

PHIL 260; Spring 2007

The Normativity of Ethics

David O. Brink

Handout #8: Normative Authority and Metaphysical Egoism

Doubts about the adequacy of appeals to impartial practical reason give those with rationalist sympathies reason to explore the metaphysical, and not merely strategic, reconciliation of prudence and altruism contained in **metaphysical egoism**. Even if we recognize impartial practical reason, the supremacy of moral demands may depend upon the plausibility of metaphysical egoism. For as long as we recognize the demands of prudence, the conflict between altruism and prudence will threaten altruism's supremacy. We might consider one version of metaphysical egoism that appeals to psychological reductionism about personal identity and exploits some Platonic and Aristotelian analogies between intrapersonal and interpersonal relations and concern.

### PLATONIC LOVE AND IMMORTALITY

One illustration of these ideas can be found in Plato's discussion of philosophical eros and its relation to immortality in the Symposium. Plato describes an ascent of desire through various stages (210a-212a). This ascent moves from (1) love of a particular beautiful body, to (2) love of bodily beauty, as such, to (3) a love of all beautiful bodies, to (4) a love of spiritual beauty, that is, what is fine or beautiful in souls, to (5) a love of fine laws and institutions, to (6) a love of all kinds of knowledge, to (7) a love of what is fine, as such. This last, best sort of love aims at what is good or fine (201a, 204d, 205d, 206b-e) and, in particular, at propagating what is good or fine (206c-208a, 212a). Plato believes that virtue is fine and that spiritual love aims at producing virtue. In middle dialogues, such as the Republic, he understands virtue as a psychic state in which one's appetites, emotions, and actions are regulated by practical deliberation about one's overall good. Virtue, so understood, is the controlling ingredient in a good or flourishing life. So when A loves B, Plato concludes, A will aim to make B virtuous (209a, 212a).

Such love benefits the beloved, because one benefits by becoming virtuous precisely insofar as one is better off being regulated by a correct conception of one's overall good. But Plato also believes that the lover benefits from loving another (Phaedrus 245b), as he must if he is to reconcile interpersonal love with his eudaimonist assumption that a person's practical reason should be regulated by a correct conception of her overall good. The key to seeing how Plato can reconcile interpersonal love with self-love is to appreciate the way in which he thinks that reproducing one's virtuous traits in another is the next best thing to immortality (Symposium 206c1-209e5; Phaedrus 276e-277a).<sup>1</sup> According to Plato, my own persistence over time, despite both compositional and qualitative change, is a matter of reproducing my traits into the future.

Now although we speak of an individual as being the same so long as he continues to exist in the same form, and therefore assume that a man is the same person in his dotage as in his infancy, yet, for all we call him the same, every bit of him is different, and every day he is becoming a new man, while the old man is ceasing to exist, as you can see from his hair, his flesh, his bones, his blood, and all the rest of his body. And not only his body, for the same

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Kraut, "Egoism, Love, and Political Office in Plato"; Irwin, Plato's Moral Theory, pp. 241-42, 267-73 and Plato's Ethics, ch. 18; and Price, Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle, chs. 2-3.

thing happens to his soul. And neither his manners, nor his disposition, nor his thoughts, nor his desires, nor his sufferings, nor his fears are the same throughout his life, for some of them grow, while others disappear. ... In this way every mortal creature is perpetuated, not by always being the same in every way, as a divine being is, but by what goes away and gets old leaving behind and in its place some other new thing that is of the same sort as it was [207d3-208b12].

Though Plato mentions both physical and psychological persistence, it is clear that his real concern is with psychological persistence. For he regards the soul essentially as a capacity for deliberation, decision, and action (Phaedrus 245c-e), and he regards eudaimonia as consisting in the proper psychic ordering of the agent's soul. So my persistence requires my psychological reproduction into the future, and if this is to be good for me, I must reproduce my valuable traits into the future; if virtue is the dominant component of my eudaimonia, this requires me to reproduce my virtuous traits into the future. But interpersonal love involves the reproduction of my virtuous traits in another, who can live beyond me; this is why interpersonal love is correctly viewed as the next best thing to immortality. It also explains why spiritual intercourse and love are better than bodily love and intercourse; spiritual love begets greater and more valuable progeny (Symposium 209a1-e4). This explains why Plato would regard Socrates or Solon as more fecund and closer to immortality than the old woman who lived in the shoe (who had so many children she didn't know what to do).

So Plato appears to appeal here to something like psychological continuity ideas about personal identity (see below) to vindicate the idea that special concern can and should take an interpersonal form. Indeed, on Plato's view, it appears that interpersonal concern is assimilated to intrapersonal concern, as we might expect given his commitment to eudaimonism. For he seem to think that love of another is just a special case of self-love. I extend myself into the future by reproducing my traits into the future. But I can also reproduce myself somewhat less systematically in others by sharing thought and discussion with them, in particular, thought and discussion about how best to live. In the intrapersonal case, I not only extend my interests; my self-reproduction is systematic enough to extend my life. Where my self-reproduction is, for various reasons, less systematic, I do not survive; but the very same sort of self-reproduction extends my interests. On this view, the interests of those whom I love become part of my interests in just the sort of way that the interests of my future self are part of my overall interests.

### **ARISTOTELIAN VIRTUE: EUDAIMONISM AND THE GOOD OF OTHERS**

Like Plato, Aristotle is a eudaimonist – he believes that virtues must promote the eudaimonia, good, or happiness of the agent who has them. Virtues must be beneficial to the agent. However, Aristotle also thinks of the virtues as beneficial to others. In *Rhetoric* i 9 he links virtue with what is fine (*kalon*) and praiseworthy (1103a10, 1120a24, 1122b6-8). To be fine, something must be both intrinsically valuable and praiseworthy (1103a10). He suggests that actions that benefit others are most likely to elicit praise and seem praiseworthy.

Virtue is, according to the usual view, a faculty of providing and preserving good things; or a faculty of conferring many great benefits, and benefits of all kinds on all occasions. The parts of virtue are justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, wisdom. If virtue is a faculty of beneficence, the highest kinds of it must be those which are most useful to others, and for this reason men honor most the just and the courageous ... [1366a36-b6].

[Also fine are] all those actions done for the sake of others, since these less than other actions are done for one's own sake; and all successes which benefit others and not oneself; and services done to one's benefactors, for this is just; and good deeds generally, since they are not directed to one's own profit [1367a4-6].

Here Aristotle identifies the virtues, or at least the most important among the virtues, with other regarding character traits. The Rhetoric contains Aristotle's reconstruction of common views, here common views about the virtues. But the Rhetoric's account of the other-regarding character of the virtues accentuates, rather than resolves, the worry about whether conventional virtues are genuine eudaimonic virtues. Though Aristotle's own ethical views in the NE begin from reflection on common beliefs, his own views sometimes revise common sense, even a reconstructed common sense. Though the NE agrees in some ways with the Rhetoric's account of the relation between virtue, the fine, and the good of others (1120a9-13, 1120a22-3, 1121a27-30, 1168a9-12, 1171a25-b16), there is an important difference between the two accounts. In the NE the fine action is not simply one that benefits others; it must also benefit the agent. Aristotle brings this feature out most clearly in a number of places where he insists that the virtues are fine because they aim at and secure a common good. The magnificent person spends money to the benefit of the community (1122b21) and the common good (1123a5). And general justice, which is complete virtue (in relation to another) (1129b20-30), aims at the benefit of the community and the common good (1129b15-18). Aristotle makes the connections between the fine, the common good, and the agent's own good clearest in discussing true self-love in NE ix 8.

And when everyone competes to achieve what is fine and strains to do the finest actions, everything that is right will be done for the common good, and each person individually will receive the greatest of goods, since that is the character of virtue [1169a8 12].

In linking virtue, with the fine, with the common good, with the agent's own good Aristotle is rejecting the popular contrast, noted in the Rhetoric, between other-regarding concern and the agent's own good. For Aristotle, as for Socrates and Plato, the real test case for this claim is justice, because justice, both for Aristotle and for us, is perhaps the most clearly other-regarding virtue (1366a36-b6).

## **FRIENDSHIP**

Aristotle's insistence on the connection among justice, the good of a community, and the common good suggests that we look to his justification of friendship for help in justifying justice, because friendship is the virtue appropriate to communities or associations in general and includes the perfection of justice (1155a22-28, 1159b25-1160a8). Moreover, appeal to friendship here seems promising because of two claims Aristotle makes about some forms of friendship.

- (a) Friendship involves concern for another's own sake.
- (b) The friend is "another self."

(a) would seem to secure the other-regarding concern characteristic of justice and moral virtue in general, whereas (b) promises to show such concern is in some way in the agent's own interest.

If so, this gives an importance to Aristotle's discussion of friendship that could explain why he devotes what might otherwise seem to be disproportionate attention (two whole books) to friendship.

Aristotle identifies three main kinds of friendship (viii 3-8).

- Friendship for advantage
- Friendship for pleasure
- Complete friendship found between virtuous people

Both advantage-friendship and pleasure-friendship, Aristotle then claims, involve something less than concern for the other's own sake (1156a11-13). Aristotle insists that virtue-friendship supplies the "focal meaning" of friendship. In calling virtue-friendship the best or most complete kind of friendship, he signals that it is friendship to the fullest extent and that other associations are friendship by virtue of their approximation to it (1157a26-32).

Virtue-friendship cannot be widespread inasmuch as virtuous people are rare (1156b25) and this sort of friendship requires a degree of intensity that cannot be maintained on a large scale (1158a11-17, 1171a1-20). Complete friends share similar psychological states, such as aims and goals (1170b16-17) and live together, sharing thought and discussion (1157b8-19, 1159b25-33, 1166a1-12, 1171b30-1172a6). Virtue-friendship "reflects the comparative worth of the friends" (1158b28). The true friend aims at what is good (1162a5, b12, 1165b14-16) and fine (1168b28-1169a12). Because virtue is fine, the friend is concerned with his friend's virtue. This explains why Aristotle thinks that one cannot remain friends with someone who becomes irredeemably vicious (1165b14-21), that the vicious cannot even love themselves (1166b2-27), and that the person who values and aims to promote his own virtue is the true self-lover (1168a28-1169a12).

### **FRIENDSHIP AS SELF-LOVE**

Aristotle anticipates some of his claims about the justification of virtue-friendship (which begins at ix 4) in viii 12, where he suggests that we should take parental friendship as our model of friendship. The parent is concerned with the child's welfare for the child's own sake. This concern is appropriate on eudaimonist grounds, because the parent can regard the child as "another self" (1161b19, 28). The child can be regarded as another self of the parent, because the child owes its existence and physical and psychological nature in significant part to the parent; this both echoes and helps explain the common view that a parent's interests are extended by the life of the child. Aristotle suggests similar claims can be made about friendship between siblings. In virtue of living together, siblings causally interact in important ways and share many things in common and so can regard each other as other selves (1161b30-35).

The account of familial-friendship brings out clearly what is crucial to justifying the other regarding concern of virtue-friendship. Aristotle explains the justification of virtue-friendship in terms of proper self-love (1166a1-2, 10, 1166a30-32, 1168b1-1169a12).

For it is said that we must love most the friend who is most a friend; and no one person is most a friend to another if he wishes goods to the other for the other's own sake, even if no one will know about it. But these are features most of all of one's relation to oneself; and so too are all the other defining features of a friend, since we have said that all of the features of friendship extend from oneself to others [1168b2-6].

The excellent person is related to his friend in the same way as he is related to himself, since a friend is another self; and therefore, just as his own being is choiceworthy for him, the friend's being is choiceworthy for him in the same or a similar way [1170b6-9].

One plausible interpretation of Aristotle's claims about the relation between friendship and self-love is reminiscent of Plato's analogy between intrapersonal and interpersonal reproduction in his account of philosophical eros. Aristotle believes that proper self-love requires a proper conception of the self and of what is beneficial for the self.

Hence he [the virtuous person] wishes goods and apparent goods to himself .... He wishes and does them for his own sake, since he does them for the sake of his thinking part, and that is what each person seems to be. He wishes himself to live and to be preserved. And he wishes this for the part by which he has intelligence more than any other part. For being is a good for the good person, and each person wishes for goods for himself. And no one chooses to be another person even if that other will have every good when he has come into being .... Rather [each of us chooses goods] on condition that he remains whatever he is; and each person would seem to be the understanding part, or that most of all [1166a15-23].

Later in distinguishing proper from vulgar self-love, Aristotle makes a similar claim.

However, it is this [the virtuous person] more than any other sort of person who seems to be a self-lover. At any rate, he awards himself what is finest and best of all, and gratifies the most controlling part of himself, obeying it in everything. And just as a city and every other composite system seems to be above all its most controlling part, the same is true of a human being; hence someone loves himself most if he likes and gratifies this part [1168b28-34].

In these passages Aristotle wants, in part, to identify a person with the controlling part of his soul or his understanding. We know that Aristotle thinks a human is essentially a psycho-physical compound in which reason can regulate thought and action (1097b24-1098a16, 1102b13-1103a3). If so, it would be reasonable for him to think that the persistence of an individual consists in the continuous employment of his rational faculties to regulate his thought and action. This would explain why Aristotle thinks that proper love for oneself involves a concern for one's practical reason and its virtuous exercise.

If this is what underlies Aristotle's account of proper intrapersonal love, we can see how he thinks interpersonal love or friendship might be modeled on it. I preserve or extend myself by exercising my practical reason -- forming beliefs and desires, deliberating about them, and acting as the result of deliberate choice. But the same sort of psychological interaction and interdependence can be found, presumably to a lesser extent, between two different persons. On Aristotle's view, friends share similar psychological states, such as aims and goals (1170b16-17) and live together (1159b25-33, 1166a1-12, 1171b30-1172a6). Even if psychological similarity is necessary for friendship, it is clearly insufficient; it should be produced and sustained by living together and sharing thought and discussion (1157b5-12, 18-21).

He must, then, perceive his friend's being together [with his own], and he will do this when they live together and share conversation and thought. For in the case of human beings what seems to count as living together is this sharing of conversation and thought, not sharing the same pasture, as in the case of grazing animals [1170b10-14].

This account of interpersonal psychological dependence among friends allows us to see how Aristotle thinks we can view a friend as another-self and so how he can view the justification of friendship in terms of self-love.

Indeed, Aristotle can extend the scope of his eudaimonist justification of interpersonal concern from friends to other members of a just political community. It's true that he recognizes that virtue-friendship can't hold on the scale of a political community that is just (1158a11-12, 1170b29-1171a20; Pol 1262b3-20) and that political communities are associations for mutual advantage and do not involve the best sort of friendship (1160a11-15). Nonetheless, political communities that are just have to a significant degree the two features that are crucial to the justification of virtue-friendship and familial-friendship: there is commonality of aims and aspirations among members of the political association, and this commonality is produced by members of the association living together in the right way, in particular, by defining their aims and goals consensually (1167a25-8, 1155a24-28). Insofar as this is true, members of such a political association can see the interests of other members implicated in their own interests. And members of such a community can aim at justice for its own sake, because justice, Aristotle believes, promotes the common good, which is presumably the good common to them insofar as they are members of an interdependent political community (1129b15-18). This begins to explain Aristotle's reasons for his well known belief that we are essentially political animals (EN 1097b9-12, Pol 1253a2) and that, as a result, the complete good for an individual can only be realized in a political community.

### **METAPHYSICAL EGOISM**

I would like to explore the resources of a conception of practical reason that, like Platonic and Aristotelian eudaimonism, justifies other-regarding conduct and concern by modeling it on intrapersonal conduct and concern. Because the conception I have in mind appeals to common, though not uncontroversial, metaphysical assumptions about persons and personal identity, it can be thought of as a form of metaphysical egoism.

### **PERSONS, PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTINUITY, AND DELIBERATIVE CONTROL**

Locke distinguished between persons and men or, as we might say, human beings and claimed that the concept of a person is a forensic or normative concept (Essay II.xxvii.8, 15, 17-21, 23, 26). In both morality and law, persons are responsible agents; it is only persons who are properly praised and blamed, because it is only persons who can properly be held accountable for their actions. Non-responsible agents, such as brutes and small children, act on their strongest desires or, at most engage in instrumental reasoning about how best to satisfy their appetites and desires. By contrast, responsible agents can distinguish between the intensity and authority of their desires. For Plato, Aristotle, and others, this requires being able to deliberate about one's overall good and being able to regulate one's appetites and emotions and, ultimately, one's actions in accord with these deliberations. If so, capacities for practical deliberation -- formulating,

assessing, revising, choosing, and implementing projects and goals in light of conception about what is best -- are essential to being a person.

Deliberative capacities may be essential to being a person, but this does not itself tell us what the persistence of a particular person consists in. Persons appear to survive some physical and psychological changes, but not others. If we distinguish sameness of person from sameness of human being, it is arguable that what personal identity consists in, and what distinguishes substantial from nonsubstantial change for a person, is some kind of continuity of mental life.

For it is arguable that it is only those physical changes that destroy continuity of mental life that destroy a person; other physical changes are alterations in a persisting person. For instance, brain damage that preserves important elements of a continued mental life is nonsubstantial change and harm; but destruction of the brain is (normally) substantial change, because it terminates a heretofore continuous stream of consciousness.

Moreover, it seems clear that certain psychological changes and incapacities do or would produce substantial change, regardless of the sort of physical change involved in this mental change and regardless of the physical continuity that might exist through this psychological change. So, for example, if I enter an irreversible and complete vegetative state, then, other things being equal, this is a substantial change that destroys me, regardless of how this psychological change is realized physically and whether my body continues to function and exist.

Furthermore, there are thought experiments in which important kinds of mental and physical continuity, which normally go together, come apart in which our intuitions seem to track psychological relations. Locke imagines that the same person might inhabit different bodies at different points in time (Essay §§14, 15, 19), as when the person of a prince might come to occupy the body of a cobbler if the consciousness of the prince is somehow transferred to the body of the cobbler (§15). But Locke leaves the mechanism by which such a transference might occur unspecified.

Shoemaker describes a more satisfactory case of body switch that involves brain transplant (Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity 23). In Shoemaker's case, surgical techniques have advanced so that brains may be surgically removed, reconnected, and transplanted in ways that preserve psychological continuity. Suppose that Brown and Robinson have fairly similar bodies and that each undergoes brain surgery; however, during the procedures, their brains are inadvertently put into the wrong bodies. The person with Robinson's brain and Brown's body dies on the operating table due to complications. The surviving patient -- call him Brownson -- has Brown's brain and Robinson's body. Though Brownson has Robinson's body, all of his intentional states are similar to and causally dependent on Brown's, rather than Robinson's, intentional states. Is Brownson Robinson or Brown (or neither)? If we were to enter Brownson's hospital room without knowing what had transpired in the operating room, presumably we would initially identify Brownson as Robinson. But as we talked to Brownson, our views would likely change. Brownson has apparent memories of Brown's life, not Robinson's. He intends to finish writing a book like Brown's book, not Robinson's. And he is eager to return to Brown's wife and children, whereas Robinson had no wife or children. When we learned what had transpired in the operating room, it would seem natural to view the inadvertent brain-transplant as a body switch. People often receive new limbs or organs; a body switch is just an extreme case of this. If so, Brown is the surviving recipient and Robinson is the dead donor. That is, Brownson is Brown. Our intuitions about Brownson seem to support a mentalistic view of personal identity.

On one such mentalistic view, what unites different parts of a single life is psychological continuity. A series of persons is psychologically **continuous** insofar as contiguous members in

the series are psychologically well connected. A pair of persons are psychologically **connected** insofar as the intentional states (e.g. beliefs, desires, and intentions) and actions of one are causally dependent upon those of the other. Of particular importance, given our views about persons, are **deliberative** connections that hold among actions, intentions, and prior deliberations in the deliberate maintenance and modification of intentional states, such as beliefs, desires, values, and intentions and in the performance of actions that reflect these prior deliberations. Connectedness is a matter of degree; it is a function of the strength and centrality of individual connections and the number of connections. Continuity can also be a matter of degree; if of two chains A and B, the links in A are better connected than the links in B, then any points in A will be more continuous than any points in B. On this view, personal identity consists in maximal psychological continuity.

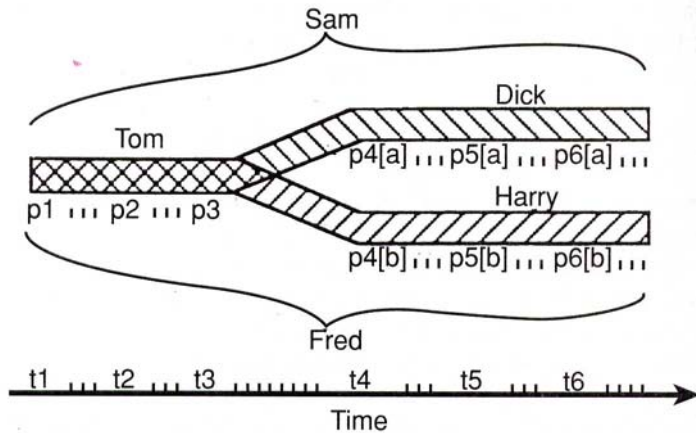
### FISSIONN AND WHAT MATTERS

But personal identity cannot consist in psychological continuity alone. The transitivity of identity requires that any analysis of the relation of identity must be one-one, rather than one-many. But psychological continuity is a one-many relation, as is demonstrated in cases in which a single stream of consciousness divides into two equal tributaries. The potentially one-many character of psychological continuity is shown in so-called "split-brain" cases.<sup>2</sup> The issues seem sharpest in **fission** cases.

Consider the following case. Tom, Zeke, and Zach are identical triplets and get in a serious car accident. Zeke and Zach are brain-dead; Tom is not, but his body is hopelessly mangled. Assume that it is possible to transplant Tom's brain into Zeke's body and that this preserves Tom's psychological continuity. If we do this (case 1), we regard Tom as the surviving recipient and Zeke as the dead donor (Zach is simply dead). Now assume that half the brain is sufficient to sustain psychological continuity. If half of Tom's brain is seriously damaged and we transplant the healthy half into Zeke's body (case 2), Tom again survives. If, however, Tom's entire brain is healthy and we transplant half of it into Zeke's body and half into Zach's (case 3), then we have a case of fission.

---

<sup>2</sup>There is clinical evidence that suggests that severing the corpus callosum can produce two distinct spheres of consciousness, corresponding to the right and left hemispheres of the brain. See, for example, R.W. Perry, "The Great Cerebral Commissure" Scientific American 210 (1964) and Thomas Nagel, "Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness" reprinted in Personal Identity, ed. J. Perry. When hemispheres are severed, dividing consciousness, each hemisphere can "learn" to perform some functions that the other had performed for the united brain, and in some patients various capacities usually found in only one hemisphere are found in both. Insofar as this is true, the possibility of dividing the brain and preserving two qualitatively identical but distinct streams of consciousness is not so fantastic. A residual empirical obstacle is that the functionality of a single hemisphere of the brain seems to depend upon the integrity of the brain stem, which does not admit of division. But these empirical obstacles to dividing the brain are not important, I think. What we would or should say about personal identity in merely counterfactual circumstances can constrain what we think personal identity consists in and what its significance is, and this can affect what we can or should say about personal identity and its significance in actual circumstances.



What do we say in the fission case about Tom and his relationship to Dick and Harry? There seem to be five main possibilities (cf. RP 256).

1. Tom does not survive fission; in particular, he does not survive as Dick or as Harry.
2. Tom survives as Dick, rather than Harry.
3. Tom survives as Harry, rather than Dick.
4. Tom survives as Dick and as Harry.
5. Tom survives as the scattered person consisting of Dick and Harry.

Each answer is initially hard to believe. Against (1), we can ask how a double success could be a failure. Against (2) and (3), we can note that Dick and Harry have exactly equal claims to being Tom. But (4) violates the transitivity of identity; because Dick ...Harry (A..C), Tom cannot be identical with Dick and with Harry (5((A=B) & (B=C))). Neither can Tom survive as a scattered person, viz. the sum of Dick and Harry. If persons must be functionally integrated systems, as their forensic role would seem to require, then Dick and Harry are each persons; they do not together constitute a person.

However, it may be misleading for Parfit to say that it is an “empty question” to ask which answer is correct (RP: 258-60, 278). The best response is to deny (1), as Parfit recognizes (260, 279). Whereas fission preserves psychological continuity, which can be one-many, it cannot preserve identity, which must be one-one. For psychological continuity to constitute personal identity, it must take a **nonbranching** form.

- **Psych-R:** P2 is identical with P1 iff P2 is (sufficiently) psychologically continuous with P1 and there is no other continuer of P1 that is as continuous with P1.

### INTERPERSONAL CONTINUITY GENERALIZED

Recall the reductionist account of fission as a case of **interpersonal psychological continuity** that preserves what matters, even if does not preserve identity. Fission is an exotic case. Though exotic, it is the limiting case of a very common phenomenon. Though I am normally most strongly continuous with myself in the future, I can be psychologically continuous with others with whom I interact psychologically. Interpersonal, as well as intrapersonal, psychological continuity is quite common. Interpersonal connections and continuity can be found

among intimates who interact on a regular basis and help shape each other's mental life; in such relationships, the experiences, beliefs, desires, ideals and actions of each depend in significant part upon those of the other. We can see this in the familial friendships that Plato and Aristotle take as their model. Parents make plans for their children that affect the children's actions, opportunities, and experiences; they impart information and teach skills; they make suggestions, act as sounding boards, and set limits. In these and countless other ways, parents help shape their children's faculties, experiences, beliefs, desires, values, opportunities, and goals. Similar relations hold among spouses and friends who share experiences, conversation, and plans. They can also be found, to a lesser extent, among partners in cooperative ventures where the deliberations, desires, plans, and expectations of each are formed together and conditioned by each other. More generally, membership in various sorts of associations will affect the beliefs, desires, expectations, and plans of members so as to establish significant interpersonal psychological continuity among the association's members. In these ways, interpersonal psychological connectedness and continuity can extend broadly, even if the degree of connectedness (and sometimes continuity) often weakens as these relations extend further.

In more normal (non-branching) interpersonal cases, what distinguishes intrapersonal continuity and interpersonal continuity is the **degree** of continuity. There are more numerous and more direct psychological connections -- between actions and intentions and among beliefs, desires, and values -- in the intrapersonal case. And where the connections among links in a chain are all weaker, continuity between any points in the chain will also be weaker. If so, we can see how I am more weakly continuous with my intimates than I am with myself. We can also see how I might be continuous with others, besides my intimates, even if more weakly so. I interact directly with others, such as colleagues and neighbors, and this interaction shapes my mental life in certain ways, even if the interaction in such cases is less regular than is my interaction with intimates and even if the effect of such interactions on my mental life is less profound than is the effect produced by interaction with my intimates. Moreover, I interact with a much larger net of people indirectly, when our psychological influence on each is other is mediated by other people and complex social institutions, though the continuity thus established is, as a result, weaker. Indeed, the nature of my relationship to others and of the bonds between us are a function of the degree of interpersonal psychological continuity between us. In branching cases, such as fission, there is no intrinsic psychological difference between intrapersonal and interpersonal relations, not even one of degree. Tom bears the same intrinsic psychological relations to Dick and Harry in case 3 as he does to his recuperating self in cases 1 and 2. What makes fission an interpersonal case is simply that continuity takes a one-many form.

### **INTERPERSONAL CONTINUITY AND ANOTHER'S GOOD**

If so, we might agree with Parfit that the separateness or diversity of persons is not so fundamental. Insofar as distinct individuals are psychologically connected and continuous, each can and should view the other as one who extends her own interests in the same sort of way that her own future self extends her interests. Precisely because it is the limiting interpersonal case, fission brings this out most clearly. In non-branching cases, such as cases 1 and 2, psychological continuity extends Tom's interests in the sense that later selves inherit, carry on, and carry out the projects and plans of earlier selves. In non-branching cases, it also extends Tom's life. In the fission case, however, continuity does not literally extend Tom's life, only because it takes a one-many form. But, by virtue of being fully psychologically continuous with Tom, Dick and Harry will each inherit, carry on, and carry out Tom's projects and plans (though presumably in

somewhat different directions over time). This seems to be a good ground for claiming that Dick and Harry extend Tom's interests, in the very same way that his own future self would normally extend his interests, even if they do not literally extend his life. This helps us better understand the common claim, which Plato and Aristotle endorse, that in more conventional interpersonal cases there is interpersonal extension of interests. Among intimates, they claim, B's good can be regarded as a part or component of A's good. The ground they offer for this claim is that A and B interact and help shape each other's mental life; the experiences, beliefs, desires, ideals, and actions of each depend in significant part upon those the other. These are the sorts of conditions of psychological continuity and connectedness that are maximally realized in normal intrapersonal cases and in fission cases. Here they are realized to a very large extent in familiar interpersonal cases. This means that each should regard the good of those to whom they stand in such relationships as a constituent part of her overall good, just as she should regard the good of her own future self as a constituent part of her overall good. This allows us to agree with Aristotle that insofar as A and B are psychologically connected and continuous, each is justified in regarding the other as a second self (NE 1161b19, 28, 1169b6, 1170b7).

On this view, interpersonal psychological interaction and dependence provide a metaphysical egoist justification of other-regarding conduct and concern. Of course, concern itself is an ingredient in many associations, especially intimate associations. For instance, concern is part of what it is to be a friend to someone, whether the friendship is toward another or toward oneself. But this does not mean that our justification of concern is circular. For we can justify concern for associates in terms of other associative relations. Typically, concern is preceded by other kinds of associative relations. For instance, people interact with each other before they display the special concern for each other characteristic of friends or neighbors. The development and expression of this concern arises from and is justified by these past interactions and shared history. Moreover, it is significant for the purposes of my argument, that people often have these associative reasons for concern without having and expressing (proportionate) concern. Concern takes the form of a cluster of dispositions, among other things, to share the other's joys and sorrows, to keep abreast of developments in the other's life, to protect the other against certain sorts of harms and risks, and to advance the other's plans and prospects in certain ways. If so, concern for oneself or another clearly contributes to **further** psychological interdependence. In this way, associative relations justify concern, which can strengthen associative relations, which then justifies further concern, and so on. There is no circularity here.

However, even if we accept this much of the metaphysical egoist justification of other-regarding concern, a number of foundational worries remain. It is worth raising these worries and exploring resources for reply.

## THE GOOD OF SELF-EXTENSION

What is the **value** of interpersonal self-extension? We might agree that proper self-love requires a concern for others proportional to the amount of interpersonal psychological interaction and dependence that already exist between oneself and others. But presumably the amount of interaction one has with others, as well as the form it takes, is often under one's control. Why should one cultivate interpersonal psychological relations? It seems a circuitous way to benefit oneself. Why not just spend my financial, emotional, and intellectual resources directly on myself, rather than cultivating relationships through which I can then benefit myself?

The metaphysical egoist should claim that interpersonal self-extension promotes my eudaimonia in distinctively valuable ways. As Aristotle makes most clear, it is in my interest to

exercise those capacities that are central to the sort of being I essentially am (NE i 7). If I am essentially a person, then a principal ingredient in my welfare must be the exercise of my deliberative capacities. Indeed, if we endorse a deliberative conception of welfare or eudaimonia, we can begin to explain how prudence can be a requirement of practical reason. For when prudence is understood in deliberative terms, it aims at the exercise of the very deliberative capacities that make one a responsible agent, capable of having and acting on reasons for action. Moreover, if my persistence depends upon the extension of my deliberative control into the future, we can see how the exercise of my deliberative capacities is part of my welfare. But then it can be claimed that interpersonal psychological dependence of the sort discussed can extend my interests in important ways.

The central premise of the argument is that I am not self-sufficient at producing a complete deliberative good. Aristotle focuses on the sharing of thought and discussion, especially about how best to live, as well as cooperative interaction. Sharing thought and discussion with another diversifies my experiences by providing me with additional perspectives on the world. By enlarging my perspective, it gives me a more objective picture of the world, its possibilities, and my place in it. This both explains and qualifies how we should understand Plato's and Aristotle's suggestion that part of the value of intimates, with whom one shares thought and conversation, consists in their providing a "mirror" on the self (Phdrs 255d5 and EN 1169b34-35). Insofar as we regard the exercise of deliberative capacities as the chief ingredient in eudaimonia, we can see how self-understanding and self-criticism are both parts of eudaimonia. Interaction between those who are psychologically similar provides a kind of mirror on the self. Insofar as my friend is like me, I can appreciate my own qualities from a different perspective; this promotes my self-understanding. One need only think of the familiar way in which parents experience pride and sometimes chagrin when they see various habits and traits of their own manifested in their children. But interaction with another just like me does not itself contribute to self-criticism. This is why there is deliberative value in interaction with diverse sorts of people many of whom are not mirror images of myself. This suggests another way in which I am not deliberatively self-sufficient. Sharing thought and discussion with others, especially about how to live, improves my own practical deliberations; it enlarges my menu of options, by identifying new options, and helps me better assess the merits of these options, by forcing on my attention new considerations and arguments about the comparative merits of the options. Here we might appeal to Socratic and Millian claims about the deliberative value of open and vigorous discussion with diverse interlocutors. Moreover, cooperative interaction with others allows me to participate in larger, more complex projects and so extend the scope of my deliberative control over my environment. In this way, I spread my interests more widely than I could acting on my own. Here too diversity can be helpful; cooperation is improved and extends each further when it draws on diverse talents and skills.

## NON-INSTRUMENTAL CONCERN

Is egoist concern too **instrumental**? Morality seems to require not just that we perform the actions it demands of us but also that we fulfill its demands from the right sort of motives, and sometimes morality seems to require not just that we benefit another but that we do so out of a concern for the other for her own sake. This is certainly true about the concern owed to intimates. If justified concern for another is, as the metaphysical egoist claims, a special case of self-love, then mustn't such concern be at bottom instrumental? If so, this is objectionable because it fails to justify concern for others for their own sakes and because it threatens to make the justification of other-regarding concern insufficiently stable.

In assessing this complaint, it is instructive to look at the Socratic view of love and friendship and compare it with Platonic and Aristotelian views. In the Lysis Socrates maintains that one who had a complete good would have no need of love or friendship and that friendship can only exist between people who stand to gain from association with each other (215ab). In this way, friendship is predicated on mutual benefit (214c). This view of love and friendship fits nicely with Socrates's eudaimonism, which implies that I have reason to care for another insofar as this contributes to my own eudaimonia. But for Socrates such concern must be instrumental.

1. Only an unconditionally complete good is intrinsically valuable (219e9-11).
2. Hence, those things desired for the sake of something else are not intrinsically, but only instrumentally, valuable (219c-220b).
3. A lover values his beloved for the sake of the lover's own eudaimonia.
4. Hence, it follows that a lover can love his beloved only instrumentally.

Whereas Socrates assumes that valuing something for the sake of another always reflects purely instrumental concern, Plato and Aristotle reject this assumption. In the Republic Glaucon and Adeimantus demand that Socrates show justice to be beneficial **in itself** and not simply for its normal causal consequences (357a-367e). Plato subsequently defends justice by arguing that justice secures the right ordering of the agent's soul and so contributes to his eudaimonia. If we are to make sense of Plato's defense of justice as a response to the challenge that Glaucon and Adeimantus pose, we must interpret him as arguing that justice is valuable for its **intrinsic**, as well as its extrinsic, consequences. If justice contributes to the agent's happiness, because justice is a part of the agent's happiness, then Plato will have shown that justice is valuable "in and by itself" (367b4, e2-4). Plato does regard justice as the controlling part of eudaimonia; he hopes to show that one is always better off being just than unjust, no matter what the extrinsic consequences of justice and injustice turn out to be (360e-362c). But this **comparative** claim does not assume that justice is sufficient for a complete good. In particular, the comparative claim allows Plato to recognize the value of external goods, independent of virtue (361e4-362a2). But then Plato's view seems to be that eudaimonia is a whole of which justice (and virtue generally) is a proper part. Justice is desirable for the sake of something else, namely, eudaimonia. But being desirable for the sake of eudaimonia does not imply that justice is only instrumentally valuable; it is valuable in itself for its constitutive contribution to happiness. If Plato can make this claim about justice, he can make this claim about friendship and love. The lover can love his beloved for the contribution this makes to the lover's own eudaimonia and for the beloved's own sake if the good of the beloved is a constituent part of the lover's own eudaimonia.

On Aristotle's view, a good is complete if it is chosen for its own sake, and a good is unconditionally complete if other things are chosen for its sake and it is not chosen for the sake of something else (1094a18-19, 1097a27-b6). Aristotle believes that eudaimonia is the only unconditionally complete good; all other goods are chosen for its sake. Some goods chosen for the sake of eudaimonia, though not choiceworthy in themselves, are choiceworthy as causal means to some ingredient of eudaimonia; these goods are incomplete, instrumental goods. But other goods - such as the virtues -- that are chosen for the sake of eudaimonia are also choiceworthy in themselves. They are chosen for the sake of eudaimonia in the sense that they are constituent parts of eudaimonia; they are valuable in their own right and for their constitutive contribution to a valuable life. Such goods are complete or intrinsic goods, not mere instrumental goods, though they are not unconditionally complete goods. Here Aristotle is making explicit the sort of

assumptions Plato must make about justice in Republic ii-iv; in Aristotle's terms, Plato thinks justice is a complete good, but not an unconditionally complete good. If the lover treats the good of his beloved as a complete good that is also choiceworthy for the sake of his own eudaimonia, the lover is concerned for the other's own sake while valuing his beloved's well-being for the constitutive contribution this makes to his own eudaimonia.

So both Plato and Aristotle have the analytic resources to provide a eudaimonist justification of interpersonal concern that is derivative but not instrumental. When I undergo a present sacrifice for a future benefit I do so because the interests of my future self are interests of mine. The on-balance rationality of the sacrifice depends upon its promoting my overall good. But because the good of my future self is part of this overall good, concern for my overall good requires, as a constituent part, a concern for the good of my future self. In this way, concern for my future self for its own sake seems compatible with and, indeed, essential to self-love. If psychological relations extend an agent's interests, then the good of others can be part of my overall good just as my own future good can be. Though the on-balance rationality of other-regarding action depends upon its promoting my overall good, concern for my overall good requires, as a constituent part, concern for the welfare of those to whom I am appropriately psychologically related. This is why Plato views interpersonal love as the next best thing to immortality (Symp 206c1-209e5) and why Aristotle claims that a proper conception of how others figure in self-love undermines the popular contrast between self-love and altruism (NE ix 8).

## SCOPE

Another worry concerns the **scope** of the metaphysical egoist justification of other-regarding concern. If its justification of other-regarding conduct and concern is limited to those to whom one is already psychologically related, then the scope of this egoist account of the authority of morality may seem disturbingly narrow. The scope of egoist concern will be especially narrow if the relevant relations obtain only among intimates and like-minded members of small associations. But the metaphysical egoist can claim that the relevant interpersonal relations do and should extend quite widely.

Psychological connectedness does not require like-mindedness. Though Aristotle sometimes speaks as if the relevant relations among friends must involve similar beliefs and values (1159b3-5, 1161b35, 1162a13, 1165b17, 1166a7, 1167a23-b10, 1170b16), it's not clear that this is or should be an essential feature of his position, at least insofar as he seeks to model interpersonal concern on intrapersonal concern. For within my own life, I exercise deliberative control and establish psychological connections with my future self when I intentionally modify beliefs, desires, or values, as well as when I maintain them unchanged. Now it may be that my successive selves will typically be fairly similar; perhaps wholesale and instantaneous psychological change is impossible or at least would involve a substantial change, which I would not survive. But intrapersonal psychological dependence is compatible with significant qualitative change. This allows us to explain how it is that we have prudential reason to undertake changes in our characters that count as improvements; our persistence requires only deliberative control, not fixity, of character. If so, it seems that Aristotle should allow in the interpersonal case for friends to be psychologically dissimilar provided the mental states and actions of each exert significant influence on those of the other. Indeed, if others are to extend my interests by diversifying my experiences, by providing me with resources for self-criticism as well as self-understanding, by broadening my deliberative menu and improving my deliberations, and by allowing me to engage in more complex and varied activities, it is important that we be different and not too like-minded (Pol 1281a42-b15).

Moreover, psychological influence can be exerted between people, on each other, even when they have not had direct interactions, as when two people influence each other through their conversations with a common third party. The ripple effects on others of our conversations, plans, actions, and relationships can extend quite widely.

Moreover, continuous selves need not be connected. Any elements in a series are continuous just in case contiguous members in the series are well connected; this implies that non-contiguous members (e.g. the end-points) of such a series are continuous even if they are not well connected or connected at all. If so, people can be psychologically continuous who are not at all connected, provided they are members of a series of persons each of whom is connected to some degree with his neighbor in the series. There is room for debate about the comparative roles of continuity and connectedness within a suitable mentalistic view of personal identity. Perhaps both relations matter and extend one's interests, but I think it is clear that continuity must matter. If so, then the relations that justify other-regarding concern can extend far beyond the circle of those with whom one regularly interacts.

In thinking about the proper scope of eudaimonist concern, it is worth thinking about differences between Aristotle and T.H. Green about the scope of the common good. Aristotle can extend the central elements of his eudaimonist defense of friendship to political association, because political communities that are just have to a significant degree the two features that are crucial to the justification of virtue-friendship and familial-friendship: there is commonality of aims among members of the political association, and this commonality is produced by members of the association living together in the right way, in particular, by defining their aims and goals consensually (1167a25-28, 1155a24-28). This establishes a common good among citizens, each of whom has a share in judging and ruling (Pol 1275a22-33). Justice aims at a common good (1129b15-18), and this, we said, is how Aristotle can construct a eudaimonist defense of justice. But this conception of the common good is still quite limited. Restricted as it is to those whom Aristotle thinks are fit for citizenship, it excludes women, barbarians, slaves, and manual laborers (1278a3-9); indeed, he thinks that manual laborers ought to be drawn exclusively from a pool of barbarians and natural inferiors (1329a24-26).

Green's own ethics of self-realization, developed in his Prolegomena to Ethics, is heavily influenced by his study of Plato and Aristotle. Whereas he thought that Aristotle was right to ground an agent's duties in an account of eudaimonia the principal ingredient of which is a conception of practical virtue regulated by the common good (PE §§253, 256, 263, 271, 279), he thought the Greeks had too narrow a conception of various virtues and the common good (§§257, 261-62, 265-66, 270, 279-80). It is Aristotle's restrictions on the common good that Green finds unacceptable.

The idea of a society of free and law-abiding persons, each his own master yet each his brother's keeper, was first definitely formed among the Greeks, and its formation was the condition of all subsequent progress in the direction described; but with them ... it was limited in its application to select groups of men surrounded by populations of aliens and slaves. In its universality, as capable of application to the whole human race, an attempt has first been made to act upon it in modern Christendom [§271].

As the last part of this passage suggests, Green's own conception of the common good is universal; full self-realization occurs only when each respects the claims made by other members of a maximally inclusive community of ends (§§214, 216, 244, 332).

There are good eudaimonist reasons for recognizing a more inclusive common good than Aristotle does. First, there already are significant forms of personal, social, and economic interaction and interdependence between Aristotle's citizens, on the one hand, and women, slaves, manual laborers, and resident aliens, on the other. This provides a backward-looking justification for recognizing a more inclusive conception of the common good.

But can the common good be genuinely universal in scope, as Green wants it to be, if it is the result of interpersonal association? The story of the Good Samaritan is supposed to illustrate the existence of duties toward others with one has no previous association (Luke 10: 29-37). Consider the proverbial remotest Mysian (Plato, Theaetetus 209b8), with whom one has no previous association, however indirect. Should it somehow come within my power to help the remotest Mysian, at little or no cost to myself, it might seem the eudaimonist cannot explain justified concern for him. This might seem like a defect in an account of the scope of morality or its authority.

If the remotest Mysian and I have had no direct or indirect psychological interaction, then his good is not already part of mine. So I can have no backward-looking eudaimonist reason to be concerned about him. But I can have forward-looking reasons. Even when the remotest Mysian and I have no prospect of further interaction, my assistance will enable or facilitate his pursuit of his own projects, and this will make his subsequent actions and mental states dependent upon my assistance. Indeed, other things being equal, the greater the assistance I provide the greater is my involvement in his life. To the extent that another's actions and mental states are dependent upon my assistance, I can view the assistance as making his good a part of my own. Assistance to the remotest Mysian earns me a share, however small, of his happiness, much the way care and nurture of my children grounds posthumous interests I have in their continued well-being. If so, it seems Aristotelian eudaimonism could seek a universal common good, of the sort Green contemplates.

## **WEIGHT**

A final worry concerns the **weight** of the reasons for other-regarding concern. Both connectedness and continuity are matters of degree. Normally, there are more numerous and direct psychological connections among successive stages within a single life than between lives. And where the connections among links in a chain are all weaker, continuity between any points in the chain will also be weaker. If so, we can see how I am more weakly continuous with my intimates than I am with myself. We can also see how I might be continuous with others, besides my intimates. I interact directly with others, such as colleagues and neighbors, and this interaction shapes my mental life in certain ways, even if the interaction in such cases is less regular than is my interaction with intimates and even if the effect of such interactions on my mental life is less profound than is the effect produced by interaction with my intimates. Moreover, I interact with a much larger net of people indirectly, when our psychological influence on each is other is mediated by other people and complex social institutions. We can think of the degrees of connectedness and continuity in terms of a set of concentric circles with myself occupying the inner circle and the remotest Mysian occupying the outer circle. As we extend the scope of psychological interdependence, the strength of the relevant psychological relations appears to weaken and the weight of one's reasons to give aid and refrain from harm presumably weakens proportionately. Despite the wide scope of justified concern, it must apparently have variable weight. Is such an **interpersonal discount rate** acceptable?

This depends, in part, on the precise shape of the interpersonal discount rate. As long as psychological connectedness is itself one of the psychological relations that matter, then there will be an interpersonal discount rate, because an agent will be differentially psychologically connected to others. But as long as psychological continuity is also one of the relations that matter, a significant level of concern can be justified for anyone with whom one is psychologically continuous. Suppose A is friends only with B, whereas B is also friends with C. All else being equal, A is as continuous with his friend's friend, C, as he is with his friend, B. So insofar as continuity is one of the relations that matter, A has as much reason to be concerned about his friend's friend as about his friend. He will have reason to give greater weight to the interests of his friend insofar as connectedness also matters. These points generalize beyond friendship. So the importance of psychological continuity, ensures that a significant threshold of concern can be justified well out into outer circles. There will nonetheless be significant differences in the degree of concern that can be justified, above this threshold, in different circles if connectedness has independent significance.

But this kind of interpersonal discount rate need not be a threat to our understanding of other-regarding morality or its authority. For it is commonly thought that, even if morality has universal scope, the demands that it imposes are a function not simply of the amount of benefit that one can confer but also of the nature of the relationship in which one stands to potential beneficiaries. Commonsense morality recognizes more stringent obligations toward those to whom one stands in special relationships -- for instance, toward family and friends and toward partners in cooperative schemes -- than toward others. Aristotle, for one, clearly accepts this sort of **moral discount rate**; he thinks that, all else being equal, it is better to help and worse to harm those to whom one stands in special relations than it is to do these things to others (NE 1160a1-6, 1169b12; Pol 1262a27-30). It seems a reasonable hypothesis that the interpersonal relationships that have special moral significance are just those relationships of psychological interaction and interdependence that extend one's interests. If so, then there will be a moral discount rate that is isomorphic to the egoist interpersonal discount rate. Indeed, it would be a virtue, rather than a defect, of this justification of other-regarding concern that it embodies an interpersonal discount rate.

## THE BALANCE OF REASONS

The metaphysical egoist models interpersonal relations and concern on intrapersonal relations and concern and thereby extends the boundaries of self-interest and self-love so as to include the good of others. This view figures importantly in Platonic and Aristotelian eudaimonism and in Green's ethics of self-realization. I have tried to articulate one conception of metaphysical egoism that draws on these traditions and appeals to plausible claims about persons and their persistence. This view implies a conception of interpersonal relations that should lead us to see people's interests as metaphysically, and not just strategically, interdependent. Moreover, this egoist justification of other-regarding conduct is robust. We can explain how each should view this interdependence as good; interpersonal self-extension makes possible the fuller realization of the deliberative powers of each. We can also explain how the justification of other-regarding concern is derivative but non-instrumental. We can defend an inclusive conception of the common good and thereby offer a defense of other-regarding conduct with wide scope. Finally, we can see how differences in the very relations that, on this view, justify concern appear also to be morally significant differences. Metaphysical egoism implies that complying with other-regarding duties is a counterfactually reliable way of advancing the agent's own overall good, properly conceived. This is a significant result, whether we understand practical rationality in exclusively prudential terms or not.

However, my argument, even if successful, does not itself imply that the authority of other-regarding moral demands is overriding or supreme. Unlike Green, I do not see these claims as establishing the strong thesis that there can be no conflict or competition of interests among people (§244). I have argued that the good of others is a necessary and distinctively valuable part of an agent's overall good. But it is one aspect of an agent's overall good that must interact and may compete with more self-confined aspects. When I expend intellectual, emotional, and financial resources on meeting the legitimate claims of others, this contributes to my overall good in distinctive ways; but it also consumes resources that might have been spent on my education, my vocation, or my avocations. There are opportunity costs to every commitment, even especially important commitments, and sometimes the opportunity costs of important commitments are themselves important. If so, other-regarding and more self-confined aspects of an agent's overall good are distinct and at least potentially conflicting.

Whether and to what extent there can be a successful accommodation of other-regarding and self-confined aspects of self-interest is an important issue that requires further study. But this does not simply leave us where we started. For I have argued that the good of others forms a distinctive part of the agent's overall good whose importance must be reckoned with in the balance of reasons. This is an important claim. Even if practical reason is exclusively prudential, it vindicates the weak rationalist thesis that there is always reason to act on other-regarding demands, such that failure to do so is pro tanto irrational. It is less clear whether it helps vindicate the strong rationalist thesis that there is always overriding reason to act on other-regarding demands, such that failure to do so is on-balance irrational. This depends upon the resolution of other issues. If practical reason is exclusively prudential, the plausibility of the strong rationalist thesis will depend upon whether self-confined and other-regarding aspects of an agent's overall good can be accommodated in non-competitive ways. As I've suggested, there may be possible circumstances of democratic equality that allow this accommodation, but it is unlikely that they already obtain generally. If so, it will be hard to maintain the strong rationalist thesis on purely prudential grounds. If, however, practical reason has impartial as well as prudential dimensions, then the

prospects for a reasonably strong rationalist thesis look better. For then both impartial reason and prudence, in one voice, will speak in favor of other-regarding morality, and only prudence, in another voice, might speak against it. How often the balance of reasons will tip toward other-regarding morality will depend upon the details of metaphysical egoism, impartial reason, and other-regarding morality. Nonetheless I hope to have said enough about the nature and resources of metaphysical egoism to show that it has an important role to play in our understanding of the rational authority of morality.