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Creating an Honors Community: A Virtue Ethics Approach

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INTRODUCTION

To become an honors student (that is, to be accepted into an honors college or program) requires satisfying specific entrance requirements, most or all of which are directly related to a student's grade point average and potential for success in a rigorous academic environment. To gain entrance into and be present in an organization or community are not sufficient, however, to characterize a person as a complete member of it. There is more to community membership than simple presence. To be a member of a community is also to perform actions and develop or possess traits of character consistent with those actions. In a community of honors students, membership requires that one be or become a person worthy of honor.

"Honor" is an active moral notion, understood not only as that which someone receives (i.e., to be honored) but also that which a person warrants (i.e., to be worthy of honor). To be honored is one thing; to be worthy of honor is another. To examine and explain the concept of honor in its virtue-theoretic sense in the context of an honors college requires understanding the unique position of the honors student, her responsibilities as a member of an honors organization, and the implications of her position and responsibilities in the creation and sustenance of an honors community.

What I wish to discuss in this paper are the importance and implication of the notion of "community" as it affects, is affected, and is *effected* by a student's membership in an honors college/community. To this end, I will concentrate on the *meaning of honor*, the distinction between *gaining acceptance into a community and becoming (and being) a member of it*, and the way in which a student's conception of her *place in an honors community entails benefits and obligations that are central to the creation and sustenance of the community*. I explain this using the honor code from the University of Central Florida Burnett Honors College to distinguish between individualism and communitarianism, which are in turn related to individual and community ascendancy models of social relations. I will show the ways in which honors colleges and their students are central players in the creation of academic communities of personal and intellectual excellence. That is, I will show that honors students are academic *and* moral exemplars.

HONOR, DISHONOR, FRIENDSHIP, AND THE HONORS COMMUNITY

The term "honor" may indicate high status (e.g., "honors student"), in which case the word "honor" serves to describe the person to which it is applied. It also functions as a verb when it is used to express something being done (e.g., "I honor my father"). Further, however, "honor" is a moral term, indicating approval and exhortation to *be* a person of honor. In its moral sense, then, "honor" can be a descriptive term signifying a person's perceived status or the character of a behavior, as would be the case in "She is an honors student" or "She is a person of honor." But one can go further with the moral notion of honor and see that it is also a morally laudatory term. When one is called an "honors student" or "a person of honor," the speaker is not only describing the status of one possessed of honor but is at the same time indicating that it is *good* to be an honors student or a person of honor.

I suspect that, in ordinary speech, one rarely hears a tone of disapproval when a person's actions or character are said to be worthy of honor. To claim that someone's action is honorable is to say that the action should be held in high esteem and be respected. It would be peculiar to claim that a person who praises the honorable person or action does not at the same time prescribe that trait of character or that action for himself and others. So when "honor" is used to elaborate on what it is to be a person of honor, "honor" is a term of moral approbation. To be dishonorable, then, or to perform actions that are dishonorable, is a matter of moral disapproval.

Also in ordinary conversation, the term "honors student" conjures up in the imagination a high academic achiever but not necessarily a moral exemplar. But this is, I think, where the notion of honor implies something about the nature of those who are honored for their attainments or traits of character and about the relationship of honor and honoring to the creation, maintenance, and character of community. Because honor is negatively associated with shame, "the fear of being shamed leads to a strong sense of honor. Honor, then, is more associated with a group or community, an attempt to achieve a certain recognition from others" (Liszka, 44).

Honor connotes respect and admiration from others who understand the behavior of a person who is "honored" to have done something, or who is the sort of person, that other members of the group or community ought to do or be. If we understand the term only as descriptive or designative of a position, the term "honor" may lose its more complete moral meaning and importance in the same way that other terms have incomplete meanings when used only as descriptors of the appearances of things. Consider the incomplete meaning of honor when it refers only to a person's placement in an organization by comparing it with a person's status as a citizen in a political community.

Being present in an organization or community is not sufficient for complete membership in it; thus, for instance, a person visiting a nation of which she is not a citizen is present in a political group without being a member of it. The visitor may wish to be a citizen, pretend to be one, apply to become a citizen, and, prior to obtaining citizenship status, perform at least some actions that are consistent with citizenship (such as paying taxes, for example). But there are rights and obligations

of citizens that do not belong to a visitor, among them the right to vote and obligations such as service in a nation's military (where applicable). The citizen, then, has access to benefits of membership in the organization *but also* is charged with satisfying obligations attending citizen status. The visitor, on the other hand, may receive some (or all) benefits (even if not all the rights, such as to vote) accruing to a citizen but may be required to perform no duties or at least may be required only to refrain from breaking rules, laws, or procedures while present in a nation. The visitor may be mistaken by others for a citizen while not, in fact, being one.

A citizen may choose (in most democratic societies) not to participate in all or some of the most important rights that belong to her as a citizen. The group of citizen-voters, for example, can be and is (in American society, at least) larger than the number of those who actually vote. One can be called "voter" (because one is registered to vote and has a right to do so) and yet not vote at any particular opportunity to do so. One may participate only incompletely or not at all in the activities that define a citizen. A citizen who does not participate in the essential activities that characterize citizenship may be a full citizen in name but not in fact. On an Aristotelian interpretation, such a citizen is one only "homonomously" in the same way a hand detached from a body is not properly a hand because it does not perform its appropriate function. Aristotle clarifies this position such that "for example, if the whole body be destroyed, there will be no foot or hand, except in an equivocal sense, as we might speak of a stone hand; for when destroyed the hand will be no better than that. But things are defined by their working and power; and we ought not to say that they are the same when they no longer have their proper quality, but only that they have the same name" (*Politics*, I, iii). Aristotle is referring to the social or political nature of human beings such that we *need* the state and are fulfilled through it. The state or community, in addition, requires fully functioning individuals for the community to achieve its ends.

The same can be said with respect to the presence of a student in an honors community. Even though a student may satisfy requirements for admission, it is possible that, after admission, she may not participate in activities characterizing membership in the honors community. One who does so is an honors student in name only, not in fact. Complete membership in a community requires, again, not only that a member be present *within* the community but that the individual performs actions that are *consistent* with membership in it. So the voter who casts a vote at an appropriate time and place, who takes advantage of the opportunity to cast the vote, is more fully engaged in what it means to be a voter (and a citizen) than one who possesses but does not exercise the right to vote. Just as we may distinguish between citizen-voters in name and in act, we can distinguish between members of an honors college ("honors students") who are and are not participating members, i.e., fully engaged in what it means to be, what defines, an honors student.

I have made a distinction between an "actively participating member" in a community and a "passive" or incompletely participatory member of a community. This distinction is reminiscent of John Dewey's comments regarding the Great Society and the Great Community. For Dewey, developments in modern technology and means of information dissemination make possible advances in creating comfortable lives and

access to myriad types of information for citizens, but in such conditions people may lose their sense of community – or a common strand of activity leading toward a common goal that defines a community.

> For Dewey, the problem … is to locate and declare the conditions that can enable the transformation of a Great Society into a Great Community. This in turn is to explain how the mere germ of community can grow into a unified *democratic* community, where democracy 'is the idea of community life itself.' When we find some association or activity 'whose consequences are appreciated as good by all singular persons who take part in it' and where what is good and shared and promoted by all who produce it, there we have what Dewey calls a 'community'. As far as Dewey is concerned, the association of men and women that is necessary to a community does not require explaining. He says of 'associated activity,' very succinctly, 'things are made that way.' But on its own this fact does not give us a community. A true community has an essential moral dimension. That dimension requires content and character through sharing common purposes. (Stanlick and Silver, Vol. II, 139)

In short, the creation of community underscores the notion not only that members share common purposes and perform actions consistent with those purposes but also that members develop a feeling of common identity and membership. Central to the creation of community is not whether academic programs and colleges/universities are themselves complete democratic institutions (although on the Deweyan model that is the ideal case) but whether education serves the purpose of educating people for participation in democratic societies in which the development of community is essential. Losing or never having a sense of shared purpose, feeling or acting as though one is only present in a group but feels no deep connection to it, either because community does not exist or because the individual does not share the commitment that defines the group (that is, the individual loses or does not have a sense of shared purpose and as a result feels only present in a group but not connected to it), may, in fact, begin to explain, in the context of an academic community of any kind, the general breakdown of respect for and participation in the life of a community where it does or can exist.

The reasons for which human beings associate themselves with others and form communities are many and varied. Much ink has been spilled in the history of ethics examining these reasons, and the reasons vary widely. In the individualist, rights-based tradition, an individual associates herself with others to gain benefits for the self that would not be achieved as efficiently, or at all, by herself. Jeremy Bentham's conception of the character of community expresses this point in that the "community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting … its members. The interest of the community then is, what?—the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it" (*PML*, Ch. 1, Sec. 4, p. 12). Here, community is nothing more than whatever the members of the community have in common with each other. Further, community in this sense is artificially constructed

only for the interests of the individual. On the other hand, the virtue-theoretic (or communitarian-oriented) sense of community is quite different in that it encompasses the notion that "community already exists, in the form of common social practices, cultural traditions and shared social understandings" (Kymlicka, 367) such that it "does not need to be built *de novo*, but rather needs to be respected and protected" (Kymlicka, 367). Further, however, the virtue-theoretic or communitarian approach to social organization is such that "people form communities to realize something of value that is achievable in association with others" (Julius Moravscik, qtd in Stern-Gillet, 213). So even when a specific community is formed at some particular time, the ability to form the community, to give it a name or designation, comes about only as a result of the association of people with a similar overriding interest, recognizing that the interest is then a *community* goal shared by the individuals. This makes it possible, too, that communities continue to exist as relatively stable constructs even when particular individuals enter and leave the community. In essence, then, in the virtue-theoretic conception of community, individuals associate with others not only for the advancement of the self but also because human beings are naturally social or political beings who understand their place in a social group as having implications for the individual's benefit as well as for that of others.

The problems created by the individual, rights-based conception of social relations in which a sense of real community membership is neither required nor necessarily desired by individuals are captured in Michael Sandel's explanation that, under this scheme, there are no particular ends sought by a particular society. Instead, pure procedural rules replace ends, enabling "citizens to pursue their own ends, consistent with a similar liberty for all; [the society] therefore must govern by principles that do not presuppose any particular conception of the good" (Sandel, "Procedural Republic," 82). Without a shared conception of the good, however, the "self" or individual has no identity and little or no moral compass because there are no clearly identifiable institutional roles. So, as apologists for virtue-theoretic or communitarian conceptions of social life contend, it is important to realize that who and what we are is formed largely by our place(s) in social settings. This realization has accompanied the resurgence of interest in the virtues and their development in the work of Elizabeth Anscombe, Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, and others, related to claims such as "it takes a village to raise a child" and the like. This realization also includes, I think, a resurrection of the notion of "honor" as part of a virtue theoretic sense of our moral lives.

For the modern individualist, we are essentially individuals and *not* members of groups or communities, so if the concept of honor requires a stable sense of community, honor becomes obsolete in the modernist account. Berger et al. explain the obsolescence of honor in the modern world such that honor is understood "in a world of relatively intact, stable institutions, in a world in which individuals can with subjective certainty attach their identities to the institutional roles that society assigns to them" (93), and since the modern world and its procedural rules for the unencumbered self do not lend themselves to any such identification, "[i]nstitutions cease to be the 'home' of the self; instead they become oppressive realities that distort and estrange the self'" (93). Another way to put it is that "[t]*he concept of honor implies*

that identity is essentially, or at least importantly, linked to institutional roles" (90; emphasis added).

Here, however, it is easy to see why both the communitarian ideal's proponents and detractors point out that one particular danger of such a close link between the individual and the community is the risk of coercive practices, of forcing conformity among members of a group. Sandel, however, contends that this is not necessarily problematic. Sandel describes de Tocqueville's analysis of American public life as a "complex mix of persuasion and habituation" that "offers a way of conducting political argument, not transcending it" so that public institutions such as "townships, schools, [and] religions … form the 'character of mind' and 'habits of the heart' a democratic republic requires" (*Discontent*, 320-321) rather than eliminating differences between people and ideas. Sandel's conclusion is that "[t]he hope of our time rests … with those who can summon the conviction and restraint to make sense of our condition and repair the civic life on which democracy depends" (351). I take this to mean that the ideal of community life does not require conformity and it does not stifle individuality. Instead, it gives a dynamic quality to the community so that individual excellence may manifest itself in the search for the good for all. That good is dependent upon the creativity, the critical eye, and the intelligence of people like students in honors programs.

Whether an individual's goal in gaining entrance into a specific community is purely self-interested or other-regarding is, however, not my primary interest in this paper. Regardless of the reason(s) an individual may wish to become part of a community, it is the community itself which is central to morality for building and sustaining the community. Even the self-interested individualist recognizes that becoming a member of a community requires respecting the interests of the community lest the benefits gained by the individual from the community cease to be received. And for the individual who understands her placement in a community to include responsibilities to others and to the vision or goal of the community that reaches beyond the individual's own interests, it is clear that the community cannot continue to provide benefits for individuals without taking into account the interests of the community as a whole. I think it is true both that the creation of and entrance into an honors community are central to the honors experience and that students in honors communities distinguish themselves as academic and moral exemplars for larger academic and social/political communities.

For an honors community, "honor" is the shared practice and commitment of the group, but to understand more clearly the way in which the individual and the community are connected to the notion of honor, and the way in which the interests of the individual and community may *appear* to clash but actually do not, it will be useful to consider the opposite of honor in an academic context. That is, it will be helpful to consider dishonest or dishonorable persons or practices (such as cheaters and cheating) ultimately to show how individual and community interests are consistent with each other, why building a community is beneficial to the individual, and how this is relevant to the meaning of an honor code for an honors college. One ethicist claims that "honor codes are very effective in keeping individual behavior in conformity with a group's standards. Honor codes are often developed with the context of a sense of

solidarity with the group…. As a result, it is expressed more in those cultures which value community over the individual" (Liszka, 44). Whitley and Keith-Spiegel note, however, that:

> The nature and feel of the campus community environment – the campus ethos – is a powerful influence on individual students' attitudes toward cheating. If students perceive their campus as merely providing a means to an end, and as unjust, disjointed, laissez-faire, impersonal, and without a core identity, deterrents to cheating may be very weak. (147)

They note, too, that "the simple establishment of an honor code is not sufficient to reduce academic dishonesty; rather, the honor code reflects the presence of a normative climate that frowns on dishonesty" (31). In addition, McCabe and Drinan contend that "honor codes, in and of themselves, are not the only means to mitigate cheating at colleges and universities. The success of honor codes appears to be rooted in a campus tradition of mutual trust and respect among students and between faculty members and students."

It is interesting to note here that Liszka's position is not that the notion of honor is used or expressed *only* in cultures in which the community is valued over the individual but simply that it is expressed *more* in those contexts. It is not necessary that the community be valued over the individual for honor to be an important or essential moral notion closely connected to the role and status of an honors student. Further, it is not clear that an honor code reduces cheating in some causal way.

Research on the effect of the existence of an honor code on college students with respect to problems of cheating and plagiarism indicates that there is a significantly smaller number of self-reported instances of academic dishonesty among honor code schools than among those with no honor code (see McCabe and Treviño). It is unclear whether the existence of a code reduces instances of academic dishonesty due to fear of reprisal for violating it or whether there is a culture of honesty at honor code schools that might not be as prevalent at other institutions. The question, then, is whether the difference in instances of occurrence of academic dishonesty is a result of having an honor code in place or whether those who attend honor code schools already overwhelmingly embrace the ideals embedded and expressed in a code. To attempt to answer this question through statistical analysis of empirical data concerning rates of cheating and plagiarism is not my purpose here. It is, instead, to discuss the moral notion of what distinguishes *adherence to a code* and *being honorable* from simple *compliance with a code* and *appearing honorable*. I am concerned with the *moral* import of the reasons that students adhere to a code, not whether they in fact do so. I will use the University of Central Florida Burnett Honors College honor code as an example to investigate concepts such as individual and community ascendancy models of our social relations, or the moral and social orientations of students, leading to a conception of the role of the honors student in building and sustaining an academic community.

CREATING AN HONORS COMMUNITY: A VIRTUE ETHICS APPROACH

The University of Central Florida Burnett Honors College honor code consists of five statements of expectations for members. It reads:

> *As a member of The Burnett Honors College I pledge to uphold the following academic and ethical standards:*
>
> To strive for the highest levels of performance in all scholarly endeavors and to do so with the enthusiasm that stems from a true love of learning and a devotion to academic excellence
>
> To demonstrate self-discipline, commitment, and responsibility in fulfilling my obligations as a member of the academic community
>
> To show thoughtfulness, understanding, and empathy toward my peers, and to offer encouragement as they pursue their academic goals
>
> To be respectful of, and attentive toward those who teach and mentor, while cherishing the ideal that academic excellence is best served where scholarly debate flourishes
>
> To honor the traditional rules of conduct that guide the achievements of a scholar including contempt for plagiarism, cheating, falsification, or any activity that threatens academic integrity and honesty

Is a list of expectations stated in this honor code – this *list of rules* – simply a list of externally imposed expectations such that it is considered negatively as the statement of a community that "build(s) connections around beliefs, and affirming those beliefs is frequently a part of the *price of admission*" (Glotzbach, 50)? Or is it a way of academic, personal, and professional life that the honors student chooses for herself and strives to attain? To answer these questions, consider two competing theoretical views of the way we may conceive of the notion of academic integrity through its opposite, academic dishonesty. These competing views are roughly similar to the distinction made earlier in this paper between an individualistic approach and a virtue-theoretic model of social relations.

The two competing views I consider here are that of Bernard Gert (see Gert, 1998) and my own (Stanlick, 2005). According to Gert, the goal of education is not only to do the best one can but to do better than others. Gert uses an analogy to the game of golf to explain that cheating is wrong because it disadvantages others who are engaged in the same competition but that cheating does not disadvantage or cheat spectators, referees or judges, or even the cheater herself.

Gert's position is roughly analogous to what Kibler et al. describe as the individual ascendancy model of our social and educational relations. It is an orientation of action and attitude focused on the present, on hedonism, and on duty to oneself (4). It is further characterized by heavy emphasis on negative rights, the notion of individualism that one has an obligation not to harm others and not to interfere in the exercise of their rights while pursuing one's own individual interests. Another way to understand Gert's position is to consider his claim that the means by which cheating and

dishonest behavior may be curtailed is to ensure that the cheater realizes that others engaged in the game will not allow the cheater to gain the benefits of the activity when cheating has been detected. Or, to put it differently, other players will cease to play with the cheater once cheating behavior is discovered, and the players will, in short, expel the cheater from the community of players (if, of course, the cheater is exposed as such). Paradoxically enough, however, the cheater violates the primary obligations to self and others in seeking to fulfill his duty to himself (to look out for and pursue his own interests) by cheating since, by seeking to fulfill his duty to himself, the cheater harms others on whom he depends for the ability even to *begin* to play the game. In this view, then, Gert is wrong because "cheaters *do* hurt themselves, but they do not *only* hurt themselves. They also degrade the education of and affront the integrity of their honest peers" (Whitley and Keith-Spiegel, viii). Perhaps, then, the inverse is also true in that the culture of honor and honesty benefits the individual and her peers, enhancing the education of and respecting the integrity of honest peers. The paradoxical nature of Gert's model of social relations shows not only that cheating is counterproductive to the cheater *who is detected* but that there is something inherently inconsistent in the individual ascendancy view.

Is individual ascendancy the model for defense of integrity that one should adopt in or for any community? It appeals largely to censure, to the fear of expulsion, and hence to the loss of benefits gained by membership in a community. This kind of negative appeal is the problem with individual ascendancy and hence the individualist model of social relations. When people are members of communities in which the primary duty is to oneself and duties to others simply amount to non-interference in the exercise of others' rights and freedoms, communities in which the spirit of activity is primarily competitive, one is reminded of Sissela Bok's contention that "the very stress on individualism, on competition, on achieving material success which so marks our society also generates intense pressures to cut corners" (Bok, 224) or, in short, to cheat.

Cutting corners in the academic realm is engaging in dishonest academic practices, but the pressure of fear of censure, coupled with the pressure to succeed and gain benefits for oneself, may very well lead the cheater to feel compelled to find ways to *cheat undetected* rather than to cease cheating. In other words, if Gert is right that education is a competitive activity, the incentive *not to cheat* is fear of expulsion from a community; and if the goal of education is not only to do the best that one can but to do better than others, the cheater may decide that it is best to find more and better ways to cheat so as *not to be caught* and thus to continue to receive benefits from participation in the activities of the community.

The problem of academic dishonesty (not simply dishonest behaviors but the attempt to find more, and more effective, ways to be dishonest) can not to be solved by means of Gert's view, especially if the incentive not to cheat is simply fear that one may not gain benefits from membership. It is ironic, however, that the successful cheater remains in the community without truly being a member of it. Just as the citizen-voter who lies to other voters about having voted only *appears* to be a voter but actually is not one, the student who cheats to retain her position in an honors (or any)

academic community only for her individual benefit at most *appears* to be a member of the community.

Membership in a community requires more than simple presence in that community or the pretense that one has achieved, or that one possesses, qualities or characteristics requisite to the fullest participation in the activity or activities (the *life*, for the Deweyan, of the community) that the community makes possible. It requires the performance of actions and the development and possession of character traits consistent with the individual and community standards that are the primary duties of individuals in communities. The individual who possesses traits of character that are themselves consistent with honor feels "a sense of honor in the emphatic sense that a moral person is one who does or does not engage in certain types of acts; that an individual's identity is bound up with his conduct, which is becoming of certain roles and status, and that it is beneath one to engage in anything less or contrary to it" (Liszka, 44). In addition, however, honor is also important to the larger community in that the moral person of honor is one who holds that "to fail at one's duties with respect to that role is to bring dishonor. Whereas duties specify what people are to do for others, given their role, an honor code has to do more with status within their position or role and how others should treat them in that regard. In other words, they act honorably because they have a certain sense of self which others should also have" (Liszka, 44). To act contrary to one's status is beneath the honorable person. So the person of honor, no less than those who honor the honorable, prescribes honorable behavior and character for others as well. The person who has only a pretense to honor or goodness and who "is a good man only because people will know it, and because they will esteem him better for it after knowing it, whoever will do well only on condition that his virtue will come to the knowledge of man, that man is not one from whom we can derive much service" (Montaigne, "Of Glory," 472).

The person who conceives of her social relationships as involving obligations (or better, commitment) to herself for personal excellence as well as an obligation or commitment to the community to promote its excellence has an alternative to the individual ascendancy model and is, I think, more likely to perform academically honest actions (and thus more likely to promote academic integrity) that are consistent with the view and characters of other individuals of honor and integrity. It is a virtue-theoretic, community-oriented view of the place and role of the student in the academic community that Kibler et al. call "community ascendancy" (4). It emphasizes the interests of the community *and* the individual such that those who adopt the community ascendancy model are future oriented, accept responsibility, and recognize and act on their obligations to others. These are people for whom trust and integrity, honesty and honor, are much more important than *pretense* to individual excellence. The "community ascender" realizes that benefits for the individual come about only through the strength of community and that the community gains its strength, its honor and reputation, from the individuals who comprise it in their having a shared vision of the goals of the community.

To possess a shared vision, to feel a sense of community, requires respect and concern for others that may be explained more completely through a discussion of Aristotle's conception of virtue friendship. His understanding of friendship may in

addition serve to underscore the value of community and also the paucity of the individual ascendancy model of human relations.

For Aristotle, virtue (or perfect) friendship, the human relationship that is requisite to the creation of the most morally advanced political communities, can be understood as the model of relationships that community ascendancy recommends. Aristotle distinguishes between three types or levels of friendship, only one of which is *perfect* and suited for the relationships obtaining between individuals who will be able to forge political communities of virtue. The first and lowest form of friendship is that of utility. Here, people associate with each other to fulfill some need or desire and the association dissolves once it has been satisfied. The second form of friendship is that of pleasure, existing only so long as the people involved in the friendship remain pleasant to each other. As Aristotle puts it:

> Those who love for utility or pleasure, then, are fond of a friend because of what is good or pleasant for themselves, not insofar as the beloved is who he is, but insofar as he is useful or pleasant. Hence these friendships as well [as the friends] are coincidental, since the beloved is loved not insofar as he is who he is, but insofar as he provides some good or pleasure.

> And so these sorts of friendships are easily dissolved, when the friends do not remain similar [to what they were]; for if someone is no longer pleasant or useful, the other stops loving him. (*NE*, VIII, iii, 2-3, p. 121)

Pleasure friendships are neither long-lasting nor dependable. They are centered on the use and pleasure of one who *uses* others for her own benefit alone. The attitude of the friend for utility or pleasure is that of the individual ascender who looks solely at the company of others as a means to achieve her own goals, ending relationships when utility and pleasure are no longer forthcoming.

It is important to note that the analogy to friendships of utility or pleasure that I am using here is certainly not perfectly parallel to the case of the cheater or impostor, but it has affinities to the behavior of the friend of utility or pleasure in conceiving of friendships (and other social relationships) as means to the ends of individuals without consideration of the interests and ends of others. For the individual ascender, cheaters and impostors are removed or marginalized from a social setting when their purely self-interested cheating behaviors are detected, thus ending or curtailing the relationship. So the cheater who remains undetected, like the friend who does not cease to find use or pleasure in others, at best has only *pretense* to membership in a group and is only incompletely a friend or is a member of a group only insofar as continued benefits are to be obtained.

Even where the duty of the individual is to *herself* on the individual ascendancy model, the individual who wishes to obtain individual benefits from the community must also respect the concerns and interests of others *who constitute* the community in which she is present insofar as she must also look out for their interests if she expects others to look out for hers. To respect the interests of others (consistently with

Gert's view) but also to respect the community (that is, to respect the "game" being played and the other players) requires at least that the individual act in accordance with community standards. Even this, however, is not enough for full membership in a community, and it is not enough to claim that the person is one of honor or integrity. To be a person of honor or integrity, a person must be one who can be trusted under any circumstances "to do the right thing, to play by the rules, to keep commitments" (Carter, 7).

The community ascender, unlike the individual ascender, realizes that benefits for the individual come about only through the strength of community and that the community gains its strength, honor, and reputation from the individuals who comprise it. The community ascender, in addition and most importantly, cares about the community in itself. Turn again to Aristotle's discussion of friends and friendship, specifically to his conception of perfect friendship, to which the community ascender has significant affinities:

> Each of them is both good without qualification and good for his friend, since good people are both good without qualification and advantageous for each other. They are pleasant in the same ways too, since good people are pleasant both without qualification and for each other. [They are pleasant for each other] because each person finds his own actions and actions of that kind pleasant, and the actions of good people are the same or similar.

> It is reasonable that this sort of friendship is enduring, since it embraces in itself all the features that friends must have. For the cause of every friendship is good or pleasure, either unqualified or for the lover; and every friendship accords with some similarity. And all the features we have mentioned are found in this friendship because of [the nature of] the friends themselves. For they are similar in this way [i.e., in being good]. (*NE,* VIII, iii, 6-7, p. 122)

It is this type of friendship, one of mutuality, a perfect friendship in which a friend sees her friend as *another self* that serves as the model and foundation of community.

Neither Aristotle nor I contend, however, that a community consisting of hundreds or thousands of members can be characterized by the emotional and intellectual connection that is central to close personal friendships of the sort described here. Aristotle does, though, use this model of friendship as a transition to his political thought in which the *polis* (the city-state), which is a *koinonia* (community), is composed of people who understand the value and importance of such highly moral relationships with very specific, well-known other individuals. The translation of this sort of friendship and its application to a larger population is civic friendship. The person who understands the value and characterization of virtue friendship, who *is* a friend to others in this way, is a "normative communitarian" who "sees civic friendship as the expression of the goods and values shared by fellow citizens who respect and care for each other" (Stern-Gillett, 161). This member of the community would "understand that the excellence of the city requires the dedication of all its capable citizens, and he

would act accordingly" (Stern-Gillett, 167). Aristotle, however, points out that such people are rare (*NE*, VIII, iii, 7, p. 123).

Concentrating his attention on Aristotle's claim that we must, however, honor truth above our friends, Glotzbach asks, "if academic community is necessary for the central work of teaching and learning and friendship or something like it is essential to the creation of genuine academic community, then how can we rationally 'honor truth above our friends'?"(52). Glotzbach finds Aristotle's position paradoxical, and perhaps it is so to some extent despite Glotzbach's attempts to find a solution to it. He contends that the "quick solution" to the paradox is "the realization that the friendship that should stand at the heart of an academic community needs to be of a managed sort, one that does not go to the full extreme of solidarity that characterizes the very deepest friendships" (53), but he adds that "in a deeper sense, to accept membership in an academic community is to place oneself under the continuing authority of one's peers for the evaluation of the products of one's intellectual or creative labor" (53).

I think that Glotzbach is right that the quick solution is insufficient because it misses the point of Aristotle's conception of friendship that a friend of virtue would "not give in to requests from others to do something base," so "the possibility of the obligations of justice" (which is correlative with truth) clashing with "primary [very personal] relationships is therefore ruled out in Aristotle's ethics" (Stern-Gillett, 164). So Glotzbach's deeper solution, that members of a community are always under the authority of their peers, means also that members of the community have its members' and the community's standards always on hand as a check on non-virtuous (or better, vicious) behavior. What this means is that the code of the community trumps the friend but not the friendship in that the code expresses the actions and goals of individuals and community that define the good person. Since the good person is most fully a friend, any temptation that would compromise goodness in its members could threaten to compromise the friendship but will not do so as long as the friend does not develop personal character tending toward such moral mistakes. Thus, preserving the community and its ideals *is* preserving the association not simply because the community has ideals but because the ideals express individual and group commitment to moral excellence, i.e., to the virtues that warrant honor. Aristotle notes that such friendships (those of virtue) are rare because such people are rare, and he explains that such people cannot "accept each other or be friends until each appears lovable to the other and gains the other's confidence" or trust (*NE*, VIII, iii, 8, p. 123). And when the friendship has been formed, it is not easily dissolved because the character of the friends is not easily shaken. Such friends are people of character; they are people of honor. It does not mean that they are perfect, but it does mean that they strive to become the best that they can be.

So, if Aristotle's account of friendship holds any weight in the conception of community to be developed in an honors college, students who recognize that simple presence in an organization is not enough to maintain the status that is awarded to the honors student will realize that membership in the honors community requires consideration of others *and* of the community as a whole. One must be worthy of friendship and trustworthy to her peers, not merely gaining friendship and trust of peers by pretense to community membership and trust but by *being a member of the*

community and *being trustworthy*. It is in social conditions such as these that the goals of community and hence the goals of the individual may be reached.

It is the goal of the honors community both to present opportunities to the honors student to take full advantage of her abilities and to establish a community of honors that is consistent with those goals. To do that may, again, be explicable on the Aristotelian model of virtue (perfect) friendship. He contends that "the friendship of decent people is decent, and increases the more often they meet. And they seem to become still better from their activities and their mutual correction. For each molds the other in what they approve of, so that '[you will learn] what is noble from noble people'" (*NE*, IX, xii, 3, p. 153). In short, the honors community becomes a community by its members becoming moral exemplars to each other, adopting the characteristics they approve in others, developing further those they already possess, and maintaining the code or ideals by which they live as a statement of the beliefs they already hold and that they recommend to others. They do this for the good of the self *and* others. This is concord, which Aristotle calls "political friendship" (civic friendship), "for it is concerned with advantage and with what affects life [as a whole]" (*NE*, IX, vi, 3, p. 144). This community concord is, for Aristotle, "the safeguard of the state" and thus of community in that "concord is the preserve of those who are decent…. Far from allowing that there can be honor among thieves, Aristotle … appears to claim that concord cannot obtain unless the citizens themselves are morally sound. The base, whose motivation is generally unsteady, can neither feel concern for the common good nor cooperate with others in its pursuit" (Stern-Gillett, 152).

Returning to the honors code of the Burnett Honors College as an example of the commitments of an individual to *create and maintain* the community, one can see that the exhortations to strive for high levels of academic performance, to fulfill obligations as a member of the academic community, to offer encouragement to others in pursuit of intellectual goals, to cherish academic excellence and debate, and to honor traditional rules of scholarly conduct are not externally imposed rules set up for honors students simply to memorize and follow. They are, instead, a statement of commitments already possessed by those who deserve the designation "honors students." Honor makes no sense for the isolated, atomistic individualist because honor and honoring require community. To build an honors community (or any community, academic or otherwise) is to admit members for whom commitment to academic and personal excellence is a way of life, not an externally imposed, onerous requirement that one must satisfy in order to receive benefits from the group. To build and maintain a community, a person must see herself as *a member* of it, not simply present in it. For students who are admitted but who are not already possessed of traits of character, student who are possessed of only minimal external indicators of honors status, the presence of an honor code and the behaviors of those who are already committed to it may lead them to adopt the code as their own, thereby *becoming* and then *being* members of the community because they have chosen to be so. Members of communities who participate most fully in the *life* of the community cultivate character and traits of character that are consistent with the good. They consider an action contrary to what is good to be "something they don't do" not because someone has told them so or because there is a list of rules they must follow. They do what is good simply because it is good. The honors academic community

exists as a place in which education, honestly obtained and cherished, is such that the community enhances the individual and the individual enhances the community.

CONCLUSION

Communities come into existence and develop in a manner consistent with the needs, desires, and interests of their members, who share a vision of the good with each other. A person might adhere to a self-interested model of human behavior and believe that people associate with others solely for the benefit of themselves, or instead she might believe that people form communities because it is part of their nature to do so in their common pursuit and conception of the good; this distinction is relevant to the way in which a community will exist, but it is not essential to understanding the way in which a sense of community and a sense of membership in a community are created and sustained.

The membership of individuals in a community helps to define the community while the community serves as a framework in which the individual may enhance her position as well as define and attain her own goals. Honors colleges and their students are uniquely situated in the academic realm to exemplify and illuminate the consistency of individual interests and community goods and to use this to build other academic communities. In doing so, they serve as examples of the importance and effectiveness of communities in providing an atmosphere in which the goals of education overall may be realized.

To create and sustain not only the honors community but also the larger academic community of which an honors college and its students are a part, administrators might consider implementation of service learning courses as a central function of the honors college and perhaps of colleges and universities on the whole. As part of education for democratic citizenship, service to the community of which one is a member is part of the growth and development of the individual as well as the community itself. Aristotle notes, for example, that "base people … cannot be in concord, except to a slight degree, just as they can be friends only to a slight degree; for they seek to overreach in benefits [to themselves], and shirk labors *and public services*. And since each wishes this for himself, he interrogates and obstructs his neighbor; for when people do not look out for the common good, it is ruined" (*NE,* IX, vii, 3, p. 145; emphasis added). Service-learning courses are consistent with development of civic consciousness in the honorable person who realizes that, to be a person of honor, one must not simply seek the good for herself but for others as well. White describes Aristotle's view that for "an action to deserve honor … it must promote some valuable end, and for the virtuous to deserve honor, they must aim at the end and not only at honor itself" (White, 261). Further, "in place of competitive ideals based on status that exalt external success, [Aristotle] proposes a cooperative ideal based on self-knowledge and rational virtue that finds its highest expression in beneficence" (270). In essence, then, to be an honors student implies a commitment to dignity and honor, but that commitment expresses itself in care and concern for others, not for the mere trappings of the benefits to be found for oneself through one's achievements or abilities. As I indicated earlier, Aristotle did not claim that political friendship is the same as personal friendship (see *NE* VIII, ix), but personal and political friendships are very similar in that good

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friendship is altruistic and pluralistic (see White, 84) and so are our political relationships. For Aristotle, the similarity of goodness between personal friends is individual while the similarity of goodness for political relationships is defined through a constitution or laws; in the case to which I am applying this conceptualization of our social relations, political friendship expressed academically is a shared commitment to educational goals generally. Those goals are defined by the shared commitment to educational attainment, to the acquisition of knowledge, which the honors student and the honors community are well qualified to promote and exemplify for all.

The honors student is not simply to be honored for academic attainment or for abiding by rules or ideals; the honors student must, as a full and participating member of an honors community, internalize and exemplify honor as a way of life that maintains her real status in an honors community. Honors colleges and their students are uniquely capable of knowing by experience the distinction between individual interests and community ascendancy in the academic realm. They are similarly situated to embody the best of the insights of both points of view in creating and maintaining academic communities of honor and integrity in which students are persons of personal and academic excellence who realize that their code of honor is an exhortation to live the life of community *and* individual ascendancy. A community of honors students is a group of people who understand their relationships with each other to be exemplifications of Aristotelian virtue and civic friendship. McCabe and Treviño (2002) put the case regarding organizational cultures of integrity that "the greatest benefit … may not be reduced student cheating. Instead, it may be the lifelong benefit of learning the value of living in a community of trust." This is not to say that the value of learning and living in a community of trust can be achieved, maintained and experienced only by honors students in honors colleges. There are numerous other academics, professionals, industrialists, inventors, and "everyday people" who belong and contribute to communities of trust. On the other hand, there are students in honors colleges and programs who do not share in the life of the organization and who may feel no obligation, or only very minimal duty, to any community in which they are present. To recognize exceptions is not to minimize the moral and social import of the exhortation that we may make to honors students to develop traits of character that situate them specifically for the obligations and benefits that "honor" may bestow upon them. To be an "honors student" is more than to attain a high level of academic achievement. An honors student is a moral exemplar in the academic community.

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