

ARISTOTELIAN FRIENDSHIP SEEN IN STEPHEN KING'S *THE BODY*

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Abstract. This article explores the aristotelian friendship in King's *The Body* to answer two questions: 1) how is friendship described in Stephen King's *The body*?; 2) what kinds of friendships are described in Stephen King's *The body*? Aristotle grouped friendship into three friendship based on utility, friendship based on pleasure, and friendship based on goodness. The research method applied was qualitative descriptive. The result of the analysis showed Gordie, Chris, Teddy and Vern performed friendship based on utility and friendship based on pleasure while Gordie and Chris performed in the friendship based on goodness because only both of them who always stayed together and shared goodness in their relationship, they encouraged one another in good things. Chris showed his love and care to Gordie by the way he pushed Gordie to join the collage course and leave the gang because the gang will only drag him down.

Keywords: *aristotelian friendship, friendship based on utility, friendship based on pleasure, friendship based on goodness*

INTRODUCTION

Among other characteristics that human being may have, making friend seems to have the important position in their life. Friendship is the most unavoidable virtue. Avoiding friendship is a denial of human dignity as individual beings and social beings. Even, it is the greatest is the ability to have (Osterberg, 2007 in Yusuf, 2015). For the demands of these social beings, the principle applies that the highest respect for a friend can be seen through what is done to him. In other words, one needs to live out the *essere agere* expression; how to act according to the way one is. Or in a more popular language, one is what one does.

Friendship can be intertwined with people who live around, having same living

area and same situation. It is something that works out between two people and cannot be forced upon anyone. Not only people and people, in some cases people can make friends with animals or even things. For children making a new friend can be difficult and a little scary but for adults making a new friend is as easy as about having the same hobby or having the same interest. In other words, friendship is a social interaction that connected people from one to another.

The study of friendship has a long history which can be traced back to the ancient times. One can read the topic in the Old Testament and the New Testament and the famous Hindu epic Mahabharata. In intellectual Greek tradition, the study of friendship can be seen through Aristotle's

thoughts which will become the basic ideas to discuss on King's novella *The Body* in this article. This novella describes the friendship between the main character Gordie and other characters who are interested in discovering a mysterious body informed in a magazine. During the way they traced the body, they have to face obstacles that build their friendship stronger and at the same challenge the friendship existing among them.

Aristotle argued that friendship could be categorized into three: friendship based on utility, friendship based on pleasure, friendship based on goodness. Those who love for the sake of utility love for the sake of what is good for themselves (Aristotle: 1976). A friendship of this kind is an impermanent thing because it changes according to circumstances. So when the basis of the relationship disappears, the friendship also breaks up. It is because that is what keeps the relationship alive. Friendships of this kind seem to occur most frequently between the elderly (because at their age what they want is not pleasure but utility) and those in middle or early life who are pursuing their own advantage. Such persons do not spend much time together, because sometimes they do not even like one another, and therefore feel no need of such an association unless they are mutually useful. For they take pleasure in each other's company only in so far as they have hopes of advantage from it. Friendships with foreigners are generally included in this class (Doyle and Smith: 2002).

Those who love for the sake of pleasure do so for the sake of what is pleasant to themselves, and not in so far as the other is the person loved but in so far as he is useful or pleasant (Aristotle: 1976). Friendship between the young is thought to be grounded on pleasure, because the lives of the young are regulated by their feelings, and their chief interest is in their own pleasure

and the opportunity of the moment. With advancing years, however, their tastes change too, so that they are quick to make and to break friendships: because their affection changes just as the things that please them do and this sort of pleasure changes rapidly. Also the young are apt to fall in love for erotic friendship is for the most part swayed by the feelings and based on pleasure. That is why they fall in and out of friendship quickly, changing their attitude often within the same day. But the young do like to spend the day and live together, because that is how they realize the object of their friendship (Doyle and Smith: 2002).

Then Aristotle argued that good friendship is a friendship that is driven by a reciprocal relationship of good will. Therefore Aristotle said that lasting friendships are friendships based on virtue, in the sense that friendship emerges as a form of respecting fellow beings as dignified and valuable individuals. Aristotle vocalized that virtue or goodness is in every person and in each other. That means goodness is intrinsic in everyone not because of coincidence as in pleasure and use. Here friendship built on the basis of kindness takes the form that between those who are friendly arise a commitment to jointly do good, together feel good because they are good people. About this good, Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of goodness, both external (external measure such as beauty), both from the soul (dignity) and good from the body (muscular, high). According to Aristotle, the good of the soul is the highest because it is not accidental and is not present in animals and plants. (Doyle and Smith: 2002).

RESEARCH METHOD

Concerning the data collection and analysis, the discussion will apply descriptive qualitative method. According to Hancock et

al (2009:6), qualitative research focuses on description and interpretation of the words/data and this can lead to an evaluation of an organizational process. It also focuses on description and interpretation that might lead to development of new concept or theory or to an evaluation of an organization process. The discussion will cover on the characters and the conflicts they may have and how the conflicts are read through the concept of friendship proposed by Aristotle.

DISCUSSION

Friendship in *The body* can be traced through the progress of the plot. The story is set in the summer 1960 and it involved four young boys of twelve year old, named Gordon Lachance, Chris Chambers, Teddy Duchamp and Vern Tessio. Most of their times they play in a tree house and from this place they plan to uncover the news they read in a magazine about a missing dead body. Their friendship become more less and less as the time flies but the true friendship in this story portrayed in the relationship between Gordie and Chris. They are growing together, taking the same course and going to the collage together, they are fighting for their dream together until one day the news of Chris's death on Gordie's hand and it makes Gordie sad of losing his best friend. Their friendship lasted until death separate them.

Friendship Based on Utility

After the search of the body, the development of the plot shows that the four boys separated in to two groups. On one side there are Teddy and Vern who decide stay together and form a new group. On the other side group Gordie and Chris leave the group and live their own lives. They do not feel comfortable anymore after the body. Gordie believes that "friends come and out of one's life like waitres in a restaurant" (King,

1999:71). Gordie's words can be understood the idea of friendship is similar to the relation of a customer and a waiter or waitress in a restaurant. When one goes to a restaurant, the person is only tied with a waiter when he/she needs to order things he/she wants. When his needs are fulfilled the will not have any more relationship. They will not take care so much one another. The restaurant gues will get busy soon with the things they order, and the waitress well be busy as well with other guests.

It happens to the friendship which manifests in the relation of Vern and Teddy. After leaving the group, it seems that they do not communicate frequently, and they seem to become stranger time by time. What Gordie's belief about friendship as such is parallell to Aristotle's concept of friendship based on utility. When there is no more use, friendship can be broken up and they separate.

Friendship Based on Pleasure

Gordie, Chris, Teddy and Vern are all coming from a bad families but they feel comfortable when they are together, they become friends because they enjoy to hang out and have fun together. They have a club and build a tree house for their wasting time and doing boy's activities, such as playing cards, smoking, and read adult magazines (King, 1999 : 02). What they do are so typical young boys will do. They are there, for the most, to escape from the mess families. It is in the tree house that they can express who they really are and have fun together. They enjoy the moments and say joking. They share stori es and fo rgetting al1 the pain behind , they talk about inter esting thin gs and enjoying chit chat in a long time. They spend their time in a deep conversat ion. Their togetherness bring them comfort feeling as how Gordie feels as he says "I was alive and

glad to be.” Furthermore, he feels a lot of “affection towards every one and every thing around ... a very special feeling. (King, 1999 : 33). Eventough all the things are only temporary. Whe he comes who he will face the reality. The situsatation of their togetherness can be seen below.

We laid our blankets out on the ground and lay down on them . Then for about an hour we fed the foe and talked - the kind of talk you can never quite remember when you get past fifteen and discover girls. We talked about fishing and spor t, and about the summer that was now ending. Teddy told about the time he had been at White's Beach in Brunswick and some guy had hit his head while diving and had almost drowned. We had a long discussion about our teachers at school. (King. 1999 : 39)

Those who love for the sake of pleasure do so for the sake of what is pleasant to themselves. This kind of relationship will see others not under the light of love but under the ideas of being usefull or pleasant (Aristotle : 1976). Relationship based on love will last longger than relationship based on pleasure. Once again, Gordie’s character development shows Aristotle’s notion of friendship based on pleasure, as Gordie then feels there is no more comfortability in his togetherness with his friend. He leaves the group and closes communication with the other three.

Friendship Based on Goodness

Perfect friendship is based on goodness. This kind of friendship is pictured in Gordie and Chris relationship. Beside they enjoy one another pleasure they both love and care each other. Gordie and Chris can understand one another even withouth saying an word. They can see other’s needs or

intention by looking through eyes. Only this kind of friendship is perfect. For these people, they have and seek the similar goals in their friendship. It is the idea of friendship based on goodness that desires the good of their friends for the friends' sake. It is in this kind of friendship the truly friends one may gain, because each loves the other for what he is, and not for any incidental quality. In Chris’ own expression ‘...’, and for a moment we looked in each other's eyes and saw some of the true things that made us friends. (King 1999: 08)

Furthermore, the close relationship between Chris and Gordie is depicted in one scene. The narators depicts that how Chris realy cares about Gordie’s future and he knows well about Gordie’s parents. Chris is the closest boy in the gang who understand Gordie very well he even tells Gordie to take the collage course because he does not want Gordie to stay in the bad gang and waste his life for no use, Chris believe that Gordie could have a better life as he is the smartest boy in the gang. Staying with the bad boys will only drag him into fail, there will be no bright future if he stays in the gang.

'It's foolish if your friends can drag you down ,' Chris said finally.

'I know about you and your parents. They don't care about you. Your big brother was the one they cared about....

'If you stay with us just because you don't want to lose the gang ' Chris went on, 'you' ll turn into just another guy, it is no good use for his brains, except to make clever, cmel remarks about other people. You'll never escape Castle Rock. You'll think it's important to have the right kind of car and then the right girl. And then you 'll get married and work in the factory or some shoe shop for ever. Is that what yo u want?' (King, 1999: 35-36)

In fact Gordie is meant a lot for Chris as it is portrayed in the scene Chris feels alone and nobody believes in Chris. In this situation it is only Gordie who can see the truth about the condition that Chris is facing. Chris does know who can be trusted while he is actually seeking a person that he will be able to talk openly. He needs someone that he can share his secret. He then discovers that Gordie is the one that he believes.

It happens because Gordie knows well who Chris is. In one episode it is told Gordie's trust toward Chris. It is about the secret that Chris has. Once Chris has been accused for stealing money—an untrue fact—but Gordie believes that even if Chris has taken the money, Chris actually has not meant to steal it. In Gordie's mind there is always a reason why Chris has done it.

'I know what people think of my family in this town. Nobody even asked me if I took the milk-money that time.'
'Did you take it?' I asked .. I had never asked him before, and if you had told me I ever would I'd have called you crazy. The words came out like a dry bullet:
'Yeah,' he said tiredly. 'Yeah I took it.' He was silent for a moment. 'You knew I took it, Teddy knew everybody knew. Even Vern knew I think.'
I started to deny it and then closed my mouth. He was right. I had argued with my parents that a person was innocent until proved guilty . . . but deep inside I had known the truth. (King 1999: 37)

Moreover, the friendship that Gordie and Chris perform shows how Gordie has become a kind of engine for Chris' life. There are three reasons for this argument. One reason can be seen in Gordie's existence. It is Gordie that has given Chris the fuel to grasp

his life better than what he is undergoing now. Gordie is the one who believes in Chris' capability and he knows that Chris is clever enough and deserves to have a better life. Another one can be traced from Chris' being together with Teddy and Vern. It is different from the band of relationship that Chris has had with Teddy and Vern. Teddy and Vern seem to have given a bad vibe and even they have dragged them down. Another is in Chris' family background. It seems that no one in the town believes in Chris because of his family.

In Gordie's side, it seems there is no other motivation but to stand behind Chris to get the best thing for Chris. What Gordie conducts that is by supporting Chris to take the collage course is evident. Gordie knows Chris can make it, and he can fight for a better life out of Castle Rock.

'Chris,' I said, 'why don't you go into the college courses? You're clever enough.'

'The teachers decide all that in the school office. All they care about is whether you've behaved yourself in school and what the town thinks of your family. They don't want you to infect their top-college-course pupils, the ones from the big houses on the hill. I don't know if I could do it, but I might try, because I want to get out of Castle Rock and go to college and never see my father or my brothers again. I want to go somewhere where nobody knows me and people don't have bad ideas about me before I've even done anything. But I don't know if I can do it.'

'Why not?'

'People. People drag you down.'

'Who?' I asked thinking he must mean the teachers, or his brother Eyeball or maybe his parents. But he said 'Your friends drag you down Gordie. Don't you know that?' He pointed at Vern and Teddy, who were standing and

waiting for us to catch up.

'Your friends do. They're like drowning guys who are holding on to your legs. You can't save them. You can only drown with them (King, 1999: 38).

In addition, Gordie is also the one who stays in a dangerous moment while Teddy and Vern busy to save their own life from Ace and his gang. Chris does not care about who will leave him but it is Gordie who is the most important person he never want to go. it is probably because Chris is asking for Gordie to stand by him while others leave as how it shown in the conversation below;

Vern gave in first. With a scream he ran up the bank. Teddy waited only a minute, then followed Vern, his hands held up over his head. On the other side Vince Desjardins disappeared back under the cover of some trees and Fuzzy Brackowicz soon joined him. But the rest of them stayed where they were and Ace began to grin again...

'Stay with me Gordie ' Chris said in a low shaky voice 'Stay with me man.' 'I'm here.' (King, 1999: 63)

As how Aristotle explain that friendship based on goodness is the perfect friendship after all. Only friendship based on goodness is last forever, it is also happen to Gordie and Chris their friendship last forever. They influence each other in good things. Gordie and Chris are growing together, taking the same course and going to the collage together, they are fighting for their dream together until one day the news of Chris's death on Gordie' s hand and it makes Gordie sad of loosing his best friend. Their friendship lasted until death separate them as how it is shown in the quotation below;

He and I studied together almost every night, trying to win back the seven years of education Chris had lost. We were hanging on to each other in deep water. We both graduated. Chris went to university to study law.

Near the end of the spring term in 1968 , Chris was queuing in a restaurant when two men in front of him started to argue about who was there first. Chris who had always been the best of us at making peace stepped between them and got a knife in his throat. He was dead in seconds. I wasn't there . Chris was in graduate school and I had already graduated from university and was married. When I read about it in the newspaper I told my wife I was going out to get a drink. I drove out of town parked and cried for him. I cried for nearly half an hour without stop ping.

(King, 1999:65)

Perfect friendship or friendship based on goodness will last for ever and it is described well in the relationship between Gordie and Chris in The Body novella.

CONCLUSION

The discussion showed that the characters performed different ty pes of friendships in Aristotelian concept of friendship. The first, friendship based on utility which each other need a company and comfortability. This friendship portrayed on how the four of them need each other on finding the dead body but this friendship is end up whenever the journey is also completed.

The second, friendship based on pleasure is when they enjoy chit chat and share stories and enjoy having fim together. This friendship portrayed on how they can entertain each other and be what they are. And the last, friendship based on goodness

which is the perfect friendship. Only true friend can stand forever, this friendship portrayed on Gordie and Chris relationship.

Gordie, Chris, Teddy and Vern are in both the friendship based on utility and friendship based on pleasure but only Gordie and Chris are in the friendship based on goodness because only both of them who always stand together and share goodness in their relationship they encourage one another in good things. Chris shows his love and care to Gordie by the way he pushed Gordie to join the collage crew and leave the gang because the gang will only drag him down. Gordie does show his love and care by encouraging Chris to join the collage crew with him and reach their dream together to be a success person and living out of Castle Rock. Chris study law in the university and Gordie finally be a writer, their friendship last until one day Gordie read a news about Chris' death. Only friendship based on goodness which last forever and only death can separate the perfect friendship.

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