

1 media use as a distinct end, I suggest that such use may foreclose or impede
2 one's ability to concurrently bring about the virtue of friendship.

3 In what follows I extend previous normative assessments of social media
4 friendship by using the Aristotelian virtue of temperance as a starting point.¹ In
5 doing so I believe that Aristotle's account of temperance is ideally suited to
6 assessing social media use not only for its contextual flexibility, but for the
7 manner in which temperance (along with other virtues) demand of the human
8 agent the ability to align practical wisdom with human action. My focus will be
9 on use of social media namely for its ubiquitous use in society. Therefore I will
10 not focus solely on a given social media platform (e.g., Facebook, Twitter,
11 Instagram); rather I will argue that all social media use coalesces on the pursuit
12 of social companionship (and related friendship) as a primary (if not *the*
13 primary) goal of individuals using the technology. One could conceivably
14 widen the scope of such an analysis or direct it to include the Internet in
15 general or perhaps smartphone use in particular. However, I believe that doing
16 so would likely conflate Internet, smartphone or tablet use with particular
17 software or applications that drive use of these devices, making it difficult to
18 identify the intended ends of device use and to then understand how such use
19 might be characterized as addictive.

20 Before I begin, I must make a number of important points. First, there is
21 widespread disagreement among psychologists and social scientists that
22 excessive use of social media does not meet the diagnostic definition of
23 addiction (see e.g., Kuss and Griffiths 2011). Therefore, in this paper I will use
24 the term "addiction" colloquially to mean excessive use of social media that is
25 difficult to control and that has the outward appearance of a behavioral
26 dependency. Although imprecise, my intent is to illustrate how such
27 uncontrolled use of social media may influence one's ability to apprehend the
28 virtue of friendship in and through one's use of social media. Although
29 confirming or dismissing diagnostic definitions of social media addiction lies
30 well beyond the scope of this paper, I will entertain at least the possibility that
31 a form of such an addiction may exist (see e.g., van den Eijnden et al. 2016;
32 Andreassen et al. 2012).

33 Second, in his writings Aristotle did not treat of addiction *per se*. This is
34 not surprising, given that current understandings of the term as a psychological
35 or physiological disorder date to nineteenth-century medicine and the rise of
36 Temperance Movement (Franzwa 1998). Instead, Aristotle recognized that
37 some people are driven by a form of compulsion, an external force that can
38 shape and direct human action. I will address this as it relates to temperance
39 later in this paper.

40 Third, in what follows I will broaden Aristotle's conception of necessary
41 objects that fall under the influence of temperance. In essence, he believes that
42 common appetites are those humans share with animals, which are
43 fundamental desires for objects necessary for existence, namely food and drink.

¹Unless otherwise noted, all references are to Aristotle 2009. References to his other works have been abbreviated as *Eudemian Ethics (EE)* and *Politics (Pol.)*.

1 Because they involve objects necessary for survival, he thinks these fall
 2 directly under the sphere of temperance. Although one does not require
 3 companionship for survival in the same way that she requires food and drink, I
 4 propose that since companionship reflects our nature as social animals that it
 5 can nonetheless be thought of as a necessary object subject to excessive desire.

6 Finally, it must be noted that the possibility of virtues influencing one
 7 another, or in some way being unified, is the subject of debate (see e.g., Telfer
 8 1990; Langan 1979). Aristotle never fully develops the idea that possessing (or
 9 not possessing) some virtues may influence one's ability to possess (or not
 10 possess) other virtues. At one point he considers the argument that "the same
 11 man, it might be said, is not best equipped by nature for all the virtues, so that
 12 he will already have acquired one when he has not yet acquired another" (*EE*,
 13 1144b, 34-5). He replies: "This is possible in respect of the natural virtues, but
 14 not in respect of those in respect of which a man is called without qualification
 15 good; for with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom, will be given
 16 all the virtues" (*EE*, 1145a, 1-2). Thus, I will assert that insofar as temperance
 17 is a natural virtue, one who possesses it possesses also practical wisdom. As
 18 such a person is virtuous, he will (all things being equal) apprehend the virtue
 19 of friendship. Conversely, one who lacks temperance will lack also practical
 20 wisdom and therefore will not be in a position to secure the virtue of
 21 friendship. My thesis will be that this linkage between temperance, practical
 22 wisdom and friendship is particularly present when one uses social media
 23 (which is itself the subject of temperance or addiction) in order to render the
 24 virtue of friendship.

25 I begin by summarizing Aristotle's account of temperance, including
 26 continence, incontinence, and self-indulgence. I then explore the possibility
 27 that excessive social media use in pursuit of a good such as companionship
 28 may be subject to temperance, incontinence, or self-indulgence. Insofar as
 29 excessive social media use may be construed to be incontinent or self-indulgent
 30 (depending on the constitution of the agent), I examine how addiction to social
 31 media use relates to incontinent or self-indulgent action. I then assert that
 32 insofar as it is intemperate, excessive social media use prevents one from
 33 apprehending the virtue of friendship using social media, namely due to the
 34 ends sought: that is, the pleasures resulting from social media use instead of the
 35 virtue of friendship *per se*.

38 Aristotle on Temperance

39
 40 Since social media overuse deals with behaviors that are either excessive
 41 or deficient, Aristotle's account of temperance is a logical starting point
 42 particularly since he locates it between excess and deficiency: "temperance and
 43 courage, then, are destroyed by excess and defect, and preserved by the mean"
 44 (II.2, 1104a, 25). Therefore, a temperate (i.e., virtuous) person manages her
 45 desires by maintaining a mean between excess and deficiency.

1 However, temperance should not be understood to be a functional mean
 2 between excess and deficiency with each being intemperate. Since he thinks
 3 that it is virtually impossible for one to reasonably choose to be deficient in
 4 terms of food and drink, Aristotle asserts that excess (i.e., self-indulgence) is
 5 opposed to temperance and is to be regarded as intemperate.

6 Importantly, however, he links temperance to pleasures (i.e., bodily) in the
 7 following way:

8
 9 Nor is there in animals other than man any pleasure connected with these senses,
 10 except incidentally. For dogs do not delight in the scent of hares, but in the eating
 11 of them, but the scent told them the hares were there ... temperance and self-
 12 indulgence, however, are concerned with the kind of pleasures that the other
 13 animals share in ... these are touch and taste (III.10, 1118a, 17-26).

14
 15 Thus, the sphere of temperance is bodily pleasures or needs, specifically
 16 for food and drink, that we have in common with other animals. Consequently
 17 “the temperate man craves for the things he ought, as he ought, and when he
 18 ought; and this is what reason directs” (III.12, 1119b, 14-20). If one fails to be
 19 temperate, one is either incontinent or self-indulgent. What differentiates them
 20 is the nature of the choice that precipitates either form of action. One who is
 21 incontinent knows the right choice yet chooses the bad. He writes: “But of the
 22 people who are incontinent with respect to bodily enjoyments, with which we
 23 say the temperate and the self-indulgent man are concerned, he who pursues
 24 the excesses of things pleasant ... not by choice but contrary to his choice and
 25 his judgment, is called incontinent” (VII.4, 1148a, 5-10). Therefore one who is
 26 incontinent has acted “contrary to his choice and his judgment” in what is a
 27 temporary turning away from the good: “the incontinent man regains his
 28 knowledge, the same as in the case of the man drunk or asleep” (VIII.3, 1147b,
 29 6-9) and therefore “is subject to regrets” (VII.8, 1150b, 29-30).

30 In contrast one who is self-indulgent has acted upon a predisposition
 31 toward the bad reflective of ill-formed desires. He writes:

32
 33 Now since some pleasures are necessary while others are not, and are necessary
 34 up to a point while the excesses of them are not, nor the deficiencies, and this is
 35 equally true of appetites and pains, the man who pursues the excesses of things
 36 pleasant, or pursues to excess necessary objects, and does so by choice, for their
 37 own sake and not at all for the sake of any result distinct from them is self-
 38 indulgent; for such a man is of necessity without regrets, and therefore incurable,
 39 since a man without regrets cannot be cured (VII.7, 1150a, 16-23).

40
 41 Thus, self-indulgence should not be understood as mere excess. Rather
 42 self-indulgence springs from ill-formed desires that direct the individual to
 43 pursue to excess things that are necessary or pleasant for no other reason other
 44 than to pursue them to excess. And these desires are more or less permanent for
 45 they are not only acted upon with no regrets but are acted upon by an
 46 individual who “cannot be cured.”

1 Self-indulgence (as well as continence and temperance) may be understood in
 2 yet another way: by the pains produced, not in the presence of desires, but
 3 rather in their absence. Generally speaking, the greater the pain produced by
 4 unsatisfied desire, the greater the likelihood that the desire may lead to
 5 incontinence or self-indulgence. Aristotle makes the distinction this way: “the
 6 self-indulgent man is so called because he is pained more than he ought at not
 7 getting pleasant things (even his pain being caused by pleasure), and the
 8 temperate man is so called because he is not pained at the absence of what is
 9 pleasant and at his abstinence from it” (III.11, 1118b, 29-35). Therefore, one
 10 who is self-indulgent suffers far greater pain in the absence of pleasure than
 11 one who is temperate.

12 Consequently, one who is continent may at some point become incontinent
 13 yet realize his error and become continent. In contrast one who is self-
 14 indulgent is “led on in accordance with his own choice, thinking that he should
 15 always pursue the present pleasure; while the other [who is incontinent] does
 16 not think so, but yet pursues it” (VII.3, 1146b, 23-26). Finally, one who is
 17 temperate is possessive of practical wisdom that directs her to crave for the
 18 things she ought, as she ought, and when she ought.

19
 20

21 **Incontinence, Self-Indulgence and Excessive Social Media use**

22

23 Insofar as it represents a failure to partake in a behavior without
 24 moderation it would seem that excessive use of social media is certainly not
 25 temperate. However, should it be considered demonstrative of incontinent or
 26 self-indulgent? To answer this question, it would be helpful to revisit
 27 Aristotle’s sphere of temperance and how different appetites fall under its
 28 influence. Aristotle believes there are two important appetites (or desires):
 29 common and peculiar. Common appetites are those we have in common with
 30 animals and involve the satisfying of basic needs (i.e., food and drink).

31 In contrast, peculiar appetites represent peculiarities of common appetites.
 32 Thus, to satisfy a need for sustenance, human beings (as well as animals) have
 33 a common appetite for food, in particular food that is generally understood as
 34 being good to satisfy hunger (e.g., bread, vegetables, meats). However, while
 35 feeling the same need one may have a peculiar appetite for pastries. So,
 36 although all human beings have a common appetite for food needed for
 37 sustenance, not all human beings have a peculiar need for pastries as a means
 38 of sustenance.

39 Since common appetites are “natural” in that they correspond to basic (i.e.,
 40 bodily) needs, Aristotle sees them outside the sphere of temperance. He writes:
 41 “Now in the natural appetites few go wrong, and only in one direction, that of
 42 excess; for to eat or drink whatever offers itself till one is surfeited is to exceed
 43 the natural amount, since natural appetite is the replenishment of one’s
 44 deficiency” (III.11, 1118b, 14-19). Consequently, in the natural appetites one
 45 can err, but only to excess or by means of self-indulgence. These errors are

1 seen as being rare insofar as once a natural appetite has been “replenished” the
2 appetite subsides.

3 By contrast peculiar appetites are more persistent, as Aristotle explains:
4 “But with regard to the pleasures peculiar to individuals many people go wrong
5 and in many ways. For while the people who are ‘fond of so-and-so’ are so
6 called because they delight either in the wrong things, or more than most
7 people do, or in the wrong way, the self-indulgent exceed in all three ways;
8 they both delight in some things that they ought not to delight in (since they are
9 hateful), and if one ought to delight in some of the things they delight in, they
10 do so more than one ought and than most men do” (III.11, 1118b, 21-28).

11 Therefore, is excessive social media use characteristic of intemperance,
12 incontinence or self-indulgence? For an answer we must first consider if social
13 media use or companionship may be thought of as a necessary object; if so then
14 it may fall under the sphere of temperance. Research has identified that a need
15 to belong, or a need to be implicated in community (i.e., companionship) may
16 be considered as a singular driver of social media use that remains consistent
17 across age groups and social media platforms (see e.g., Sheldon, Abad and
18 Hirsch 2011; Yu, Tian, Vogel, and Kwok 2010; Gonzales and Hancock 2011).

19 Although feeling that one belongs (within a community or within a circle
20 of friends or acquaintances) would seem to be a desire that humans share with
21 animals (for both are certainly social animals) it would seem also that such a
22 desire could not be considered a bodily pleasure (as would food, drink and
23 sex). By extension, then, a need to belong (i.e., companionship) may be
24 considered a necessary object: Although we do not need it to sustain ourselves
25 physically, it is nonetheless a constituent part of our sociality; that is, we do not
26 need it to survive physically, yet we still have a fundamental need for it that is
27 related to our ends. As Aristotle writes: “he who is unable to live in society, or
28 who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a
29 god: he is no part of a state. A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature,
30 and yet he who first founded the state was the greatest of benefactors” (*Pol.*,
31 I.2, X). Giving further support to the possibility of companionship as a
32 necessary object he writes: “Surely it is strange, too, to make the supremely
33 happy man a solitary; for no one would choose the whole world on condition of
34 being alone, since man is a political creature and one whose nature is to live
35 with others” (IX.9, 1169b, 16-18). He continues: “For a human being is not
36 only a political animal but also one who forms a household. Unlike other
37 animals, a human being does not mate from time to time with just anyone, male
38 or female; but in a special sense human beings are not solitary animals, but
39 prone to forming a community with those with whom they have a natural
40 kinship” (*EE*, VII.10.5, 24-25). Throughout these observations he asserts that a
41 “social instinct,” a need “to live with others,” and humans being “prone to
42 forming a community” are constituents of human nature. Although Aristotle
43 does not collapse these into a single human need or drive that brings about
44 social intercourse these are, I believe, coterminous with a human need for
45 companionship.

1 Thus, I think it plausible that companionship is a necessary object and is
 2 subject to the sphere of temperance. However, would excessive social media
 3 use in pursuit of companionship be considered a failure of temperance, or a
 4 case of incontinence or self-indulgence? As a common appetite companionship
 5 is something that humans have in common with animals. However, satisfying
 6 this need using social media would appear to be a peculiar appetite: Although
 7 all human beings (like animals) have a common appetite for companionship,
 8 not all human beings have a peculiar need for using social media to attain it.

9 Following Aristotle's structuring of incontinence and self-indulgence,
 10 excessive social media use might, depending on the agent, fall into either
 11 category. For example one user of social media may be pre-disposed to
 12 overuse; she knows intrinsically that she ought not to partake in heavy use of
 13 social media for doing so is not altogether good (e.g., focusing on social media
 14 use at the expense of spending time with others or at the expense of doing other
 15 things). Nevertheless, she engages in overuse and, in a mark of incontinence,
 16 reflects on doing so and regrets it. Conversely, a different user of social media
 17 may knowingly engage in overuse yet, in a mark of self-indulgence, not regret
 18 it for he is doing so by choice; that is, a choice to do what he ought not to do.
 19 This user would seem to follow Aristotle's observation that one who is self-
 20 indulgent "is led on in accordance with his own choice, thinking that he should
 21 always pursue the present pleasure; while the other does not think so, but yet
 22 pursues it" (VII.3, 1146b, 23-26). Unlike incontinent and self-indulgent social
 23 media users, the temperate user would, as Aristotle suggests, "[crave] for the
 24 things he ought, as he ought, and when he ought" (III.12, 1119b, 14-20)
 25 thereby using social media in pursuit of companionship at appropriate times
 26 (e.g., not while driving a car or at the expense of doing other necessary things),
 27 and for appropriate lengths of time (e.g., for 10 minutes instead of 3 hours).

30 **Voluntarily Acts and Ignorance**

31
 32 Having outlined Aristotle's conceptions of temperance, incontinence and
 33 self-indulgence I now wish to review his account of voluntary action for I
 34 believe it helps give additional context to excessive social media use. Generally
 35 speaking, it may be said that one may act either voluntarily or involuntarily, or
 36 intentionally or not intentionally (respectively). Differentiating them is what
 37 Aristotle refers to as "the moving principle;" in other words the origins of the
 38 action in question as being either internal or external to the agent. Acts that are
 39 involuntary, Aristotle asserts, are those that "take place by force or by reason
 40 of ignorance; and that is forced of which the moving principle is outside, being
 41 a principle in which nothing is contributed by the person who acts—or, rather,
 42 is acted upon, e.g. if he were to be carried somewhere by a wind, or by men
 43 who had him in their power" (III.1, 1110a, 1-4). Thus, Aristotle asserts that the
 44 most obvious examples of involuntary action involve physical coercion or
 45 force.

1 In contrast, voluntary acts proceed from one's appetitive or rational
 2 faculties and therefore reflect intent; that is, deliberation and subsequent
 3 choice. Insofar as they originate from within oneself, they reflect the
 4 constituent nature of one's desires and subsequently "contribute" to the
 5 movement precipitating action. In this way Aristotle ascribes culpability based
 6 on intention: Either one desires to perform an act, or one does not.

7 As intention has a bearing on culpability, so too does ignorance. If one
 8 performs an act in ignorance she is acting voluntarily. But the form of one's
 9 ignorance has a bearing on the voluntary nature of one's actions, determined
 10 namely by knowledge of particulars (i.e., an awareness of the circumstances in
 11 which a choice is made as well of the objects in question) as well as knowledge
 12 of universals (i.e., an awareness of right and wrong). On one hand, Aristotle
 13 thinks that some acts are performed *in ignorance*: "for the man who is drunk or
 14 in a rage is thought to act as a result not of ignorance but of one of the causes
 15 mentioned, yet not knowingly but in ignorance" (III.1, 1110b, 25-27).
 16 Consequently, such a person has knowledge of both universals (i.e., that
 17 excessive drinking is wrong) and particulars (e.g., that consuming a large
 18 number of alcoholic drinks will likely result in drunkenness) and as such, acts
 19 voluntarily. While one's state of inebriation may prompt one to act
 20 unknowingly in a sense, Aristotle nonetheless holds him responsible for his
 21 action, "since he had the power of not getting drunk and his getting drunk was
 22 the cause of his ignorance" (III.5, 1113b, 29-34).

23 Involuntary acts tend to arise from one acting *of ignorance*. Such actions
 24 are done, Aristotle thinks, without knowledge of universals and particulars.
 25 Therefore, Aristotle claims, "the man who was ignorant ... is thought to have
 26 acted involuntarily, and especially if he was ignorant on the most important
 27 points; and these are thought to be the circumstances of the action and its end"
 28 (III.1, 1111a, 15-19). Because they are involuntary, acts performed of
 29 ignorance are exculpatory, while voluntary acts that are undertaken against
 30 knowledge of the circumstances of the action and its end are not. Thus, he
 31 writes: "Those errors that are committed not simply in ignorance but because
 32 of one's ignorance are pardonable, whereas those that are committed not
 33 because of one's ignorance but in ignorance caused by some unnatural or
 34 inhuman passion, are not" (*EE* IV.8.11, 1136a, 6-9).

35 That some acts are either voluntary or involuntary and are either done in
 36 ignorance or of ignorance help to qualify incontinent and self-indulgent
 37 behaviors. Given the above, self-indulgence would seem to be an act done in
 38 ignorance, for since she is indulging, she is aware of both particulars and
 39 universals. Moreover, she would be also acting voluntarily, as Aristotle writes:
 40 "For the self-indulgent man, on the other hand, the particular acts are voluntary
 41 (for he does them with craving and desire), but the whole state is less so; for no
 42 one craves to be self-indulgent." (III.12, 1119a, 31-34). Incontinence is
 43 similarly voluntary, for the incontinent "acts voluntarily (for he acts in a sense
 44 with knowledge both of what he does and of the end to which he does it)"
 45 (VII.10, 1152a, 14-16).

46

Social Media Addiction and Voluntary Action

1
2
3 Of all the above conditions it would appear that as a voluntary act
4 excessive social media use is done in ignorance: One knows that spending too
5 much time using social media is undesirable, yet he continues to use it
6 excessively. But how might this change for individuals whose uncontrolled use
7 of social media may in some way be driven by addiction? Since Aristotle does
8 not think that voluntary acts are brought about by a force external to the agent,
9 addiction to social media would not be considered a form of compulsion.
10 Rather it might be thought of as Aristotle's drunk who, although he is drunk,
11 had the power of not getting drunk and as such he has done so voluntarily, in
12 ignorance (III.1, 1110b, 25-27; III.5, 1113b, 29-34). Like the drunk who
13 realized (at some point after that first drink) that becoming inebriated was in
14 some way pleasurable, so too may a social media user realize that excessive
15 social media use is pleasurable.

16 If so then what began as a voluntary act of ignorance evolved into an act
17 done in ignorance. What I mean is that one's addictive-like use of social media
18 likely began (as with Aristotle's drunk) with a first encounter or series of
19 encounters during which time she succumbed to the pleasure afforded by social
20 media use and became habituated in seeking out and using social media
21 specifically for the resulting pleasure as an end in itself. I will suggest what
22 pleasures are involved later in this paper. For now, given the foregoing account
23 of voluntariness, one's first encounters in using social media (in particular to
24 excess) may have been voluntary yet done of ignorance, having no knowledge
25 of the particulars; namely the pleasures resulting from social media use. Once
26 habituated, although his excessive use would remain voluntary, he would then
27 act in ignorance: aware of the pleasures afforded by social media use and that
28 these may encourage excessive use but choosing to partake regardless.

29 As a strictly voluntary act, if one cannot control her use of social media
30 and is therefore acting in ignorance, and if she is engaging in addictive-like
31 behavior, then what precisely is she attracted to? The answer, I believe, reveals
32 something about the nature of the attachment and the ends sought. Although it
33 might be possible that she is addicted to companionship, evidence suggests she
34 is attached to the physiological or psychological mental stimulation that often
35 results from social media use that can trigger reward centers her brain (see e.g.,
36 Tamir and Mitchell 2012; Turkle 2011). If one then obtains satisfaction from
37 such stimulation then it would seem that the proximate end of her action is the
38 stimulation itself (or more accurately the pleasure derived from it), rather than
39 the end of (or good of) companionship or friendship (as a good) *per se*. For she
40 would be acting upon the knowledge that social media use provides such
41 stimulation, that such stimulation is good and that it is desirable to pursue such
42 a good even if it requires excessive use of social media. This would, as
43 Aristotle suggests, be indicative not only of voluntary action done in ignorance,
44 but of self-indulgence insofar as she "pursues the excesses of things pleasant
45 [...] and does so by choice, for their own sake and not at all for the sake of any
46 result distinct from them" (VII.7, 1150a, 21-23).

Friendship and Excessive Social Media use

I now turn to Aristotle's account of friendship to see how temperance may affect one's ability to bring about the virtue of friendship. Although he alludes to the possibility of one being a friend to oneself, for Aristotle friendship is essential to human sociability. What differentiates kinds of friendships are what motivates them; what serves as the basis for their formation and ongoing maintenance. What one's friends *do* for oneself characterizes both friendships of "utility" and friendships of "pleasure." He writes: "those who love each other because of utility do not love each other for themselves but in virtue of some good which they get from each other" (VIII.3, 1156a, 10). These are friendships that are founded and maintained *quid pro quo* (what we may recognize as friendships of convenience) based on some good provided *for* oneself. One may, for example, be friends with someone because they walk together; walking being a good that one values.

Friendships based on pleasure are similarly *quid pro quo*. Thus, one may be friends with someone because he is fun to be around. As Aristotle writes: "those who love because of pleasure; it is not for their character that men love ready-witted people, but because they find them to be pleasant" (VIII.3, 1156a, 10). Finally since both are defined by goods they provide, friendships of utility and pleasure are fleeting, or "incidental," insofar as they are tied to specific ends, "for it is not as being the man he is that the loved person is loved, but as providing some good or pleasure. Such friendships, then, are easily dissolved, if the parties do not remain like themselves; for if one party is no longer pleasant or useful the other ceases to love him" (VIII.3, 1156a, 15).

On the other hand, perfect friendship is enduring because it possesses all the qualities that friends should have. Friends of this kind, he writes, "wish well alike to each other *qua* good, and they are good in themselves" (VIII.3, 1156b, 5). Thus, those who share perfect friendships share a durable bond that is not rooted in utility or pleasure but is instead rooted in a reciprocal form of love in which one loves another for what and who she is, being fully aware that such love is being reciprocated. Thus Aristotle writes: "This kind of friendship, then, is perfect both in respect of duration and in all other respects, and in it each gets from each in all respects the same as, or something like what, he gives; which is what ought to happen between friends" (VIII.4, 1156b, 35).

At this juncture we may ask: Is one who lacks temperance as a result of her excessive use of social media capable of bringing about friendship using social media? Aristotle appears to have the answer when he writes: "we must suppose that the use of language by men in an incontinent state means no more than its utterance by actors on a stage" (VII.3, 1147a, 23-25). Therefore it would seem that one who cannot control his use of social media (thereby responding to the pleasures such use affords) is merely using interactions with his friend not to service companionship or to bring about perfect friendship *per se* (as one who is acting reasonably would do), but rather to obtain specific pleasures. As research suggests, these pleasures include the satisfaction that obtains in sharing one's feelings (Bazarova and Choi 2014), receiving "likes"

1 on Facebook (Blease 2015), having posts or updates shared (Nadkarni and
 2 Hofmann 2012), gaining new social media followers (Leung 2013), or
 3 increasing one's social capital (Liu et al. 2014). Thus, for such a person it is the
 4 pleasure derived from social media use that is the end being sought, not the
 5 good of friendship.

6 Such unrestricted use of social media in pursuit of pleasure would appear
 7 to have more in common with friendships of utility or pleasure than with
 8 perfect friendship. For one who reflexively uses social media in an unrestricted
 9 manner, it is the pleasures sought that serve as ends. Thus it is not a response to
 10 what reason dictates, insofar as such use reflects ill-formed desires (i.e., the
 11 pursuit of pleasure as an end in itself, instantiated by use of social media *per*
 12 *se*), but is instead reflective of a turning away from the good that is the mark of
 13 self-indulgent action. Resembling relationships of utility or pleasure, in this
 14 state friends offer a *quid pro quo*: They are to be sought and interacted with
 15 merely for the satisfaction those interactions provide not for the good of the
 16 relationships themselves.

17 Another way to differentiate the ends sought through excessive social
 18 media use is to determine if such use could be considered an expression of love
 19 toward one's friend. To attain true friendship, Aristotle believes that one must
 20 commit oneself to another in such a way that one wishes well to her for her
 21 own sake. To do so requires one to selflessly commit to another as an
 22 expression of love, through which true friendship is expressed. As Aristotle
 23 writes: "Now since friendship depends more on loving, and it is those who love
 24 their friends that are praised, loving seems to be the characteristic virtue of
 25 friends, so that it is only those in whom this is found in due measure that are
 26 lasting friends, and only their friendship endures" (VIII.7, 1159a, 32-35). Thus,
 27 we may ask: What may an excessive social media user truly love? I submit that
 28 since a self-indulgent user of social media has the satisfaction of his own
 29 pleasure as his ends, it is the satisfaction of these pleasures that is loved; not
 30 the good of friendship nor the friend himself for the sake of himself. Indeed,
 31 such a user would have the ability to recognize that there is a time and place for
 32 engaging social media, and that some ends are desirable (e.g., serving
 33 friendship), while others are not.

34 Conversely if the aim of excessive use is intended to serve the good of
 35 one's friend, as when a friend is in need, the end is the good of friendship, and
 36 therefore the act itself is good. Therefore, I submit that sporadic bouts of
 37 excessive use in service to one's friend is an indication that such excessive use
 38 is not habitual and that such use reveals much about one's motives, which
 39 themselves are implicated in virtue. Aristotle makes this clear in prescribing
 40 how and when pleasure is to be sought: "to feel [pleasure] at the right times,
 41 with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right
 42 motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is
 43 characteristic of virtue" (II.5, 1106b, 16-23). Thus if one serves the good of
 44 one's friend (in and through excessive social media use), and derives pleasure
 45 from doing so (from serving the needs of the friend), then one has done so at
 46 the right time (i.e., using it to excess now, but not later), with reference to the

1 right objects (i.e., the good of friendship), towards the right people (i.e., one's
 2 friend), with the right motive (i.e., serving the good of friendship as an end in
 3 itself), and in the right way (i.e., using social media excessively only to the
 4 extent required to bring about the good being sought). Of course if one pleases
 5 herself by using social media excessively as a means of pleasuring herself, then
 6 she is doing so at the wrong time (i.e., as a matter of habit), with reference to
 7 the wrong objects (i.e., pleasure as an end), toward the wrong people (i.e., for
 8 the good of the friend is not the aim of the act), with the wrong motive (i.e.,
 9 pleasuring oneself), and in the wrong way (i.e., using her friend as a means to
 10 her own ends and doing so habitually).

11 In such a case the pursuit of the virtue of friendship is being mediated by a
 12 device and related software platform that themselves have become the objects
 13 of desire, not for procuring the end of friendship, but (for the excessive or
 14 addicted user) for the stimulation (i.e., pleasure) they provide. In this way the
 15 ends sought through social media interactions reveal much about the
 16 constituent nature of one's desires: that by self-indulgently seeking
 17 physiological or psychological stimulation as a result of a habituation toward
 18 intemperate behavior one is acting on ill-formed desires. That breaking such a
 19 habit may require much pain (see e.g., Turkle 2011, p. 227-8; Blease 2015)
 20 underscores the self-indulgent nature of the desire and reveals the intended
 21 ends of excessive social media interactions.

22 Therefore, in view of the foregoing it is difficult to see how one so
 23 effected is capable of attaining the virtue of friendship through excessive use of
 24 social media, except in such cases as dictated by the needs of one's friend.
 25 Although in these cases such use may indeed be excessive, it reflects a
 26 particular good being sought and served: that is, the good of friendship.
 27 Habitual excessive use, on the other hand, is indicative not only of self-
 28 indulgence but of ill-formed desires expressive of ends that precipitate choices
 29 lacking the guidance of practical wisdom. As a result, one who in this way has
 30 been compromised is demonstrating the substantive quality of his character. As
 31 Aristotle writes: "For men are good in but one way, but bad in many. Virtue,
 32 then, is a state of character concerned with choice" (II.5, 1106b, 34-35). Thus,
 33 in such a state one is lacking practical wisdom, is lacking virtue and is
 34 therefore unable to apprehend the virtue of friendship.

35 36 37 **Conclusion** 38

39 It is my hope that I have added to the discussion of bringing about the
 40 virtue of friendship in and through use of social media by demonstrating that
 41 variables (in this case the virtue of temperance) may intervene. To apprehend
 42 the virtue of friendship requires a steadfast commitment both to the good of
 43 friendship (as a good in itself), and to the good of one's friend (for her own
 44 sake, which is also good). To be clear, I do not wish to claim that social media
 45 is incapable of exercising such a commitment; rather, *particular uses* of social
 46 media are capable of either compromising such a commitment or are reflective

1 of other commitments entirely. Insofar at the habitual excessive use of social
2 media is demonstrative of the latter, it represents a commitment to pleasuring
3 oneself, not a (perhaps misguided) commitment to friendship. Therefore, I do
4 not assert that all excessive use of social media is *per se* bad. On the other
5 hand, it is the habitual excessive use of social media that is bad in itself namely
6 because it is self-indulgent and reflects an ongoing choice on the part of the
7 agent to reflexively choose the bad, knowing that such behavior is not
8 desirable. By asserting this I do not suggest that all forms of long-term
9 excessive use is undesirable; there may, for example, be cases in which one
10 uses social media for an excessive amount of time, repeatedly, because his
11 friend is grieving, his friend is separated by distance, and using social media to
12 lend support is convenient. Such cases, I maintain, are not habitual, but reflect
13 an ongoing need to render love to one's friend. In other words, there is a clear
14 difference between using social media excessively as a habit of self-serving
15 pleasure and using social media excessively to bring about the good friendship.

16 Similarly, I hope to have added to the debate concerning the unity of the
17 virtues. Applying excessive social media use to such a possibility, if one is
18 intemperate in the way described, one has no grasp of practical wisdom; one's
19 ability to reason has been compromised in such a way that she thinks she is
20 intending one end (i.e., the good of friendship) while in reality she is intending
21 another (i.e., the good of pleasure). As result, she no longer has the ability to
22 make good choices, and this inability would appear to extend to her ability to
23 apprehend the virtue of friendship. Instead, as I have indicated, she would seem
24 more able to service friendships based on utility or pleasure than on perfect
25 friendship.

26 Taking this a step further, I believe that if we can connect temperance to
27 friendship then it is possible to connect other virtues to it as well. Justice is one
28 example. If one is lacking practical wisdom as indicated by a failure of
29 temperance, then it might be said that he is likewise lacking an orientation
30 toward the needs of others, of doing what is just. In such a state, by responding
31 to a perceived good in such a way that runs contrary to temperance, he is
32 therefore unable to recognize that his actions are not being done for the
33 advantage of his friend, but namely for his own sake. The same might be said
34 for prudence: if one lacks the ability to control her responses to pleasure then
35 she is unable to use practical wisdom to control her behavior. Therefore, if she
36 lacks temperance (as indicated by excessive use of social media), then she
37 cannot govern her own behavior and thus is incapable of realizing that her
38 actions are being undertaken not in service to another, but in service to herself.

39 Given the ability of social media to precipitate excessive use, being able to
40 control these desires is fundamentally necessary in order to differentiate and
41 evaluate the ends being sought. If the agent is unable to control this desire, he
42 lacks practical wisdom and with it the corresponding ability to make choices,
43 as Aristotle suggests, "at the right times, with reference to the right objects,
44 towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way" (II.5,
45 1106b, 16-23). This being absent, an excessive social media user is incapable

1 of bringing about the virtue of friendship in and through his use of social
2 media.

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