντιπροαίρεσις) among good people” and that “this kind of friendship is found only among human beings (for they alone are aware of decision [μόνον γὰρ αἰσθάνεται προαίρεσως][1236b6]),” what Aristotle has in mind is awareness not just about the utility or pleasure of a specific action (like cleaning a crocodile’s teeth or hunting with Odysseus), but awareness about how that action fits within a broader life-pattern. It is instructive that Aristotle denies προαίρεσις not only to non-human animals, but even to children. Aristotle’s προαίρεσις implies an evaluative preference for the different goods that constitute well-being. As Aristotle glosses the word’s etymology, it “seems to indicate something being chosen (αἶρετον) before (πρὸ) other things” (*EN* 3.2.1112a16–17). By contrast, the *Nicomachean Ethics* describes non-human animal “forethought” as follows:

T14: Now if health or goodness is different for human beings than for fish, for example, but whiteness and straightness are always the same, anyone would say that theoretical wisdom (τὸ σοφὸν) is the same for all but that practical wisdom (φρόνιμον) is different, since the one who has a theoretical grasp of the good (τὸ εὔθεωροῦν) of a given sort of being is the one human beings would call “practically-wise” (φρόνιμον) and it is to him that they would entrust such matters. That is why even some of the wild beasts are said to be practically-wise (φρόνιμα)—those that appear to have a capacity for forethought (δύναμιν προνοητικὴν) about their life. (*EN* 6.7.1141a22–28)

No doubt, a human child may choose to play tag instead of reading a book, just like a dog may choose to chase a rabbit rather than a chew toy. Aristotle’s examples suggests a dog could also

exhibit the foresight of knowing that eating grass, to induce vomit, will alleviate the animal's suffering and produce health. And both children and dogs, on this reconstruction, are aware of the pleasure or utility of their choices. What they appear to lack is the ability to comprehend individual choices as part of a comprehensive life plan that constitutes eudaimonia (rather than a specific useful or pleasant action). That, so I believe, is the difference between non-human animals expressing awareness of what is useful and pleasant, either for themselves or for others, and fully mature and ethically virtuous human animals integrating useful and pleasant (and sometimes unpleasant) actions into a well-chosen life.

Part III: Does Aristotle deny friendship between human and non-human animals?

The first part of my paper examined numerous passages in which Aristotle describes non-human animals exhibiting intra-species friendships, including several passages which appear to be normative for humans; one might argue that animals that exhibit such characteristics are worthy of respect and thus have moral ties to human animals. The second part of my paper examined the *Eudemian* claim that non-human animals are capable of utility and pleasure friendships, including inter-species friendships between human and non-human animals. According to Aristotle's general understanding of friendship, such relationships generate moral ties between its members. Together, the first two parts of my paper provide unequivocal evidence that Aristotle ascribes friendship to non-human animals, evidence which also seems to establish inter-species moral ties. Nonetheless, scholars have seized upon two passages in Aristotle's writings that appear to deny both inter-species friendship and any moral ties between human and non-

human animals. In order to defend my claims that Aristotle ascribes both inter-species friendships and moral ties between human and non-human animals, I need to respond to both of these passages.

The first passage, which appears to deny both friendship and moral ties between humans and non-humans, comes from Aristotle's discussion of similarities between political constitutions and household relations in *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.11. For example, Aristotle likens the political constitution of kingship, in which a monarch rules in the interest of his or her subjects, to the paternal rule of a father, who oversees and guides his offspring in a beneficial fashion (8.10.1160b23–26). Each form of correct "rule" (namely kingly and paternal) exhibits aspects of friendship and justice (8.11.1161a10–11, 31–34). Within the context of such a discussion, Aristotle notes that

T15: In the deviations [of constitutions], however, just as justice is found only to a small extent, so too is friendship, and it is found least in the worst one, since in tyranny there is little or no friendship. For in cases where there is nothing in common (μηδὲν κοινόν) between ruler and ruled, there is no friendship, since there is no justice either. Take for example the relation of craftsman to tool, and soul to body. The latter in each pair is benefitted by its user, but there is neither friendship nor justice towards soulless things. Nor is there any towards an ox or a horse, or even a slave, in so far as he is a slave; for master and slave have nothing in common (κοινόν), since a slave is a tool with a soul, while a tool is a slave without one. (*EN* 8.11.1161a30–b5)

Scholars, such as Newmyer (2017) and Fröding and Peterson (2011), take T15 to indicate that (in Newmyer's words) Aristotle "comes rather close here to positing a moral divide between human

and non-human animals” (78).⁴⁴ If horses and oxen are akin to inanimate or soulless things, then both friendship and moral ties between humans and horses or oxen seem impossible.⁴⁵

There are a number of problems with the claim that T15 is Aristotle’s categorical denial of inter-species friendship between human and non-human animals. First, as noted above, *EN* 8.11 is part of an extended discussion about similarities between political constitutions and household relations. The six-word Greek clause (ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ πρὸς ἵππον ἢ βοῦν [1161b3–4]) that I translate as “nor is there any towards a horse or an ox” is one of only two references to non-human animals in the entire chapter. The general context of the passage provides no basis or evidence to support the claim that Aristotle intended his remark to serve as a categorical denial of inter-species friendship between human and non-human animals. Indeed, such a categorical denial of inter-species relationships contradicts an earlier claim within the discussion, namely Aristotle’s assertion that

T16: The friendship of a king toward those he rules is in accord with his superiority as a benefactor. For he treats those he rules well, if indeed he is good, and supervises them to ensure that they do well, just as a shepherd does his sheep.
(*EN* 8.11.1161a11–13)

Although Aristotle rather clearly seeks to elucidate the king-subject relationship by comparing it to the shepherd-sheep relationship, Newmyer’s interpretation seems to imply that Aristotle is a

⁴⁴ Henry (2018, 23–25) and Cagnoli Fieconi (2021, 220–221) concur with Newmyer’s reading, although Cagnoli Fieconi thinks that *EN* 8.11 is inconsistent with the rest of Aristotle’s writings.

⁴⁵ Aristotle notes in several places that although one can like inanimate objects, loving/friending is only possible with animals (*EE* 7.2.1237a37–40, *EN* 8.6.1157b30–32).

covert Thrasymachean, who thinks that kings prey upon their subjects like shepherds prey upon their sheep.⁴⁶

Interpreting T15 as a categorical denial of inter-species friendship presents additional problems. Such an interpretation implies that there is neither friendship nor justice towards horses and oxen, because they are soulless entities. But such a claim contradicts the entirety of Aristotle's zoology and natural science, which ascribe souls to all living beings, including most obviously complex animals such as horses and oxen, to which Aristotle attributes perception, desire, spiritedness, and a form of cognition which is at least analogous to human cognition. Finally, T15 twice claims that there is no justice or friendship where individuals have nothing in common (1161a33, b3). And yet we have seen (in Part I of the paper) that Aristotle calls the spousal friendship between animals generally and pigeons specifically a *κοινωνία* (*EN* 8.12.1162a16–25) and (in Part II of the paper) that hawks and humans share something in partnership (*κοινῆ*) in their hunt (*HA* 9.36.620a33–b6). To interpret *EN* 8.11 as claiming that there is nothing in common between human and non-human animals directly contradicts the account of hawks and is at odds with the account of pigeons.

A closer look at Aristotle's Greek in T15 shows that the text fails to deny inter-species friendship between humans and animals and that translations that go beyond the Greek make questionable additions to what Aristotle actually says. Aristotle's Greek claims:

φιλία δ' οὐκ ἔστι πρὸς τὰ ἄψυχα οὐδὲ δίκαιον. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ πρὸς ἵππον ἢ βοῦν,
οὐδὲ πρὸς δοῦλον ἢ δοῦλος. (8.11.1161b2–3)

⁴⁶ See *Republic* 1.343a–b.

The first sentence is simple enough: “There is no friendship towards soulless things, nor is there justice towards them.” But what, precisely, is denied towards an ox or horse? “Nor is there any towards an ox or a horse” accurately translates Aristotle’s Greek, but reading that “nor” to include both friendship and justice (or either friendship or justice) goes beyond the Greek text.⁴⁷ Aristotle may just as well be limiting his assertion to the claim that there are no claims of justice between humans and oxen or horses or slaves insofar as the ox, horse, or slave in question is property belonging to an individual, which one cannot “wrong” (as opposed to harm) insofar as one cannot wrong one’s self.⁴⁸ Indeed, although T15 denies that there is justice towards a slave qua slave, the immediate sequel notes that there is both justice and friendship towards a slave qua human (8.11.1161b5–11) and Aristotle may have the same distinction in mind with respect to an ox or horse qua animal (rather than qua property). For instance, in Aristotle’s account of domestic justice in *Nicomachean Ethics* 5, he claims that

T17: What is just for a master of slaves or for a father is not the same as [instances of political justice] but similar to them. For there is no unqualified injustice in relation to what is one’s own, and our possession or our child, until it reaches a certain age and has been separated, is like a part of us. No one, however, deliberately chooses to harm himself. That is why there is no injustice in relation

⁴⁷ So too, I would argue, is Reeve (2014, 150), rendering of the passage: “Neither is their friendship toward a horse or an ox” (so too Pakaluk 1998, 16). Rowe and Broadie (2002, 220), Irwin (1999, 132), and Rackham (1934, 497) by contrast, translate more accurately, viz.: “but there is no friendship towards inanimate things, nor justice either, and no more is there towards a horse or an ox, or towards a slave insofar as he is a slave.”

⁴⁸ Although Aristotle claims that justice and *philia* are often coextensive (*EN* 8.9.1159b24–25, 8.1.1153a22–28), I do not believe that to deny that there is a justice claim in a relationship between two individuals entails a denial that there is also no *philia* between them. Newmyer (2017, 76–78), for instance, notes that Aristotle never discusses examples of non-human animals in his treatment of justice in *Nicomachean Ethics* 5; but as my paper has shown, non-animal exempla abound in the discussions of friendship.

to oneself and hence nothing politically unjust or politically just either. (*EN* 5.6.1134b8–14)

At least according to Aristotle, it is impossible to commit injustice towards one's own property. Such a scenario may be exactly what he has in mind in T15. But whatever Aristotle intended in that passage, it seems incautious to read T15 as proof that Aristotle categorically denies either friendship or moral ties between humans and non-human animals in light of Aristotle's explicit attribution of inter-species friendship between human and non-human animals elsewhere in his writings.

The second passage, which scholars have interpreted as being inconsistent with positing friendship and moral ties between humans and non-humans, comes from Aristotle's discussion of the teleological relationship between human and non-human animals in *Politics* 1.8. The chapter examines the relationship between household management and wealth acquisition and describes a form of natural property acquisition, one which is grounded in the teleological principle that "nature does nothing in vain."⁴⁹ Aristotle writes that

T18: It is evident that nature itself gives such property to all living things, both right from the beginning, when they are first conceived, and similarly when they have reached complete maturity...Clearly, then, we must suppose that in the case of fully developed things too that plants are for the sake of animals (τῶν ζώων ἕνεκεν), and that the other animals are for the sake of human beings (ἀνθρώπων χάριν), domestic ones (τὰ ἡμέρα) both for using and eating, and most but not all wild ones (τῶν ἀγρίων) for food and other kinds of support, so that clothes and the other tools may be got from them. If then nature makes nothing incomplete or in vain (μήτε ἀτελὲς ποιεῖ μήτε μάτην), it must have made all of them for the sake of human beings (τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἕνεκεν). That is why even the science of warfare, since hunting is a part of it, will in a way be a natural part of property

⁴⁹ For the principle's articulation in Aristotle's *Politics*, see 1.2.1252b1–5, 1.2.1253a10, and 1.8.1256b21. For its articulation in the natural scientific corpus, see *DA* 2.4.415b16 ff., 3.9.432b21–2, 3.12.434a31; *PA* 1.1.641b12–29; *GA* 5.8.788b20; and *DC* 271a33.

acquisition. For this science ought to be used not only against wild beings (τὰ θηρία) but also against those human beings who are unwilling to be ruled, but naturally suited for it, as this sort of warfare is naturally just. (*Pol.* 1.8.1256b7–9, 15–26)

Newmyer 2011, for instance, glosses Aristotle’s claim as showing that “just as it is natural for one man to rule over another, so it is natural for humans to rule over animals, for they are intended for man’s use in the same way that some humans are intended for the use of humans” (27). Such anthropocentrism appears to reduce all animals to objects of human exploitation in a way that is inconsistent with either inter-species friendships or moral ties.

Aristotle’s discussion of the bountifulness of nature and its provisions to human animals raises serious questions about the anthropocentrism of his teleology that go far beyond what I can (and, I think, what I need) to say about *Politics* 1.8.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, I think there are two reasons why *Politics* 1.8 is compatible with inter-species friendships. First, I reject the claim that human rule over non-human animals—or even the use of non-human animals—is irreconcilable with showing justice and friendship towards non-human animals.⁵¹ It is a bedrock principle of Aristotle’s ethical and political writings (one which I discussed above in conjunction with the *Nicomachean* T15) that rule can be exercised justly or unjustly and that there are qualitatively different forms of rule.⁵² In the case of non-human animals, such rule inevitably will take some

⁵⁰ For recent discussion of the issues raised by *Politics* 1.8 see Johnson (2008), 229–237.

⁵¹ Cagnoli Fiecconi (2021, 221) comes to the same conclusion, but on the grounds that if there are just wars involving some kinds of non-human animals, it follows that there must also be unjust wars against some kinds of non-human animals (for example, the hunting of tame animals). Newmyer (2017, 78) concurs that the account of just wars is at odds with T15.

⁵² See *Pol* 1.1.1252a8–17, 1.3.1253b15–23, 1.7.1255b17–21.

sort of paternalistic form since non-human animals are not consensual beings.⁵³ If I take my dog for a walk on a busy street and compel him to wear a leash (something he is rather not fond of wearing), I do so to protect him from cars and other pedestrians who may be less dog-friendly. But I fail to see that such “compulsion” is incompatible with the friendly bond that I have with him. I concede that what constitutes “just rule” of a domesticated animal companion is very different from what may constitute “just rule” for domesticated livestock or non-domesticated animals.⁵⁴ But I do not concede that such human and non-human animal interaction is inherently exploitative or unjust. Radical or “deep ecology” is neither the only nor even the most plausible environmental ethic.

Secondly, I think my paper helps to illustrate the methodological differences between examining non-human animals “practically” and zoologically. Consider, for instance, a relatively straightforward depiction in *EN* of the relationship between “function” and “virtue”:

T19: We should say, then, that every virtue, regardless of what thing it is the virtue of, both completes the good state of that thing and makes it perform its function (ἔργον) well—as, for example, the virtue of an eye makes both the eye and its function excellent, since it is by dint of the eye’s virtue that we see well. Similarly the virtue of a horse makes the horse excellent—that is, good at running, carrying its rider, and standing firm against enemies. (*EN* 2.6.1106a15–21)

⁵³ As Korsgaard (2010) notes, the most relevant moral difference between human and non-human animals is not that we have no obligations to them, but rather that “they have no moral duties to us” (103). Any account of the moral status of animals must reflect that the relationship between human and most (if not all) non-human animals is not a reciprocal one and cannot be a consensual one (except hypothetically).

⁵⁴ Concerning animal domestication, Aristotle claims “tame animals are superior in their nature to wild animals (τὰ ἡμερα τῶν ἀγρίων βελτίω), yet for all it is best to be ruled by humans (ἀρχεσθαι ὑπ’ ἀνθρώπου), since this gives them security (σωτηρία)” (*Pol* 1.5.1254b10–14). See further *HA* 9.1.608b19–609a3, 5.8.542a27–28, 6.18.572a2–3.

That a virtue perfects its possessor and allows its possessor to function well is, of course, standard Aristotelian ethics. But that a horse's "excellence" or what makes it σπουδαῖον is what makes it capable to bear a human rider or to carry that human rider into battle as a member of the cavalry looks profoundly anthropocentric. And yet, from page one of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle informs us that this treatise or subject matter concerns the architectonic practical science of the good, namely the science of politics (*EN* 1.2.1094a27–29). And as Aristotle adds on that first page: the science of horsemanship (ἵππική) is a subordinate military science (πολεμική) which ultimately falls under the science of generalship (στρατηγική [*EN* 1.1.1094a10–14]). Examining the relationship between a crocodile and a plover bird to illuminate a practical good like friendship is very different from examining the relationship to illuminate the multitude of ways in which different species of animals exhibit an approximation of human intelligence.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ I am grateful to audiences at Selwyn College (2022), University of South Florida (2021) and McMaster University (2016) for comments on earlier versions of this paper. At various stages in its writing, Carol Atack, Sara Brill, Jerry Green, Chelsea Harry, Mariska Leunissen, Christof Rapp, David Riesbeck, Adriel Trott, and James Warren have offered valuable comments. I am especially grateful for extended written comments from Sophia Connell on an earlier version of the paper.

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