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[See table of contents](#)

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# ARISTOTLE ON SOCIAL FRIENDSHIPS

Théodore L. FORTIER

THE technocratic character of our society, which dehumanizes its subjects, is sufficiently ascertained to be assumed here. Reason has been cultivated at the expense of appetite to the extent that communication has replaced communion and organization is often confused with organism. Law and order alone, both works of reason, will not correct this state of affairs. Appetite must regain its rightful place in deliberations on values.

Aristotle established the principles of a sociology which, if heeded, would promote the affective development of man, the social animal, not at the expense of reason, but in the balance and harmony that rational nature demands. These principles form the substance of the Stagirite's doctrine on friendship. This paper proposes a restatement of the part of this teaching which concerns itself more immediately with society.

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*To be friends, then, they must be mutually recognized as bearing goodwill and wishing well to each other for one of the aforesaid reasons (i.e. for one of the three kinds of good). Nicomachean Ethics, 1156 a 4.*

Since friendship is a kind of love, its object is a good, i.e. an object which perfects the lover. There are essentially three kinds of good, each of which may serve as the basis of friendship, viz. the pleasant, the useful and the noble. The notions of play, work and leisure respectively, correspond to the parts of this division of the good. Leisure is an activity worthy of pursuit for its own sake, the life of contemplation which Aristotle proposes as the first form of the good life in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X. Work is utilitarian, the kind of activity whose end, artifact or service, has a market value. Play or recreation is of its nature an interlude in the life of work whose function is to repair in a person the physical and psychological wear and tear of labor and prepare the worker for more pro-

ductivity. These are our motives for loving people, they determine the essential value of a given friendship.

Friendship is goodwill. This is a form of love the first configuration of an appetite which tends towards an object for the benefit of a person other than the lover. This love must be mutual, based on one of the aforementioned goods, and the parties must be aware of the reciprocity. Intimacy is the mutual indwelling of each friend in the other by means of knowledge and love. One person exists in another by means of knowledge when that other, as a result of common activity, has acquired a truly penetrating insight into the personality of the loved one. Indwelling by way of love means that a person has grasped and accepted the values and preferences of the other, and made them his own. One's appetite is polarized by the other person. He becomes another self.

Friendship is an analogous term. The primary analogate is the friendship based on virtue (the noble good), where the friends are alike and equal with respect to that good. Any relationship is a friendship when and to the extent that it includes something of these three components, viz., a good, resemblance and equality. In a descending order, friendships motivated by pleasure or utility are less perfect. Heterogeneous friendships, i.e. relationships where the motive of each party differs in kind (e.g. when one person seeks pleasure and the other utility) are weaker than the homogeneous. Friendships among equals we call personal, those among unequals are social friendships. The latter constitute the subject of this paper.

*But there is another kind of friendship, viz. that which involves an inequality between the parties. Nicomachean Ethics, 1158 b 12.*

Friendships among unequals must be seen within the context of the city. Aquinas summarized Aristotle's argument thusly: "Omnis amicitia in communicatione consistit. Omnis communicatio reducitur ad politicam. Ergo omnes amicitiae secundum politicas communicationes sunt accipiendae."<sup>1</sup>

All these relationships resemble political associations. They come to be for the purpose of providing the necessities of life, and so does the city.

Now all forms of community are like parts of the political community; for we journey together with a view to some particular advantage, and to provide something that they need for the purposes of life; and it is for the sake of advantage that the political community too seems both to have come together originally and to endure.<sup>2</sup>

Aristotle gives two reasons for this: (1) "for this is what legislators aim at," (2) "and they call just that which is to the common advantage."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ST. THOMAS AQUINAS; *In Decem Libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomacheum*, VIII, lect. 9, no. 1657.

<sup>2</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII, c. 9, 1160 a 9-12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, a 13.

Furthermore, friendships are parts of the city. All associations other than the city seek to provide some particular advantage,<sup>4</sup> even those that exist in view of pleasurable activities, like social clubs, athletic leagues, committees for organizing festivities and the like. Their function resembles that of recreation with regard to work. They fit within the context of the city which they serve, for they pursue particular goals, whereas the city promotes "what is advantageous for life as a whole."<sup>5</sup>

This was true of religious gatherings in the past and the nature of man hasn't changed. Pieper rightly maintains that the good life requires the practice of a public religious cult (liturgy).<sup>6</sup> The virtue of religion does not suffice. Though Christianity transcends the city the way ancient religion did not, it nevertheless provides the same benefits.

All other associations, therefore, form part of the city just as the good they provide is part of the common good for which the city exists. Friendship must be numbered among these associations, consequently, the diversity of friendships corresponds to the diversity of political regimes.

In conclusion, friendships among unequals participate, according to both meanings of the word, in that association which is the city. We must see, therefore, how this kind of friendships is (1) like political relations, and (2) a component of the city.

*Now all forms of community are like parts of the political community. (1160 a 9)*

This appears from the fact that "in every community there is thought to be some form of justice, and friendship too."<sup>7</sup> General usage corroborates this, "men address as friends their fellow-voyagers and fellow-soldiers, and so too those associated with them in any kind of community. And the extent of their association is the extent of their friendship, as it is the extent to which justice exists between them."<sup>8</sup> The ancient "proverb 'what friends have is common property' expresses this truth,"<sup>9</sup> as well as popular expressions like "what is mine is yours," "make yourself at home" and the like. "And the demands of justice also seem to increase with the intensity of friendship, which implies that friendship and justice exist between the same persons and have equal extension."<sup>10</sup>

The individual relates to the society in which he lives as part to whole. In order to integrate the whole, he must be ordered to it, i.e. he must be governed by its unifying principle, the common good. A man so ordered we call law-abiding

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, a 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, a 23.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph PIEPER, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, Pantheon Books, Random House, N. Y., 1964, pp. 42ff.

<sup>7</sup> *Ethics* VII, c. 9, 1159.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, b 27.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, b 31.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 1160 a 6.

or a just man according to the first meaning of the term legal justice.<sup>11</sup> From this determination, there follows a special relationship to the other parts of the same whole. This virtue we call legal justice in a special sense. It regulates the relationship among individuals inasmuch as they are ordered to the same common good. "This form of justice, then, is complete virtue, but not absolutely, but in relation to our neighbor."<sup>12</sup>

This ordering of part to whole, as it were, does not cover all the bonds established by the society. Particular justice, within the same social context,<sup>13</sup> perfects one's relationships with regard to the other members, i.e. to the parts as such. This virtue rectifies external acts and the exchange of goods which are the means of communication among men.<sup>14</sup>

There are two kinds of particular justice. One governs the community's treatment of the individual in a movement from whole to part that protects the individual's position in the society. It "is manifested in distributions of honour or money or the other things that fall to be divided among those who have a share in the constitution."<sup>15</sup> This is distributive justice. The other kind "plays a rectifying role in transactions between man and man."<sup>16</sup> It regulates exchanges between part and part. This is commutative justice.

Distributive justice protects each man's position in the society. This balanced coordination of the parts we call equality, and since the balance can be upset by the attribution of either an excess or a deficiency of goods or burdens to one of the parts in relation to the others, the object of justice is a mean, and a *medium rei* because there are others involved.

Now it is clear that there is also an intermediate between the two unequals involved in either case. And this is the equal; for in any kind of action in which there is a more and a less there is also what is equal. If, then, the unjust is unequal, the just is equal, as all men suppose it to be, even apart from argument. And since the equal is intermediate, the just will be an intermediate.<sup>17</sup>

Upon examination, we discover that we are dealing with four elements: two persons who are the terms of the relation, and two things by means of which they communicate. "The just, therefore, involves at least four terms for the persons for whom it is in fact just are two, and the things in which it is manifested, the objects distributed, are two."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, V, c. 1; ST THOMAS, *Ila Ilae*, q. 58, a. 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, V, c. 1, 1129 b 25.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. ST THOMAS, *In V Ethic.*, lect. 3, no. 918.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 919.

<sup>15</sup> *Ethics*, V, c. 2, 1130 b 31.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, b 36.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 1131 a 11-14.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, a 18-20.

Justice requires that the relation between person and thing remain constant. If, before an exchange, one man contributes or is worth twice as much as another, a fair transaction will give that man twice as much, "And the same equality will exist between the persons and between the things concerned."<sup>19</sup>

The mean of distributive justice is proportional (geometric proportion). One man's share in the common distribution will compare with another's the way his contribution to the common good compares to the other's. "Mathematicians call this kind of proportion geometrical; for it is in geometrical proportion that it follows that the whole is to the whole as either part is to the corresponding part."<sup>20</sup>

A community as such cannot act. For purposes of transactions, the community is concentrated in its ruler, "a city or any other systematic whole is most properly identified with the most authoritative element in it."<sup>21</sup> Since the distribution of community property falls exclusively within the scope of his competence, he is primarily the subject of distributive justice. However, this virtue also informs his subordinates in that they willingly accept a just distribution. What was said of the state applies to imperfect societies and their authorities, e.g. a family and the head of the family, though he be a private citizen.<sup>22</sup>

Commutative justice also promotes and preserves equality among citizens. Its mean however consists in a numerical equality, i.e. arithmetical and not geometrical. "But the justice in transactions between man and man is a sort of equality indeed, and the injustice a sort of inequality; not according to that kind of proportion, however, but according to arithmetical proportion."<sup>23</sup>

This is because the quality of the person does not enter into account. The function of commutative justice is to regulate the communications between part and part. The balance is upset when one person receives more or less than the other in an exchange. It is restored by eliminating the difference. In other words, both parties are treated in the same manner, everyone is equal in the eyes of the law, "the law looks only to the distinctive character of the injury, and treats the parties as equal."<sup>24</sup>

Men structure their society by means of laws which become the norm of what is just and unjust, "the just, then, is the lawful."<sup>25</sup> Justice governs a man's actions in a way such that he maintains a relationship with others that contributes to the attainment of the end of that society.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, a 20.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, b 12-14.

<sup>21</sup> *Ethics*, IX, c. 8, 1168 b 30.

<sup>22</sup> Actus distributionis quae est communium bonorum pertinet solum ad praesidentem communibus bonis: sed tamen justitia distributiva est et in subditis, quibus distribuitur, in quantum scilicet sunt contenti justa distributione. Quamvis etiam distributio quandoque fiat bonorum communium non quidem civitate, sed uni familiae: quorum distributio fieri potest auctoritate alicujus privatae personae. *Ila Ilae*, q. 61, a. 1, ad 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ethics*, V, c. 4, 1131 b 34.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 1132 a 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, V, c. 1, 1129 a 35.

Now the laws in their enactments on all subjects aim at the common advantage either of all or of the best of those who hold power, or something of the sort ; so that in one sense we call those acts just that tend to produce and preserve happiness and its components for the political society.<sup>26</sup>

This holds true of friendship also. The law determines the relative position of each of the friends, and this position determines the exchanges or transactions proper to their "conversatio."

Since a friend is another self, whereas equality is the end to be attained in justice, it is a principle in friendship.

Justice is preoccupied primarily with guaranteeing that each person will receive in accordance with his situation or dignity. Making equals of the parties involved is foreign to justice. Friendship, on the other hand, presupposes some kind of equality among persons. It follows that communications between unequals in friendship reverses the procedure proper to justice. The equality of justice consists in maintaining the same proportion between things that exist between persons. Friendship seeks to make the persons equal.<sup>27</sup>

The reason for this difference is that friendship is a kind of union or society that cannot exist among persons who are very distant ; they must strive for equality. Hence, friendship uses goods equally in a pre-established equality, while justice reduces inequality to equality. Equality is the end of justice, it is the beginning of friendship.<sup>28</sup>

We get a sign of this in the fact that distance discourages friendship.<sup>29</sup> Aristotle gives us three examples of this. Spirits do not cultivate friendships with men, such as to converse and live with them, kings do not frequent beggars, and the virtuous and vicious do not mix.<sup>30</sup>

One might ask just how much distance a friendship can brook, and still survive. This cannot be answered determinately, but the margin is considerable.<sup>31</sup>

This seems to impose limitations upon one's goodwill for a friend. One would not want the greatest goods for his friends, for in so doing he would lose him.<sup>32</sup>

We can answer this in two ways (1) A friend wants goods for his friends for his own sake. We must suppose, that coming into these goods, he will remain himself in some way.<sup>33</sup> (2) A friend wants good for his friend, but not at all costs. Because each one wants most of all his own good, he cannot want for a friend those goods by means of which he would lose him.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, b 14-19.

<sup>27</sup> *Eud. Ethics*, VII, c. 10, 1242 b 18.

<sup>28</sup> ARISTOTLE, VII, *Ethics*, Loeb, 7-3 & 12-7 ; (c. 9, 1158 b 29) ; ST. THOMAS, no. 1631, lect. 7 ; ST. ALBERT, Tract. 2, c. 1, no. 34.

<sup>29</sup> ST. THOMAS, *In Ethic.*, no. 1632.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1633.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1634.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1635.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1636.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1637.

The basis for one's rights in friendship also differs from that of justice. Justice deals with operations related to others under the law, but friendship is based on moral obligations, it is gratuitous.<sup>35</sup>

The difference parallels that of servile and free act. The former is imposed by law, and therefore performed under a form of external coercion e.g. the fear of punishment. A free act proceeds from an interior inclination, it is spontaneous.<sup>36</sup>

The obligation of justice being legal, its principle, ultimately, is reason.<sup>37</sup> The principle of friendship is love of self, "By a man's attitude to himself the other modes of friendship, under which we are accustomed to consider friendship in this discourse, are determined."<sup>38</sup> Consequently, we call the obligation moral, i.e. appetitive.

*All the communities, then, seem to be parts of the political community. Nicomachean Ethics 1160 a 28.*

It is a common good that specifies the city. An object can be called a good only if it answers a need on the part of the subject. However, we must not confuse a proper good with a private or particular good. The two are formally distinct.

Ad secundum dicendum quod bonum commune civitatis et bonum singulare unius personae non differunt solum secundum multum et paucum, sed secundum formalem differentiam: alia enim est ratio boni communis et boni singularis, sicut et alia est ratio totius et partis.<sup>39</sup>

By nature, man desires to live in society. He attaches to the commonweal because: (1) he needs society, (2) there is a social dimension to his being.

Ille qui quaerit bonum commune multitudinis ex consequenti etiam quaerit bonum suum, propter duo. Primo quidem, quia bonum proprium non potest esse sine bono communi vel familiae vel civitatis aut regni. Unde et Maximus Valerius dicit de antiquis Romanis quod malebant esse pauperes in divite imperio quam divites in paupere imperio. — Secundo, quia, cum homo sit pars domus et civitatis, oportet quod homo consideret quid sit sibi bonum ex hoc quod est prudens circa bonum multitudinis: bona enim dispositio partis accipitur secundum habitudinem ad totum; quia ut Augustinus dicit, in libro *Confes.* (111, 8, 15), turpis est omnis pars suo toti non congruens.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1638.

<sup>36</sup> VII *Ethic.*, c. 13; cf. lect. 13; *Ila Ilae*, q. 23, a. 3, ad 1.

<sup>37</sup> "... but the law has compulsive power, while it is at the same time a rule proceeding from a sort of practical wisdom and reason." Arist., X *Ethics.*, c. 9, 1180 a 21-22.

"The reason is that all law is universal, but about some things it is not possible to make universal statements which shall be correct." V *Ethics.*, c. 10, 1137 b 11.

"Law is a system of order; and a general habit of obedience to law must therefore involve a general system of orderliness." VII *Polit.*, c. 4, no. 8, 1326 a 30. (Cf. *Polit.*, III, c. 15, 1284 a).

<sup>38</sup> *Eud. Ethics.*, VII, c. 6, 1240 a 23. Also: "Friendly relations with one's neighbours, and the marks by which friendships are defined, seem to have proceeded from a man's relations to himself." *Nic. Ethic.* IX, c. 4, 1166 a 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ia Ilae*, q. 94, a. 2, c. Cf. also III *Cont. Gent.*, c. 129, *Adhuc*; III *Cont. Gent.*, c. 24, *Bonum autem suum*.

<sup>40</sup> *Ila Ilae*, q. 47, a. 10, ad 2.



Aristotle tells us that it is the greatest good : "In the most sovereign of all the arts and sciences . . . the end in view is the greatest good and the good which is most pursued. The good in the sphere of politics is justice ; and justice consists in what tends to promote the common interest."<sup>41</sup> Man loves most a good which transcends him, "unaquaque pars naturaliter plus amat commune bonum totius quam particulare bonum proprium."<sup>42</sup>

This good must have an amplitude and a perfection such that it can be enjoyed in its integrity by several people at once.<sup>43</sup> It is not the sum total of the particular goods of each member of a given society. Nor is it the proper good that benefits a member by means of the other members. Nor is it the attraction exercised on others from the fact that it is a good, what we mean when we say that of its nature, a good is diffusive of self.<sup>44</sup>

It is the end of the society whose goodness is based upon the fact that it is shared or susceptible of being shared.<sup>45</sup> We define it as "aliquid commune secundum participationem unius et ejusdem rei secundum numerum."<sup>46</sup> The *Eudemian Ethics* gives us the example of two citizens, an Athenian and a Megarian.<sup>47</sup> In spite of what they have in common, they cannot be friends on this score, not only because they do not live together, but because they do not have a common cause to unite them.

We call it common because it is communicable.<sup>48</sup> The object exercises an attraction on more than one subject. The community of this causality, the object's

<sup>41</sup> ARISTOTLE, III *Polit.*, c. 12, 1282 b.

<sup>42</sup> *Ia Ilae*, q. 26, a. 3, c.

<sup>43</sup> *Ia Ilae*, q. 28, a. 4, ad. 2.

<sup>44</sup> ST. THOMAS, *De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 1, ad 4 : . . . Diffundere, licet secundum proprietatem vocabuli videatur importare operationem causae efficientis, tamen largo modo potest importare habitudinem cujuscumque causae, sicut influere et facere, et alia hujusmodi. Cum autem dicitur quod *bonum est diffusivum secundum sui rationem*, non est intelligenda effusio secundum quod importat operationem causae efficientis, sed secundum quod importat habitudinem causae finalis ; et talis diffusio non est mediante aliqua virtute superaddita. Dicit autem bonum diffusionem causae finalis et non causae agentis : tum quia efficiens, inquantum hujusmodi, non est rei mensura et perfectio, sed magis initium ; tum effectus participat causam efficientem secundum assimilationem formae tantum ; sed finem consequitur res secundum totum esse suum, et in hoc consistebat ratio boni.

<sup>45</sup> The common good is of such import, that even evil must be tolerated if its suppression endangered the former. *Ia Ilae*, q. 91, a. 4, c.

<sup>46</sup> Ad tertium dicendum, quod dupliciter aliquid dicitur esse commune. Uno modo per praedicationem : hujusmodi autem commune non est idem numero in diversis reperitum ; et hoc modo habet bonum corporis, communitatem. Alio modo est aliquid commune secundum participationem unius et ejusdem rei secundum numerum ; et haec communitas maxime potest in his quae ad animam pertinent, inveniri. *In IV Sent.*, dist. 49, q. 1, a. 1, q. 1, ad 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Eudemian Ethics*, VII, c. 10, 1242 b 23-28.

<sup>48</sup> "Le bien commun est meilleur, non pas en tant qu'il comprendrait le bien singulier de tous les singuliers : il n'aurait pas alors l'unité du bien commun en tant que celui-ci est en quelque façon universel ; il serait pure collection, il ne serait que matériellement meilleur. Le bien commun est meilleur pour chacun des particuliers qui y participent, en tant qu'il est communicable aux autres particuliers : la communicabilité est de la raison même

power to perfect subjects is a component of its attractiveness. In other words, the relative universality of the end attaches to the formality of the object.<sup>49</sup>

The existence of the object does not depend upon a "de facto" communication to several subjects. Communicability, not actual communication defines the good. A private good does not become a common good by the decision of one pursuing that good. On the other hand, if one rejects the communal aspect of a good which is common objectively, his end cannot become the basis of a society. A husband and wife can genuinely dedicate themselves to the upbringing of their children, but as competitors in a struggle for influence. Besides the harm done to the children, this will produce two strangers living under one roof.<sup>50</sup> There will be no genuine "convivere".<sup>51</sup>

The common good is concretized in that in which it exists primarily, as an army's good consists in the attainment of the general's goal, the good of the state in that of its ruler. In the natural order, the hand can be said to prefer the safety of the head to its own, witness the instinctive warding off of danger, because the body's good is primarily that of the head.<sup>52</sup>

In any society, the individual benefits from the good of the whole. One member does not intend the good of another immediately: "bonum commune est finis."<sup>53</sup> The person relates to the community as a part does to the whole, and the parts exist for the sake of the whole.<sup>54</sup>

To desire the good of a society in order to possess it or for the purpose of attaining one's particular end is a tyrannical love, selfishness. Love of the common

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de sa perfection. Le particulier n'atteint le bien commun sous la raison même de bien commun qu'en tant qu'il l'atteint comme communicable aux autres. Le bien de la famille est meilleur que le bien singulier, non pas parce que tous les membres de la famille y trouvent leur bien singulier: le bien de la famille est meilleur parce que, pour chacun des membres individuels, il est aussi le bien des autres. Cela ne veut pas dire que les autres sont la raison de l'amabilité propre du bien commun; au contraire, sous ce rapport formel, les autres sont aimables en tant qu'ils peuvent participer à ce bien." *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, Ch. De KONINCK, Édition de l'Université Laval. Québec, 1943.

<sup>49</sup> ST. THOMAS, *Q. D. De Caritate*, a. 5, ad 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Illa*, q. 1, a. 1, c. & CAJETAN, n. VI; *Ia Ilae*, q. 1, a. 4, ad 1 & CAJETAN.

<sup>51</sup> "But the fable (loving things instead of God) did not die for me, even when one of my friends would die. There were other things done in their company which more completely seized my mind: to talk and to laugh with them; to do friendly acts of service for one another; to read well-written books together; sometimes to tell jokes and sometimes to be serious; to disagree at times, but without hard feelings, just as a man does with himself; and to keep our many discussions pleasant by the very rarity of such differences; to teach things to the others and to learn from them; to long impatiently for those who were absent, and to receive with joy those joining us. These and similar expressions, proceeding from the hearts of those who loved and repaid their comrades' love, by way of countenance, tongue, eyes, and a thousand pleasing gestures, were like fuel to set our minds ablaze and to make but one out of many. ST. AUGUSTIN, *Confessions*, IV, c. 3. Translated by John K. Ryan, Image Books. Doubleday and Co., Inc. Garden City, New York, 1960, p. 101. Cf. also St. Thomas, *In Ethic.*, nn. 1949, 1698.

<sup>52</sup> Ch. DE KONINCK, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>53</sup> *Ia Ilae*, q. 58, a. 9, ad 3; cf. corp.

<sup>54</sup> *Ia Ilae*, q. 64, a. 2, c.; q. 65, a. 1, c.

good seeks to preserve, protect, and promote the welfare of the society in question, at the expense of the private good and with personal risk when required.<sup>55</sup>

A member relates to a society as a part does to the whole. The term part can be variously conceived. It may mean (1) the result of a quantitative division,<sup>56</sup> (2) the object of a distinction, as a species is part of its genus, (3) an essential component, (4) a concept contained in a more universal one.<sup>57</sup>

We are concerned here with the third meaning, since the common good is a reality of which the private goods are components. The parts are prior to the whole as simple entities that go to make up the composite, but, in the order of nature, they are posterior, since outside the whole they lose their identity as parts.

Applied to our problem, this means that there would be no common good unless there were private goods, and in this sense, the private good is prior. However, the good of the individual member of a society cannot exist apart from the good of the society as a whole.

Because it includes reason, the very notion of person implies capacity for communication: "rationalis naturae individua substantia — the individual substance of a rational nature," where nature means a principle of operation. The person is not wanted for the sake of its incommunicability. On the contrary, far from being "for itself," it makes communication with itself possible "actiones sunt suppositorum."<sup>58</sup>

A person separated from the society is a person, i.e. a social animal, only in an analogous sense. The social animal's individual good cannot exist without that of the society, whereas the latter's good can subsist without some of its parts, i.e. without the private good of some of its individuals.

We say "some parts" because there are some which, though not prior to the whole in the meaning taken here, i.e. though they cannot exist independently of the whole, are nevertheless indispensable. They are said to be simultaneous because the whole depends upon them for its existence. Such is the case of the vital organs in an animal.<sup>59</sup>

In Book VII of the *Metaphysics*,<sup>60</sup> Aristotle makes even more explicit, the priority of the whole. Here he shows that the components do not exist in act, but in potency only.<sup>61</sup> That the components exist in potency only is obvious from the fact that they have no separate existence. Furthermore, they are parts to the extent that they are united to the whole.<sup>62</sup> A chemical compound illustrates this point. The elements that compose it do not exist in act, they lose their properties,

<sup>55</sup> *De Caritate*, a. 2, para. 8.

<sup>56</sup> ST. THOMAS, *In V Metaph.*, lect. 21, n. 1093.

<sup>57</sup> ST. THOMAS, *In V Metaph.*, lect. 21.

<sup>58</sup> CH. DE KONINCK, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 1489.

<sup>60</sup> ARISTOTLE, *VII Metaph.*, c. 15, 1040 b 4-14; ST. THOMAS, lect. 16, nn. 1631-1634.

<sup>61</sup> ST. THOMAS, *In VII Metaph.*, n. 1631.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1632.

but do exist in the compound, potentially. This will be one reason why happiness requires friendship.

In sum, since we are dealing with a good, and therefore a reality, not a definition, the whole precedes the parts, i.e. the common good takes precedence. The whole is prior to its integral parts, so the purpose of the community comes before that of the persons involved.

A friendship among unequals, therefore, has its 'raison d'être' outside itself. It is preserved by promoting not its own good, but that of the community to which it belongs.

The reciprocity that constitutes friendship parallels that of justice, as we saw above. Relationships among unequals manifest more clearly that friendship accompanies justice. They are not only alike but together. In justice, we treat the other in accordance with the dictates of reason (the law proximately), in friendship, the same person in the same social context becomes an object of affection. "Friendship and justice seem, as we have said at the outset of our discussion, to be concerned with the same object and exhibited between the same persons . . . and the extent of their association is the extent of their friendship, as it is the extent to which justice exists between them."<sup>63</sup>

We saw that the community produces and fosters friendships among equals. Resemblance in this case, becomes common interest. The first division that imposes itself corresponds to the two kinds of natural association, the family and the state.

"One might, however, mark off from the rest both the friendship of kindred and that of comrades."<sup>64</sup> The family, being a distinct kind of community, gives rise to a distinct kind of association. Family friendships are distinct relationships for as Democritus had observed relatives aren't necessarily friends. "Not all one's relatives are friends, but only those who agree with us about what is advantageous."<sup>65</sup> As St. Thomas points out family friendships are genuine friendships that depend upon a choice (love) and agreement (reciprocity). They differ from civic friendships not in that they do not depend upon agreement, but in that the latter is less obvious. "Distinguit secundum communicationem species amicitiae, de quibus minus videtur."<sup>66</sup>

The family exists to provide and foster the individual's *esse*, as Aristotle explains for example, "The art of household management must either find ready at hand, or itself provide such things necessary to life."<sup>67</sup> It is natural in the primary sense of the term, i.e. based on blood. All the associations of this kind are friendships to the extent that they participate in the father-son relation, "The friendship of kinsmen itself, while it seems to be of many kinds, appears to depend in every

<sup>63</sup> *VIII Ethics*, c. 9, 1159 b 25 & 29.

<sup>64</sup> *VIII Ethics*, c. 12, 1161 b 12.

<sup>65</sup> *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, transl. Kathleen Freeman. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1962; frag. 107, p. 103.

<sup>66</sup> *In VIII Ethic.*, lect. 12, no. 1703.

<sup>67</sup> *I Polit.*, c. 8, 1256 b 18.

case on parental friendship.”<sup>68</sup> Though it begins the education of the citizen its mode of operation resembles that of nature, i.e. instinct.<sup>69</sup> The proper cause of this kind of love is closeness, “for parents love their children as being a part of themselves, and children their parents as being something originating from them.”<sup>70</sup>

Just as the family’s proper function is education as well as procreation, so the associations that produce “family friendships” are not limited to the family proper. “Et dicit, quod secundum diversitatem communicationis potest aliquis distinguere adinvicem et ab aliis amicitiam cognatam, idest quae est inter consanguineos, et etairicam, idest quae est inter connutritos. Cognati enim communicant in origine, etairi autem in nutritione.”<sup>71</sup>

These groupings include extensions of the family, i.e. relatives (uncles, cousins, etc.) and the circle of family friends. They also comprise the neighborhood and related associations like the gang and in our mobile society, the city. With the formation of kingdoms and nations, the city had already assumed the functions of the ancient family.<sup>72</sup> Technology has brought its members closer to each other.

We will readily recognize in these associations what sociologists generally refer to as primary groups. They answer the needs of the individual (as opposed to the citizen),<sup>73</sup> stress love, educate, and gather for reasons of pleasure. Negatively, they may inhibit maturity by perpetuating a need for undue dependence upon the group, and foster narrow minds and provincialism.<sup>74</sup>

The state complements the family’s life-preserving role but must assume responsibility for providing the means for the good life. “When several villages are united in a single complete community large enough to be nearly or quite self sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life.”<sup>75</sup> Where the family centered around its origins, the state draws its unity from its goals. Whereas the former inspires loyalty to blood, the latter rallies around the standard of excellence or virtue. “For man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all; . . . But justice is the bond of men in states, for the administration of justice, which is the determination of what is justice is the principle of order in political society.”<sup>76</sup> It satisfies his social instinct and fits him for the good life.<sup>77</sup>

It provides man with his greatest good, and concerns itself with his *bene esse*.

<sup>68</sup> VII *Ethic.*, c. 12, 1161 b 16.

<sup>69</sup> See above footnotes 41, 43.

<sup>70</sup> VIII *Ethics.*, c. 12, 1161 b 17; cf. whole passage.

<sup>71</sup> In VIII *Ethic.*, lect. 12, no. 1703.

<sup>72</sup> Triplex est communitas domus sive familiae civitatis, et regni. . . Communitas civitatis omnia continet quae ad vitam hominis sunt necessaria. ST. THOMAS, In *Matth.*, n. 1101.

<sup>73</sup> *The Small Group*, Michael S. OLMSTEAD. Random House, N. Y., 1959, pp. 46-48.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49 & 52.

<sup>75</sup> ARISTOTLE, I *Polit.*, c. 2, 1252 b 27.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 1253 a 31 & 36.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. III *Polit.*, c. 6, 1278 b 15-29.

"But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good."<sup>78</sup> Consequently, just as virtue is inchoately natural and formally man's doing, so the state is the product of both nature and human industry. "A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature, and yet he who first founded the state was the greatest of benefactors."<sup>79</sup> Reason prevails over blood, and the resulting friendship will bear this mark.

Here as above, we have derivative forms, the most obvious being the organizations within the state whose specific goals contribute to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," i.e. business, social, cultural or professional organizations, together with political parties.

In this context also, we must envisage the broader community of mankind, which transcends the artificial boundaries of the statesmen (i.e. the bond created by particular constitutions) but nonetheless can thrive only on the grounds of justice, i.e. the philanthropy of the ancients. Aristotle recognizes this broader foundation for goodwill in the friendships of traveling companions. Presumably among people who travel abroad, "We can see even in our travels how near and dear every man is to every other."<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, slaves can be friends, precisely because they are human beings, though incapable of governing themselves. "Hence, where the relation of master and slave between them is natural they are friends and have a common interest, but where it rests merely on law and force the reverse is true."<sup>81</sup> Further study should be made of the suggestion of Pope John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris* to the effect that this foundation is the *jus gentium*.

Jus gentium est quidem aliquo modo naturale homini, secundum quod est rationalis, in quantum derivatur a lege naturali per modo conclusionis quae non est multum remota a principiis. Unde de facili in hujusmodi homines consenserunt. Distinguitur tamen a lege naturali, maxime ab eo quod est omnibus animalibus commune.<sup>82</sup>

These friendships answer the description of the sociologists' secondary groups. The good which forms such groups is man's *bene esse*. "The protection of social and political freedom is thus the chief positive function of the group . . ." <sup>83</sup> Reason has priority over nature in these associations. They are fundamentally utilitarian as opposed to primary groups.<sup>84</sup> So where family friendships would be "warm,

<sup>78</sup> I *Polit.*, c. 1, 1252 a 3.

<sup>79</sup> I *Polit.*, c. 2, 1253 a 29.

<sup>80</sup> VIII *Ethics.*, c. 1, 1155 a 22.

<sup>81</sup> I *Polit.*, c. 6, 1255 b 12.

<sup>82</sup> *Ia IIae*, q. 95, a. 4, ad 1.

<sup>83</sup> M. OLMSTEAD, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>84</sup> Once Freud was asked for a definition of the capacities of the truly mature individual, he replied, "Lieben und arbeiten" — to love and to work. The loving is vital — without it men would dry up or blow up. Here the primary group plays its absolutely essential role. But working is also necessary and for this the primary group, in its primary-ness, is not designed. For such ends men organize in terms of different principles. M. OLMSTEAD, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

solidary, person-oriented”<sup>85</sup> political friendships are cool, practical and business-like. Since law provides the framework for friendship, the kinds of friendship will correspond to the kinds of constitutions.

There are three basic kinds of regime, depending on who embodies authority. There is (1) monarchy, one man rule, (2) aristocracy, the rule of the most qualified and therefore the few; (3) timocracy, (for the sake of clarity, the Oxford-Ross rendering is retained),<sup>86</sup> the rule of the free and equal, both rich and poor, therefore the rule of the majority. There is a variety of other forms of government, but they are all combinations of these three types. (Aristotle analyzes several of these mixed forms of government in *Politics* IV).

There exists perversions of each of these forms: (1) tyranny, one man rule primarily for the personal advantage of the ruler; (2) oligarchy, rule of the wealthy with a view to class interests; (3) democracy. In this context, we mean the rule of the majority, the poor, without regard for excellence.

The associations that form the household follow the same patterns. (1) “For the association of a father with his sons bears the form of monarchy, since the father cares for his children; . . . it is the ideal of monarchy to be paternal rule. (2) The association of man and wife seems to be aristocratic; for the man rules in accordance with his worth, and in those matters in which a man should rule, but the matters that befit a woman he hands over to her. (3) The association of brothers is like a timocracy; for they are equal, except in so far as they differ in age; hence if they differ *much* in age, the friendship is no longer of the fraternal type.”<sup>87</sup>

Corrupt forms of each of these also exist. (1) A father’s rule is tyrannical when he treats his children like slaves, or otherwise rules for his personal advantage.<sup>88</sup> (2) If a man rules everything the relation passes over into oligarchy; for in doing so he is not acting in accordance with their respective worth.<sup>89</sup> We have an oligarchy also when the woman rules, be it for reasons of character or family wealth.<sup>90</sup> (3) “Democracy is found chiefly in masterless dwellings (for here every one is on an equality), and in those in which the ruler is weak and every one has licence to do as he pleases.”<sup>91</sup>

*The particular kinds of friendship will correspond to the particular kinds of community. Nicomachean Ethics 1160 a 29.*

In each of the good associations of the above division, whenever there is goodwill based on the association (we saw above that this is not automatic), the

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>86</sup> VIII *Ethics.*, c. 10, 1160 a 32.

<sup>87</sup> VIII *Ethics.*, c. 10, 1160 b 23 to 1161 a 6.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, a 7.

love corresponds exactly to the specifications of justice that obtain in that particular relationship.

In the case of the corrupt relationships, friendship seldom exists. The possibility of friendship is in inverse proportion to the distance between the parties. Consequently, friendship is practically non-existent between a tyrant and his subject, and what friendship there is exists mostly among the members of a timocracy, or its domestic counterpart, i.e. brothers in an anarchic household. "But in the deviation forms, as justice hardly exists, so too does friendship. It exists least in the worst form; in tyranny there is little or no friendship . . . in democracies they exist more fully; for where the citizens are equal they have much in common."<sup>92</sup>

Within the family closeness, generally, determines the intensity of a friendship. "Ratio dilectionis in omni amicitia cognata est propinquitatis unius ad alterum."<sup>93</sup> Some consequences, however, must be noted.

In the parent-child relationship we must distinguish friendship proper and love. As children mature and acquire an identity of their own, the good, that is, the ground of their intimacy with their parents, becomes more and more limited. Where the son pursues a career other than that of his father, the *convivere* is often limited to visits to and from "the grandparents," i.e. exercises of filial piety. Friendship is a matter of choice, tenuous in this case.

However, the love that binds parents and children is the strongest of human affections. The heterogeneity which characterizes this kind of reciprocity does not detract from this affection, which follows upon nature and not choice. It is the strongest bond that exists because we want our existence most of all and "parents love their children as being part of themselves, and children their parents as being something originating from them."<sup>94</sup>

In this perspective, a mother loves more than a father does. Her parenthood is more obvious, and she begins to communicate with the child sooner than the father. "Magis enim possunt, scire matres qui sunt eorum filii quam patres. Similiter etiam quantum ad tempus. Prius enim tempore matres ex convictu concipiunt amoris ad filios affectum quam patres."<sup>95</sup>

Because of the causal role of proximity, a brother and sister who differ in age by one or two years will develop a more intense family friendship than two brothers who differ considerably in age.<sup>96</sup> Fraternal communion follows upon paternal affection, "for their (the children's) identity with them (the parents) makes them identical with each other (which is the reason why people talk of 'the same blood', 'the same stock', and so on). They are, therefore, in a sense the same thing though in separate individuals."<sup>97</sup>

<sup>92</sup> VIII *Ethics*, c. 11, 1161 a 30 and 1161 b 9.

<sup>93</sup> In VIII *Ethic.*, lect. 12, no. 1708.

<sup>94</sup> VIII *Ethics*, c. 12, 1161 b 18.

<sup>95</sup> In VIII *Ethic.*, lect. 12, no. 1710.

<sup>96</sup> VIII *Ethics*, c. 12, 1161 b 34.

<sup>97</sup> VIII *Ethics*, c. 12, 1161 b 30.



Brothers may well become fast friends in the primary sense of the term. To this end they have a head start since they have more in common with each other than with anyone else, and know each other much sooner. However, if a friendship in the primary sense develops between them, it is a relationship formally distinct from that of fraternal friendships.<sup>98</sup> The two associations would strengthen each other.

The man and wife relationship is essentially natural, "children seem to be a bond of union (which is the reason why childless people part more easily) ; for children are a good common to both and what is common holds them together."<sup>99</sup> Procreation is a work of nature, the child is the good upon which this union is based, so it is natural. Man is inclined to form couples — even more than to form cities.<sup>100</sup> Since the end of marriage is the good of the species, it is a virtuous good, and therefore, the basis of a noble friendship. Moreover, a marriage in its origin is the result of a choice. To the extent that partners accept each other, their mutual love approximates that of the perfect friendship. As man and wife, they cannot realize perfectly the primary analogate of friendship, marriage is based on their differences. Nevertheless, their union is human (not natural) in origin, so "this friendship may be based on virtue, if the parties are good ; for each has its own virtue and they will delight in the fact."<sup>101</sup>

In contemporary western society, the choice is usually made by the parties themselves. When the choice is motivated by virtue and similarity of interests, the friendship can come that much closer to the ideal.

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Friendship fosters the affective development of the person, and is indispensable to his happiness, for it is "most necessary with a view to living, for without friends, no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods."<sup>102</sup> It guarantees the health and dynamism of society, "Friendship seems too to hold states together, and lawgivers to care more for it than for justice ; for unanimity seems to be something like friendship, and this they aim at most of all, and expel factions as their worst enemy."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Cf. ST. THOMAS, no. 1717.

<sup>99</sup> VIII *Ethics*, c. 12, 1162 a 27.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, a 17.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, a 25.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 1155 a 5.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 1155 a 23-25.