L'amitié dans les relations internationales/
Friendship in international relations

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Friendship and the state

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ABSTRACT: *In modernity 'friendship' and 'politics' have been theorised as antithetical, if at all. This is reflected in the dominant theorisations of International Relations. However, this position is to ignore an older tradition which at least saw the possibility of theorising friendship within the polity, even if this does not amount to a full-blown account of friendship in and between the modern state. This paper raises again the question of both how it is possible to theorise friendship and what it would mean to do so in International Relations. Specifically, it focuses on the usefulness of thinking about friendship in relation to the state. Current thought sees little role for 'friendship'. The phenomena is crushed under dominant paradigms of individuality, power, and sovereignty. Here a response to that discourse is offered by mounting a prima facie case for the introduction and development of 'friendship' in International Relations. In particular, it is argued that the particular, private, and emotive account of friendship which dominates modernity should not be allowed to stand for all affinities – instead we must view 'friendship' as being hard to define, but a useful term nonetheless. In utilising 'friendship' in this way we could come to recognise and discuss what the sovereign-state overshadows – that there are various enduring affinities with ethical and political obligations and responsibilities throughout the world of International Relations. In this way 'friendship' will not remain the preserve of the premoderns (such as Aristotle) nor be usurped as an adjunct to sovereignty (such as in the thought of Schmitt) but can be employed as a concept which both allows us to identify and discuss significant phenomena in International Relations both within, between, and beyond states.*

Introduction: Some Hobbesian doubts about personal relations

At first glance it might seem that there is not only little relation between the themes of friendship and the state, but that there is little possibility of there being so. This might appear true because of two related assumptions. The first is that the international order is characterised by both rivalry and conflict. Indeed, it has been powerfully argued that the international order is an 'anarchical society' (Bull 1977) and that we are locked in a form of Hobbesian anarchy creating a carefully calculated security dilemma for states (Morgenthau 1972, Mearsheimer 1990, see also Trachtenberg 2006: 212). This anarchy is, like Hobbes' anarchy, a state of war which 'consisteth

not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto' (Hobbes 1968chapter 13). As Hobbes goes on to claim, this inclines men to 'solitude' and 'men have no pleasure, (but on the contrary a great deale of grief) in keeping company' (Hobbes 1968chapter 13). We live in a world of sovereign states and despite the views of the advocates of those who have hailed the 'death' of the state, recent history would seem to suggest that whilst it might be somewhat unwell, it is by no means deceased. States remain major actors, and they also continue to both claim a monopoly of legitimate force within their borders; a force which is routinely exercised legitimate or not. Additionally, states are more than capable of using violence to those outside of their borders. If this picture is accepted, then talk of friendship appears utopian, naive, and totally unrealistic. States have both interests and powers, and realising the potential for conflict is both rational and prudent.

Of course, violence is only one result of this Hobbesian anarchy. Indeed, as Wendt points out, it is possible to view the world of states as more Lockean than Hobbesian where competition better characterises the state-of-affairs than conflict (Wendt 1999). The dominant images of International Relations do not rule-out the possibilities of cooperation (Bull 1977: 57-74, Keohane and Nye 1977: 23-37). However, there is a tendency to see this in terms of self-interest rather than a commitment to a wider moral community as such. Indeed, some explicitly warn against mixing politics and morality in this way – at least at the theoretical level (Carr 1942, Morgenthau 1972). In any event two things are clearly evident from this literature. The first is that, however it is glossed, the state remains an important focus, if not *the* focus, of International Relations. Second, the possibilities for genuine affinity or moral commitment in the international system are seriously limited if not impossible. The best that can be hoped for is an alignment of interests (cf. Trachtenberg 2006: 214 on how it might be 'rational' for states to seek 'friends').

The second major assumption, which leads to a related strand of objections, might ask us to say exactly what could we possibly mean by the idea and the term 'friendship' in our talk about states and the international order. After all, 'friendship' would seem to connote the private and deeply affective relationship of two or more individuals. It does not seem to be a good candidate for the relationship between such vast entities as states. In any case it is difficult to see how one state could have affective ties with another. It might be conceded that individuals *within* states can have friendly relations; but this is different to claiming that states *per se* can have friendships, or even that there are forms of friendship which underpin the state. Moreover, even if these claims were conceded, it might be the cause of some suspicion. The intimate and affective demands of a private friendship would seem to threaten the general and reasonable demands of justice and transparency. In this view, politics is about the general, public, and rule based justice; friendship is about the particular, private, and special acts of virtue. The two do not meet.

Thus, the critic of friendship in International Relations, or even the scholar who has no strong views either way, might be led to claim that there is at least a *prima facie* case against friendship in International Relations. Given the dominant direction, outlook, and concerns of International Relations it appears that it is not at all implausible to claim that 'friendship' neither characterises the existing state of the international order, nor does the term offer much hope of shedding any light on that world – indeed, it threatens merely to add confusion to an already complex picture.

However, as might be expected, it is suggested here that we do not give up quite so easily. Indeed, in simply accepting the starting points of those who would dismiss friendship from the study of International Relations we already concede too much and risk missing some important lessons. This paper begins to sketch the ways in which 'friendship' might be theorised in International Relations. It takes as its starting point the very observations that seem to make the task a daunting one: namely, the dominance of the Hobbesian state and its accompanying modern theoretical foundations, and the widespread (but unreflective) assumption that 'friendship' is confined to and indicates the particular, private, and affective relations between a limited number of close individuals. To these assumptions it will be suggested that the state is, indeed, a powerful actor, but that we should not conclude from this that the Hobbesian anarchical relations between sovereign states are the only dynamic of interest in the international forum – and that these dynamics cannot (and should not) be the exclusive focus of International Relations. Instead, this paper draws attention to the possibilities and desirability of researching 'friendship' understood as affinities of an ethical and political nature which manifest at all levels. Thus it is *not* being suggested here that a theorisation of 'friendship' overturns or dismisses the idea of the sovereign-state; nor is it being suggested that we should simply abandon our focus on this powerful actor. However, it is being suggested that an exclusive focus on the sovereign-state as a unit trapped in a potentially violent and self-interested security dilemma fails to recognise other significant phenomena in the international order both in terms of how states actually relate, and dynamics which occur within, between, and beyond them. This can usefully be examined by a recognition of friendship and the development of a conceptual framework to identify and investigate it. In so doing we not only focus on otherwise neglected phenomena, we also strengthen our theoretical model itself.

In order to advance this *prima facie* case the paper will bring together several related tasks. It is recognised from the start that this is far from a comprehensive account; but it is hoped that it is sufficient to indicate the possible direction of debate and development and the possibilities for International Relations. The first section of the paper notes that International Relations draws, in part, from the western tradition of political thought (Trachtenberg 2006: 212ff.). As such, it inherits from that tradition some key themes and foci, most notably for our purposes a focus on the sovereign-state. It also inherits the tendency to marginalise 'friendship' and to separate it from 'the political'. The first section attempts to address this scene by sketching an older paradigm where friendship did feature: that of the premoderns. It then suggests some reasons for the changes in the modern conception of politics. Having sketched this initial ground – ground which should make us pause to think about our own modern position – the paper then moves into its second section where two influential figures are discussed: Aristotle and Schmitt. Here it is argued that although their accounts can offer suggestions as to how friendship can be redeveloped it remains that case that their accounts are seriously limiting and in need of transcendence if friendship is to have relevance to International Relations. The third section then moves the argument forward by suggesting ways in which we can rethink friendship – specifically, to move away from a rigid core definition of its features, or from viewing friendship in the modern way as a particular, private, and affective relationship between individuals. Instead, we need to rethink 'friendship' in terms of a series of related and overlapping phenomena. These phenomena share characteristics, but no

characteristics are core to them all. In this way we can come to see a variety of points of interest, and develop an understanding of friendship which has practical use as a term of research. In the final section we return again to the state and apply the argument that has been developed throughout to show that whilst 'friendship' does not push the sovereign-state aside as a tool and focus of analysis, it complements that focus in potentially enlightening ways. Specifically, it allows us to take our analysis beyond a focus on a view of the sovereign-state pursuing national self-interest through the use of power, to seeing affinities and communities both within, between, and beyond states.

Paradigm lost

If we are to come to understand the contribution that 'friendship' can make to our understanding of International Relations it is first necessary to say something about how the dominant concerns of International Relations have emerged. Of course, this is a complicated story and its narrative could fill several volumes. However, what we are primarily interested in here is not fleshing-out that story in full, but in sketching one particular theme of that story: the relationship between International Relations and the dominant assumptions of modern political theory. As such we intend only to give a thumbnail and cursory account as the issue here is not to establish the link between International Relations and friendship *in full*, but to observe as to how they could be linked. Thus the focus of this sketch will be to show how both (a) friendship existed as an important term and concern in pre-modern political thought; but that (b) how it now stands somewhat marginalised in modern (and contemporary) political thought. Insofar as International Relations draws upon this tradition it too has concerns seemingly incompatible with friendship.

We start, then, with the assumption that in respect to friendship at least the modern paradigm is substantially different to that of the premodern (Hutter 1978, King 1999, Pahl 2000: 45-67). The observation then is a noticing of something which is absent, something which once was but has now vanished. And in order to become aware of what we now lack we must cast our eye back to a time when it was still present. In premodern thought we can find an active concern with friendship as a term necessary to the theorisation of political life (along with virtue, justice, and the Good). In modernity there is no such parallel. The premodern (in both its Greco-Roman and Christian guises) displays a concern with friendship which can be seen in many of its major figures such as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch (for an overview of the positions of the Greek theorists see Hutter 1978: 91-132, and for an account of the attendant scholarship see Devere 1999). In the Greco-Roman tradition Aristotle tells us that 'no one would choose to live without friends even if he had all other goods' and that 'friendship would seem to hold cities together, and legislators would seem to be more concerned about than justice' (Aristotle 1985: 207-08). Pointing towards the notion that friendship is more than simple reciprocity of aid, Epicurus reflects that 'We do not so much need the help of our friends as the confidence of their help in need' (Epicurus 1964: 68). Like many of this period, Epicurus also makes a link between friendship, virtue and the good man. He tells us that 'The noble man is chiefly concerned with wisdom and friendship; of these, the former is a mortal good, the latter an immortal one' (Epicurus 1964: 72). The Roman Cicero places the very existence of society on the need for the varieties of friendship claiming that 'if the

mutual love of friends were to be removed from the world, there is no single house, no single state that would go on existing' (Cicero 1991: 88). Seneca takes up Aristotle's question of whether a happy person needs friends, and attempts to show that there is no confusion in the Stoic view on this point, claiming that the wise man 'can do without friends, not that he desires to do without them' (Seneca 1917: 43-45). Plutarch concerns himself with the identification of true friends from flatterers. He alerts his readers to the independence and difference that is desirable in friendship 'I have no use for a friend that shifts about just as I do and nods assent just as I do (for my shadow better performs that function), but I want one that tells the truth as I do, and decides for himself as I do' (Plutarch 1997: 104-05). The concern with friendship is connected to a wider vision of the political, and the political is connected to the *telos* of life. This *telos* connects persons engaged in an ethico-political community.

The pre-modern Christian tradition inherits and develops these concerns. St. Augustine reflects upon friendship in his *Confessions* lamenting that 'I cared nothing but to love and be loved. But my love went beyond the affection of one mind for another, beyond the arc of the bright beam of friendship' as he admits to having confused love and lust (Augustine 1961: 43). Aelred of Rievaulx views Christ as the model and inspiration for a self-sacrificing form of friendship (Rievaulx 1991: 137). This leads him to the view that true, Christian, friendship involves both self-sacrifice (paragraphs 28-30) and eternal love (paragraph 45). Thus friendship becomes other-orientated in a radical way. However, here spiritual friendship becomes an unattainable ideal. Original Sin prevents our intimacy from being extended to all humanity as was originally intended (paragraphs 58-61). In order to achieve this wider love God has to become the mediating term. Thomas Aquinas revises Aristotle's account of friendship placing it in a Christian context in his *Summa Theologiae* explaining how, through charity, one may be a friend to both God and through Him humanity. Thus, in Christian thought there was an extending both outwards and upwards – at least as the ideal.

In summary: For the premoderns friendship was a going concern. Of course, not all agreed on what friendship was, or how it could be best understood, but what the writings of these thinkers illustrate is an active concern with the idea of friendship, and a manifestation of friendship as an institution at the level of social, economic, political, and religious relations (Hutter 1978, Hyatte 1994, Rouner 1994, Fitzgerald 1997, King and Devere 2000). And so the inevitable question arises: *What became of friendship?* Indeed: *How did friendship loose its connection to the political and fall from the attention of the moderns?* Undoubtedly friendship remains as a practice in the everyday lives of those in the modernity. Who would wish to live their lives without their friends; and who could imagine a society where friendship was not a feature? However friendship is not now considered a novelty rather than mainstay for philosophers in general, and it is almost alien to those engaged in thinking about politics. Whereas for the pre-moderns and especially the Greco-Roman thinkers friendship was a vital component in an integrated whole which manifested itself in their social, cultural, religious, economic, philosophical and political lives, clearly this is not the case for moderns. Friendship has become "privatised" and is encased in the particularity and intimacy of the personal lives of individuals. Persons now experience friendship not *as* citizens or political subjects, or as members of a community, but in their personal and private roles as relatives, colleagues, and

perhaps even worshippers. Friendship still provides the background to our lives, but does not tend to register in theoretical enquiry at the ideational level.

This is not to say that thinkers in the modern period have not treated friendship, or have remained entirely silent on the matter, but it is clearly not a central and pressing concern as it once was for the Greco-Romans and early Christian thinkers. From the emerging modern perspective, Montaigne's name is pivotal. His essay on friendship forms the centre-piece of his *Essays* and in many ways is an echo of the concerns of the Greco-Romans. Despite this, the essay also betrays currents which were to become prevalent in a fully-fledged modernity. Montaigne introduces the notion of the "will" in relation to friendship, which anticipates Romanticism and is wholly un-Aristotelian (Montaigne 1957: 137). Montaigne also points towards the particularity of friendship claiming that his friendship with La Boétie 'has no other model than itself, and can be compared only with itself' (Montaigne 1957: 139). Despite the beauty of the essay as a testament to a friendship, what is lost is the wider appreciation of friendship as a banner for a variety of relations, and the sense that friendship can be understood in any more systematic terms than recognising it as a profound mystery. Later, Bacon treats friendship in a much more calculating way in his *Essays*. Friends both relieve distress and provide true counsel (Bacon 1862: 107, 111). Tellingly, friendship also provides a third 'fruit', that 'a man hath a Body, and that Body is confined to a Place; But where *friendship* is, all Offices of Life, are as it were granted to Him, and his Deputy' (Bacon 1862: 115). Friendship is desirable but impossible to disconnect from power and instrumentality.

Montaigne and Bacon may have been the last two major figures to treat friendship in a way which links it to previous concerns, but even here the increasingly private and emotional view of friendship is clear – a view which begins to divorce friendship from political thought. It might also be noted that friendship was not simply confined to essayists with a direct concern for the ethical or the practical. For example, John Locke presupposes that there are some bonds between people before the formation of political society, although he never really explores this issue in depth. Presumably the tension here is that Locke wishes to avoid the idea that there could be natural authority and thus duties and obligations that we have not consented to (Locke 1988: Book II, paragraphs 52-76 and 119). This also seems to sit less than squarely with the theological underpinnings of Locke's account of government, underpinnings which explicitly recognise that we have religious obligations to others (Locke 1988: Book II, paragraph 6) Despite this in an isolated comment he claims that 'those, who liked one other so well as to joyn into Society, cannot be but supposed to have some Acquaintance and friendship together, and some Trust one in another' (Locke 1988: Book II, paragraph 107). Whilst Locke is not providing a sustained enquiry into friendship – indeed, it is a mere mention – what is interesting here is that Locke joins friendship with the modern question of trust. Friendship has moved from its connection with the good to that of the securing of behaviours (Pahl 2000: 61-67, Vernon 2005). This question of the extension of trust and the security it affords is repeated in the Enlightenment economists when they have pause to comment on friendship. For example, in his *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, Ferguson comments that 'the public is a knot of friends' (Ferguson 1995: 208). However here, as in Adam Smith, the goods that friendship produces are not intrinsic to the relationship itself (as they tended to be for the Greco-Romans) but are a by-product of it. Friendship is justified and desirable because it facilitates the attainment of other

goods: it is not a good nor an end in itself. Interestingly, Kant produced an unfinished lecture on the subject of friendship. Kant clearly runs into some philosophical difficulties in his treatment of friendship. Whilst recognising it as a good, its particularity makes it impossible to universalise. Kant is aware that on the one hand 'I can be a friend of mankind in general in the sense that I bear good-will in my heart towards everyone', but that simultaneously 'men are inclined to form particular relationships because this is a natural impulse' (Kant 1991: 217). The trouble seems to be to find a way to universalise this impulse without diluting it. As we know from Aristotle, goodwill is not the same thing as friendship which involves an active interest in the interests and person of the other. Finally, the general position of friendship in modernity is probably best reflect by Schopenhauer's dour assessment (Enright and Rawlinson 1992: 22):

> With the ancients *friendship* was one of the chief elements in morality. But friendship is only limitation and partiality; it is the restriction to one individual what is the due of all mankind, namely, the recognition that a man's own nature and of mankind are identical. At most it is a compromise between this recognition and selfishness.

As we have seen, with the long slow dawn of modernity 'friendship' becomes an increasingly marginal and devalued concern. Perhaps we might consider the last two major thinkers who can be noted for their treatment of friendship during this long dawn are Montaigne and Bacon – but they do so in a modern way: the first reflecting the increasingly private, particular, and *affective* way of thinking about the relation; the second betraying the emerging *individualism* of modernity treating the relation in the contexts of power and instrumentality. Thus, we can conclude that in modernity itself we find no sustained treatment of friendship in political theory (cf. Schwarzenbach 1996). Marginalised to ethics and psychology friendship is invariably viewed as something to be rationalised as a special form freely chosen and reciprocated obligation, or is simply left as a profound and unfathomable mystery. In political thought the concept is increasingly replaced by the asocial individualism of rational and sovereign persons. The politics of such entities does not involve communion as such, but a collaboration with others. In such a politics the state is seen as an aggregate of individual interests and the mediator between them. On such a horizon of the political 'friendship' is all but abandoned.

In premodern thought friendship is theorised as being connected to the central themes of philosophical enquiry – in modernity it is scattered and remote. What then changes in modernity? What makes the vanishing of friendship possible? There is no simple answer to this question. Indeed, the causes are multiple and the effects over-determined. Without wishing to foreclose any detailed examination or debate into this question a few conjectures and general observations can be advanced. Clearly modern political thought responds to the human condition is wholly different way to that of the premodern. There are emerging socio-political developments which help to stimulate and frame the political thought of modernity. There is the 'discovery' of the New World and the expansion of commerce into new markets (Bronowski and Mazlish 1960: 349ff., Hampson 1968: 43ff., Berger 1979: 101, Toulmin 1990: 8). This is also the period of the centralisation of power in the hands of the newly forming nation-states and the rise of science and its subsequent consolidation of its

hold on the imagination (Bronowski and Mazlish 1960: 133-34, Hampson 1968: 43ff., Berki 1977: 117, McClelland 1996: 278-93). These changes formed the context to ideational shifts in modernity. The premodern certainties and hierarchies began to give way to uncertainty and new forms of order. Detached from a holistic world view it became increasingly important to find a foundation for politics which provided a solid basis and purpose to social life. Moreover, ideationally persons are cut loose from their social contexts and set adrift in formless universes. Political arrangements – like all other ontologies and epistemologies – had to be justified not to and by a community, but to the individual. And individuals were taken to be equal, rational, self-interested and (crucially) invested with liberty. In other words, in this new world individuals were sovereign points of power, knowledge, and decision. Thus, society and politics are raised as *problems*. It is not so much that the question is to discern and realise the Good Life, but that politics itself stands in need of justification and explanation (cf. Connolly 1984: 2ff.). In such a picture although persons are equal they are not connected, and although they can co-operate (or 'choose and act together') they can only be understood to do so because this is facilitated by an artificial and sovereign state. Thus, espistemic, religious, ethical, and political certainty came from within, and modern theory must work outwards from individuated nodes. This is reflected from Descartes and Hobbes onwards, and is perhaps best summarised by Kant's paradoxical phrase 'unsocial sociality'.

Aristotle and Schmitt: Friend or foe?

Given the near extinction of 'friendship' in modern political thought what are its chances of a revival? Indeed, how does the strange fate of friendship impinge on International Relations when it draws on modern political thought? One way of trying to rethink friendship and the state is to start by looking again at some previous attempts to think about friendship and politics. In doing so we better realise our own inheritance and come to get a better perspective of our own conditions. However, we also run the attendant risk of finding ourselves limited by these accounts. Thus we must acknowledge previous accounts, but also find ways to overcome them. In what follows we will focus on the accounts of just two figures: Aristotle and Schmitt. The former has been selected as Aristotle's account is perhaps the most well-known and it is also probably the single most influential account of the premodern traditions. It also specifically considers the idea of friendship (or a form of friendship) *within* the state. However, although Aristotle's account still shines through the centuries to light parts of our enquiry today, it is also a light which comes to us from a vastly different ideational and historical context – There's the rub. In contrast the thought of Schmitt is treated as it returns friendship to the very centre of an understanding of the political. Schmitt is also nearer to us than Aristotle as Schmitt's world is more-or-less our world: a world of modern sovereign nation-states. Yet Schmitt's thought also poses difficulties for the theorist of friendship and the state. In the final analysis friendship is wedded as an unequal partner to sovereignty.

To claim that Aristotle's account of friendship has become the standard requires little justification. Like many, Pakaluk identifies Aristotle as being central when he focuses the origins of our thinking on friendship to the Ancient Greeks. Now it should be noted that the Ancient accounts of friendship took multiple forms (Derrida 1988, Stern-Gillet 1995, Devere 1999) but this does not significantly diminish the point that

Pakaluk is making. In particular, he identifies the two contrasting models of friendship advanced by Plato and Aristotle (Pakaluk 1994). Here it is suggested that Plato understood friendship to be characterised by a 'unity' – that like the Good Society it was both complete and whole and did not admit divisions. This is shown in Plato's analogy that in the unified state, as with friendship, 'all things are held in common' (Plato 1987: 191, 226, 46-52). In contrast, Aristotle argues that virtue plays an 'oblique' role in friendship in the wider community and that friendship is both 'intellectual' and derives its source from the household (Pakaluk 1994: 207-08). Thus, Plato's friendship displays and aims for a unity, whilst Aristotle's admits varieties or forms. Aristotle uses 'friendship' to indicate a wide variety of relations, from the family to citizens; from utility, to pleasure, to virtue; from hospitality to well-wishing. From this Pakaluk suggests that there are two traditions of friendship: Plato's, which leads to the kind of unified political societies advocated by Rousseau and Marx; and Aristotle's, which has been characteristic of the American republic (Pakaluk 1994: 198). It would be interesting to develop what Pakaluk suggests; indeed, we might be tempted to think that the strands identified by Pakaluk could develop not in a strict linear way, but that with investigation a whole genealogy of friendship might emerge. We might, for example, add to this that Plato's form could also be said to lead to various forms of fascism and nationalism, or exclusionary religions and cultural movements. Indeed, does Plato lead to Schmitt? It is interesting to observe, in this context, that Derrida suggests a similar project through the tracing of what he terms 'ruptures'; in Derrida's account the most significant of these being between the Greco-Roman model 'marked by the value of *reciprocity*, by homological, immanentist, finitist, and politicist concord' and the Judeo-Christian which introduces 'heterology, asymmetry, and infinity' (Derrida 1988: 643-44).

To return to the point in hand: What is at stake is whether Aristotle's account of friendship – which admits variations and perhaps seems the more promising of the two Ancient accounts for contemporary concerns – could lead to the kind of flourishing civil society which would be important in sustaining democracy. In many ways Aristotle's account of *political* friendship does seem to indicate this. As Pakaluk has observed this account of friendship is based not on close emotional ties but on agreement on large-scale practical matters facing the polity: in short, the constitution (Pakaluk 1994: 208, Stern-Gillet 1995: 152).

However, it is not simply a case of our being able to use 'friendship' as a kind of umbrella term under which these other relations are brought together and sheltered as did Aristotle. This is especially so for those who are attempting to consider the *political* possibilities and implications of friendship. The inclination to start with Aristotle and his account of the varieties of friendship is perfectly understandable given the relative neglect of friendship as a *political* construct in the modern period. If we are to revive some political life from the term, then it seems a reasonable strategy to go back to the time when the concept was animated with a political spirit and see whether such a spirit can be re-invoked. However, the danger here is that the relative neglect of a political understanding and application of 'friendship' in the modern period coupled with the sheer brilliance of Aristotle's account, results in the somewhat difficult task of stepping out from his light. Contemporary accounts drawing on Aristotle face the daunting task of not only negotiating the assumptions given to him by his time and place (especially about women and foreigners), but also the theoretical framework on which the account hangs. Specifically, in revisiting

Aristotle we must either negotiate or transcend his hierarchical virtue ethics and the deep social and political conservatism that this entails. Additionally, when we examine Aristotle it is apparent that (whilst he disagrees with Plato) in many respects their thought follows the same pattern. What Aristotle supposes (and what is enabled by his hierarchical virtue ethics) is that there is one true form of friendship (virtue friendship) which other inferior forms somehow mirror or echo. Thus, only the true form of friendship has true ethical merit (and it is also extremely limited as it is only possible between handfuls of good men) and other forms are somehow degraded versions of this (Stern-Gillet 1995: 167-69). In Aristotle's thought they are friendships *because they resemble* the true form. This is fine if we buy into the moral and cultural world of the *polis*, but it seems difficult to support in the pluralism of the world of states. Thus, although Aristotle's light shines brightly, it quickly becomes apparent that its beacon can also be seen as a warning, and that if we sail too closely to his island we run the risk of being wrecked on his reef.

Schmitt's thought must also be seen as an ambivalent friend to our task. On the one hand Schmitt's work is now receiving closer scholarly attention; attention which intends, in part, to rescue his thought from its wartime taint. Schmitt is also receiving renewed attention in the thought of International Relations scholars. What is initially appealing about Schmitt is that whilst dealing in the world of modern nation-states he also posits a central role for friendship. Unlike Aristotle, Schmitt is not tied to the hierarchical virtue ethics which tend to characterise the premodern accounts. Now friendship becomes the defining feature of the political: the political is defined by the antithesis between friend and enemy (Schmitt 1996: 26). This distinction cannot be 'traced' to other distinctions which remain primarily apolitical such as beauty and ugliness in aesthetics, and good and evil in morality (cf. Schmitt 1996: 37). What is more 'The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation' (Schmitt 1996: 26). In this way, we might view Schmitt as not only the heir of Hobbes, but also the heir of Plato. There are not really varieties of friendship, just the unity and solidarity of friendship. The difference is that, unlike Plato, Schmitt offers no moral framework for friendship at all. Indeed, he is pains to keep friendship apart from all other systems of evaluation. In the Hobbesian mould, friendship, like power, just *is*.

For Schmitt, then, the friend-enemy distinction is the organising concept of the political (Schmitt 1996: 29). It is the friend-enemy grouping that subordinates other groupings as it is this political grouping which facilitates the others (Schmitt 1996: 38). Thus, Schmitt's world is very much a world that a Hobbes would recognise – but a world where friendship appears to take a central role. What Schmitt does is to return us again to the primary bond of political society. However, Schmitt's account, as an account of *friendship*, is seriously deficient for our purposes. For Schmitt, the friend-enemy distinction very quickly becomes embroiled with the notion of sovereignty. It is true that states can have friendly relations with other states, but what is also essential is the identification of an enemy be they internal or external (Schmitt 1996: 38-39, 46). Thus, friendship is animated not by the free emergence of bonds of obligation, responsibility, reciprocity, or even fellow-feeling within the polity, but by the realisation of difference and existential threat (Schmitt 1996: 32-33). As Schmitt claims 'For as long as a people exists in the political sphere, this people must, even if only in the most extreme case – and whether this point has been reached must be

decided by it – determine by itself the distinction of friend and enemy.' (Schmitt 1996: 49). There is a unity, but it is a unity created through mutual fear.

Schmitt's concept of friendship relies on the identification of a threatening other – a feature that we might find both mistaken and regrettable. Contra Schmitt, there is nothing to suggest that identification with some necessarily entails hostility to others, or visa-versa. It is perhaps because of two further observations that we can understand why Schmitt goes down this route. The first is that Schmitt links the ability to determine the enemy to the idea of sovereignty, and sovereignty becomes entangled with the idea of the people acting through the state. What Schmitt sets up from the start is the ability to act and decide, but an ability which is not connected, in the first instance, to any substantive values or morality at all. What we have then is a determination of power and the ability to act, but no way of determining how self-enclosed nation-states will act. We are immediately returned to the uncertainty of a Hobbesian anarchy and its dour prospects. However, this focus on determining the enemy also betrays another tendency in Schmitt – the tendency to assert, rather than argue and explain, the nature or features of 'friendship'. Despite returning friendship to the very centre of his political theory Schmitt actually says very little about what it is like (or how it is possible). Indeed, it is merely determined by what enmity is not.

So, in the final analysis Schmitt's thought whilst having a growing influence on our understanding of both the political and International Relations cannot provide a satisfactory route back to friendship. Indeed, its focus on sovereignty and on enmity might stand as a stark warning about how friendship can quickly become subsumed in a world of nation-states. If we are to rethink friendship in International Relations Schmitt's thought points us in the opposite direction to that of Aristotle – but we must avoid both extremes.

Relocating friendship

Our task of theorising friendship in International Relations has, then, two outer limits. On the one hand we must somehow negotiate the legacy of those who have theorised before us and we have suggested here especially the paradigmatic cases of Aristotle and Schmitt. On the other hand we are limited by the centrality of the sovereign-state to theorising International Relations, and the current under-theorisation and invisibility of friendship. However, difficult though they are, these limits create a border and a space where friendship can be located. Friendship must occupy some ground between these outer limits – and it is also hoped that make the terrain more interesting. It is important that we can both draw on Aristotle and Schmitt but to overcome their difficulties. There are two ways in which this might be done. One is to attempt to modify Aristotle's and Schmitt's accounts to suit our own circumstances. Whilst this is a totally legitimate strategy to pursue it involves close analysis of Aristotle and Schmitt, and detailed and careful consideration as to what can be salvaged – this would take us away from the matter in hand and it is not proposed that we attempt to here. The other way in which we might attempt to overcome the limitations set by Aristotle and Schmitt is simply to acknowledge but resist their accounts. In doing so we also resist the temptation to try to set-up or define the central or complete account of friendship – an account which will either run adrift on the rocks of historical and geographical contingency, or become stranded and immutable

in its own time and place. And this is especially true of Aristotle. Instead of following Aristotle in trying to find a core or true friendship and showing how other relationships approximate this one true friendship we could start by suggesting that there is no core account of the one true friendship, but that there are a group of features that friendships can be said to share in a plural world. Conversely, instead of simply accepting Schmitt's assertions about friendship which perpetuate its under-theorisation both terms of its relation to the state and its connection to ethical and moral concerns, we need to pay some attention to the features which help us to locate friendship. Thus, our strategy is one of investigating a network or complex of friendship as *both* a theoretical term *and* an empirical phenomena or dynamic.

From this perspective, relationships characterised as 'friendship' could appear at any point on a number of registers – but they need not all appear at the same points and on the same registers. When we begin to consider any account of friendship we find that the features that we attribute to it both include and exclude. For example, it is certainly true that *some* friendships have elements of reciprocation – but perhaps not all. Indeed, it is not clear exactly how much, and what kind of reciprocation distinguishes a relationship as a friendship. Does a friendship have to be a conscious undertaking recognised by both parties (or all parties) as friendship? Equally friendship might be thought to be exclusive or open; emotional or intellectual; contain equal or unequal partners; be chosen or situational. All of these attributes can be connected or identified with friendship, but they may not be present in all dynamics that we would wish to identify by the term friendship. However, we would not wish the phenomena and category to become so diffuse that it ceased to have real meaning. What limits the category is its *usefulness*; And the category is useful insofar as it highlights and allows us to examine what would otherwise be hidden. Thus, what is being aimed at here is an understanding of friendship that would consider the term in the light of Wittgenstein's arguments concerning 'family resemblances' (Wittgenstein 1963sections 66 and 67). Wittgenstein argues that concepts need not be clearly defined for them to be either meaningful or useful – and he cites the idea of a 'game' to demonstrate this. Whilst we can all identify various games it is clear that they differ significantly in their features. Thus there are features that they all share, although they do not share all the features – thus they resemble each other like members of a family (for a discussion of this see Fogelin 1976: 133-38). This reflects the fluidity of instances of friendship, and the openness of the underlying category. If the category appears to be broad it is because politics itself is broad. And if the concept appears vague then does this really matter if it does not impede but facilitates investigation?

What this approach allows us to do is to see that (a) friendship can have content (and even moral content) without it having to be registered on a pre-given moral hierarchy (this enables us to both recognise the plurality of the phenomena of friendship and opens the door to a political-normative pluralism of our own); and (b) we do not need to 'rule-out' relations as being outside the concerns of friendship by having a restrictive notion of *exactly what* friendship is. Such a restrictive notion always stands in danger of contradicting, or being contradicted by, our actual use (both contemporary and historical) and also runs the risk of being either too restrictive or too inclusive and thus no real practical use. We do not wish to make 'friendship' so specific that it connotes only a narrow (and culturally specific) relationship or dynamic; nor to make it so wide that it embraces every form of association.

The issue here, then, is to develop an analytical use of 'friendship' which both has utility as a tool for the political researcher *and* remains true to the usual contemporary connotations. This is not strictly a *definitional* task, but a question of *use*. However, no attempt can be made in isolation, and as we have seen, as soon as we begin this enterprise we are in danger of quickly becoming overshadowed by the terms central theorists (Aristotle and Schmitt in particular) and the somewhat bewildering array and diversity of accounts both through time and across geography (for examples of the variety of such accounts consult Pakaluk 1991, Rouner 1994, Blosser and Bradley 1997). What might we conclude from an examination of this literature? And how might it help us to rethink friendship? The first thing to note is that interest in friendship begins to wane significantly in the modern period. It has been suggested here, and demonstrated elsewhere, that 'friendship' was a central concern of the Ancients – a concern which was connected, at least in part, to an understanding of the political. It is not entirely true that the idea has been universally ignored in modern times – indeed, it often appears in unusual places (such as in the thought of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard) but it can be maintained that in modern times friendship; (a) is not considered to have a political dimension; (b) is treated as a private and affective relationship between individuals; and (c) is often treated with a degree of hostility or suspicion. Let us call this the *contemporary-affective* model of friendship. It is *this* model of friendship which has been excluded from politics – it is not, as first appears, that friendship has simply 'gone away'.

Clearly the modern story is clearly not the only story that can be told about friendship. The most recent model does not supersede all previous models. Indeed, from our current perspective the *contemporary-affective* model of friendship is an extremely limited account of the phenomena *if* it is taken to stand for the only relationship which can be treated by the term 'friendship'. That the *contemporary-affective* model is taken to be the *only* variety of friendship betrays not a clarification of our language but its impoverishment. Indeed, our language is impoverished in three senses: first it is the poorer as we fail to see the connection between a whole variety of relationships which can be characterised as belonging to friendship; second, by limiting friendship to the *contemporary-affective* model we leave ourselves bereft of a discourse to describe and explore relationships; and third, it is the poorer because it fails to recognise and respond to the long tradition of theorising about friendship.

Thus, we should not give-up or become disheartened. Rather than simply accepting that close personal friendships are the *only* form of friendship we can suggest that, on the contrary, personal friendship is but one manifestation or variety of a more generalised set or relations which could be usefully classified as friendship. Affective friendship is, of course, one variety. It is even a variety which can have importance to politics (Rawls 1971, Okin 1989), but it is only one instance of a family of relations which might be usefully classified as friendship. Moreover, friendship can still have a role even in our plural times where the concerns of modern political thought are in the ascendancy (e.g. the individual, liberty, power, sovereignty, the state). Clearly, if friendship is theorised as a set of phenomena or dynamics in relation to each other – relations which hinge on commitments to others and obligation generated by values and orders – then we can begin to see a space for friendship, and that friendship can and does occupy that space in a variety of manifestations and throughout a whole spectrum of relations.

The state and International Relations

Let us complete the picture by turning now to the issue of the state itself – an idea which has so far stood behind what we have said. Of course, it is a vexed issue to attempt any analytic definition of the state as such. Whilst not wishing to simply gloss over these issues, it is permissible to leave the details to one side for the purposes of this discussion. What is relevant here is that we do, in fact, talk about states – and that the concept of the state (however ill-defined) not only plays a meaningful role in our conceptual language, but also allows us to identify and understand a variety of phenomena. What is more, the state is clearly a central term in both modern political theory and International Relations theory.

It can be observed that the state is taken to act like an individual *and* taken to have enemies; We should therefore also take the idea that it can have friends seriously (Wolfers 1962: 25ff., Smart 1994: 156, Wendt 1999: 298). Indeed, it might be added to this that usual assumptions about the state also take two further premises for granted. The first is that whilst realists and others often talk about the problems that states face vis-à-vis cooperation with each other, there is also (often) the assumption that there is little problem of individuals cooperating within states. Of course, this is not to ignore the vast literature on divisions within states – but what it is to say is that very few states could really be under the scales of Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Second, as Berenskoetter has rightly pointed out, to even talk of the state as an individual leads to Hume's famous worries that there is no stable self (Berenskoetter 2007 forthcoming). Even people have no underlying 'self' or 'core'. The notion of the state as an individual with the attributes of a person is, of course, *only* a metaphor. Despite this, it is a metaphor which it is hard to see, or rather speak, beyond. However, whilst at first the state seen as an individual might give the theorist of friendship some foothold, the discussion cannot end there and we must climb beyond this metaphor. For to rest on this metaphor is precisely to fail to see friendship operating at a variety of other locations (it is to restrict ourselves to the modern paradigm). Instead it is suggested here (as elsewhere, Smith 2005: 494-98) that the state is seen as one important crystallisation of a relationship between orders and values. An important manifestation of the values of a given order, but only one possible manifestation. Friendships point to other communities of value with dynamics of their own which can exist (sometimes silently, sometimes noisily) both *within* and *across* states.

What we also observe in International Relations is not just that states are sovereign, but that they tend to be *nation*-states. Thus, at the very heart of the International Relations paradigm there is a double form of friendship: the bonds which tie the nation and the bonds which tie citizens. So, the state becomes a focus, but something which we have to put out of focus if we are to see a fuller range of phenomena. The state must be brought into and out of relief in order to see friendship, and in doing so a better understanding of both the state and International Relations is achieved. Thinking in this way there are three broad sites of friendship that might be thought to exist in the international community, and in each the state plays a role: Friendship *within* states, where the state is the limit of the friendships; friendship *between* states, where the state itself conducts relations with other states; friendships *across* states, where the state is taken out of relief to highlight the connections which can exist

between groups within states with groups within other states, or groups which span across state borders.

Initially it might be tempting to see these forms of friendship in terms of weak and strong, and in terms of concentric circles. Such a picture might suppose that strong friendships (of the emotional type) are localised to the individual and a few close confidents, then there are the levels of the family, then perhaps regional affinities, then fellow citizens/nationals, and finally some forms of international friendship. As these concentric rings radiate outwards the bonds of friendship become weaker, and perhaps more formalised. Thus we could move from an emotive obligation to a handful of people (personal virtue) to the formalised and rational obligation to others as 'citizens of the world' (cosmopolitanism). In such as story it might also be supposed that our obligations, duties, and responsibilities to others also grew weaker the further from the local that we travel – although this is far from certain (cf. Scheffler 2001: 48-65). One recent attempt to think along these lines can be found in Richard Vernon's *Friends, Citizens, Strangers: Essays on Where We Belong*. Here Vernon outlines and differentiates the three sorts of relationship of its title, concluding that cosmopolitanism (i.e. the morality of strangers) must form the over-arching morality, with it must find room for and be sustained by 'citizenship' and 'friendship' (Vernon 2005: 13-14, 244-70). Thus we are left with obligations generated by commitments at a variety of levels, but with the principles of *conditionality* (that we are not 'defined or encompassed by their associations') and *subsidiary* (that 'levels of organization derive their authority only from the shortcomings of levels below).

This approach would allow bridges to be made both in terms of analysis and research into the locations or levels of friendship. It exposes various levels of expectation and obligation. These ties could thus bring the state 'in' and relationships between states as a *level* of analysis. This would lend itself to both the reality of the state, and national and international commitment. It is important to note here that the point is not to analyse the source of obligation as such – i.e. it is not a *normative* question in the first instance. Rather, the point is to identify, conceptualise, and analyse existing interactions, relationships, and phenomena.

However, the idea of concentric circles is only a part of this story. In order to fully conceptualise and realise the role of friendship in International Relations we need not simply to think about concentric circles rippling out from the centre (for where would such a centre be?), but a whole complex or network of overlapping and entwined rings. What might be called – at the risk of overstretching the language of geometry – a 'network of rings'. When we start to think in these terms the state is removed from relief and instead of viewing International Relations as the study of power units known as states, we begin to see the myriad of interconnected values, orders, and affinities that cross-cross the globe. Thus we arrive not at a tight core-definition of 'friendship' but a conceptualisation of the relationship that at once lets us focus on otherwise unobserved foci, relations, and dynamics, and which does so by complementing the dominant paradigm of individuality, sovereignty, and power which characterise the modern nation-state.

Conclusion: The knots of friendship within, between, and beyond states

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Our intentions have been limited, exploratory, and suggestive. In this paper we have attempted to sketch (a) why friendship should be taken seriously in International Relations, and (b) what such a theorisation of friendship might look like. Of course, the success of the first aim is not dependent on the success of the second, although it is hoped that what has been outlined here is at least a plausible *prima facie* case for bringing friendship and International Relations together. How this account is flesh-out and developed in different ways is beyond the remit of our task and we must leave it to others.

By way of a conclusion we might stress again three important observations. The first is that any account of friendship in International Relations must draw upon, and be attentive to, previous accounts. However, it must also recognise the limitations set by these accounts. As we have seen, both Aristotle and Schmitt offer interesting starting points, but they must be transcended. What we need is a truly modern understanding of friendship and politics – truly modern because it must also complement the established focus of the sovereign nation-state. There is little point in trying to ignore this feature of International Relations, and nothing is gained by simply dismissing the existing literature and language. The second observation is that, given the limitations placed upon us, the strategy that is suggested here is not to try to come to some core definition of friendship (although this might be possible in certain localised instances) but to try instead to understand friendship as a family of related phenomena. This family share characteristics, but they do not share *all* characteristics. The reason for doing this is not only is friendship notoriously hard to define, it is also that in thinking about friendship in this way we open our eyes to a whole variety of interlocking relationships which might otherwise be subsumed under power, individuality, and the state, or be bracketed away by an over-strict logic. Finally, in International Relations we are interested in seeing friendship within, between, and beyond states. In order to do this we have to enhance the vision of friendship as a series of concentric circles with a variety of levels of obligation, commitment, and responsibility with a much more complex picture which resembles a network. Although this is a daunting task it does not mean that we have to see all relations as a Gordian tangle – instead it allows us to realise that not only are there different levels of analysis but also different strands, strands which takes us into and across the borders of states, and also across cultural and historical borders. It is our task to identify and to follow these strands and to discover again the knots of friendship.

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