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## FRIENDSHIP

Deep friends love one another. But this cannot be the distinguishing feature of friendship. For as the parent-child relationship makes abundantly clear, two people can love one another quite deeply and yet not be friends. Indeed, parents and children may not even confide in one another, whereas the idea of deep friends not confiding in one another seems almost unthinkable.

My aim in this essay is to shed some light upon this very significant interpersonal relationship. There are various species of friendship, such as friendships of pleasure and friendships of convenience.<sup>1</sup> I shall label the species of friendship about which I shall be speaking companion friendship.

### 1. SALIENT FEATURES OF FRIENDSHIP

(1) Companion friendships are a manifestation of a choice on the part of the parties involved. (2) Neither party to the relationship is under the authority of the other. This is not to say that they are equal in the amount of authority which they have; nor is it to say that neither has influence with the other. (I leave aside job situations where in virtue of rank or responsibilities one has authority over the other.) (3) There is an enormous bond of mutual trust between such friends. This is a bond which is cemented by equal self-disclosure and, for that very reason, is a sign of the very special regard which each has for one another. I shall discuss these points in turn.

#### 1.1.

In one sense this first difference requires no explanation. Children do not choose their parents, though they may make many other choices in connection with their parents, including sometimes the one with whom they shall live. But is it just as obvious that we do not choose our friends. Well, yes and no. On the one hand, there is clearly something to the idea that friendships are an expression of choice; no one

supposes that she or he had no choice but to be a person's friend. Yet, it is all too obvious that as a rule we do not self-consciously choose our friends in the way that we choose, say, the clothes that we wear. One does not shop for a friend in the way that one shops for an article of clothing. There is a very clear sense in which we grow into friendships; indeed, we can even be surprised that our interaction with someone has given rise to such companion friendship. We are surprised in that it would never have occurred to us that so deep a friendship would have developed. Thus, on the other hand, there is a sense in which friendships happen to us. I argue below that these seemingly conflicting intuitions about friendship merely reflect our feelings about different aspects of this kind of interpersonal relationship.

As I have observed, companion friendship involves love. In fact, it parallels romantic love to a remarkable extent. Now, people are often said to fall in love. I hold that a similar phenomenon can occur with friendship. In the case of romantic love, the conversational implicature is clearly that the person about whom this is said was more or less besieged by feelings of love for so-and-so, as opposed to choosing to have those feelings.<sup>2</sup> Still, no one would say that a person had no choice but to love the individual in question, notwithstanding the fact that initial feelings of love are sometimes experienced as an onslaught. To understand what happens here some observations about social interaction are in order.

We may think of such interaction as being on a continuum with respect to being structured.<sup>3</sup> At one end we have maximally structured social interaction, where the interaction of the parties in question is highly governed by the social roles which they occupy; at the other we have minimally structured social interaction, where how the parties interact with one another is not primarily a function of social roles, and so where matters of propriety and protocol are least apropos, if at all. In the latter instance, morality, alone, is indispensable to how the parties interact with one another. Most social interaction, of course, falls somewhere between these two extremes.

Interaction between heads of state is generally maximally structured, since it often involves highly ritualized behavior: what one says, the order in which one says it, one's posture while speaking, salutations, and so on are all rather structured. Most interactions between strangers, while not involving highly ritualized behavior, are nonethe-

less governed by social conventions concerning the roles of the parties involved, as with physician and her patient, clergywoman and her parishioner, clerk and customer, and the like. Even behavior between associates, that is, people who are non-companion friends but with whom we interact regularly and whose company we occasionally enjoy, is governed considerably by social conventions. It is a matter of impropriety for associates to enquire about one another's personal life.

While it may be thought that interaction between immediate family members is minimally structured, if any social interaction is, the truth of the matter is that this is rarely the case (except perhaps between siblings). For until very, very recently social conventions have strongly dictated what the roles and duties of wife and husband should be toward one another; and, of course, interaction between parents and children is very much governed by a conception of how parents and children should interact with one another. These remarks about social roles are developed and refined in Section 2.1.

(Throughout this essay, I shall restrict the use of family to cases where children are being raised. This restriction would seem to accord with convention; for one can ask a (married) couple whether or when it plans to start a family. If the family is thought of as an institution this makes sense precisely because it is in the context of having and rearing children that adults would seem to acquire new obligations that can not be circumvented by agreement. By contrast, a romantically involved couple, whether married or not, could agree to all sorts of arrangements, so long as no moral precepts were violated. Nothing about the wisdom of what is agreed upon is implied.)

As one might surmise, I want to say that companion friendships and romantic loves are characteristically and paradigmatically minimally structured interpersonal relationships. Even matters of etiquette and protocol are often put aside. We would not quite know what to make of two such individuals who, for instance, insisted upon addressing one another formally or holding each other to the minutest detail of etiquette, when they are alone together, save that this was a precious form of amusement between the two of them. Deep friendships and romantic lovers are the only two forms of interpersonal relationships where the involved parties interact with one another intensely and frequently, but yet, aside from the rules of morality, the nature of that interaction is not defined by this or that set of social rules. If there is a caveat in order here it pertains to the extent to

which gender alone is thought to entail a proper conception of behavior. This is a complication which I shall not pursue here. Suffice it to say, that gender behavior does make a difference. Females touch and embrace to a far greater degree than males ever do (assuming heterosexual orientation across the board); and if touch is one of the ways in which bonding takes place,<sup>4</sup> then female-female friendships have an important dimension to them that male-male friendships lack.

We are now in a position to give a partial explanation of why deep friendships and romantic loves seem to be a matter of choice, on the one hand, and something which happens to us, on the other. I have claimed that deep friendships and romantic loves are characteristically and paradigmatically minimally structured interpersonal relationships. Needless to say, though, we do not go about our daily activities under the assumption that we could interact in this way with any person whom we might come across. Quite the contrary, we have every reason to believe that there are very few people with whom we could interact in this way. For minimally structured interaction will be harmonious only if the parties involved are sufficiently attuned to the way in which each other views and interacts with the world. Only the most self-centered of individuals could assume that most people are so attuned to him. Successful minimally structured interaction requires a shared conception of the good.

Now, not only do we go about our daily activities under the assumption that we could not have this kind of relationship with others, there is surely no way of knowing that such a relationship with someone is possible except through interacting with her or him. This is not to say that we cannot exclude some people outright, but that the only measure of whether or not it is possible to have such a minimally structured relationship with someone is the way in which one's interaction with that person proceeds.

Given these considerations, the surprise element of deep friendships and romantic loves can be put thus: while interacting with a person under the ubiquitous assumption that most social interaction does not give rise to minimally structured relationships, we come to have the feeling that in the instance at hand such a relationship is possible. We are surprised because we had no more reason to believe that our interaction with this person would have given rise to such feelings than we had to believe that our interaction with others would have done so, assuming that all those in question are moral individuals with their share of foibles. A person may unwittingly generate this feeling

in various ways: by telling a story or revealing a facet of his life which strikes a rather responsive chord in our hearts, by behaving in a way which we find particularly moving, and so on.

Though we have no control over a person's doing or saying things that so move us, what we do upon having experienced such feelings is another matter entirely. That is up to us. This is where the element of choice in friendships and romantic love comes into the picture. We can examine our feelings in light of previous ones, if experience permits this. We can more carefully examine the life of the person whose behaviour generated these feelings. In particular, we can examine our feelings about his behavior in several different contexts to be sure that there was nothing suspect about the context which initially gave rise to the feeling that we could have a minimally structured relationship with the person. It is one thing to be intrigued, fascinated, and even captivated by a person who can generate this sort of feeling in us. We are rightly or, at any rate, understandably, so moved by a person who can cause us to have such feelings. However, it is another thing to lose entirely one's sense of reason and perspective on things. Some fallings in love undoubtedly have this affect upon people, but this is not part and parcel of what it means to fall in love or, for that matter, to fall into a deep friendship.

Before moving on, I should like to mention that I am well aware of the fact that deep friendships and romantic loves are not thought to be alike in all respects. Presumably, the latter has a sexual element to it, whereas the former does not. I have not supposed that the two relationships are exactly alike. I maintain only that the two are alike with respect to being, on the one hand, an expression of choice and, on the other, being experienced as something which seems to happen to us. Sexual attraction, I have assumed, while an important element of romantic love, does not amount to romantic love.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2.

I turn now to the second salient feature of companion friendships: namely neither party to the relationship is under the authority of the other, which is not to say that neither is much influenced by the other.<sup>6</sup> Understandably, friends are quite influential in the lives of one another. We can explain the significance of this feature of friendship by looking briefly at the parent-child relationship in this regard. (It will be

remembered [see the introduction] that I leave aside job situations where in virtue of rank or responsibilities one has authority over the other.)

Parents are thought to have justified authority over their children. The right of parents to determine the good for their children is regarded as an important part of parental authority. Understandable though this may be, since children rarely have the wherewithal to determine their own good, the fact remains that children initially experience their parents as individuals who are entitled to determine the good for their children, and thus as individuals who are entitled to make authoritative assessments of the behavior of their children. Hence, there is the presumption that children should defer to the authoritative assessments which parents make of their behavior. It is this fact about parents which explains why parents and children rarely form companion friendships. Parents generally take this presumption for granted; children spend a lifetime calling it into question.

Even after a child has become an adult and has acquired a defensible version of his own good, this presumption tends to linger on the part of the child's parents. Consequently, the bond of trust that is indispensable to deep friendships is rarely formed. For in examining our lives with another, it is of the utmost importance that we be able to do so without there being any sense, on the part of either party, that the hearer is entitled to make authoritative assessments of the speaker's life and is entitled to the speaker's deference with respect to those assessments. Otherwise self-examination with another is more like having another sit in judgment upon one rather than the attainment of self-understanding that it is meant to be.

The absence of such authority enhances the willingness of individuals to open the window of their lives to one another, which in turn cements the bond of trust between them. These considerations speak to the importance of deep friendships being between equals.

While it need not happen as a matter of logic, it often does happen that when two people are sufficiently unequal with respect to their stations in life, the one with the higher station will be inclined to think that his utterances have more authority than the other's utterances. This consideration, in turn, sheds some light on why companion friendships between the young and the elderly are rather unlikely to flourish in any society where, in virtue of being such, the elderly are accorded special honor and privilege. For the elderly will be inclined

to think that, in virtue of being such, their utterances have more authority than the utterances of those who are many years younger than they are. Thus, we have an additional factor which operates against parents and children forming companion friendships, namely the disparity in age itself.

### 1.3.

We come now to the third salient feature of companion friendships which, it will be remembered, is that there is an enormous bond of mutual trust between such friends and that this bond is cemented by voluntary self-disclosure and,<sup>7</sup> for that very reason, is a sign of the very special regard which each has for one another.

There is a great deal of information which anyone can obtain about us if only she would watch what we do and listen to what we say as we go about performing our various social roles. I shall refer to this information as public information. It constitutes the outline of our lives. It is information over which we are concerned to exercise little or no control. Or to put the matter differently, we are either indifferent or care very little about those in whose hands the information falls. Then there is guarded information about our life, that is, information the dissemination of which matters considerably to us.<sup>8</sup> This I shall variously refer to as private or intimate information. Neither private nor public information is an all or nothing matter. Both admit of gradations or degrees. In any event, a person who has enormous public information about our lives will normally not be able to infer much concerning the private information of our lives. One important reason for this is that our motives for doing things constitute a significant aspect of the private information of our lives. And not only are our motives not always transparent, we can often deny motives attributed to us without incurring much suspicion as to the veracity of our claims. I shall illustrate these points in Section 2.1 below.

The bond of trust between deep friends is cemented by the equal self-disclosure of intimate information.<sup>9</sup> Why this is so shall become clear in what follows.

This distinction, between public and private information, can be blurred in one of two ways. We can be public about virtually everything in our lives or we can be exceedingly private. While perhaps both extremes are to be avoided, what is true, surely, is that deep

friendships are very nearly impossible in the former instance. This is because the extent to which a person is willing to reveal to us private information about himself which he is not willing to reveal to most others is the most significant measure we can have of a person's willingness to trust us, where the trust in question implies considerably more than that the person takes us to be of unquestionable moral character. For we can trust a person in this way, without the relationship between ourselves and that person being one of deep friendship. We can think that of our trust that a person has a good or minimally decent moral character as basic trust. The more confident we are of the goodness of a person's moral character the deeper our basic trust. We have deep basic trust of some neighbors and colleagues with whom we do not have companion friendships. We may think of the trust that is characteristic of companion friendships as intimate trust.

Now, the point is that if we are public about virtually everything in our lives, then we are left with little that can serve as the basis for intimate trust. We have few, if any, resources left whereby we can convey to another that we regard him as someone in whom we can have intimate trust. And there can be no deep friendship if we cannot convey this.

Against this point, it might be said that notwithstanding the fact that we are very public about our lives, we could indicate to another that we regard him as someone in whom we can have privileged trust provided that we only accepted (or solicited) advice about our lives from him. Not so, however.

For, if things go as they should, our accepting of another's advice is contingent upon our believing that he is in the position to give us advice. While various factors determine this, one of the most important of them is the amount of information the person has about our lives. So, to be very public about our lives is, by the very nature of things, to put ourselves in the position to receive advice from anyone who is frequently within the sound of our voice. Accordingly, we would not have much reason to accept a friend's advice over the advice of anyone else, save that we generally thought that the friend offered the more sound advice. But, then, the determining factor in our accepting his advice would not be the friendship, but rather our favorable assessment of the soundness of his advice in comparison to that of others. Consequently, our accepting his advice could hardly serve as an indication to him of the depth of our regard for him.

This is a good point at which to notice the difference between companion friends and therapists, both of whom are good listeners, at least ideally. A therapist-patient relationship is formally one-directional in that by and large the flow of private information is supposed to be from the patient to the therapist, and not the other way around. For in virtue of her training and experience, the therapist is deemed an expert at helping people to achieve self-understanding by listening to private information about their lives (to put matters rather simply). Her comments, therefore, have the status of authority utterances. The client is motivated to reveal private information about himself to the therapist, not out of delight in sharing such information about himself with someone whom he loves, but out of a need to achieve self-understanding; and the therapist is regarded by the patient as someone who can facilitate this end.

An upshot of the foregoing considerations is that a marked disparity between the amount of private information which two individuals possess or self-disclose about one another is an obstacle to the flourishing of deep friendships because it bespeaks an authority relationship between the two individuals, with the one possessing the greater amount of information being in the superior position. When there is great disparity of this sort, what we have is not a friendship, but something akin to a relationship between therapist and patient (or counselor and client). There are two implicit premises here. One, of course, is that in personal relationships we do not take delight in self-disclosing private information, when self-disclosure at that degree of privacy is not reciprocated. The explanation for this is quite simple. The failure to reciprocate usually indicates one of two things: either that the person does not trust us or that he does not value our perspective on his life.

The other implicit premise is that, barring a reckless disregard for revealing private information about himself, only someone in dire need of assistance in getting a perspective on his life would continue self-disclosing private information in the absence of reciprocity of self-disclosure. This premise is grounded in the fact that, in the absence of their meeting an important need, we value associating only with those who indicate by their words and deeds that they have a positive regard for us. Those who neither trust us nor value our opinion regarding their lives make it manifestly and painfully clear that they do not have such a regard for us. Thus, self-disclosing to someone

who does not have a positive regard for us in these ways is belittling and constitutes a form self-effacement; hence, we are disposed to self-disclose in such instances only when we find doing so enormously beneficial. And so like the patient to his therapist, we self-disclose not out of delight in sharing private information about ourselves with someone whom we love, but out of the need to obtain a better perspective on our own lives.

I wish to conclude this section with two comments concerning the role of self-disclosure in friendship.<sup>10</sup>

First, it is a mistake to suppose that we have reciprocity of self-disclosure only when the parties in question self-disclose about the same sorts of things. The emphasis in reciprocity is upon the level of intimacy as opposed to self-disclosing the same type of information. This is as it should be, since what is deeply revelatory about the lives of individuals does not pertain to the same thing in every case. For some it is their sex life; for others it is their struggle to excel; and for still others it is their deep commitment simply to staying alive; and so on.

Naturally, it is understandable that during the course of any given conversation reciprocity of self-disclosure will yield information about the same sorts of things, since conversations generally have a focus. And sometimes the point of a conversation can be none other than self-disclosure itself, as when *A* reveals something quite intimate to *B*, and then asks *B* to reciprocate, period. If, however, in discussing a personal problem, *A* self-discloses to *B* about such-and-such, it would be very insensitive of *B* to attempt to match the intimacy of *A*'s self-disclosure by revealing something related to an entirely different aspect of life. *B* would do better not to self-disclose at all than to do that.

And it is obvious, I trust, that the idea behind reciprocity of self-disclosure is not that of immediate reciprocity. Quite the contrary, if *A* self-discloses to *B*, then *B* need not reciprocate immediately; indeed, for reasons given in the preceding paragraph, it may very well be inappropriate for *B* to do so.

The second comment I wish to make is this. It might seem that I have made so much of the importance of self-disclosure in friendship that I have lost sight of the other very important aspects of friendship. After all, so it might be noted, friends help one another in quite straightforward ways, even companion friends. This last point is true

enough. I have made much of self-disclosure, however, because I have assumed that this is the predominant way in which companion friends can and do contribute to one another's flourishing, where the emphasis here is upon the improvement of character and personality. Insofar as individuals can be understood as being self-sufficient in that they have an adequate livelihood, I have assumed that by and large companion friends are self-sufficient or, in any case, that the material help each provides the other is quite ancillary to the friendship. This assumption, far from revealing a Western bias, enables us to see more clearly how rich a friendship can be which does not turn upon material offerings.

## 2. A GLOSS ON ARISTOTELIAN FRIENDSHIP

### 2.1.

Aristotle concludes his rich discussion of friendship with the observation that companion friends seek to live together. He writes:

What the erotic lover likes most is to see his beloved, and this is the sort of perception he chooses over the others, supposing that this above all is what makes him fall in love and remain in love. In the same way, surely, what friends find most choiceworthy is living together. For friendship is community, and we are related to our friend as we are related to ourselves. (1171b pp. 30-35)<sup>11</sup>

His explanation here would seem to be straightforward enough: because they take delight in one another's company and in doing things together, they want to maximize the amount of time spent together. There is, however, another significance to be attached to friends living together in order to maximize the amount of time spent together, namely that through doing so friends come to have a commanding perspective of one another's lives. The point can be best brought out by again looking briefly at the notion of a social role.

As I have remarked in section 1.1, a great deal of social interaction involves role playing. We have role playing whenever there are well-delineated modes of behavior which are generally expected of a person, given the position which he occupies in an institutional structure (for example, professor or student) or the significant social category in which he falls (for example, member of a gang or affluent class); and the primary explanation for the person's behavior in a given situation is that he occupies an institutional position or falls into

a social category of which the preceding is true. As these remarks suggest, the significance of social roles lies in the fact that they specify what the appropriate forms of behavior are for the individuals over whom they range. And the range of behavior here may include both interpersonal and noninterpersonal behavior. For instance, gender roles clearly specify how men and women should behave towards members of both genders. And just as clearly, they specify how men and women ought to behave though they should interact with no one at all.<sup>12</sup>

Needless to say, the idea here is not that role playing constitutes less than genuine behavior on the part of a person. The point, rather, is that widespread social expectations substantially influence the behavioral patterns that we develop. Most social roles which we occupy can be and are played out in a variety of ways. There are members of the clergy, parents, business people, professors, students, and so on, of all stripes and persuasion; and people generally act these roles out differently depending on the circumstances and context. On the first day of class, for instance, a professor may out of concern to demonstrate her professional competence come across as very erudite and impersonal; afterwards, she may warm up to her students. Sometimes being a parent calls for gentleness; sometimes firmness; sometimes both. I shall refer to the way in which people act out their roles as role expression.

It is obvious, I trust, that role playing is virtually inescapable; since all of us either occupy some institutional position or fall into some significant social category. Gender-based or familial roles come quickly to mind here. Generally, we play one or both of these roles throughout our lives. In truth, the majority of us occupy a number of roles all at the same time. So and so may at once be a professor, spouse, parent, church deacon, and a member of a company's trustee board, although it is rather unlikely that she will have to play all of these roles simultaneously. Still, she may experience tension on account of the demands of these roles. Her church's position on an important social issue may be somewhat at odds with the policies of the company on whose trustee board she sits.

We are now in a position to explain why maximizing the amount of time spent together enables friends to acquire a commanding perspective of one another's lives. As we shall see, there are two respects in which this is so.

One of them, not surprisingly, is that maximizing the amount of time spent together enables friends to observe the behavior of one another over a wide range of the social roles which each occupies, and to do so in a variety of contexts. This, in turn, enables each to have a very informed picture of how each expresses himself in his various roles. For, it is in part through the roles that we occupy that we live our lives; they are one of the primary vehicles through which we engage in social interaction. It will be remembered, however, that at any given time we do not act out all of the social roles which we occupy. Thus, a complete picture of a person is not to be had if our observations are limited to only one of the social roles which that individual occupies. Nor, a fortiori, is one to be had if we are unfamiliar with the variety of ways in which the person may express himself in that role. This is because it is primarily through role expression that traits of character and personality are revealed or that we can come to have a sense of the contours of those traits.

For instance, whether a person is insecure or ambitious is not readily revealed by the social role which she occupies, since any number of such roles are compatible with these traits. But over time, her role expressions will undoubtedly reveal the truth about her in this regard. And it is only through a person's role expressions that we can know the way in which her kindness, say, manifests itself. Obviously enough, a well informed picture along these lines is rarely to be had at a single glance.

Now, the other reasons why maximizing time spent together is indispensable to friends coming to have a commanding perspective of one another's lives has to do with the fact that their interaction is minimally parasitic upon the social roles which they occupy. Let me explain.

In general our social interaction revolves primarily around the social roles which we occupy. Moreover the nature of our interaction is generally determined by one or more of these roles. We interact either as fellow employees, members of the same profession, customer-merchant, physician-patient, lawyer-client, parent-child, husband-wife, and so on. Now, since social roles pertain to the ways in which people are expected to behave, this means that our behavior is significantly influenced by prevailing expectations. This point holds whether or not we act in accordance with the norms of the social roles which we occupy. Our behavior may very well be designed to shock

people; but this we can have as our aim only if we choose to act contrary to the norms of the social role in question. To flaunt a social norm is not simply to fail to do what the norm requires; it is to act contrary to the norm in a calculating and self-conscious manner, and so with an acute sense of what the norm requires. Hence, our behaviour is still influenced by the prevailing expectation regarding the social role in question.

By contrast, precisely what distinguishes the interaction characteristic of companion friendships (and loves)<sup>13</sup> from other forms of social interactions is that none of the social roles which friends occupy serve as the primary basis for their interaction. It is not primarily because they are fellow employees or have entered into a client-lawyer relationship, or some such thing, that friends interact with one another. Rather, the *raison d'être* for their interaction is the delight that they take in being with one another. It follows, then, that the expectations of others as refracted through the prism of social roles minimally, if at all, influence the way in which friends interact with one another. This last point is of great significance because it means that friends can count on one another not to evaluate them simply in terms of the prevailing expectations concerning the social roles which they occupy. (The claim is not that friends do not evaluate one another.) This, in turn, contributes mightily to their having a commanding perspective of one another's lives.

It should be intuitively clear why this is so. An interaction not governed by social roles is freer in the sense that how each party reacts to the other is not substantially influenced by the expectations of others. Specifically, precisely because each can count on the other not to evaluate him simply in terms of the prevailing expectations concerning their social roles, each is able to speak freely about his roles and the ways in which he expresses himself in them. In speaking freely in this way, each makes himself most vulnerable and provides the deepest insight into his own character and personality.

To take an example, suppose Susan and Mary are companion friends and that Paul is one of Susan's Ph.D students. It is generally assumed that the reason why Susan interacts with Paul, who is married, in such a formal manner is the same as everyone else's, namely Paul's quite arrogant manner. But Susan confides in Mary that while she (Susan) agrees that Paul is arrogant, the real reason why she keeps her distance from Paul is that she finds him incredibly attractive – in

fact, his arrogance is part of the attraction – and feels that she will best be able to respect his marriage if she keeps her distance from him.

Here Susan is commenting on the nature of her role expression in her interactions with Paul. Her remarks are very revealing. For one, they reveal that Susan is able to use formality to hide sexual attraction. For another, they give tremendous insight into the kind of person she finds romantically captivating, and so what traits of character and personality are important in a potential romantic candidate. For a third, her determination to respect Paul's marriage reveals that she is a person of principle. No one could possibly glean so much from simply observing Susan's interaction with Paul.

Susan makes herself vulnerable to Mary in the following way. By revealing to Mary that she (Susan) sometimes uses a formal manner to mask her deep feelings, Susan thereby reveals to Mary that her (Susan's) formal behaviour can be interpreted in two ways, one of which entails that she (Susan) is deeply affected by the person with whom she is interacting. She thus gives Mary reason not to assume always, as otherwise it would only be reasonable to do, that her (Susan's) future formal behavior is just a matter of keeping an arrogant man in his place. To be sure, if queried, Susan can always deny that there is anything more to her behavior than this. But the point is that Mary's query has a reasonableness it would, and could, not have had but for Susan's revelatory remarks to Mary; and Susan knows this. Thus, as these remarks suggest, it is quite possible to know something quite significant about a person's life and yet not be entitled to broach the subject with the person in question, if the individual has not voluntarily disclosed the relevant information to one.

## 2.2.

There can be no doubt that Aristotle thought companion friends to be an inextricable part of one another's lives, as one of his most provocative claims about friendship is that companion friendship can be likened to self-love.

It comes as no surprise that we want and delight in our own flourishing. So it is very understandable that we endeavor to do those things that contribute to it. It is also understandable that we should want others to contribute to our flourishing. But it is another thing

altogether to take delight in another's having considerable influence in the manner in which our flourishing expresses itself and to be solicitous of their opinions concerning our projects, where in neither case is the reason for this that (a) in the absence of that person's approval we do not feel that what we do is worthwhile, (b) we are fearful of being rejected by the person if our projects do not meet with her or his approval, or (c) the person is a sycophant in whose flattery we delight.

But, now, it is characteristic of deep or companion friends that each takes great delight in the other having considerable influence in the manner in which his flourishing expresses itself. And when such a relationship holds between two people, say *A* and *B*, it is very easy for self-love to serve as the basis for friendship. To begin with, each loves the other and knows that he is loved by the other out of choice and, therefore, each experiences the other as a fully autonomous being who, out of love and choice, profoundly identifies with and so wants the flourishing of the other. And because each has a commanding perspective of one another's life, each experiences the others remarks and observations about his life and projects not so much as a different person offering his assessment, but as a form of self-reflection.

Through choice and mutual love, then, companion friends are an integral part of one another's lives. Thus, for each to want his own flourishing is for each to want the other to flourish. It is in this sense that self-love can serve as the basis for companion friendship. Just as a person naturally desires his own flourishing, companion friends naturally desire one another's flourishing precisely because each regards the other as an integral part of his life. In this sense, the love of friendship is very much like that of parental love. A child's flourishing does not have instrumental value in the eyes of his parents, but is regarded as a good in and of itself, for the very reason that parents see the child's good as an integral part of their good. The difference is that this identification with the good of the other is reciprocated in companion friendships, but not in the typical parent-child relationship.

Aristotle rightly likens the affection between deep friends to the affection which parents have for their children. For, in the first place, there is no incompatibility between *A*'s being motivated to give *B* affection simply in virtue of taking delight in doing so and *A*'s being cognizant of the extent to which *A* and *B* each contributes to the

other's good. Second, if our favorable disposition towards another is reinforced by a full appreciation of the good that the person does for us,<sup>14</sup> then a relationship between two individuals where the affection which each has for the other mirrors that of parental affection would surely be one which would flourish. For while neither is motivated to give in the hopes of receiving, each's full appreciation of the other's giving serves only to deepen his concern for the good of the other.

#### CONCLUSION

Friendship is a profoundly rich topic. There is much that I have not touched upon in this essay. For example, I have said nothing about the idea that there is a limit to how many companion friends we can have. It is generally agreed that such friends must be few in number, given the limitations of human psychology. While I think that is right, I also think that there is more to be said on the matter.

Nor have I said anything about the importance of friendship to having a good moral character. While of course friendship contributes to our moral flourishing because it facilitates self-understanding,<sup>15</sup> I believe that companion friendship also contributes to our moral flourishing by reinforcing our disposition to be altruistic. These claims, to be sure, are so much promissory notes. This essay is not complete. I have indicated some of the ways in which I regard it as incomplete, all the while aware that what I have said on that score is incomplete as well.<sup>16</sup>

#### APPENDIX: COMPANION FRIENDSHIP AND ROMANTIC LOVE

The essay invites the question: what is the difference between companion friendship and romantic love? I have eschewed the suggestion that the sexual element of the latter marks the difference (see note 5). However, there is the fact that traditionally and universally sexual intercourse signals the union of those romantically involved. There is no activity which traditionally and universally signals the existence of companion friendship. Suppose there were such an activity – say, companion friends traded a pint of one another's blood or purchased two very fine crystal glasses, as a mark of their friendship. I suggest that structurally the difference between friendship and romantic love

would be even more similar. On this way of looking at things, there is nothing mysterious about fidelity. Just as two companion friends who purchased two fine crystal glasses – say this is the deeply entrenched and universal practice – would not expect the other to use his crystal glass for any occasion save those that were exclusively for the two of them, fidelity has to be important if sexual intercourse is the mark of union between romantic lovers.

Now, the truth of all that has been said is not to be confused with another related, but yet different issue: is it a conceptual matter that sexual intercourse is understood as the mark of union between romantic lovers? I shall not attempt to answer this question here. However, let me note that if one denies that there is a conceptual link here, then the structural difference between romantic love and companion friendship becomes more difficult to make out than many have been inclined to suppose, especially if there is no conceptual bar to there being a deeply entrenched and universal form of behavior which serves as the mark of companion friendship.

#### NOTES

\* Various people have been kind enough to offer comments upon various drafts of this essay: Annette Baier, Richard Bjornson, Stephen Darwall, Thomas Hill, Jr., and Harvey Mansfield, Rebecca Matlock, Ferdinand Schoeman, Patricia Spacks, and Bruce Wilshire. A version was presented to the Philosophy Department at the University of Notre Dame and to my colleagues at Oberlin College in a faculty seminar. I have been given more advice than I have been able to take into account. As in the past Ira Yankwitz's reflections on my philosophical views generally were most instructive here.

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<sup>1</sup> This taxonomy of friendships is obviously Aristotle's. What I am calling companion friendship is called perfect friendship by some and complete friendship by others (e.g., Terence Irwin [see note 11 below for reference]). John Cooper refers to it as character-friendship. The term companion has many desirable connotations in connection with the subject of this essay and no undesirable ones.

I should like to acknowledge that my thinking on Aristotle's account of friendship has been sharpened by John Cooper's discussion of the topic, though many of my views were arrived at independently of his writings. See his 1980, 'Aristotle on Friendship', in Amelie Rorty (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, University of California Press. I have also profited from Nancy Sherman: 'Aristotle on Friendship and the Shared Life', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (forthcoming) and Ferdinand Schoeman: 1985 'Aristotle on the Good of Friendship', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 63.

<sup>2</sup> The notion of conversational implicature is of course borrowed from H. P. Grice: 1975, 'Logic and Conversation', in P. Cole and J. L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics*, V. 3, Academic Press, New York, pp. 43-44.

<sup>3</sup> On the topic of social roles, I am much indebted to Erving Goffman: 1959, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Doubleday Anchor Books. The notion of a role understood here seems to be generally accepted. Robin R. Vallacher in 'An Introduction to Self Theory' writes thus: "A role can be defined as a pattern of behavior that is prescribed (expected or demanded) in a given social relationship" (p. 23), in Daniel M. Wegner and Robin R. Vallacher (eds.): 1980, *The Self in Social Psychology*, Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. John Bowlby: 1979, *The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds*, Tavistock Publications, pp. 68-69 and 129ff. Bowlby cites approvingly the work of Harlow on rhesus monkeys. See Harry F. Harlow and Clara Mears: 1979, *The Human Model: Primate Perspectives*, John Wiley & Sons. "The [monkey] infant differs from the human infant in that the monkey is more mature at birth and grows more rapidly; but the basic responses relating to affection, including nursing, contact, clinging, and even visual auditory exploration, exhibit no fundamental differences in the two species" (p. 103). A few pages later they write as follows of their experiments with monkeys: "We were not surprised to discover that contact comfort was an important basic affectional or love variable, but we did not expect it to overshadow so completely the variable of nursing; indeed, the disparity is so great as to suggest that the primary function of nursing as an affectional variable is that of insuring frequent and intimate body contact of the infant with the mother" (p. 108).

<sup>5</sup> Annette Baier (in private communication) observes that whereas romantic love can be unreciprocated, not so with friendship; whereas one can be in love with a person whom one barely knows, not so with friendship; whereas romantic love often indulges fantasy, not so with friendship. Perhaps. But I wonder if these claims would hold in the absence of the sexual component. See the Appendix of this essay.

<sup>6</sup> On the topic of authority, I am much indebted to Kurt Baier's essay 'The Justification of Governmental Authority', *The Journal of Philosophy* 69 (1972), especially for his distinction between authority and influence.

<sup>7</sup> Erving Goffman: 1963, *Behavior in Public Places*, The Free Press of Glencoe, writes: "Although an individual can stop talking, he cannot stop communication through body idiom, he must say either the right thing or the wrong thing. He cannot say nothing. Paradoxically, the way in which he can give the least amount of information about himself—though still appreciable—is to fit in and act as persons of his kind are expected to act. (The fact that information about the self can be held back in this way is one motive for maintaining the proprieties.)" Chap. 3, Section 3, p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> The importance which I attach to private information is shared by others: Cf. Robert S. Gerstein: 1978, 'Intimacy and Privacy', *Ethics* 89; Jeffrey Reiman: 1976, 'Privacy, Intimacy, and Personhood', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 26; and Ferdinand Schoeman: 1984, 'Privacy and Intimate Information', in Ferdinand Schoeman (ed.), *Philosophical Dimensions of Privacy*, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>9</sup> Much has been written on self-disclosure among friends. I am indebted to the following: P. C. Cozby: 1973, 'Self-Disclosure: A literature review', *Psychology Bulletin* 79; Lily Schubert Walker and Paul H. Wright: 1976, 'Self-Disclosure in Friendship',

*Perceptual and Motor Skills* 42; Zick Rubin and Stephen Shenker: 1978, 'Friendship, Proximity and Self-Disclosure', *Journal of Personality* 46; and Sidney M. Jourard: 1971, *The Transparent Self*, 2nd ed., D. Van Nostrand Company, Parts I and II; and Richard L. Archer: 'Self-Disclosure' in Daniel M. Wegner and Robin R. Vallacher (eds.), *The Self in Social Psychology*. The last essay offers a nice taxonomy of self-disclosure. For our purposes, it is particularly important to keep in mind the difference between intimate and non-intimate self-disclosure and that self-disclosure tends to be reciprocal across levels of intimacy. That is, if *A* conveys to *B* information of a certain level of intimacy, then *B* will either respond in kind or attempt to break off the conversation with *A*, provided that *B* is not simply in the business of accumulating facts about *A*'s life. As I hope is clear, as the terms private and public information are used in text they mark different ends of the intimacy scale, with the latter being less intimate than the former.

<sup>10</sup> In what follows, I am indebted to Norman Care for helping me to be clearer about matters.

<sup>11</sup> 1985, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Terence Irwin (trans), Hackett Publishing Company.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., the important collection of essays in Clara Mayo and Nancy Henley (eds.): 1981, *Gender and Non-Verbal Behavior*, Springer-Verlag.

<sup>13</sup> I wish to record my awareness of the fact that male-female relationships generally involve considerable role-playing, along gender lines, in spite of the fact that the basis for the interaction is love itself. One can either suppose that male-female roles are primitive in some way or that the entrenchedness of the roles is due to other factors. I believe that the latter is the case. However, I do not wish to argue that here.

<sup>14</sup> As I have argued in 1985, 'Beliefs and the Motivation to Be Just', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 22, 347-52.

<sup>15</sup> As John Cooper has so persuasively argued in 'Aristotle on Friendship'.

<sup>16</sup> I aim to provide a more complete account in *A Psychology of Moral Character*, a work in progress.

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