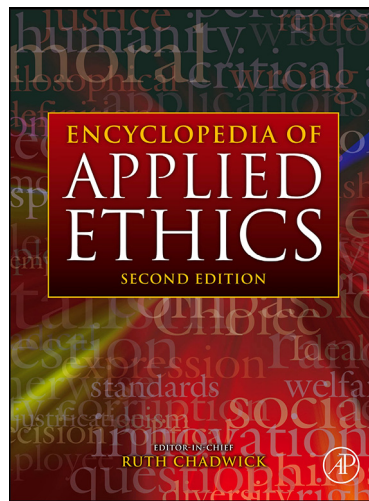


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## Friendship

L Thomas, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, USA

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In his work the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle put forth what many consider to be the richest account of friendship ever written. Contemporary discussions of the subject continue to be enormously indebted to his views on the subject, although rich and subtle refinements are offered in light of theoretical developments in fields of study such as psychology and sociology. This article begins with a brief account of Aristotle's topology of friendship, which is then followed by an extensive discussion of what Aristotle regards as friendship at its best. The third section of the article briefly examines the role that parental love may play in the realization of friendship at its best. The article ends with a brief look at friendship in the face of an ever-increasingly technological world.

### Three Kinds of Friendship

Aristotle held that there are three kinds of friendship: On the one hand, there are friendships of either utility or pleasure; on the other, there is the highest form of friendship, which he called perfect friendship. We have a friendship of pleasure when two people commonly and regularly engage in an enjoyable activity together and, indeed, look forward to engaging in that activity with one another. This might be said of two people who, in this manner, play tennis or cards together. The same might be said of two people who regularly attend a tavern for beer. We have a friendship of utility, by contrast, when in a like manner two people are able to count on one another in order to accomplish one or more important tasks. Study partners serve as an excellent example. The two partners could find it helpful to study the same material together. Or the two might complement each other because one is strong in an area in which the other is weak. So, for example, one person is brilliant in mathematics but not literature, whereas the other is very weak in mathematics but brilliant in literature.

One thing that both friendships of utility and friendships of pleasure have in common is that the interaction between the friends is essentially confined to the activity in question. Two friends who play cards together at the community center might not meet otherwise. Likewise for the two folks who regularly have a drink after work at the local tavern. Of course, it is easy enough to imagine that one kind of friendship might carry over into the other. For instance, two people who study together could also end up playing a sport together.

This would be rather natural, given that they both like the same sport and are more or less equally good at it. Just so, it is easy enough to imagine that two people who meet regularly at a bar after work for a drink, and who occasionally play volleyball together after work, nonetheless keep their interactions limited to just these forms of interaction. For instance, they might understand that in view of both their religious and social differences, as well as family concerns, it would simply be a mistake for them to try interacting outside of the tavern. Each is comfortable with the limited interaction and wants no more.

Another thing that both types of friendship have in common is that when either the pleasure or the utility that occasioned them disappears, then so does the friendship. Precisely, because it is the case that in a friendship of pleasure or utility the emphasis is upon the benefit being received and not at all upon the richness of the character of the person providing the benefit, the loss of that benefit seriously diminishes, if not destroys entirely, the reason for the interaction. And if a friendship is based upon an activity of utility and an activity of pleasure, and one of those activities must be set aside, then we can easily see why the friendship is apt not to be as strong. For it is not as if the remaining activity will fill the void left by the activity that has been set aside. The example of study partners who play sports should make this clear. If for whatever reason playing sports together is no longer an option, because one individual lost a limb (say), it is very unlikely that the time that they used to spend together playing sports will be filled with some other activity, least of all studying, since, in the first place, they only played sports after they had completed their studying together. Certainly, there is no independent reason to look for something to fill the void, owing to a deep overarching commitment that each has to one another.

Aristotle claimed that with perfect friendships, having a perfect friend or a companion friend, as is often said, is rather like having another self. But a friend of utility or pleasure is far from being like another self. This consideration underscores the claim in the preceding paragraph that the loss of the utility or pleasure is pretty much the undoing of a friendship of utility or pleasure, for there is no respect in which losing the friend is rather like losing a part of oneself. Typically, two individuals who limit their interaction to drinks at a bar understand all too well that there is more of significance that separates them than there is that unites them.

## The Perfection of Companion Friendship

Aristotle's account of companion friendship is profoundly moving. He maintains that a person would want this kind of relationship, even if the individual had all the other treasures in the world; for, he held that companion friendship was absolutely indispensable to living a meaningful life. He further claims that companion friends spend a considerable amount of time in one another's company. Then there is Aristotle's claim noted earlier that a companion friend is rather like another self. What is absolutely crucial to Aristotle's account of companion friendship is that we choose our companion friends, where choosing is to be understood as involving considerable deliberation about the matter. This stands to reason given the enormous importance that Aristotle attaches to companion friendship. It is not possible to be rational and to give no more deliberation to choosing a companion friend than one gives to choosing a pencil or a computer or even a pet. Without denying the moral significance of animals or the moral obligations that human beings may have to treat animals in certain ways, it is out of the question that we should ever regard our most beloved animal like 'another self' in the extraordinarily marvelous sense that Aristotle had in mind. Insight into the claim that a companion friend is rather like another self is best gained by considering Aristotle's observation that companion friends spend lot of time together.

Already, we have a striking difference between companion friendship, on the one hand, and friendships of pleasure or utility, on the other. With the latter two, the primary motivation for individuals spending time together is not that they profoundly like one another, but that doing so serves as a means to accomplishing a desired goal, be it studying or playing a tennis match or what have you. With companion friends, things are effectively the other way around: it does not matter much what they do, just so long as they spend time together. So, for instance, two companion friends might regularly visit a giant shopping mall, precisely because doing so provides them with a very rich opportunity to interact with one another as they react to a multitude of old and new things that are on exhibit or that are occurring in the mall during each visit. The two friends react to one another as they each react to the various things going on around them. They converse about various things. Sometimes the conversation between them is none other than a sustained continuation of a conversation that has been underway, which may in some cases be infused with a new perspective as a result of what is going on around them. Other times, an entirely new topic may be taken up. Of course, one or both of the friends might actually buy something while at the mall. If that does not happen, though, the visit to the mall will hardly be considered a waste of time,

precisely because visiting the mall together provided the two friends with a very fruitful way in which way to spend time together.

Countless are the ways in which companion friends make a point of spending time together. Moreover, their doing so is typically very spontaneous. To be sure, there will certainly be things that they regularly do together, such as watching a given program or attending a particular social event or meeting up for lunch. It is just that the regularly scheduled set of events will hardly exhaust the extent of the interactions between companion friends. If, as is most likely, they live in the same neighborhood, then it will be common for each to make spontaneous visits to one another's home in order to discuss something (seek advice or share an interesting experience) or to see if the other is willing to come along for an errand that has to be run.

Now, spending time together turns out to be a much more complicated matter than one might at first suppose. This is because with rare exception doing so necessarily involves a significant measure of behavioral self-disclosure, since even the slightest gesture (or lack thereof) can be quite revealing. Sexual interest, for instance, is something the vast majority of individuals pick up on instantaneously, though often enough the indications of this involve only the slightest gesture or two, which have a duration of only a split second. Thus, two friends regularly spending time together invariably results in both learning quite a few things about each other's character, as well as each other's likes and dislikes. Finally, in this vein, there is the opportunity for each friend to witness the kind of social presence that the other has, where a person's social presence can be defined as the way in which strangers tend to respond to a person in the course of a routine form of social interaction. Some people have a most commanding social presence; others have very little; most are somewhere in between. Sometimes a commanding social presence is most effective; other times, it can get in the way of things. Most people have a relatively clear sense of their social presence and adjust their behavior accordingly. Sometimes, though, a person is clueless. Needless to say, two friends who spend lots of time together will soon enough learn which characterization holds for the other.

Self-disclosure is typically understood as verbal, and so in terms of personal information that persons verbally convey about themselves to another. There is no gainsaying the extraordinary significance of verbal self-disclosure. In the preceding paragraph, however, I have merely drawn attention to the very deep truth that we can self-disclose a fount of information about ourselves without saying so much as a word about our personal life. What is more, there is a very straightforward respect in which we are more vulnerable with behavioral self-disclosure, since in a public setting we have very little

control over the events that will occur to which we will find ourselves reacting in some way or other, whereas with verbal self-disclosure, the disclosure is very much a decision that we make. In addition to established patterns of behavior that we have, equally revealing about our character is our response to unexpected situations, from seeing a lost child who is crying for mom and dad to realizing that the person who is before one is a transgendered individual to being the object of an ethnic slur.

Thus, in choosing to spend lots of time with a person, we are in effect choosing a person who shall witness many of the most subtle aspects of our lives, some of which we may not be fully conscious. Therein lies the significance of Aristotle's claim that companion friends spend lots of time together. Though few would disagree with the point, few grasp its tremendous import.

At this juncture, a word about privacy is in order. Disclosing things to another, be it verbally or non-verbally, is one thing; intruding into another's life is quite another. Even companion friends have aspects of their lives that are private, which both parties to the friendship respect. The obvious example in this regard would be the intimate aspects of each companion friend's life. It is obviously out of place to ask a companion friend "How was sex with your partner last night?" even though it could be quite obvious to the friend that this is precisely what happened last night. And even if a companion friend should disclose a difficult moment on one occasion, it would clearly be a mistake for the friend who is told this to take the self-disclosure as a license to make inquires generally about the sex life of his or her friend.

Understandably, the very nature of companion friendship makes it the case that such friends have great insight into one another's private lives. Having this insight is nonetheless very much compatible with respecting each other's private life and thus broaching a particular subject only if either explicitly invited to do so by the friend or if there is a crisis that the friend can address only by broaching the subject matter in question. When moments like this occur, the friend who is called upon commands the respect of the friend who is being helped, precisely because: (a) the friend has a most informed perspective of the other's life, which can be brought to bear, and (b) the friend is capable of offering important and sound criticisms without being motivated by unsavory motives such as jealousy or vindictiveness.

I turn now to Aristotle's rhapsodic claim that a companion friend is rather like another self. No matter how much self-knowledge we have with regard to our own actions, we never witness the behavior that we perform in the way that others do. Obviously, we do not affect ourselves by what we do in the way that we affect others. What is more, we do not engage in our own behavior with the same anticipation that an observer or recipient of it does. Certainly, Winston Churchill and Martin Luther

King, Jr. were well aware of their tremendous oratory skills. Just so, it would be ludicrous to suppose that either of these individuals anticipated their own speeches in the way that their audiences did, or that either speaker was affected by his speeches in the very salubrious manner in which their audiences were. Thus, having a person who could speak to our behavior with integrity and goodwill would surely constitute having a most majestic moral gift. Such a person would be as close as one gets to being like oneself, while yet being unmistakably not who one is. For Aristotle, a companion friend occupies this very role. For Aristotle, the virtuous person says the right thing at the right time and in the right way and to the right person. We all stand in need of praise; we all stand in need of criticism. However, a sycophant would be too eager to praise, whereas a competitor would be too eager to criticize. Sometimes the only approval we need is the absence of criticism, and sometimes the criticism that we need is best made in the context of praise. I assume the first case to be rather obvious. An example of the latter might be the following. Suppose that a renowned lecturer has a companion friend sitting in the audience. During an evening snack the friend says,

The way in which you handled the third question put to you this evening was just wonderful. The only thing I would have done differently, if at all, is mention the name of the person whose question you were answering, since the name of each person's question is given out.

This is a way of making a constructive criticism without the making the criticism the point of the remark, which in this context proves to be the right way to be most effective.

Most significantly, a companion friend is (in most cases) able to provide either praise or criticism from a particularly informed perspective with regard to the motivations of his or her friend. Indeed, unlike the average individual who experienced or witnessed what was done, a companion friend is typically in the position to say, "I know how much it meant for to you say or do such-and-such." Or, conversely, a companion friend can indicate that he or she has difficulty in understanding why the friend behaved in a particular way. The idea here is straightforward enough. If companion friends have difficulty understanding one's another behavior, then it is rather likely that others will as well.

Now, to say that having a companion friend is like another self is to say that there is an enormous amount of trust between companion friends. It should be easy enough to see why this is so. Where trust is warranted, then we can be vulnerable to a person without having to worry at all that the person will exploit that vulnerability to harm us. When a male is trustworthy in the right ways, then a woman can trust him to accompany her from

destination A to destination B without any concern whatsoever that he will behave in a sexually inappropriate manner toward her. Again, where honesty prevails between two individuals, there is no worry at all that one would take money from the other, although this could be easily done without raising any suspicion.

Given that companion friends have an enormous amount of knowledge about one another's life, the belief on the part of each that the other will invariably use that knowledge in just the right way, at the right time, and so forth is none other than trust at its best. There is never even the slightest worry that there will be inappropriate disclosure. There are numerous ways in which this can happen, from being explicit to matters of innuendo. So not having to worry about such thing is indeed quite significant. And, of course, the fact that it continues to be the case that neither has to worry about inappropriate disclosure from the other, because there have been no mishaps in that regard, serves only to nourish the friendship and trust between them.

There can be no greater sign of just how extraordinary the trust is in this regard than that, once we put circumstances of human safety aside, there are very few, if any, acceptable excuses for failing to live up to this trust. It is not uncommon nowadays for people to use being inebriated as an excuse for various forms of unacceptable behavior on their part. Needless to say, being inebriated would not be an acceptable excuse for disclosing the personal aspects of a companion friend's life.

It is important to clarify here that friendship is very much a dynamic relationship. The bond of affection between friends and the deep trust between them need to be constantly reinforced. There is nothing that can be done in the past that suffices to make two individuals friends for life. To be sure, people can be friends for life. If this is so, however, that is because they have regularly interacted with one another, or they have managed to renew their interaction after a hiatus. Nothing, of course, can erase the fond memories of the past. The point, though, is that no companion friendship that is thriving in the present is based entirely upon the richness of the past. Even companion friendship admits of degrees. And it may very well be true that were it not for the extraordinary richness of the past there would not be the less intense friendship of the present. As we all know, geographical distance can be a serious impediment to spontaneous interaction between two friends, as can familial and career responsibilities. Of course, technology and social networking sites have made it possible for individuals to remain in contact across tremendous distances. Alas, it is a mistake to think that such modes of interaction are even remotely analogous to the richness of face-to-face interaction. In this regard, the contemporary notion of 'friend' may be more illusory than not. In the conclusion to this

article, I shall offer some remarks regarding the way in which technology bears upon friendship.

The observations of the preceding paragraph bring out the difference between siblings and friendship. The sibling relationship is at root a biological one (with adoptions serving as a parallel here); moreover, the sibling relationship is not a matter of choice. While the ideal, no doubt, is that siblings love and care about one another forever, the fact of the matter is that if individuals are siblings, then they are siblings whether they care for one another or not. Whatever else is true, it is plainly ludicrous to say that two people are friends whether they care for one another or not.

Aristotle held that companion friends are individuals of good moral character. Interestingly, one aspect of good moral character consists in exercising foresight in order to ensure that one behaves in the morally right way. This, in turn, suggests that there is a very strong positive correlation between having the wherewithal to make a good companion friend and the realization of the capacity for moral maturity. A morally immature companion friend seems to be something of an oxymoron, precisely because the person would not be someone who could be counted upon.

Can immoral persons be companion friends? Surprisingly, the answer is more complicated than might be initially supposed. This is because there are many ways to be immoral, and some of them are constitutively more compatible with companion friendships than others. For example, it would seem that being sexist is compatible with there being companion friendship between men. Likewise, it would seem that there can be companion friendships between members of a given ethnic group, although the members of that ethnic group have downright objectionable views of another ethnic group. In both of these cases, there can abiding bonds of affection and tremendous trust between the individuals. We could insist that companion friendship is impossible between such individuals. Unfortunately, this would be merely a stipulation that has no claim to being true to the reality of things. Arguably, where there can be profound trust between individuals, there can also be companion friendship between them, and history makes it clear that in the absence of the considerable trust between individuals of a given group, it would not be possible for them to commit the evil that they commit.

Where companion friendship seems entirely out of the question, though, is with someone whom I shall term the consummate immoral person. This is a person who would not hesitate to wrong his or her parents if this would entail obtaining a significant benefit and doing so could be done with impunity. To the extent that a person's moral personality veers in that direction, it becomes increasingly unlikely that the individual has the moral fortitude to be a companion friend. It is not possible to have trust in a

consummate immoral person, whereas trust can abound between members of the same ethnic group who have morally indefensible views of individuals belonging to another ethnic group. This latter point has parallels in other areas of life. For instance, being a loving parent of one ethnic group in no way precludes holding quite despicable views of the members of another ethnic group.

### Parental Love and Companion Friendship

Aristotle attached enormous importance to upbringing, famously claiming that we become just by doing just things. Yet he says nothing about the way in which good parental upbringing contributes to companion friends. I shall briefly speak to this in the remarks that follow.

We are born without a sense of self – without even a sense of who we are. That changes ever so rapidly, and nothing plays a more important role in the proper psychological development of an infant than parental love. As we shall see, parental love underwrites two aspects of the self that contribute mightily to a child becoming the kind of individual who could be a companion friend. One of these is a sense of self-worth. The other is an appreciation for the gift of love. I shall discuss these in turn.

Parental love at its best bestows upon the child a deep and abiding sense of worth that is not tied to the child being talented or beautiful; for, parents love their child for no other reason than that the child is theirs. Of course, a child may go on to excel in many ways. He or she may become a brilliant economist or a stunning fashion model. Just so, it is not for these reasons that the child is loved. Parents are rightly proud of the accomplishments of their child. However, parental love is not to be confused with parental praise. When parental love is as it should be, no child feels that she or he has to excel in some striking way in order to be the undisputed object of parental love. Because parental love underwrites self-respect, such love is the basis for a child coming to have a proper valuing of the self, and so the belief that he or she should be treated fairly by others. For, it is true that we should be treated fairly however lacking in extraordinary accomplishments our lives might be.

As noted previously, Aristotle observed that we become just by acting justly. He did not mean something so banal as the view that justice is simply a matter of mindless repetition. Rather, he was making a profound point about character formation. The point being made here is that it is in a like manner that we grasp that we have a sense of worth and so should be treated fairly, namely, by being so treated. And in this regard, parents serve as the point of departure for every child. An Aristotelian companion friend cannot be one who is more interested in having the approval of the other friend than in doing what is right by that friend. An individual

who has been the beneficiary of abiding parental love is less likely to be that kind of person and is less likely to look for that kind of person in a friendship.

It is an incontrovertible truth that the most complete and rhapsodic description of a beautiful sunset will never replace actually witnessing one, as doing the latter is rightly understood to occasion an appreciation that one cannot otherwise have. Similarly, although an individual may fully and brilliantly understand the biological workings of pregnancy and giving birth, it would be sheer folly to suppose that this knowledge is actually anywhere even close to having the experience of being pregnant and giving birth. Again, we rightly hold that there is an understanding that comes from in fact having the experience of being pregnant and giving birth that a theoretical account, no matter how complete, cannot yield.

Parental love at its best is a sustained and marvelous experience on the child's part of the gift of giving motivated by love. This occasions a deep emotional and visceral understanding by the child of just how wondrously affirming and nurturing giving can be when it is occasioned by love. The simplest gift given out of love at the right time and in the right way can be an everlasting treasure. A child who has been raised by loving parents brings this knowledge to a companion friendship.

It would certainly be too strong to claim that only people who have benefited from a childhood of parental love can enter a companion friendship as Aristotle conceived of it. Just so, we cannot have it both ways: we cannot hold that parental love is the non-fungible good and foundation that we take it to be in a child's life and, at the same time, maintain that it is easy to live equally well without such love. As the life of Helen Keller reminds us, there are individuals who beat the odds in ways that literally defy the imagination. Alas, such individuals are the exceptions that confirm the rule. We do not need to deny that it is possible for an individual to flourish having grown up without parental love (or surrogate thereof). We need only to be mindful of the truth that such an individual is surely quite the exception to the rule. Thus, when the parent–child relationship is as it should be, there cannot be a greater and more marvelous moral platform from which human beings exercise one of the most significant choices that individuals ever get to make, namely, the choice of companion friendships.

### Conclusion: Friendship and Modernity

On the one hand, there is a fundamental respect in which Aristotle's account of companion friendship flies in the face of modernity and the commitment to women and men as moral, social, and intellectual equals. On the other, the account speaks to a fundamental truth of which we must not lose sight in a world of technology that permits

so much communication at a distance. I shall briefly discuss these two matters in turn.

Nowadays, it is not uncommon for people to suppose that their spouse is their companion friend. Needless to say, there is no conceptual difficulty at all in viewing marriage as a species of companion friendship. The exception here would be arranged marriages. Yet even with arranged marriages, the two individuals could indeed become companion friends in just the way that Aristotle conceived of the idea; for, there is no conceptual barrier to two individuals coming to realize that indeed they do make the best fit for one another even though they initially had no say in the matter. At any rate, allowing that marriage can be a form of companion friendship merely confirms what we already know intuitively, namely, that (i) companion friendship admits of different levels and (ii) a committed sexual relationship is transformative in its own way.

Turning to technology, it is manifestly clear that technology has radically changed the way in which people can and do communicate with one another. Thanks to cell phones, a great deal of voice-to-voice communication now takes place while people are in the middle of doing something else, and thanks to text messaging, a great deal of communication has been compressed to abbreviated phrases and words: 'c u soon'; 'where r u?' Some individuals actually prefer exchanging text messages to conversing with one another by phone. Social networking sites, of course, are yet another way in which individuals can communicate with others – indeed, many individuals at once.

Recalling Aristotle's view that companion friends should spend much time together: Do these new forms of communication naturally facilitate friendship? It is not obvious that this question warrants an affirmative answer. This is because Aristotle envisioned companion friends to be typically the center of one another's attention during the time that they spend together. This is why the time spent together has far more significance than the activity they might choose to do together, be it enjoying a meal or watching a movie or going for a hike. Well, people can be in the throes of doing just about anything while text messaging; hence, the person whom they are texting need not be the center of the attention of the person texting. Although a cell phone conversation accords a person far more attention, there is the unfortunate fact that cell phone conversations are liable to interruption at any moment. Indeed, a cell phone call may come to an abrupt halt for no other reason than that an acquaintance has just shown up. This simple reality nicely speaks to Aristotle's point.

What Aristotle surely recognized is that there can be no substitute whatsoever for the direct spatial proximity (DSP), let us say, between two friends. In terms of sustaining interaction, DSP has a gravitas that cannot be easily overridden. If, for example, two companions friends, Leslie and Hilary, are walking through the mall together

and Hilary encounters an acquaintance (a co-worker or classmate), it is simply out of the question that the acquaintance would now take priority. In the typical case, Hilary would introduce Leslie and the acquaintance, the three would chat a bit, and then Leslie and Hilary would continue their perusal through the mall. Likewise, if one of the companion friends received a phone call, the conversation would most certainly be kept to a minimum so that the two friends could continue spending time together. We can all imagine an emergency situation, as when one of the friends has to handle a crisis at work, where the interaction between two companion friends has to end abruptly. However, it takes an emergency situation to bring the DSP interaction between two friends to an abrupt halt. Most significantly, this is not so with mere technological communication between two individuals. Even companion friends must take measures to ensure that their communication via technological means is not routinely subject to immediate interruption.

There is no gainsaying the extraordinary advances of technology and the absolutely remarkable ways in which it has facilitated communication. The point of the preceding two paragraphs is simply that technology is not automatically an ally of companion friendship. This is owing to the very substantial truth that mere communication with another person is not at all tantamount to making that person the center of one's attention. More poignantly, the intrusive nature of technological communication actually makes it difficult to make another the center of one's attention while using technology to communicate with that individual.

Social networking sites bring out this latter point in a particularly instructive way. These sites have changed the way in which we use the term 'friend.' The word has become a verb, and on sites such as Facebook one can now 'friend' or 'unfriend' an individual with the mere click of a mouse. People even have 'friends' whom they do not even know, and many boast of the number of 'friends' they have rather like sports players boast of the number of points they have scored. This use of the word 'friend' is surely problematic. The word 'friend' has always had at least two senses to it that have been readily understood: casual friends and close friends. In either case, though, it makes no sense at all to refer to someone as a friend, if one does not even know the individual.

Interestingly, modernity has given rise to what may be regarded as a new category of casual friendship, namely, hooking up. Rather than drinks and casual conversation, the goal is entirely non-committal sex, often between individuals who do not know one another. Interestingly, as the term 'friend' is so often applied nowadays there is also very little commitment between 'friends.' Moreover, in their use of social networking sites and also in their text messaging, many young people in particular have become quite comfortable with sharing private information about

themselves, including revealing photographs (as with sexting), with individuals who can only be properly characterized as strangers. It is against this backdrop of social behavior that the practice of hooking up occurs. Given this social context, it would be rather surprising if a practice akin to hooking up did not come about. Together, these considerations speak to the enormous extent to which technology has not only tremendously influenced the way in which people behave, but indeed the way in which people conceive of their lives and thus the conceptualization of friendship.

From antiquity to modernity, nothing is more indicative of our ideals and values than the individuals whom we choose as our companion friends. The hope is that humanity shall never lose sight of this truth. What a pity it would be if we the beneficiaries of modernity should be so busy giving pride of place to technology that we become inured to the reality, so majestically articulated by Aristotle, that nothing equals or can replace the richness of companion friends doing what is so very simple and so very independent of all that technology has to offer, namely, spending time together.

*See also:* Anatomy, Ethics of; Aristotelian Ethics; Family, The; Loyalty; Moral Particularism; Personal Relationships; Privacy, Challenges to; Privacy, Ethics of; Trust; Virtue Ethics.

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### Biographical Sketch

Laurence Thomas is professor of philosophy and professor of political science in the Maxwell School at Syracuse University. He has written extensively on the topic of evil and the family. The author of several books, his most recent book is *The Family and the Political Self* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).