



## Moral Character and Virtue in Anime: An Aristotelian Reading of Wind Breaker Season 2 Episode 10

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**Abstract.** The rise of social apathy in modern society reflects a deeper moral disconnection that calls for renewed ways of engaging with ethical reflection. This study examines how Wind Breaker Anime Season 2 Episode 10 represents Aristotelian virtue ethics as a narrative form of moral imagination within popular culture. Rather than assessing audience impact, this study highlights the representational potential of anime as a medium that recontextualizes classical virtue ethics within modern moral discourse. Employing a qualitative content analysis, the research explores how arete (moral excellence), phronesis (practical wisdom), and eudaimonia (flourishing) are expressed through the characters' actions and emotional transformations, particularly those of Suzurin. The episode's portrayal of apology, empathy, forgiveness, and self-acceptance reflects Aristotle's doctrine of the golden mean and the process of moral habituation, while collective support and the granting of second chances manifest justice and friendship (philia) in a social context. The findings suggest that Wind Breaker articulates the moral possibilities of virtue ethics within contemporary youth narratives, illustrating how classical ethical concepts can be reinterpreted through visual storytelling.

**Keywords:** anime; Aristotelian; Eudaimonia; Japan.

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### 1. Introduction

The issue of morality in the context of social concern becomes increasingly complex when linked to technological advancements and shifts in modern lifestyles. The digital age and social media have, paradoxically, created 'connected isolation' where individuals are virtually connected but emotionally and socially disconnected. Previous research on the development and status of moral education through visual knowledge shows that digital transformation has fundamentally altered the landscape of moral education (Chen et al., 2023). This phenomenon is exacerbated by strengthening individualism in urban societies, where collective values and mutual cooperation are eroded by a competitive mentality and materialistic orientation. The evolving concept of relative morality also blurs ethical boundaries in social concern, as individuals tend to justify their apathy with various personal rationalizations. This condition demands a revitalization of classical moral values that have stood the test of time, such as Aristotelian virtue ethics, to provide a solid philosophical foundation for reconstructing social concern. In contemporary society, however, the

transmission of ethical values no longer occurs solely through formal philosophical discourse but increasingly through cultural media.

Within this context, anime as a central product of Japanese popular culture serves as a dynamic medium capable of embodying and communicating virtue ethics through narrative, character development, and visual storytelling to a global audience. Berndt's research further demonstrates how anime functions as a representative object in both media studies and Japanese studies, illustrating its potential as an ethical and cultural discourse platform. Berndt research analyzes how anime functions as a representative object in media studies and Japanese studies, demonstrating the complex interplay between cultural representation and transcultural consumption in an academic context (Berndt, 2018). With a global reach that reaches billions of viewers and an industry worth more than \$25 billion in 2023, anime not only functions as entertainment but also as an effective agent of socialization in shaping character and worldview, especially among the younger generation. The Hernández-Pérez research on 'Anime Global Popular' and 'Manga Media' examines reflections on transmedia and transcultural industry scholarship, showing how anime operates as a complex medium in conveying universal values (Berndt, 2018). The ability of anime to combine deep narratives, engaging visualizations, and complex moral messages makes it an ideal medium for exploring ethical values and virtues.

Through sophisticated storytelling techniques and complex character development, anime can present relatable moral dilemmas and encourage ethical reflection on various life situations. While many *shōnen* anime — such as One Piece or *Jujutsu Kaisen* — also celebrate friendship, loyalty, and perseverance, Wind Breaker distinguishes itself through its grounded portrayal of moral rehabilitation within a delinquent youth community (Debnath & Kumar, 2025; Dwipa, 2023). Unlike the epic or supernatural settings of those series, Wind Breaker situates virtue formation in an urban, realist context, where moral growth emerges not from heroic quests but from everyday interpersonal struggles, reconciliation, and acts of care. This focus allows a more human-scale exploration of Aristotelian virtues, particularly phronesis (practical wisdom) and arete (moral excellence), making the anime an especially relevant object for virtue ethics analysis. This conflict encapsulates a central theme in Aristotelian virtue ethics, the balance between personal aspiration and the common good, guided by phronesis (practical wisdom). The interpersonal dynamics displayed in this episode mirror the moral complexities individuals face in real life, illustrating how virtues are not abstract ideals but lived practices shaped through relational contexts. Moreover, anime's capacity to embed these dilemmas within a distinctly Japanese cultural framework — emphasizing collectivism, harmony, and mutual care — offers a valuable cross-cultural dimension to understanding the interplay between arete (moral excellence) and social responsibility in modern society.

Studies on moral values in anime have been conducted by several researchers in recent years. To demonstrate the novelty of this research, some relevant studies are listed. First, research on problematic online anime analyzes the relationship between anime consumption, emotion regulation, and life satisfaction (Liu et al., 2022). Second, a study on the identity construction of anime pilgrims within a cultural context that explores the psychological and social dimensions of anime cultural consumption (Xu et al., 2022). Third, research on anime pilgrimage in Japan focusing on social influence as a determinant that analyzes the popular cultural phenomenon of anime (Ono et al., 2020). Fourth, a study on moral education in Japan discussing the role of curriculum in the transmission of moral values (Bamkin, 2020). Fifth, research on virtue consciousness that compares the

perspectives of education specialists and the general public in Japan, exploring the concept of virtue within the Japanese cultural context (Tachibana & Nakazawa, 2024). Sixth, a study on changes in ethics education and its influence on core moral values, which analyzes historically and culturally based models of morality (Nieuważny et al., 2021). Seventh, research on virtue ethics in evaluation practice that applies the theory of virtue ethics in a practical context (Taggart & Zenor, 2022). Among the various previous studies, none have specifically discussed Aristotelian virtue ethics in the context of the anime *Wind Breaker*.

The concept of virtue ethics, developed by Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics, offers a comprehensive philosophical framework for understanding human morality from the perspective of character development and the actualization of good potential. Research by Tachibana and Nakazawa examined virtue consciousness in the Japanese context, revealing a gap between education specialists and the general public in understanding the concept of virtue, thus demonstrating the contemporary relevance of discussions on virtue ethics (Tachibana & Nakazawa, 2024). Unlike deontological ethics, which focuses on moral duties, or utilitarian ethics, which emphasizes the consequences of actions, Aristotelian virtue ethics places emphasis on the formation of an excellent character (*arete*) through the consistent practice of virtues until they become a settled disposition. In Aristotle's view, virtue is the 'mean' or middle path between two extreme vices, achieved through *phronesis* (practical wisdom) and continuous moral habituation. The concept of *eudaimonia* as the telos or ultimate goal of human life is also central to Aristotelian ethics, where true happiness can only be achieved through the actualization of human potential within the context of a harmonious social life. The relevance of Aristotelian virtue ethics in the modern context is evident from various contemporary studies that show its effectiveness in addressing moral crises and providing practical guidance for character development, especially in the context of education and leadership development.

As an anime focusing on cycling, friendship, and sportsmanship, *Wind Breaker* offers a distinct moral landscape compared with most sports or team-centered narratives. While many anime explore virtue through competition and achievement, *Wind Breaker* situates its ethical inquiry within a delinquent youth environment, where the struggle is not for victory but for moral redemption and social reintegration. Episode 10 Season 2, in particular, depicts moments where the main characters confront moral dilemmas involving loyalty, sacrifice, and the courage to choose communal good over personal pride. This setting allows the series to articulate virtues, such as courage, justice, humility, and compassion, not as traits polished through discipline alone, but as habits reclaimed through relational healing and collective care. The cycling motif thus becomes a metaphor for moral endurance and interdependence, framing virtue development as a process of restoring harmony within oneself and one's community.

The phenomenon of growing social apathy in modern society, highlighted by concerning global and Japanese studies on empathy and social isolation, signals an urgent moral crisis. This issue is further complicated by the 'bystander effect' and 'connected isolation' in the digital age, alongside rising individualism and relative morality, all pointing to a degradation of ethical values. Recognizing anime's immense power as a global medium for moral messages, this research aims to analyze the representation of Aristotelian virtue ethics in *Wind Breaker* Anime Episode 10 Season 2. Specifically, it will comprehensively explore Aristotelian concepts like *arete*, *phronesis*, *eudaimonia*, and the doctrine of the mean, identify virtuous actions within the anime, and analyze how these representations contribute to moral education and character development, thereby affirming anime's

potential as a pedagogical tool to revitalize classical ethics for the digital generation and addressing contemporary social apathy.

This research is grounded in the analytical assumption that *Wind Breaker* Anime Season 2 Episode 10 contains meaningful representations of Aristotelian virtues that can be systematically explored through a virtue ethics framework. The study aims to interpret how the anime's narrative and character development embody ethical concepts such as *arete* (moral excellence), *phronesis* (practical wisdom), and *eudaimonia* (flourishing). Furthermore, it seeks to examine how these virtues intersect with traditional Japanese moral values, revealing a synthesis between local ethical sensibilities and universal Aristotelian principles with cross-cultural relevance. Through this interpretive lens, the research endeavors to explore how popular anime can function as a medium for moral reflection and character education, offering insights into ways contemporary media can contribute to addressing social apathy in modern society. The analysis employs qualitative content interpretation of narrative, visual, and symbolic elements central to this episode.

## 2. Method

This research adopts a qualitative research approach, primarily employing content analysis as its main method. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to delve deeply into the meanings contained within the study object, namely *Wind Breaker* Anime Episode 10 Season 2, and its relevance to the concept of Aristotelian virtue ethics. Through a directed qualitative content analysis, the researcher systematically identifies, categorizes, and interprets patterns or themes emerging from selected scenes. While the analytical framework draws on Aristotelian virtue ethics — particularly *phronesis* (practical wisdom), *arete* (moral excellence), and *eudaimonia* (true happiness) — these concepts serve as sensitizing guides rather than fixed categories, allowing new themes to emerge inductively from the narrative data. According to Robert K. Yin (1999), qualitative research is highly effective for answering how and why questions, which aligns with this study's aim to understand how Aristotelian virtues are manifested in the anime's scenes. This analysis does not just focus on what is said, but also on how it is conveyed and its implications for character and narrative.

The material object of this research is the anime *Wind Breaker*, specifically Episode 10 of Season 2. This episode was selected through purposive sampling based on its narrative centrality and thematic density. It contains pivotal scenes that explicitly portray moral conflict, character transformation, and collective interaction — elements closely aligned with the analytical dimensions of Aristotelian virtue ethics. These indicators make Episode 10 a representative and analytically rich unit of analysis for examining the manifestation of virtue ethics within contemporary anime storytelling. The primary data sources for this study are twofold. First, articles and books on Aristotelian Virtue Ethics serving as the theoretical foundation for core concepts. Second, the specific visual scenes and dialogues within *Wind Breaker* Season 2 Episode 10 itself, which constitute the empirical data for analysis. According to Earl Babbie (2020), ensuring relevance and authenticity. By combining established theories from scholarly sources with concrete anime data, this research aims to provide a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis, illustrating how ancient philosophy can thrive within modern media.

This research also utilizes secondary data sources to complement understanding and analysis. These include books, scholarly articles, and online resources related to *Wind Breaker*, the *shōnen* anime genre, character analysis, and philosophical interpretations of

fictional works. These sources provide theoretical triangulation to validate and enrich findings derived from primary data. The units of analysis are defined as narrative sequences or visual – dialogic moments that explicitly present moral decision-making, interpersonal conflict, or expressions of virtue. Each unit was coded manually using open and axial coding procedures, guided by sensitizing concepts from Aristotelian virtue ethics (*arete*, *phronesis*, *eudaimonia*). To minimize researcher subjectivity, coding and interpretation were conducted through iterative reflection and cross-referencing with established theoretical definitions (Bernard, 2017). Analytical memos were maintained to ensure transparency and consistency in linking observed data with conceptual categories.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1. Central Concepts of Aristotelian Virtue Ethics

Aristotle (384-322 BC), born in Stagira, Macedonia, stands as one of the most influential philosophers in the history of Western thought. His fundamental contributions span various fields of knowledge, including ethics, politics, metaphysics, and logic. As a student of Plato at the Academy in Athens for twenty years, Aristotle later developed a philosophical system distinct from his teacher's, placing greater emphasis on empirical observation and practical analysis of human life. His journey as tutor to Alexander the Great and founder of the Lyceum in Athens reflects his complete dedication to education and the systematic development of knowledge. His monumental works, especially the Nicomachean Ethics, the Eudemian Ethics, and Politics, have served as primary references in the study of virtue ethics for over two millennia and form the foundation for the advancement of Western scholarship (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2018).

Aristotle's theory of virtue rests on the fundamental premise that humans are naturally teleological (goal-oriented beings), and the ultimate aim of human life is to achieve *eudaimonia*. This refers to a state of authentic well-being and flourishing, attained through the development and consistent practice of character virtues (Papouli, 2019). Unlike subjective or hedonistic conceptions of happiness, *eudaimonia* in Aristotle's understanding refers to the objective condition of a life lived well (*eu zen*) and acting well (*eu prattein*), which can only be achieved through the development of an excellent character. Aristotle distinguishes between two main types of virtues: intellectual virtues (*aretais dianoetikai*), which relate to excellence in the use of reason and include scientific knowledge (*episteme*), practical wisdom (*phronesis*), intuition (*nous*), technical skill (*techne*), and theoretical wisdom (*sophia*); and moral or character virtues (*aretais ethikai*), which pertain to the disposition to act, feel, and desire things in the right way in specific situations (Kraut, 2018).

The Doctrine of the Mean is one of Aristotle's most original contributions to ethical theory, asserting that moral virtue is generally a disposition to choose the middle path between two extremes of excess. In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle explains: "Virtue is a disposition to choose the mean relative to us, determined by reason and as the prudent person would determine it" (Crisp, 2014). This concept does not imply a simple compromise, but rather seeks the optimal point that is appropriate to the specific context of a situation. For example, courage is the middle ground between cowardice and recklessness, while generosity is the middle ground between stinginess and extravagance. Determining this middle path requires practical wisdom (*phronesis*), an intellectual virtue that connects theoretical understanding of good with its practical application in daily life. This involves the ability to engage in sound deliberation (*euboulia*) about matters concerning human life as a whole (Cohoe, 2022; Cooke & Carr, 2014).

Aristotle's theory of habituation (*hexis*) explains that moral virtues are developed through repeated practice and habituation, not solely through intellectual learning. In Aristotle's conception, moral virtue is not propositional knowledge that can be acquired through verbal instruction; rather, it is a character disposition that must be cultivated through consistently performing virtuous actions until they become a 'second nature'. This habituation process begins in childhood with proper moral education, where individuals learn to act virtuously even before fully grasping the rational reasons behind such actions. The concept of the unity of virtues asserts that individual virtues cannot be separated from one another in a truly virtuous character, as all virtues are interconnected and dependent on practical wisdom (*phronesis*) as the regulating virtue. Thus, the authentic development of one virtue will encourage and facilitate the development of other virtues in a holistic and integrative process (Dimmock & Fisher, 2017; Kosman, 1980).

The social and political dimensions of Aristotelian virtue ethics reflect his view that humans are 'zoon politikon' (political animals) who can only achieve eudaimonia within the context of a well-organized community. Individual virtues cannot be fully realized in isolation; rather, they require a supportive social context that facilitates the practice of virtue. Justice, as the primary social virtue, acts as a 'complete virtue' because it encompasses all aspects of proper relationships with others. Aristotle distinguished between distributive justice, which concerns proportional allocation based on merit, and corrective justice, which aims to restore balance when a transgression occurs. Both forms of justice necessitate sound political and legal institutions for their implementation, demonstrating that virtue ethics cannot be separated from broader political and social considerations (Brouwer, 2017).

### **3.2. *Virtuous Actions in Wind Breaker Anime Season 10 Episode 2***

The anime Wind Breaker serves as a contemporary representation of the battle shonen genre, which at first glance might seem to center on physical conflict and 'delinquent' characters. The series is set at Furin High School, an institution renowned for its exceptional fighting prowess, paradoxically used to protect the city from external threats. Its main character, Haruka Sakura, is initially portrayed as an individual solely interested in strength and fighting, with little interest in teamwork or a heroic role, instead aspiring to reach the top through his own power. This initial premise, focusing on battles and tough characters, seemingly implies that the narrative will be limited to exploring physical strength and power hierarchies.

However, beneath its layers of action and combat, Wind Breaker is fundamentally a deeper narrative focused on character growth and psychological recovery. As explained, this anime is "a story about people healing from past traumas and learning how to become better versions of themselves by forging connections with others." The series is specifically dedicated to "delving into its characters and truly caring about their thoughts, feelings, and emotions," making it a profound character study. This shift in emphasis from mere physical conflict to personal development and social interaction creates a rich foundation for analysis.

The development of internal character and interpersonal relationships is crucial for achieving a good life. Episode 10 of Wind Breaker Season 2 specifically highlights various 'acts of care', defined as actions or interactions that demonstrate concern, empathy, support, or responsibility for the well-being of others or oneself. These actions form the core of the moral development within the story. This concept of 'acts of care' serves as an umbrella,

encompassing a diverse range of positive actions, illustrating how various positive character traits can unite in practical deeds to enhance well-being.



**Figure 1.** Suzurin apologizes for her actions

**Source:** <https://www.bilibili.tv/id/play/2128776/13761072>

One of the most crucial scenes depicting care is ‘Suzurin’s confession and apology’. This moment demonstrates Suzurin’s immense personal courage, especially considering he was previously mired in despair and violent acts. His action of acknowledging his mistakes and apologizing to his friends and those he had wronged shows an awareness of the impact of his actions and a strong desire to begin the healing process. Suzurin’s act of resolving the inconsistency between his past behavior and his desired values is not merely an emotional expression, but a conscious choice to rectify his character (Morvan & O’Connor, 2017). This step serves as a crucial foundation for developing a positive character, shifting from negative behaviors towards a more balanced and ethical disposition.



**Figure 2.** Suzurin’s friends said they will continue to support her

**Source:** <https://www.bilibili.tv/id/play/2128776/13761072>

Additionally, the ‘unwavering support from Suzurin’s friends’ forms the core of care in this episode. They consistently demonstrate boundless loyalty and emotional backing, refusing to abandon Suzurin even at his lowest point. Their constant presence, persistent efforts to understand his suffering, and willingness to stand by him are tangible manifestations of deep friendship and genuine empathy. This collective support from his friends not only highlights positive individual traits but also illustrates how a supportive community can provide the necessary context for personal development. Their friendship creates a safe environment for Suzurin’s vulnerability, enabling him to begin his journey of recovery (Megawati & Maulana, 2024).



**Figure 3.** Kanji Nakamura's offers help to Suzurin and friends  
**Source:** <https://www.bilibili.tv/id/play/2128776/13761072>

Acts of care are also clearly evident through Kanji Nakamura's and his group's 'offer of a second chance'. Instead of imposing punishment or exclusion, they choose the path of reconciliation. By offering jobs and an opportunity for Suzurin and the Gravel Gang to start anew, this scene emphasizes the importance of compassion and belief in an individual's potential for change, even after significant past mistakes. Nakamura's decision reflects a belief in rehabilitation and transformation, prioritizing recovery over retribution. This approach aligns with a nuanced understanding of justice, which means giving what is due and ensuring no one is 'cheated, defrauded, or abused', here expanded to include a fair opportunity for redemption and reintegration into the community. Nakamura's decision demonstrates a deep understanding of human potential and long-term community well-being (Wahid, 2022).



**Figure 4.** Tsubaki's form of support for Suzurin  
**Source:** <https://www.bilibili.tv/id/play/2128776/13761072>

Furthermore, the interaction between 'Tsubakino and Suzurin' specifically highlights acts of care through empathy and deep understanding. Tsubakino does not just offer passive support; he actively strives to comprehend the root of Suzurin's suffering and anger. This active engagement shows that care involves both affective and intellectual components. Tsubakino's empathetic understanding is not merely a feeling, but a cognitive effort to connect with and grasp the underlying causes of Suzurin's distress. This creates a safe space for Suzurin to express vulnerability and begin self-healing, demonstrating that genuine care requires a deep and informed connection that addresses both the emotional and cognitive

dimensions of human experience. Tsubakino's actions are crucial for effective and profoundly impactful acts of care.



**Figure 5.** *Suzurin begs Nakamura and friends for help*  
**Source:** <https://www.bilibili.tv/id/play/2128776/13761072>

Finally, Suzurin's acceptance of hope serves as the culmination of this series of acts of care. Although initially overwhelmed by despair, his willingness to accept the hope and opportunity offered by Nakamura is a form of self-care and a commitment to his future. This illustrates an early form of courage not merely in facing external threats, but in confronting internal despair and choosing a path toward recovery. It is an internal commitment to his own future and well-being, acknowledging that he deserves a second chance. Suzurin's acceptance demonstrates his inner strength and determination to rebuild his life with the support of others (Deci & Ryan, 2012).

### **3.3. Representation of Aristotelian Virtue Ethics in Wind Breaker**

Wind Breaker Anime Season 2 Episode 10 deeply represents Aristotelian virtue ethics through Suzurin's character transformation and the surrounding social dynamics. In line with Aristotle's fundamental premise that humans are teleological beings oriented towards achieving eudaimonia — an authentic state of flourishing through developing an excellent character, this episode illustrates how its characters move from a vicious to a virtuous state by practicing moral virtues (*aretais ethikai*). Suzurin's transformation from despair and violence towards accepting hope and a second chance reflects the Aristotelian concept of a journey toward eudaimonia. In this study, transformation is interpreted representationally, through narrative and visual cues within Episode 10 that symbolically condense the broader moral trajectory of the character depicted throughout the series. Rather than tracing a full longitudinal process, the analysis focuses on how this episode encapsulates key indicators of virtue formation as a narrative culmination of prior conflicts (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2018).

The acts of care displayed in this episode, particularly Suzurin's confession and apology, are therefore examined as emblematic moments of moral praxis, consciously enacted behaviors that signify an internal reorientation consistent with Aristotelian virtue development. Suzurin's courage to admit his mistakes and apologize demonstrates a manifestation of the virtue of courage (*andreia*), which in the Aristotelian context relates not just to physical bravery but also to the moral courage to face the truth about oneself and the consequences of past actions. This act also shows the development of Suzurin's practical wisdom (*phronesis*), the ability to deliberate well about what should be done in a specific

situation to achieve good (Kraut, 2018). This acknowledgment of fault is not merely an emotional expression; it is a rational choice that demonstrates the integration of intellectual understanding of goodness with the character disposition to act in accordance with that understanding.

The unwavering support from Suzurin's friends, especially Tsubakino, illustrates the social dimension of Aristotelian virtue ethics, which emphasizes that virtues cannot develop in isolation. Aristotle's concept of humans as *zoon politikon* (political animals) is reflected in how friendship and community support become the necessary context for the development of individual virtues. The loyalty and empathy shown by Suzurin's friends represent the virtue of *philia* (friendship), which, in Aristotle's understanding, is a crucial component of a good life. Authentic friendship involves mutual care for each other's well-being and character development (Richardson & Sherman, 1991). This consistent emotional support creates an environment conducive to the practice of virtue and character transformation, demonstrating how individual and social virtues mutually reinforce each other in a holistic process.

The offer of a second chance by Kanji Nakamura and his group demonstrates the representation of the virtue of justice (*dikaiosyne*) within the broader context of restorative justice. Nakamura's decision to offer jobs and new opportunities to Suzurin and the Gravel Gang, instead of imposing retributive punishment, reflects an Aristotelian understanding of justice. This understanding is not solely concerned with proportional punishment but also with restoring balance and reintegrating individuals into the community. This action shows the application of practical wisdom in a social context, where Nakamura uses rational judgment to determine the most appropriate response to a specific situation, considering not only universal rules but also the context, individual character, and the potential for positive change (Norman, 2016). This approach aligns with the Aristotelian concept of equity (*epieikeia*), which allows for a flexible and contextual application of justice.

The interaction between Tsubakino and Suzurin specifically illustrates the virtues of empathy and deep understanding, which, within an Aristotelian framework, can be understood as a manifestation of practical wisdom applied to interpersonal relationships. Tsubakino's active effort to comprehend the root of Suzurin's suffering demonstrates not only the virtue of compassion, but also an intellectual virtue in the form of a deep understanding of the human condition and emotional complexity. In Aristotelian terminology, Tsubakino's actions show an integration of intellectual and moral virtues, where a theoretical understanding of human suffering is translated into practical actions aimed at alleviating suffering and facilitating healing (Kosman, 1980). This cognitive and affective approach to empathy reflects the Aristotelian concept of the unity of virtues, where various individual virtues work synergistically to achieve a greater purpose (Annas, 2007).

Suzurin's acceptance of hope represents the aspect of agency and self-care in Aristotelian virtue ethics, showing that character transformation requires not only external support but also an internal commitment to change. This internal commitment is textually represented through Suzurin's reflective dialogue and bodily expressions during his conversation with Nakamura, where he pauses, lowers his head, and admits, "I don't deserve this, but I want to start again." The hesitation before this statement, followed by tears and a deep exhale, visually conveys a moment of moral realization and volitional choice. These narrative cues, verbal confession, emotional restraint, and physical surrender, collectively signify the transition from passive despair to active self-determination, embodying the Aristotelian notion of deliberate moral agency (*prohairesis*). Suzurin's decision to accept the

opportunity offered by Nakamura reflects the development of self-respect and the recognition of his own worth as an individual deserving of a second chance. In the Aristotelian context, this action demonstrates an emerging wisdom about the nature of human flourishing and the recognition that *eudaimonia* is not solely about individual achievement but also about living in harmony with others in a supportive community. This acceptance also shows the courage to face the uncertainty and vulnerability inherent in the process of change, as well as a commitment to engage in virtuous practices that will facilitate long-term character transformation (Russell, 2009).

#### 4. Conclusion

*Wind Breaker* Season 2 Episode 10 illustrates the principles of Aristotelian virtue ethics through its contemporary narrative. Suzurin's movement from despair to recovery, triggered by his confession and apology, exemplifies the practice of moral virtues such as courage (*andreia*). This aligns with Aristotle's *Doctrine of the Mean* and the concept of *prohairesis* (voluntary choice through rational deliberation), showing that ethical character is cultivated through conscious decision and repeated habituation. The episode demonstrates how fiction can effectively convey philosophical ideas through moral conflict, emotional resolution, and visual symbolism, thereby bridging classical ethical reflection with narrative art. This representation suggests that ancient moral frameworks remain resonant and adaptable within contemporary cultural forms.

This study offers interpretive insights relevant to both general and academic audiences. For broader readers, the anime's portrayal of *phronēsis* (practical wisdom), *philia* (friendship), and *eudaimonia* (flourishing) invites reflection on moral courage and relational virtue in everyday life. Academically, the analysis provides a focused example of how virtue ethics can be applied to media narratives, highlighting anime's potential as a pedagogical and analytical medium for exploring ethical philosophy. Rather than claiming definitive proof, the study emphasizes interpretive possibility — demonstrating how popular media can serve as a dialogical space for philosophical engagement. Further research could examine audience reception and comparative cases to substantiate these interpretive claims and explore how virtue ethics operates across diverse cultural narratives.

This research, which represents Aristotelian virtue ethics in *Wind Breaker*, offers significant advantages. It successfully bridges classical philosophy with popular culture, making abstract concepts more accessible and relevant — a crucial contribution to the pedagogy of philosophy. The in-depth analysis of acts of care and character dynamics also provides concrete evidence of how virtues are manifested in a contemporary narrative, enriching academic discussion. However, there are also limitations. Due to the focus on a single series, the generalization of findings may be limited, and interpretations could be subjective, influenced by the researcher's understanding. Without empirical audience data, the actual impact of these representations on viewers' understanding or behavior might not be fully measurable, despite being engaging for young generations.

For future research, it would be interesting to explore how narrative media like anime can be effectively used as a pedagogical tool to teach philosophical concepts, not only in virtue ethics but also in other areas of philosophy. Research could compare the representation of virtue ethics in *Wind Breaker* with other fictional works from various genres to identify patterns or differences in their philosophical application. It is also crucial to conduct empirical studies on how audiences interpret and internalize the ethical concepts presented in such narratives, and whether this understanding influences their behavior or

moral views. Finally, research could examine how the rejuvenation of virtue ethics in modern moral philosophy is reflected in popular media, identifying trends and their philosophical implications for society at large.

### Notes on contributors

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