Introduction

Politics, Philosophy, and Friendship

Reflecting on his friendship with Étienne de La Boétie, Michel de Montaigne famously asserted that if asked why they were friends, he would be unable to provide an answer other than to say "because it was he, because it was I."[1] While Montaigne's answer appears to be somewhat glib, it does reveal something important about their friendship. Montaigne believed it hinged upon the particularity of their respective characters. The two of them were so constituted that it seemed as if they had been made for one another. In fact, Montaigne goes on to declare that their friendship was so all encompassing that he and La Boétie became thoroughly entwined with one another, so that they became "of one piece," such that there was "no more sign of the seam by which they were first conjoined."[2] Montaigne and La Boétie were fused into one.

While Montaigne's description of his friendship with La Boétie is beautiful, it may also give us pause. Few of us, I believe, can claim to have so close a friendship that we can argue to have become as one with the other. The closest such friendship that many of us might be able to point to is a marriage or other amorous relationship. However, Montaigne explicitly characterizes his relationship with La Boétie as a friendship, rather than a relationship of amorous love. If we take Montaigne's standard as the guide, a fair number of us might claim never to have had such a friend. In the *Lysis* (the dialogue analyzed in the first chapter of this book), Socrates asserts that despite his great desire for a friend "he is so far from the possession" of such a thing that he does not know "the manner in which one person becomes a friend of another." (*Lysis*, 212a3–4).[3] Socrates's desire for a friend—someone who can complete him—becomes an important theme

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in the dialogue, as Socrates is skeptical that anything other than the good itself could provide such completion for man. Taking Montaigne's friendship with La Boétie as the governing standard, many of us can probably relate to Socrates's elusive quest for a friend. While beautiful, the completion that Montaigne claims to have found in his friendship with La Boétie is not something with which most of us are familiar.

At the same time, friendship is largely recognized to be an integral component of human flourishing, and it would seem odd to say that those with whom we are close are not worthy of the term *friend*, but are, in the words of Montaigne, "mere acquaintances."[4] The elusive character of friendship is neatly encapsulated by the famous quip attributed to Aristotle, "Oh my friends, there is no friend!"[5] This paradox speaks to the difficulties attending the use of the term *friend*. In common parlance, the term *friendship* is used to describe a whole range of relationships, from the sense of brotherly camaraderie that can exist among teammates engaged in a common enterprise to the intimate love between spouses, and in the Christian tradition, a believer's personal relationship with Christ. Some even maintain that the relationship between merchant and customer can be considered friendship in some loose way. As a result, we often distinguish between distant friendships, ordinary friendships, and close friendships.

According to Aristotle, there is nothing strange about the disparate meanings we colloquially assign to the term *friendship*. In his treatise on friendship in *The Nicomachean Ethics* (analyzed in chapters 3 and 4), he divides friendship into three types: friendships of utility, friendships of pleasure, and friendships of virtue. Friendships of utility are characterized by the use each party obtains from the relationship—we can think here of commercial friendships—and last only as long as each party benefits from the relationship. In contrast, friendships of pleasure are premised on the enjoyment each party obtains from being with their friend. Aristotle explains that these friendships are prevalent among the young and typically dissolve quickly. The last type of friendship exists only among those who are good and alike in point of virtue and, because it is based on the excellence of each party to the friendship, it is the only one of the three that can be described as a friendship of the good. I once had some students ask if the study group they had created for the upcoming test was a friendship of utility. I teased in return that Aristotle believed friendships of the good are often marked by having shared in suffering together. The truth is that while we are able to distinguish between these three conceptual types of friendship, Aristotle believes that the friendship of virtue includes both pleasure

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and use and that there is movement between the three types—friendships of mere use or pleasure can develop into friendships of virtue. Thus, the confused way in which we use the term *friendship* reflects the complexity of the phenomenon.

In addition to the three friendships described above, Aristotle also describes the relationship that exists among the citizens of the polis. While this relationship is often described as *civic friendship* and compared to the friendship of utility, I prefer the Greek term *homonoia* employed by Aristotle, which means "sameness of mind," as he expressly distinguishes this relationship from friendship (*Nicomachean Ethics [NE]*, 1155a24).[6] While Aristotle provides only a brief description of what "sameness of mind" entails in *The Nicomachean Ethics*, he indicates that it relates to the conception of justice, equity, and norms shared by the citizens of a particular regime. In chapter five, I analyze Aristotle's description of the best regime in the *Politics*, to see how it reflects *homonoia* and whether Aristotle has any advice for cultivating these shared norms.

Despite the confused way in which we ordinarily speak of friendship, Aristotle believes that only the highest type of friendship—friendship of virtue—is friendship in the authoritative sense. This friendship, while not identical to Montaigne's account of friendship, shares some affinities with Montaigne's description of his own friendship with La Boétie. For Aristotle, the highest type of friendship, like Montaigne's friendship, is dependent upon character. Specifically, the highest type of friendship is based on excellence of character. Aristotle describes this type of friendship as *sunaisthetic*, which in Greek means "joint perception."[7] In the Aristotelian friendship of virtue, each party is good and alike in point of virtue and, as a result, they are each able to perceive the excellence in the other's character. Such friendships are rare because excellence of character is rare. Friendship in the authoritative sense is described as an important aspect of human existence without which human life would be lacking. Friendship of virtue, therefore, appears to be of great moment to Aristotle, while remaining somewhat elusive.

The Decline of Friendship

However elusive friendships of virtue might have been in antiquity, it seems that modern democracy has witnessed a decline even in the number of friendships Aristotle would have termed friendships of pleasure, as well as the sense of *homonoia* he describes. There is a general sense that the rela-

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tionships and associations that used to be a staple of life in democracy are disappearing. The decline in such relationships is not simply a symptom of nostalgia or an attitude of pessimism toward the present times. Numerous studies have documented the disintegration of civil bonds and friendships that were characteristic of an earlier democratic age. Robert Putnam's observations documenting the decline of such bonds in his book *Bowling Alone* are well known.[8] Compared to a short while ago, the civic associations and groups that populated the American landscape have declined precipitously.

The disappearance of these meaningful relationships has left us with only the more transient and thin friendships of utility. While these friendships are no doubt important, they are characterized primarily by necessity rather than as something good and beautiful in their own right. Adam Smith describes these friendships as follows: "Colleagues in office, partners in trade, call one another brothers; and frequently feel towards one another as if they really were so. . . . The Romans expressed this sort of attachment by the word *necessitudo*, which . . . seems to denote that it was imposed by the necessity of the situation."[9] The decline in relationships that are founded on shared sentimentality, pleasure, or virtue means that the primary bonds of society are founded on necessity, rather than on anything that is good and beautiful in its own right.

We might wonder why a decline in relationships founded on shared sentimentality, pleasure, or virtue is problematic. After all, if necessity is that which keeps society together as Adam Smith suggests, we might do well to build on this low but seemingly solid foundation, rather than to spurn that which nature provides. However, Putnam amply shows the way relationships based on shared sentimentality provide the social capital that facilitates ease of interactions and affords society with the trust that enables utilitarian exchanges to take place with minimal friction.[10] In sum, the shared sentimentality, pleasure, and occasionally virtue that characterize civic associations have a use of their own. Of course, to justify nonutilitarian relationships on the basis of their use may be the last refuge of scoundrels, and it might be better to simply acknowledge that the decline in relationships founded on shared sentimentality has resulted in the loss of something beautiful in its own right.

The explanations often provided for the decline in relationships and associations of shared sentiments are varied. Some point to the rise in technology, suggesting that the proliferation of weak online relationships is the culprit of the destruction of meaningful in-person friendships—our social circles are widened at the expense of their depth. Others point to the rise in

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individualism, suggesting that the focus on individual liberties, self-expression, and a preoccupation with autonomy have led to the decline of friendships beyond mere utility, as people have shunted group activities, perceiving them to be stifling their independence. Finally, others have suggested that globalization and neoliberalism are to blame, whereby the prioritization of profit over the protection and enhancement of social cohesion destroyed associational tendencies.

I think there is truth to all these explanations. What they all have in common, however, is a shift in values. The last few centuries have witnessed a shift that has deprioritized traditional virtue as espoused in different forms by Aristotle, Cicero, Thomas Aquinas, and others, in favor of utility, autonomy, and profit. The virtues necessary for commercial society have been substituted for traditional virtues. Of particular influence in this regard were the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment, such as Adam Smith, Francis Hutcheson, and Thomas Reid, who sought to refashion the virtues and sentiments of society to make them congruent with the aims of a modern society based on commerce.[11] Considering this substitution of commercial virtue, it is not surprising that we see a decline in the traditional friendships of virtue as well and, as I hope to make clear in subsequent chapters, a concomitant decline in friendships of pleasure and civic friendships.

Why Study Friendship?

There has been a resurgence of scholarly interest in the topic of friendship, and many of the books written have explored the writings on friendship that date from classical antiquity to help further their own inquiries into the concept of friendship.[12] However, while the relevance of civic friendship to politics is straightforward—as noted, civic friendship, in addition to being pleasing in its own right, provides the thick social bonds necessary for political cohesion and action—the relevance of friendships between two virtuous individuals in the manner of Aristotle's *sunaisthetic* friendship of the good (or the relationship between Montaigne and La Boétie for that matter) to the field of political philosophy is not immediately apparent.

Friendship seems, at first glance, to be decidedly nonpolitical. Contemporary conventional understandings of friendship seem to suggest that it is more fundamental than politics. Not only are friendships able to transcend political boundaries (and in fact often do), but our understanding of political relations also ordinarily entails concepts of rights and duties that seem to

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be foreign to our conception of friendship. Friendship appears to be outside of the realm of politics or relegated to the private sphere. Consequently, it may seem more appropriate to the field of sociology than political science. If friendship is largely conceived of as a private affair, why should it be the object of study for political philosophy?

The political philosophers of antiquity, including Plato and Aristotle, discuss the concept of friendship in detail. As I hope to explain in subsequent chapters, these writers saw the friendship between philosopher and statesman as constituting the height of friendship and believed it to have important political ramifications. This same political view of friendship held practical and theoretical influence in the Christian tradition as is evidenced by the treatise on friendship written by Aelred of Rievaulx, the theological writings of Thomas Aquinas, and the epistle on education addressed to the young Prince Charles of Spain by Desiderius Erasmus.[13] While the modern era is still witness to a number of treatises on friendship, Montaigne's essay being among the most influential, the provenance of these treatises is decidedly less political, and friendship is presented primarily as one of the pleasures of private life.[14]

By relegating friendship to the private sphere, these writers of the early modern period point toward the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, who sought to establish politics on a solid scientific and mechanistic basis rather than on what he saw to be the unstable ground of friendship.[15] Travis Smith makes the case that a principal motivation for Hobbes's system of government is his concern over the problems posed by friendship. According to Smith, Hobbes's embrace of the all-powerful Leviathan is borne out of a belief that human society "cannot sustain itself on the basis of friendship alone without suffering 'a great deal of grief.' "[16] In fact, friendships pose a danger to the security of society, as Hobbes views them as "partial associations" that are inclined toward self-interest. Accordingly, an important goal for Hobbes is to weaken these relationships to ensure that they pose no danger to the state. Smith concludes that Hobbes's attempt to weaken friendship entails a concomitant attempt to "transform the state into something impersonal and procedural."[17] For Hobbes, a politics reduced to procedure and contract is superior to that practiced in classical antiquity, which was sustained by the fickle bonds of friendship.

This history may go some way to explaining the resurgence of interest in friendship. Perhaps the rise in scholarship devoted to friendship is undertaken in response to the perceived inability of social contract theories to explain deep commitments. Michael Walzer has documented the

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way in which the social contract theory underpinning liberalism is felt to inadequately respond to man's deepest metaphysical needs, leaving people feeling isolated and alone.[18] As abstract rights and duties begin to be perceived as incapable of providing a solid foundation for politics, people may be turning to friendship to provide an alternative source of meaning, commitment, and stability.[19] However, a majority of the recent scholarship is primarily sociological and is devoted to exploring friendship's capacity to provide meaning and purpose to private life. While there is certainly merit in these studies, they proceed in a manner conditioned by modern political thinking: friendship is analyzed as a private association that operates independent of and subordinate to the realm of politics. I propose that the history of friendship provides a justification for analyzing friendship from the standpoint of political philosophy. If the modern approach to politics is seen as being incapable of providing a solid foundation for politics, it may make sense to turn to ancient conceptions of friendship to uncover why friendship was seen as foundational for politics, rather than something belonging to the private realm into which individuals can retreat for the sake of comfort and fulfillment.

The purpose of this book is to explore why seemingly private friendships between two individuals was seen to be foundational to the practice of conventional politics according to both Socrates and Aristotle. Through a comparison of Plato's *Lysis* and *Gorgias* with books VIII and IX of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* as well as his discussion of the best regime in the *Politics*, I hope to explore friendship's relationship to political life. There are good reasons for pairing these texts together. The *Lysis* and the *Gorgias* form a pair, as the former reveals the Socratic conception of friendship, while the latter reveals the effect this conception of friendship has on politics. Furthermore, recent scholarship has suggested that the dramatic date of these dialogues indicate that the *Gorgias* takes place immediately after the *Lysis*.[20] Aristotle's reflections on friendship in books VIII and IX of *The Nicomachean Ethics*, in turn, are dependent on many of the strands of argumentation abandoned by Socrates in the *Lysis*. Aristotle develops an account of friendship in these books and, in the *Politics*, explains how friendship animates the polis and orients it toward the good.

While readers might wonder why I have chosen to focus on Socrates rather than Plato, the reason is fairly straightforward: Plato places the arguments developed in the dialogues in the mouth of his characters, and while Plato does not himself speak in the dialogues, it is possible to uncover what he wants to show his readers by paying close attention to the characters,

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setting, and topics of the dialogues.[21] For example, in the *Lysis*, Plato presents Socrates engaging with the youngest interlocutors of the entire Platonic writings, employing a number of sophistic arguments, and concluding with an account of friendship that stresses its basis in need. Similarly, in the *Gorgias*, we witness Socrates seeking to (unsuccessfully) persuade Callicles to avoid politics on the basis of a conception of friendship that had been examined, and found wanting, in the *Lysis*. While these arguments and dramatic details may not enable us to derive a full-blown conception of Platonic friendship, when combined with other similar indications, they enable us tentatively to conclude that Plato saw the Socratic approach to friendship and politics as leaving something to be desired. The lacunae that Plato identifies in the Socratic approach to friendship and politics provide a space, or ground, upon which it is possible to construct an alternative account of friendship and politics. It is my contention that Aristotle grapples with many of the same philosophical puzzles that had rendered Socrates's inquiry into friendship aporetic but, in contrast to Socrates, is able to uncover an account of friendship that provides a solid foundation for politics. It is my hope that the book reveals that although Socrates and Aristotle reach different conclusions as to the nature and purpose of friendship, both provide invaluable insights into the extent to which friendship should inform our political life and provide an alternative to the modern conception that approaches politics from a strictly mechanistic perspective.

The City and the Philosopher

Socrates's death at the hands of his political community, famously recounted in Plato's *Apology*, illustrates the inherent tension that seems to exist between the philosopher's devotion to a life of contemplation and the political community. Socrates's famous assertion that "the unexamined life is not worth living" generates criticism among the Athenian political elite and the poets who point out that his life of constant inquiry calls into question the conventional practices of Athens (*Apology,* 38a6–7).[22] The tension between philosophy and the polis pervades much of subsequent philosophy, with the result that many political philosophers since Socrates—particularly in the modern era—have recognized this tension and sought to reduce it in various ways.[23]

This theme of the tension between philosophy and politics pervades Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* as well—albeit in a nuanced form—and has

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recently been the focus of a renewed interest in Aristotle's *Ethics*.[24] However, in contrast to Socrates, Aristotle makes his peace with politics. Not only does Aristotle devote an entire treatise—the *Politics*—to the different possible regimes and the manner in which such regimes might be improved, but he also famously collected constitutions alleging that these collections of laws and regime types would be of good use to those who are capable of determining which laws would be beneficial for the various types of regimes (*NE*, 1181b8–10). As a result, some have persuasively argued that the *Politics* is intended to be the counterpart to the *Ethics*, and that the one is meant to lead seamlessly into the other.[25]

Furthermore, Aristotle's interest in politics was not limited to strictly theoretical concerns but extended to practical engagement with politics. Aristotle's relation to the Macedonian rulers has long been acknowledged—in particular his relationship with Alexander the Great, whom he was hired to tutor in 343 BC. While the exact extent to which Aristotle acted as a political advisor to Alexander is debated, most scholars agree that Aristotle had an influence on Alexander's political and ethical undertakings.[26] Whatever the extent to which his advice had a practical impact on Alexander's policies, it is generally agreed that Aristotle was politically active. Thus, in contrast to Socrates, who eschewed the practice of politics as an enterprise that entailed the exercise of injustice (cf. *Apology*, 31d–32e) and inquired into political matters only to show the inherent limits of politics, Aristotle inquired into and engaged in the practice of politics in a concrete manner.

How is it that Aristotle alleviated the tension between politics and philosophy in a way that Socrates chose not to? Can it be that Aristotle was simply more of a realist than Socrates when it comes to political life? Did Aristotle understand the harsh necessities of politics and condone them in a way that Socrates did not? Many political interpretations of Aristotle's *Ethics* have adopted precisely this argument.[27] Leo Strauss and others have put forward an interpretation according to which Aristotle recognized the tension between philosophy and politics but sought to alleviate it in various ways while maintaining the superiority of the philosophical life.[28] According to this interpretation, Aristotle's concern with the political community was primarily practical—he recognized that the philosopher's good is in some way dependent on the political community, and as a result he attempted to foster a favorable disposition towards philosophy among the educated political class.[29] In essence, the Straussian interpretation of the *Ethics* holds that at best Aristotle's presentation of the moral virtues was intended to point out that they are merely a pale imitation of the philosophical life of

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contemplation, while at worst his presentation may simply be an elaborate ruse, the goal of which is to ensure that the city is made safe for philosophy.

The standard Straussian reading of the *Ethics* has much to offer. According to this reading, Aristotle sought to present the life of moral virtue so as to emphasize its nobility, while also exposing its limitations. In this way, the well-bred Greek gentleman (καλοσκάγαθος), if he is a sufficiently attentive reader, will recognize that the true benefit of moral virtue is that it points beyond itself toward philosophical virtue, which is self-sufficient and capable of being practiced alone.[30] This interpretation accords nicely with the general consensus that perceives Socrates as the idealist who doggedly pursues the good and holds Aristotle to be the realist who moderates his pursuit of the good in order to concern himself with political matters.[31]

While there is certainly an element of truth to the idealist/realist dichotomy that scholars have imposed on Socrates and Aristotle, I will argue that their differing evaluations of political life stem instead from their different conceptions of friendship. While the interpretation of Aristotle's *Ethics* described above provides much purchase, its greatest difficulty is that it struggles to incorporate much of books VIII and IX into the overall inquiry of the book. These books, both of which deal with friendship, are largely treated by the standard Straussian approach as an exhortation preparing the reader for Aristotle's somewhat startling claim that the philosophical life is the happiest life.[32] In contrast, I will argue that these two books, which together comprise a fifth of the entirety of the *Ethics*, entail a direct response to Socrates's inquiry into friendship in the *Lysis* and are meant to make clear the deficiencies of Socrates's understanding of friendship, as well as of his approach to politics as described in the *Gorgias*. As I will make clear, Socrates has a largely negative understanding of friendship, according to which friendship acts as an impediment to one's advancement toward what is good. It is this understanding that causes Socrates to treat philosophy and the pursuit of the good as occurring outside of the political realm. In contrast, Aristotle sketches a positive account of friendship. This positive view, I will argue, caused Aristotle to present politics in a favorable light and enabled him to use philosophy as a measure that can order the political realm toward the good.

Friendship, Necessity, and the Polis

It may perhaps seem odd to explain the differing stances Socrates and Aristotle take toward the polis as the result of their differing concepts of

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friendship. After all, neither Plato nor Aristotle discuss friendship at length in their most obviously political works.[33] Furthermore, as noted, friendship is often conceived as a private relationship that transcends politics or as being somewhat more fundamental than politics. Many of us likely have friendships and familial relationships that transcend partisan political positions, and it is not uncommon for friendships to transcend political boundaries. As a relationship that is more fundamental than politics, we might say that it is anchored in nature rather than in the conventional world of politics and is therefore primarily a pre-political relationship. Why would Socrates and Aristotle regard friendship as a field of inquiry for political philosophy if it is a pre-political relationship?

The answer is that for both Aristotle and Socrates pre-political relationships have an important effect on politics. Their respective accounts of how the polis comes into existence manifests this important effect. On the surface, it seems that for both Socrates and Aristotle it is pre-political relationships—specifically, relationships developed to fulfill a felt need, or lack—that give rise to the polis.[34] In book II of *The Republic*, Socrates relates to Adeimantus that a city "comes into being because each of us isn't self-sufficient but is in need of much" (*Republic,* 369b6–7).[35] What follows is an analysis of the way in which different parts of the city come together to provide one another with various necessary goods. Aristotle's account of the development of the polis appears to be similar to that of Socrates. The polis seems to emerge from a variety of parts that come together to counter necessity. The most basic unit of the polis, states Aristotle, is the individual, who joins with other individuals to form the household. This is done to provide "for the needs of daily life," as these individuals "cannot exist without one another." In turn, several households come together to form a village, so as to provide for the sake of "non-daily needs." Finally, the "complete community, arising from several villages, is the city" (*Politics*, 1252a26–30).[36] Thus, Socrates and Aristotle both suggest that the polis has its origin in the pre-political relationships that are ordered toward countering necessity.

There is, however, a subtle difference between the two philosophers' accounts of the city's formation. While Socrates is quite clear that the city arises from the pre-political relationships that are ordered toward countering necessity, Aristotle's account goes beyond this. As Aristotle presents it, the daily and non-daily necessities are countered at the level of the household and the village respectively. In contrast, the city—the complete community—comes into being "for the sake of living well" (1252a30). However, Aristotle remains silent about what it is that *causes* the city to be ordered towards

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this end. As a result, it seems that for Aristotle there is some force other than a desire to relieve man's estate that orders the city towards living well.

I hope to show that the differences bewtween Socrates's and Aristotle's accounts of the city's development have their roots in their disparate understandings of friendship. If the pre-political relationship of friendship has its basis in a felt need or lack, then Socrates is correct: the entirety of the political community is founded on pre-political relationships of desire and need. Political communities are, at bottom, little more than economic associations meant to provide for man's necessities. Friendship and political community are simply arrangements of convenience designed to facilitate mutual, utilitarian advantage; only the desire to overcome the harsh necessities of nature causes human beings to form communities. However, if individuals are liable to enter into friendships with one another wholly independent of need, then Aristotle's account may be correct. Political communities have their basis in pre-political relationships that are based on an appreciation of another's virtues or goodness, rather than individual deficiency. Political communities are ordered toward an end that is more noble than mere utilitarian advantage.

It is precisely this difference in understanding of friendship that causes Socrates and Aristotle to adopt differing stances to politics. Socrates's belief that friendship, and by extension the political realm, has its basis in necessity causes him to take a negative, abstentious approach to politics. Placing philosophy in the service of politics would be a degrading and humiliating exercise that is beneath the dignity of the philosopher. In contrast, Aristotle's understanding of friendship and politics as based on self-sufficiency and a recognition of another's virtues allows philosophy to play the crucial function of ennobling politics; philosophy can have a positive guiding impact on politics. For Aristotle, friendship grants dignity to politics, a dignity that relationships based on necessity alone do not provide. Viewed in this perspective, the concept of friendship developed in the *Ethics* not only affects politics but may also be precisely that which prompts Aristotle to offer the practical, political advice contained in the *Politics*.

The following five chapters and conclusion proceed in a comparative manner. In chapter 1, I detail Socrates's understanding of friendship as presented in the *Lysis*. I make the case that a close reading of the *Lysis* reveals a number of problems with Socrates's conception of friendship. Plato presents Socrates as using eristic arguments and sophisms, while engaging his youngest interlocutors in the entirety of the Platonic *corpus*—Menexenus and Lysis—in a discussion concerning the definition of friendship. At one

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point, Socrates adopts a sophistic argument that is strikingly similar to an argument used by the two Sophists, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, in the *Euthydemus*. The ultimate presentation of Socrates's argument in the *Lysis*, I argue, collapses the distinction between friendship and eros such that both are characterized by a felt need or desire. According to Socrates, there is no such thing as a friendship based on self-sufficiency and an appreciation that two people may have of one another's good qualities. The *Lysis* intimates not only that Socrates is incorrect in suggesting that all friendship has its basis in need but also that there are dangers attending his conception of friendship.

Chapter 2 presents the political implications of Socrates's conception of friendship by examining the *Apology* and the *Gorgias*. The *Apology* shows Socrates's relation to the practice of politics to be one of negation and abstention. As he attests in his defense speech, Socrates never puts forward a positive teaching but instead questions the Athenian citizens' settled convictions, exposing their ignorance. The result, I argue, is an approach to politics that is entirely negative or dissolvent of people's opinions. In addition, Socrates's approach is characterized by an unwillingness to involve himself in conventional politics. In his defense speech, Socrates claims that he entirely avoids the practice of politics due to its incompatibility with justice. While Socrates does not explain with precision why he believes the practice of politics to be incompatible with justice, this connection is made clear in the *Gorgias* and, as I make clear, hinges on Socrates's understanding of friendship. At a critical juncture of the dialogue, Socrates directs his interlocutor, Callicles, away from the practice of politics precisely on the basis of a definition of friendship that had been proposed—but found wanting—in the *Lysis*. I show that Socrates believes the conventional practice of politics depends on a false conception of justice and friendship.

The third chapter analyzes Aristotle's discussion of friendship in book VIII of the *Ethics* in light of his understanding of the virtue of magnanimity. I argue that Aristotle's friendship of the good is intended to describe the friendship between two magnanimous individuals. Turning first to Aristotle's presentation of magnanimity in the *Posterior Analytics*, in which Aristotle suggests that there may be two types of magnanimity—one that is political and another that is philosophical—I show that Aristotle views the virtue of magnanimity to be problematic. The two types of individuals who are held up as being potentially magnanimous are presented as being self-sufficient and aware of the honor and respect they deserve. Nevertheless, when they fail to attain the honors they rightly deserve, they tend to act in a socially

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destructive manner. I go on to argue that Aristotle's presentation of magnanimity in the *Ethics* suggests that the cure for the socially destructive tendencies of such magnanimous individuals is friendship. If the magnanimous philosopher were to befriend the magnanimous statesman, they would not only temper one another's socially destructive tendencies, but also their alliance—the alliance of power and wisdom—would be capable of bestowing great benefits on the political realm.

While chapter 3 shows that Aristotle's friendship of the good is intended to describe friendship between two magnanimous individuals, chapter 4 explains why it is that such individuals will choose to befriend one another. Aristotle recognizes that philosophers are not likely to become friends with individuals who hold positions of power, as those in power may well have had to engage in nefarious tactics to attain their position and therefore cannot be described as virtuous or good. Nevertheless, in book IX Aristotle uses a protreptic address to convince the philosopher to engage with the statesman. As I make clear, Aristotle induces the philosopher to interact with the statesman and to activate his potential for virtue. The friendship that develops is a *sunaisthetic* friendship. As noted, the Greek noun *sunaisthesis* means "joint perception." Those sharing in a friendship of the good perceive the good together or, more specifically, they perceive the excellence in one another's character. As Aristotle presents it, each partner to the friendship is actualized by the other and takes delight in the other's virtue. This type of friendship between the philosopher and the statesman ensures that philosophy will have an indirect, guiding effect on the practice of politics.

In the fifth chapter, I examine the practical effects that Aristotle's *sunaisthetic* account of friendship has on political life. While the *sunaisthetic* friendship of the statesman and the philosopher seems somewhat detached from the everyday practice of politics, I explain how this friendship comes to have a unifying influence on the city. In the *Politics*, Aristotle is clear that unity in the city is necessary, but he is relatively pessimistic concerning the ability of impersonal institutions to achieve such unity. In book II of the *Politics*, for example, he details at length the inadequacies of law, and it is not until books VII and VIII, that Aristotle reveals that it is the musical education system established by the city's founders (i.e., the magnanimous statesman and philosopher) that actualizes the citizens' capacity for moral virtue by instituting a common way of life or unity in the city. Through their shared perception of the music (*nomos*) of their regime, the citizens come to share in the *sunaisthetic* friendship of the city's founders.

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I conclude with a brief analysis of the role friendship played in establishing the American Constitutional Republic. I show that while the American founders had realistic insight into the self-interested aspect of human nature, they were nevertheless sufficiently convinced of their fellow citizens' intelligence and good sense to entrust political decisions and constitutional design to public discussion and choice. As a result, using the philosophic ideas of the day, they sought to convince one another and the public of the merits of their proposed designs for government. I argue that the ratified Constitution reflects elements of both the Socratic and Aristotelian conceptions toward friendship. Finally, I provide a brief account of the troubled friendship between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, to show the practical benefits and limits of seeking to ground politics in constitutional procedures alone. I show that the commitment of the two statesmen to the principles of the Constitution was insufficient to maintain their friendship. Instead, what was needed was the prudent intervention of their mutual friend, Benjamin Rush. Through intimate knowledge of his friends' characters, passions, and prejudices, Rush was able to reconcile the two former friends before their passing. The dramatic rupture in their friendship, along with the reconciliation effected through the wisdom of Benjamin Rush, reveals that politics will always require the leavening effects of prudence and friendship. I conclude that the sensible approach to politics adopted at the time of the American founding, which was sufficiently attentive to the Socratic insight concerning man's deficiencies while maintaining an Aristotelian appreciation of man's capacity for virtue, provides us with a model worthy of emulation.

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