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**From Political Friendship to Befriending the World
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Abstract Political friendship is typically portrayed as a dyadic relationship. In this traditional model, friendship is conceived as a positive intersubjective experience of relation-to-self and relation-to-other, assuming the reciprocity and equality characteristic of symmetrical relations of recognition. This essay explores an alternative, triadic model of political friendship suggested by the work of Hannah Arendt. Arendt makes the claim, at odds with most modern accounts, that “politics is not so much about human beings as it is about the world that comes into being between them and endures beyond them.” I suggest that the dyadic model of political friendship is incomplete; a more adequate paradigm would foreground triadic relations of interest, concern and care for the phenomenal world itself, conceived as the quasi-objective intermediary of human artifice. As a “public thing,” a shared world is a necessary condition for intersubjective friendship and therefore is deserving of a properly political mode of acknowledgement and friendship in its own right.

Introduction

While the concept of friendship still remains on the margins of academic analyses of political life, the past two decades have witnessed a remarkable growth in this field of study.¹ Not only has political friendship taken up a place as a serious and important alternative to dominant contractualist, rights-based legal and ethical frameworks, but there has also been a recent proliferation of analyses of the role and nature of friendship in domestic, international and global contexts. Intellectual historians, philosophers and political theorists have convincingly shown that political friendship deserves greater conceptual attention, and that it may contribute to rethinking “real world” social and political problems. Moreover, this same period has witnessed an increasing effort by social and political theorists to extend critical debates and insights focused on the concept of recognition. From interpersonal relationships of self and other, to multiculturalism, identity politics, new social movements, economic inequality, human development and global justice, theories of the ethics and politics of recognition have challenged mainstream liberal and communitarian accounts of political coexistence and the “normative grammar” of social life.² Surprisingly, however, there has been little substantive cross-fertilization of the themes of political friendship and recognition. This is puzzling both because the phenomenon of friendship exhibits characteristics strongly correlated to the dynamics of mutual recognition, and because the concept of recognition challenges long-standing assumptions of individual self-sufficiency at odds with the notion of political friendship.

In this essay I seek to contribute to the project of building conceptual bridges between theories of political friendship and theories of recognition. In particular, I suggest that analyses of the relationality of both recognition and friendship have an important role to play in conceptualizing the “worldly” context of political friendship. Political friendship is typically portrayed as a dyadic relationship. In this model, friendship is conceived as a positive intersubjective experience of relation-to-self and relation-to-other, assuming the reciprocity and equality characteristic of symmetrical relations of recognition. I argue that this traditional understanding of political friendship reflects insufficiently upon the extent to which the dyadic model is incomplete. My understanding of political friendship on the contrary foregrounds triadic relations of interest, concern and care for the world itself, conceived as the common intermediary of human artifice. As a “public thing,” a shared world is a necessary condition for intersubjective friendship and therefore is deserving of a properly political mode of acknowledgement and friendship in its own right.

To demonstrate this claim I first outline the relational nature of friendship, typically conceived as a positive relation-to-self and relation-to-other experience that exhibits the dyadic structure of intersubjective recognition. This is followed by an exploration of the political or public relevance of friendship, highlighting the limits of its dyadic intersubjective focus. I argue that the dyadic understanding of political friendship has a tendency to neglect the common world whose quasi-objective existence serves as phenomenal intermediary between self and other. Following this, I elaborate on the need to make political friendship more “worldly” by fostering triadic interconnections between self, world and other. The final part of the essay proposes redescribing political friendship as “befriending the world,” which I suggest is a political acknowledgement of the mutuality rather than formal reciprocity of the self-world-other triad, and a performative manifestation of regard for the shared world in its own right.

Friendship, Intersubjective Recognition and Relationality

Friendship comes in many guises. Yet all kinds of friendship share in common that they are essentially social relationships. They are therefore reciprocal in character, formative of our identities, and constitutive of our everyday lives with others. For Aristotle, of course, friendship answers to the deep human need for community; “friendship [*philia*],” he tells us, “is the motive of social life.”³ He famously argues that there are three distinct species of friendship that correspond to three different kinds of lovable goods (*phileta*): friendship based on mutual advantage and utility, friendship based on the mutual pleasure derived from being in one another’s company, and friendship based on mutual appreciation of one another’s virtuous character. Only the last type of friendship is lasting, complete and “perfect,” because in this relationship friends wish for and pursue the good *qua* good for their friend’s own sake.⁴ The mutual appreciation of the qualities of excellence embodied in true friendship is premised on the mutual recognition of what the other is,⁵ and therefore on a reflexive acknowledgement that two persons see themselves in and through the eyes of the other. Aristotle apprehends in the relation of friendship a kind of mirror effect whereby, he says “all friendly feelings for others are extensions of a man’s feelings for himself.”⁶ Yet if it is true that “a friend *is* another self,”⁷ then the interactions of friendship also result in a certain interchange of identity, since the self must also be “another friend”; each friend arrives into self-realization through the internalized regard of the valued other. The friend must be “another” and not the “same” self because the defining feature of friendship is that it is a relationship.⁸ Self-othering, whereby one relates to another under the sign of a common good, is a principal mark of friendship.⁹

The emphasis on the dyadic “friend is another self” trope reverberates through the classical literature on friendship.¹⁰ Cicero, for instance, conceived of friendship as a type of

love for another “whose habits and character are congenial with our own.”¹¹ The defining characteristic of the relationship of friendship is mutual goodwill, which is a motivational attitude that puts a premium on treating a friend with concern and respect equal to how one treats oneself.¹² In this way, Cicero notes, “he who looks upon a true friend, looks, as it were, upon a sort of image of himself.”¹³ Similarly, Aquinas holds that the “fellowship of friendship” is essential to a happy life. Human friendship is required for the joint activities of good works and charity, which elevate friends closer to the divine in their love of God.¹⁴ Aquinas thus frames friendship as a relationship of mutual benevolence, whereby friends are joined as two-in-one through their shared love of the good: “It should be said that friendship is not a virtue properly speaking, but something following on virtue. For because one is virtuous it follows that he will love those like himself.”¹⁵ Finally, both Montaigne and Kant follow closely the “friend is another self” tradition. In Montaigne’s view, the most perfect and complete friendship exemplifies a bond whereby each friend is to the other as the friend is to himself. Such a union reveals that the seemingly singular self is in fact doubled in the other. Writing of his friendship with Etienne de la Boétie, Montaigne opines: “If you press me to tell why I loved him, I feel that this cannot be expressed, except by answering: Because it was he, because it was I.”¹⁶ In comparison, Kant insists that the affectionate bonds of friendship must be tempered by reason, lest they become so tightly drawn and dominating as to jeopardize the equal worth and autonomy of the other person. While friendship consists, therefore, of reciprocated self-revelation, trust and the desire to communicate openly, such disclosure must be “consistent with mutual respect” that acknowledges the other person as particular and irreplaceable. Only then can friendship assume a “moral” quality, as a relationship of reciprocal concern between equals.¹⁷

Further specific theoretical examples can be multiplied, but the general points are these: friendship, as the state or quality of two or more persons being friends, is a relationship; the nature of this relationship consists of “connective bonds between person and person”; such connective bonds manifest some type of mutual concern on the part of the self for the other; this mutual concern presumes a high degree of symmetry between those bound together by friendship; and the acknowledgement of symmetry is “connected to the recognition of value in self and others.”¹⁸ The bond of friendship entails reflexivity, insofar as entering into friendly relations with others requires a productive cognitive movement in the self from awareness of those others as distinct persons, to consideration of the circumstances of their encounter, to a series of judgements about character, compatibility and interests, to assuming a commitment of responsibility to others. Yet for all of this, the attachment of friendship is equally and profoundly affective: it elicits and draws upon feelings of concern and care, pleasure and joy, sympathy and intimacy, and even of desire and a deep need for the self to be drawn inexorably towards others. The phenomenon of friendship thus reveals that meaningful selfhood is a function of being implicated in relations to others with whom the self can both identify and differ. In this way, the relationality of friendship is contiguous with the intra- and intersubjective dynamics of the formation of self-consciousness that underpins the ethical-political imperative of recognition.

The basic contention here is that friendship should be construed as presupposing social recognition and, further, that friendship itself is a socially recognized practice—though not the only one—by which identity, understanding and status are constituted through our interactions with others. G. W. F. Hegel’s seminal writings establish the fundamental terms of the theme of recognition by calling attention to the nature of self-consciousness. His great innovation is to show that consciousness is always consciousness of something other than itself—both inanimate objects and animate others. As used by moral and political philosophers and social theorists who draw more or less systematically on Hegel, the term “recognition” offers the possibility of thinking about individuals and community in deeply

relational terms, and of grasping the psychological, social and political effects on persons and groups who suffer from a lack of recognition. While accounts of recognition and its ethico-political import differ,¹⁹ it is possible to isolate several key (though not exhaustive) attributes of the substance of intersubjective recognition that buttress its pertinence to friendship, both personal and political.

First, it is widely agreed that, because individuals exist in and through their relations with others, recognition theory relies on a relational ontology. This means, on the one hand, that individuals are not monadic, sovereign selves but are formed by and come to define themselves through their relations with others and, on the other hand, that individuality and social ethics are not isolated from one another but instead human personhood is contextually sustained by ethical relationships; the self is always cultivated as a morally relevant entity within an array of different social relations. Hegel, for instance, insists that recognition mediates between the particular (private individuals) and the universal (social ethics), thereby articulating the reflexivity of self to other within successive and increasingly complex forms of socialization from the family to the state. In making this argument, he claims that human self-consciousness will not properly develop in the absence of recognition by others.²⁰ Such recognition ideally manifests itself within three central spheres of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*): in the family, in civil society, and in the state.²¹ The merit of Hegel's phenomenology of recognition, when it comes to friendship, is his insight that ethical relationships may be formed on the basis of a reciprocity that reconciles the universal and the particular in a "moral totality" of complementarily distinct entities: through friendship, self and other exist as a dynamic relationship of mutual recognition of similarity and difference, that is, of identity and differentiation. In "friendship and love," Hegel says, "we are not inherently one-sided; we restrict ourselves gladly in relating ourselves to another, but in this restriction know ourselves as ourselves."²²

The second apposite feature of intersubjective recognition concerns interdependency. Viewed through the lens of relationality, self and other are seen as dependent on one another, and perform a function for each other in providing mutual care, nurturance, assistance, love, friendship and of course recognition.²³ A self is constituted through relations of interdependency that both enable and constrain its possibilities of meaningful personhood in a variety of ways. As Axel Honneth has argued, love—"whether between friends, lovers, or parent and child"—is a form of recognition that physically sustains and emotionally supports the growth and development of persons in need.²⁴ Bryan Turner has described human interdependency as a matrix of four conditions: the vulnerability of human beings as embodied agents, the dependency of humans on others for survival, the general reciprocity or interconnectedness of social life, and the precariousness of socio-political institutions.²⁵ Turner argues that this "vulnerability of our everyday world" makes social institutions (familial, cultural, legal, and political) and social practices such as friendship necessary in order to provide stability, security and support.²⁶ A protective, supportive space for social interaction is vital to cultivating the chains of interdependence through which the integrity, identity and agency of persons can be acquired in a process of reciprocal recognition. Interdependency, then, is not a weakness but, as Charles Taylor says,²⁷ a "vital human need" for others to value, care for, take an interest in, and befriend us not only for *what* we are—parent, child, sibling, lover, colleague, neighbour—but for *who* we are. We might say that the point of recognition is to acknowledge certain kinds of social interdependencies and that the point of friendship is to care for and enhance those interdependencies. Friendship thus makes us more, rather than less, recognizable when coupled with fulfilling interdependence.

A third and final feature that I will add here is that recognition is also a deeply important human need because it is so closely intertwined with questions of identity and our sense of place in the world. While the need for recognition is universal, it is a performative

process binding both recognized and recognizers with reference to particular socio-historical contexts. Locating recognition in the intersubjective realm of ethical life, where the self is meant to assume the character and dispositions of a concretely situated being for whom reciprocity and accountability facilitate the self-realization of one's freedom in relation to others and a system of shared social institutions, makes questions concerning the giving and receiving of recognition a matter of hermeneutical-existential import. Thus one can conceptualize recognition in terms of meaning, interpretation and understanding. The task of understanding self and other rests upon basic forms of symbolic representation by which we come to know and appreciate ourselves and others, through acknowledging particular histories, identities and relationships. Investigating and interrogating the views held by ourselves and others facilitates our normative orientations, enlarges our perspectives on the world, and can lead to opportunities for acquiring as well as questioning shared meanings. Taylor observes that human identity and agency is fundamentally dialogical in character, meaning both that mutual understanding is predicated on intersubjective dialogue, and that the practice of recognition consists, in large part, of the self's dialogical exchanges with others.²⁸ In this way, too, dialogical recognition lies at the heart of friendship—which relies on open, hospitable yet critical communication more than, perhaps, any other attribute. Indeed, friendship may rightly be considered the highest expressive form of mutual recognition: the friend is “another self” embodied in the role of meaningful interlocutor within the dialogic encounter that fosters experiencing friendship together.²⁹

Political Friendship and the Limits of Recognition: The Role of World

The intersection of friendship and politics generates what appears to be a dichotomous choice: A political approach would view friendship as an eminently public act of partnership, and insist that political community is necessarily sustained by and even completed in the bonds of friendship. By contrast, an apolitical approach would regard friendship as most attractive when restricted to the personal sphere, and contend that practical political life unavoidably taints the refuge of friendship. In reality, of course, friendship evades such a strict dichotomy. This does not mean, then, that proponents of the political approach must regard it as the sole form of friendship, exclusive of private friendships. Neither must they ignore the hazards attendant upon public life. Friendship can be fulfilling in both its private and public forms, and may be fluidly interlinked in ordinary practice. But as a matter of principle, the political approach will not concede an inherently negative opposition between friendship and politics and indeed will endorse, in some way or another, the belief that there is a positive symmetry between the two. The challenge is to develop a notion of friendship that welcomes personal relationships sheltered from the demands of public affairs, without giving up on the critical value of a shared conception of the political as a place where a distinctive type of friendship can (and perhaps ought to) be experienced.

Recognition theory offers a path by which to “bridge” the political and apolitical perspectives on friendship, because of its insistence on the relational quality of social interaction. To treat friendship as either a political or an apolitical phenomenon is to assume that they are naturally opposed kinds, the essence of which is separable from social interaction. Yet it is untenable to think that social phenomena—whether of a more personal or a more political kind—can exist independent of relations between persons. Friendship only exists as a relationship between social entities, whether referring to individuals, citizens, communities, groups or even states.³⁰ In other words, the relation of friendship can never designate something separable from the particular friends that it conjoins, and still less can it connote a mode of interaction that only truly pertains to a single level of reality. The lived experience of friendship belies any such formal categorization. No doubt there are particular ways of tending to friendships that are taken to be more personal or more political in

character, with different sets of expectations and varying sorts of sensibilities. Yet whether within the wider political community or the closer circle of personal friends, friendship is a reflexive-affective exercise that presumes a receptivity towards others. What is most central to the practice of friendship, therefore, is that prospective friends approach one another through an encounter whereby the self engages with, and extends recognition to, the other. Recognition in general entails more than merely perceiving something; it entails an acknowledgement of what is distinctive in the object of perception. Indeed, it is precisely the quality and tenor of a certain type of affirmative recognition that confers a distinctive status on friendship compared to other modalities of social recognition. Thus the experience of friendship, of whatever kind, can only be gained through the experience of recognition. Friendship, both personal and political, seems to be both initiated and continually guided by an appreciation for the needs, attributes, abilities and accomplishments of others which attract an individual's attention, prompting reflection, recognition and caring regard *for the relationship itself*.

This brings us to the following question: What is the object of recognition and care in the specific relationship of political friendship? Aristotle points us in the right direction when he stresses that political friendship (*philia politike*) has two facets. The first consists of the unique type of relationship between fellow citizens in the polis, where the focus is on the mutual benefits gained by pursuing civic association and cooperation; while the second consists of the citizens' relationship to the polis itself, where the focus is on preserving and enhancing the public space that makes political relations possible.³¹ All friendships may be useful and pleasurable, even those based on goodness, but only political friendship holds out the additional advantage of looking after the stability and reliability of a durable political community within which a flourishing human life may be nurtured and sustained. The conception of friendship that intimates some role for cultivating the public realm, or at least the common good, as an element of being with others politically is shared by a number of other commentators as well. J. G. A. Pocock, for example, describes his interpretation of the civic republican tradition in a manner that portrays citizens as custodians of the public realm and sees this as virtuous action akin to political friendship.³² Adopting a somewhat different, and for my purposes, more promising trajectory, Graham Smith gives a central role to a "shared world of order and value" that is "held together and animated by the bonds" of political friendship "between person and person."³³

At this point, however, we come up against a conceptual limitation that transects contemporary theories of political friendship and recognition. The limitation is that both theoretical approaches fail to give due independent weight to the concept and place of "world" in the friendship-recognition nexus. Despite the notion that, according to Aristotle, friends must have something "in common,"³⁴ and the stress he placed on maintaining the norms, laws and institutions making up a political community as integral to the utility of political friendship, theorists of political friendship have paid the phenomenon of a *common world* little if any attention. I suspect there are two reasons for this. First, as many commentators have noted, in the modern era personal and private forms of friendship are considered to be admirable, while the association of friendship with the political is regarded with suspicion, if not entirely with disdain.³⁵ Second, inasmuch as friendship has been widely divorced from the political, we can presuppose a corresponding dissociation between friendship and the public space within which, and on the basis of which, political discourse and action occurs. What then constitutes the relational space upon which the political is dependent for its manifestation and enactment—a tacit yet not explicitly theorized concern for Aristotle—is no longer a question that immediately springs to mind. What I want to suggest, however, is that the "worldliness" of the political is precisely what is shared in common when focusing on friendship in the political sense. To flesh out this claim, it is

necessary to shift our attention from the now commonplace account of friendship, and the mode of intersubjective recognition that informs it based on the self-other dyad,³⁶ to an account based instead on the self-world-other triad. If, politically, friends must have something in common, then properly speaking that “something” belongs to neither of them as individual persons but rather exists as a third element in the relationship between them. That third element shared in common is best understood as “world.”

Hannah Arendt is the thinker perhaps best suited both to recovering the role of the world for political friendship, and to conceiving the complex interrelations between self, other and world in terms of recognition. Friendship is a recurring theme in Arendt’s writings and her thinking about the political.³⁷ The political, on Arendt’s view, refers both to the freely initiated actions and unconstrained deliberations that individuals undertake with a plurality of others, and to the public space needed for political actions and speech to occur and to be witnessed.³⁸ Important, too, is the following point: “Action without a name, a ‘who’ attached to it, is meaningless.”³⁹ Action, for Arendt, is one of the principal ways that individuals become persons with recognizable identities, by disclosing or revealing *who* rather than *what* they are by what they do and say. Yet words and deeds can only be exercised meaningfully within relationships of mutual recognition, that is, when they are seen, heard and acknowledged by others. Crucially, then, personhood or personal identity is not strictly speaking an inherent or private quality. It is a particular moral and political status that we mutually guarantee to one another through recognition in a public realm characterized by the ontological condition of plurality.⁴⁰ Arendt thus regards identity as a feature of intersubjective recognition that arises through human togetherness located, as the most distinctive feature of properly human life, in the realm of the political.

Although Arendt does not believe that friendship is intrinsically political, she does consider it to be one of the most significant forms of human association that can foster the relationality, interdependence and dialogical recognition required for jointly undertaken words and deeds, and which confers meaning on those political actions. Arendt was convinced, for instance, that the type of open dialogue and critical deliberative exchange that occurs most fruitfully between persons who regard each other as friends, could be seen to exemplify the process of politically “equalizing” people who are, naturally, “different and unequal.”⁴¹ This is because citizens, considered as political friends, “can understand the truth inherent in the other’s opinion.” Understanding “the greatest possible number and varieties of realities” as these appear to others, without asserting a privileged claim to an absolute truth that would trump all other opinions (*doxai*) is, Arendt insists, “the political kind of insight par excellence.”⁴² Political friendship so conceived, as distinguished from the intimacy of erotic love and the bonds of fraternal kinship, holds that “only the constant interchange of talk” can unite the otherwise disparate citizens of a polity into a partnership of peers. The political importance of friendship is manifest, then, in “the humanness peculiar to it,”⁴³ that is, in the willingness to be drawn towards others in a way that confers on each the reciprocal status of equal interlocutor in a ceaseless discussion concerned with the world shared in common. Here we hit upon the crucial and innovative insight of Arendt’s understanding of the political relevance of friendship. Whereas political friendship and its accompanying process of recognition are typically treated as centring on discussion about and concern for each of the persons as citizens, Arendt wants to shift our gaze from the viewpoint of the citizen to the viewpoint of the polity itself or, more accurately, to the world which lays between them. “By talking about what is between them,” Arendt explains, “it becomes ever more common to them. . . [and] begins to constitute a little world of its own which is shared in friendship.”⁴⁴ In short, self, other and world in all their relationality, interdependence and revelatory bestowing of meaning are the existential triad constituting the political dimension of the human condition.

Arendt likely would agree that most theorists have been too eager to leave the “common” world for a higher realm of “perfect” friendship untainted by plurality and the arena of politics. In order to turn friendship back towards the plane of the political in Arendtian terms and raise awareness of its “worldliness,” I will briefly flesh out the concept of world and its role in the frequently overlooked symbiotic relationships of the self-world-other triad. The reason Arendt is attuned to the political significance of world when most modern theorists are not is, as noted above, her interpretation of the political as exceeding or standing beside the self-other dyad. In Arendt’s words: “Strictly speaking, politics is not so much about human beings as it is about the world that comes into being between them and endures beyond them.”⁴⁵ What then is this world and why does Arendt imbue it with such magnitude?

Arendt expounds a concept of “world,” formulated as a substantive noun, inspired by existential-phenomenology. In doing so, she expands on the post-Hegelian paradigm of recognition by showing that intersubjective modes of socio-political recognition are dependent upon or mediated by quasi-objective “milieus” possessing distinctive ontological and relational qualities. The trio of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty are perhaps the most commonly known figures at the core of the phenomenological tradition who present explicit conceptions of world. For Husserl, “world” refers to what is “pregiven” in the perceptual circuit of intentional consciousness to meaning; consciousness is always “world-consciousness,” in the sense that the apprehension of objects as they appear in experience is synonymous with the apprehension of meaning.⁴⁶ The subject is embedded in an intersubjective “lifeworld” (*Lebenswelt*) of historically and culturally preconstituted meanings, which serves as an abiding “horizon” for all knowledge, interpretation and action.⁴⁷ Consequently, the lifeworld is a “third dimension” that makes common experience and its historical transmission possible.⁴⁸ Heidegger, in contrast, distances his own understanding of world from the investigation of consciousness and situates it instead in relation to the question of Being. He insists that “self and the world belong together. . . not two beings, like subject and object,” but “the unity of Being-in-the-world.”⁴⁹ Human being (or *Dasein*), “thrown” temporally into the world prior to any subject-object bifurcation, “primordially” encounters the world as a totality of “equipment” and conditions for practical engagement. Yet the intimacy that characterizes the coupling of “being-in-the-world,” disclosed through language, also engenders the horizon of all possible meaning and action and therefore of taking care (*Sorge*) of the world.⁵⁰ Merleau-Ponty further develops these positions in order to go beyond the (corporeal) subject-object and self-other correlates by showing that they exist in and through their interpenetration with world as a phenomenal field of dynamic relations.⁵¹ Ontologically, world is neither objective nor subjective but instead a “third dimension” that inexhaustibly unfolds between individuals (and all collective associations) as the necessary ground of intersubjective interaction.⁵² In his late work, Merleau-Ponty refers to the third dimension as the “flesh” or connective tissue of a sensible world that intertwines the actual and the virtual, and through which all persons take on a recognizable, lived reality.⁵³

These phenomenological approaches to the ontology of world serve as conceptual underpinnings that support, yet generally remain implicit within Arendt’s more politically-inclined interpretation. What Arendt shares with these approaches is a determination to situate the phenomenal reality of human coexistence—and even more specifically, for Arendt, of political coexistence—within a shared, historical world of experience. As with other existential-phenomenological theorists who have tended to think of world as a “field” or “centre of action,” Arendt talks about world as a “space of appearance” that is public by definition. Her conception of world leads her to reject thinking of political interaction in merely dyadic terms, since political subjects relate directly to a world as a third term as well

as to other political subjects, and which can be seen through several interwoven conceptual distinctions. The first is that world is a composition of human artifice having a quasi-objective existence, an image that resonates strongly with the classical notion of the “public thing” (*res publica*). “Worldliness” characterizes the practical activities that build and shape the objective conditions, as distinguished from the natural environment, in which humans live—through instrumental praxes such as labour and work, which produce objects for consumption as well as endow the social structure with relative durability and stability, but also through the initiation of freely undertaken action that begins something new whose outcome is uncertain and unpredictable. In this way, cultural, economic, aesthetic, technological, and educational goods are invented that confer relative durability and stability on the social fabric, and associative practices and institutions based on mutual respect and equality are created that cultivate opportunities for collective interaction and foster diverse opinions about the character of public coexistence.⁵⁴ While all three activities are interdependent, it is through joint action that a world acquires properly human significance and reality since it manifests a public, and paradigmatically political, aspect of togetherness that no other activity can give it. Hence worlds are always already meaningful because meaning is invested in and results from the world-building practices of individuals and communities, even though worlds themselves do not reduce to individuals and communities.

The second distinction concerns the relationship between plurality, recognition and identity. Arendt proposes that a world as space of appearance is pluralist in the dual sense that all phenomena appear through the plurality of perspectives that human beings take on a world, and that human beings appear to one another as a plurality of worldly, situated beings.⁵⁵ Plurality is indispensable to the reality of a world because “the reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself.”⁵⁶ Similarly, identity is intertwined with the manner in which we reveal the distinctiveness or uniqueness of “who” we are through the exchange of words and deeds with and amongst others in a shared world.⁵⁷ A world is “where I appear to others as others appear to me,”⁵⁸ Arendt says, and in so doing we *become recognizable*; put differently, the achievement of identity and the ability to appear before others via the milieu of a quasi-objective world are co-extensive.⁵⁹ Identity, then, is immanent to worldly relations as the medium for the publically acknowledged aspects of one’s being-in-the-world-with others.

Finally, since worlds exist neither inside individuals inherently, nor outside of them transcendentally, but rather between or among them as a kind of historical ensemble of human artifice, then the characteristic of relationality assumes the form of a disjunctive synthesis.⁶⁰ Instead of assuming a direct correspondence between subject and subject, self and other, Arendt maintains a worldly circuit between them must be established if their relations and interactions are to have political significance. Arendt famously appeals to the figure of a table to portray a world’s role as disjunctive synthesis: “To live together in the world,” she writes, “means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time.”⁶¹ Inasmuch as it manifests publicly and can be perceived and talked about by all from the myriad perspectives taken upon its appearance, a world serves as an “in-between” that both connects together and differentiates plural persons. As an intermediary third dimension that arises between plural persons (*inter-est*), a world serves as a kind of phenomenal milieu in which people become “equalized” through reciprocal recognition of their equal status as interlocutors appearing together publicly. Yet a worldly intermediary also separates and differentiates, since too much intimacy or closeness destroys (respect for) worldly plurality.⁶²

A world, then, is an intermediary third dimension that is irreducible to the persons who relate through and to it. We can understand a world, in political terms, as a precondition for interpersonal recognition including friendships. It is the site, as it were, where political friendship is situated. World-building establishes a meaningful public context for recognition, and persons depend upon the existence of an enduring common world, one that is shared between them and which renders them visible to others. By treating world as having the same ontological status as self and other, existing as a definite and historically specific ensemble of relations between political agents, we place recognition within a triadic schema of interworldly interdependencies. Recognition is distinguished not only by reciprocity between plural persons but by the presence of an *acknowledged* common world around which they are constituted. Consequently the dynamic of recognition is decidedly more complicated than dyadic theories indicate, because it entails a move away from the self-other duality towards a third shared object of concern that serves as a site of political coexistence. What is most pertinent for present purposes is that political friendship can then be seen from this position to express being-in-the-world-with-others afresh, as encompassing an interest in others that must be conjoined to an interest in world.

Befriending the World: A Different Relationship of Recognition

What does it mean to acknowledge the third dimension of world as a necessary condition of the political? My goal here is to make a case for the practice of acknowledging the status of world as an integral component of political friendship: through affirmation of its ontological uniqueness, appreciation of its complexity and fragility, and interest in its nurturance and well-being. I refer to this multifaceted practice of acknowledgement as “befriending the world.” The ultimate concern of this form of friendship is for what kind of world (or worlds) humans want to sustain, protect and experience as the milieu of their political coexistence and shared reality. If we understand world as a phenomenal space of appearance that is relational by nature, manifested through the ongoing coming together of plural persons in speech and action, then political friendship can be taken to mean a form of acknowledgement of persons as citizens as well as of the common public-political space between them. From the point of view of recognition theory, such acknowledgment can be translated as emerging from shared political engagements over the question of which particular worlds people want to be included in, which necessarily appeals to the existence of others seeking recognition and friendship. The question is compelling because not all worlds are conducive to public modes of friendship premised on recognition of plurality. A triadic conception of political friendship therefore does the work of intersubjective recognition but simultaneously looks to acknowledge the space of appearance in its own right; such friendship is deeply political when it becomes world-affirming, world-engendering and world-preserving.

What then is the type of bonding that exemplifies befriending the world? Given the nature of world as a quasi-objective common medium around which diverse people associate, and which is a phenomenal intermediary insofar as it lies relationally between people rather than substantively within them, a distinctive type of relationship of regard is forged between persons and world. Typically the bond of friendship is expressed in the language of reciprocity, which is a way of positively recognizing people’s moral standing and agency. Reciprocity has been given a broad role in traditions of political friendship. Aristotle, for instance, holds that proper friendship entails reciprocated goodwill, while friendship in Kant’s sense requires reciprocity of respect. When we have a relationship of friendship with others, we share with them a variety of thoughts, experiences, attitudes, values, dispositions and benefits. Yet reciprocity involves sharing not merely as the exchange of instrumental purposes or reasons, which otherwise leave people separate in their self-interestedness, but includes sharing something acknowledged as estimable embedded within or existing between

them as such: that which is joint or shared in common. What self and other share or reciprocate in political friendship is not literally a self-centred inner essence, but the common space of shared appearance and action that is external to and between them. In dyadic terms, political friendship means people doing things they believe will promote each other's good, for the sake of self and other. In triadic terms, it means sharing an interest in doing things that promote the good or well-being of the world, for the sake of the world as well as for the sake of self and other. There is no necessary path from dyadic interpersonal political friendship to triadic interworldly political friendship. But the notion of befriending the world aims to foster such a path, even if that route may seem indirect or uncertain. One promising approach to clearing that path is to recognize that the analogue of reciprocity, when viewed through the quasi-objective lens of world, is mutuality.

In his discussion of "complete" friendship bound by the shared pursuit of excellence, Aristotle suggests that such friendship is premised on the virtue of generosity and the "opportunity for beneficence," that is, for the practice of proper gift-giving as a kind of "mutual friendliness."⁶³ The act of giving well both solidifies the bonds of friendship and makes the act itself a kind of gift that is shared in such a way that it provides what the other cannot: the mutuality of gift-giving sustains and maintains the relationship of togetherness.⁶⁴ Without regularly reaffirming and repeating such generosity and giving, the relationship would wither. Claims about mutuality and generosity in friendship are mirrored by similar claims about amicable or "peaceful" modes of recognition that cannot be said to "belong" wholly to self or other. Paul Ricoeur, in his analysis of the polysemic character of the concept of recognition, suggests that the desire for recognition sheds light on the presence of not merely a human predisposition to sociability but further on a moral motivation to *philia* (as well as *eros* and *agape*).⁶⁵ *Philia* does not necessarily appeal to the calculation and equivalence demanded by a "fair trade" (as in a contractual relationship), Ricoeur proposes, but instead embraces the practice of giving without expecting anything in return, even though in friendships generosity will be mutual and thus freely returned in some fashion. The experience of *philia* discloses a form of recognition as gift-giving that shifts away from formal reciprocity and towards informal mutuality. Friends are simultaneously givers and receivers to each other. Where formal reciprocity implies that equality is tied to the expectation of an equivalent exchange, mutuality is the expression of a double generosity: that of the initial giver, who "neither requires nor expects a gift in return," and that of the initial recipient, who nonetheless returns the gesture voluntarily yet also, paradoxically, obligatorily.⁶⁶ Yet the source of this obligation is a sense of gratitude rather than entitlement. Here recognition becomes an acknowledgement and affirmation of what is *shared between* self and other—and thus of the common ground, though contingent and plural, which is mutually established and cared for together. Consequently, Ricoeur's argument raises a crucial point about recognition, whether interpersonal or interworldly; namely, it exhorts us to entertain the notion that the acknowledgment of the worth of others inherent to *philia*, even though it comes without a price, must be freely given in return.

Returning to *philia politike* as befriending the world, mutuality is an apt way to characterize the ties that self-world-other have with one another. Although a world does not reciprocate in the way typically attributed to human agency, it does exist within a circuit of mutual conditioning and interdependence—that is, of outward-looking giving and receiving. Arendt describes this relation of mutual influence between worlds and human beings when she writes the "things that owe their existence exclusively to men nonetheless constantly condition their human makers."⁶⁷ The connection between self-world-other, in other words, is a three-sided phenomenon and its ontological and existential core is the public web of relationships that provides a context within which individuals and groups can sustainably access mutual political recognition and civic acquaintance. People and worlds complement

one another and need each other for mutual support: just as sharing between people is a prerequisite for world-building, sharing between people and a world is a prerequisite for political coexistence and friendship. Worlds offer a collective abode for otherwise disparate individuals to encounter and connect with one another. The upshot of the discussion here is that a world enables us to exist and flourish not merely as human beings but as political beings. A world constitutes us as political beings and we in turn constitute, in part at least, a world as a shared public space.

Placing world at the centre of political friendship likewise highlights that the world is vulnerable to loss and even obliteration. Because world is synonymous with human artifice it does not possess a natural permanence, and worlds can be ruined through power asymmetries, structural injustices and misrecognition including racism, sexism, poverty, domination, terror and genocide. A world may also be destabilized or diminished by neglect, such as when people withdraw from the political realm into predominantly private relationships or limit their interchange to contexts of consumerism. We cannot “do” political friendship in isolation since it relies upon what happens and lies between mutually implicated people. Consisting of a mix of both inherited and novel tangible and intangible elements—objects, customs, languages, concepts, institutions, memories, practices, experiences, habits, beliefs, symbols, narratives and traditions—worlds accumulate a density over time and are remade only through various modes of socio-historical transmission and inheritance.⁶⁸ A world is the collective repository of a past, the meaningful condition of a present and the potential expression of a future. Indeed, if a world is to retain the quality of public space then it must, Arendt says, “survive the coming and going of the generations.”⁶⁹ Yet the ability to associate and appear together with others presupposes there being either a common world already in place or conditions favourable to accessing and stimulating proto-worldly public interactions. From such fragile triadic entanglements a shared world has to be continually cultivated without assurance that there is an absolutely certain basis for its continuation. Self-world-other either flourish together or deteriorate together.

With respect to the mutuality between self, world and other, my contention is that befriending the world means, in different ways and to various degrees, assuming a public disposition of companionability towards the world and all that it offers by way of providing the necessary conditions for becoming human with others. To befriend the world is to be attentive to it: to give back to it, to cultivate its growth and development, to promote its well-being or flourishing, which in turn opens up the possibility of enhanced experience, of growing and flourishing interpersonally and politically.⁷⁰ Since it would be imprudent to assert prescriptively what sorts of practices “count” as befriending the world, a few illustrative examples are merely sketched here. Given that the world, in its mediating role as common, is what grounds joint speech and action, then the scale and scope of dialogue and participation should, for instance, be as inclusive as possible. It is insufficient to appeal to any sort of natural sociability to ensure that people are able to speak and act together, as this would circumvent the indispensable world-formative process of political recognition. Thus the mutual dialogue, disputation of competing opinions, movement of agreement and disagreement, and amicable persuasion and dissuasion that is characteristic of political friendship must be underpinned by a refusal to exclude others from claiming a recognized place at the world’s table and thus from being seen and heard by others—for enlarging the diversity of perspectives on a world simultaneously amplifies the “fund” of worldliness that can be shared in common.

Of course, if political life is premised on plurality, then politics presupposes the possibility of disagreement. Similarly, matters of agreement and disagreement, inclusion and exclusion, expose the reality that difference in the public world may give rise to conflict and enmity. One of Carl Schmitt’s insights was to demonstrate how political encounters with

others—or “strangers” and “aliens”—in extraordinary situations juxtaposes a deeply existential struggle of “friends” against their “enemies”. The condition of possibility for the question “Who is the friend?” must be, Schmitt believes, the contraposed question, “Who is the enemy?” Put simply, the key point for Schmitt is that political friends (or non-enemies) *need* political enemies, and the political organs of the state are constituted on the basis of a presumed relationship of mutual opposition.⁷¹ Arendt certainly agrees that the political must leave room for debate, contention and dissent, and it would be naïve to underplay the potential for conflict since it is precisely the plurality of perspectives, voices and opinions that galvanize debate and participation. Moreover, Arendt thought that friendship is not antithetical to disagreement and she believed that the centrality of dispute to friendship had become lost in modern thought.⁷² Dispute, disagreement and even anger are still ways that friends share their opinions with each other and live together. A greater focus on the relational condition of political friendship thus reveals a deeper point, namely, that plural persons are not simply thrown back upon themselves as either friend or enemy *simpliciter* but rather upon the context of a mediating world. Even the friend-enemy distinction, in other words, presupposes some degree of worldliness that renders such a distinction intelligible. If that is the case, then the rigid binary of friend and enemy, which fixates on the mutually exclusive opposition of either identity or difference, can be offset by the mutually inclusive triad of self, world and other, in which both identity and difference find a common home. Placing world at the centre of our perspective on political friendship does not avert the possibilities for conflict that the contestable and equivocal character of public discussion and action may exacerbate, but it does unsettle an unnecessarily restrictive binary approach that itself minimizes the ways that worlds can be built and shared between plural people without *a priori* recourse to the designation of enemies. Indeed, even those who are “less than friends” at any given time may exist together in a productive relationship animated by concern for a common world—think of the “friendly rivalries” of sporting adversaries, for instance—and whose mutual recognition and respect may evolve into friendship because of or through that worldly intermediary.

The more that world-constituting action and speech around matters of shared political concern occurs, the more permanence and reality a world as in-between attains. The freedom to associate, to seek asylum or hospitality, and even to engage in civil disobedience are all aspects of befriending the world inasmuch as they presuppose a desire to share the world with others in all of their diversity. Such engagements in the worldly in-between also buttress public recognition of the human condition of plurality, from which the space of appearance arises, by acknowledging the complementary irreducibility of the common world and the individuals who reside there. Similarly, practices of democratic participation, civic association, solidaristic collaboration, activist campaigning, cooperative governance and public decision-making are powerful ways of augmenting world and its bonding capacity, whenever they are undertaken specifically for the sake of a world in which plurality is possible. Other befriending practices may be oriented around building up the tangible, physical dimensions of a common world, such as public institutional sites for politics and collective fora such as museums, schools, parks, and even sporting venues. Still other activities may contribute to the formation of the intangible, symbolic dimensions of world, including literature, poetry and narrative, musical performances, public works of art, municipal ceremonies, public holidays, speeches, and even legislative processes. Any collective exercise performed for the purpose of creating and maintaining a common public context for humans to come together in their plurality, yet which stands outside of and between self and other, may be indicative of befriending the world. Building new worldly contexts, or preserving and enhancing established ones, may also be done on a multitude of levels and can assume multiple scales, from neighbourhoods and cities to regional and

transnational political activities,⁷³ provided they illuminate rather than obscure plurality. What is of paramount importance is maintaining the continuity of ongoing befriending practices, based on a sense of gratitude for the durable presence of a world and all that it gives through the manifold ties of mutuality. Continuity helps sustain both the unique relationality of world as a binding element and the distinct identities of myriad interconnected people animated by a spirit of friendship with a common world. The “third dimension” of a common world endures only if its quasi-objective existence is publicly acknowledged by reaching out to it, and not merely to other persons, “with the gift of friendship.”⁷⁴

Conclusion

I have argued that current approaches to political friendship and to recognition are united by their lack of attention to the self-world-other triad. This is linked to their reliance on the dyadic intersubjective model of individuals as autonomous from the intermediary of phenomenal world. The deficit introduced by this model is that political friendship relations do not extend to the world in its own right. Yet where would political friendship be, without a world? I have therefore sought to provide an alternative description of political friendship that relies on a triadic relational ontology, which shifts the standard perspective from only interpersonal recognition and calls also for acknowledging the phenomenal world as a mutually conditioning third dimension of political coexistence. Put differently, political friendship in a complete sense also requires befriending the world, namely, cherishing the presence of world as “in-between” and giving it, together with others, the same unfailing interest, concern, goodwill, respect and care for its own sake as we would any friend worthy of the name. Bringing to the fore the place of world in political friendship reminds us that no one actually experiences publicly-oriented friendship alone and, crucially, without a common context—indeed, from a political perspective, people are dependent upon the mutuality of both interested others and an enduring world for aspects of their being. Political friendship is something that we do together through and upon the shared intermediary of a world, not something that we possess independent of it. Moreover, we are at least partly responsible for the status and well-being of others as well as of a viable world through bonds of acknowledgement within complex webs of interdependence. An integral element of befriending the world is to encourage people as political beings to look carefully at how we think about and esteem the world that will endure beyond our own finite lifespans, at who is responsible for ensuring its continuation and under what conditions, at mitigating its neglect and, most importantly, at not taking for granted that it will simply be there even if we do nothing to look after it. Because political friendship involves “sharing-the-world-with-others,”⁷⁵ it is manifested only where self, other and world can each reliably appear in their distinctive plurality. In many ways, then, befriending the world is a multifaceted expression of acknowledgement, gratitude and attentiveness towards the world as the grounding intermediary of political association, that is, as the “public thing” which friends must have in common.

Notes

¹ Comprehensive surveys are provided in Heather Devere and Graham M. Smith, “Friendship and Politics,” *Political Studies Review* 8 (2010): 341-56, and Heather Devere, “Amity Update: The Academic Debate on Friendship and Politics,” *AMITY* 1 (2013): 5-33.

² For a good survey of the recent recognition debates, see Simon Thompson, *The Political Theory of Recognition: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006).

³ Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Harris Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1932), 1280b38-39. On the centrality of friendship in Aristotle's view of human affairs, which remains subject to interpretive dispute regarding the proper understanding of the political dimensions of friendship, see John Cooper, "Friendship and the Good in Aristotle," *The Philosophical Review* 86 (1977): 290-315; John Cooper, "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship," *Review of Metaphysics* 30 (1977): 619-48; Richard Mulgan, "The Role of Friendship in Aristotle's Political Theory," in *The Challenge to Friendship in Modernity*, ed. Preston King and Heather Devere (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 15-32; and Bernard Yack, *The Problems of a Political Animal: Community, Justice, and Conflict in Aristotelian Political Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁴ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J. A. K Thomson (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 1155b29-1156b23.

⁵ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1156b2-23; on Aristotle's criterion of recognition see 1155b29.

⁶ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1168a18-b7.

⁷ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1166a16-b4.

⁸ As Derrida points out, "there is never a sole friend. Not that there would be none, but that there never is one. . . . This multiplicity makes the taking into account of the political inevitable." Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship* (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 215.

⁹ Hence, interpretations that claim Aristotle means to reduce identity to sameness push the point too far. As Hauke Brunkhorst notes, Aristotle's point is that friends are "reciprocal models" for each other, that is, each is for the other a figure "in whom one can objectively recognize, viewing from the outside, what is good and right for oneself." Hauke Brunkhorst, *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005) 14. The affiliative relationship of identity between friends can only ever be partial rather than complete, embodying some similarities as well as some differences, for otherwise it would be impossible for one self to recognize a friend as *another* self, i.e. as possessing a distinct identity in his or her own right.

¹⁰ A. C. Grayling usefully recounts the significant historical influence of the "friend is another self" trope in the literature—which is given to romantic idealization in the Renaissance—but arguably he himself too readily conflates this trope with the notion of sameness. A. C. Grayling, *Friendship* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

¹¹ Cicero, *De Amicitia*, trans. William Armistead Falconer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), sect. 27.

¹² Cicero, *De Amicitia*, sect. 22.82.

¹³ Cicero, *De Amicitia*, sect. 7.23; cf. sect. 80: "the real friend. . . is, as it were, another self."

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. English Dominican Fathers (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947), 1-II, q. 4.

¹⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*, trans. Ralph McInerny (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1999), q. 5.

¹⁶ Michel de Montaigne, "On Friendship," in *The Complete Works* (New York: Knopf Everyman's Library, 2003), 169.

¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 216-17.

¹⁸ Graham M. Smith, *Friendship and the Political: Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Schmitt* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2011), 10-15.

¹⁹ See, for example, Shane O'Neill and Nicholas H. Smith (eds), *Recognition Theory as Social Research: Investigating the Dynamics of Social Conflict* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

²⁰ See the discussion in Robert R. Williams, *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

²¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), third part.

²² Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Para. 7 (Addition), 228.

²³ There are different pathways to the acknowledgement of interdependence. While Hegel is famous for outlining his account of recognition via the conflictual dialectic of master and slave, it should not be forgotten that ultimately mutual recognition of the master's and slave's interdependence is what prepares the ground for the building of amicable relations. See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 114-17.

²⁴ Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 107.

²⁵ Bryan S. Turner, *Vulnerability and Human Rights* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 25.

²⁶ Turner, *Vulnerability and Human Rights*, 27.

²⁷ Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25.

²⁸ Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," 32.

²⁹ In Plato's *Lysis*, the discussion between Socrates, Lysis and Menexenus regarding the nature of friendship ends inconclusively. Despite failing to arrive at a precise definition of friendship as such, however, Socrates' concluding comment suggests that by engaging in the very process of dialogue, by sharing their opinions about "what a friend is," the three interlocutors have in fact become friends (thereby demonstrating that knowledge of what is the nature of friendship is inessential to establishing friendship). See C.D.C. Reeve (ed.), *Plato on Love: Lysis Symposium, Phaedrus, Alcibiades, with Selections from Republic and Laws* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006), 223b.

³⁰ See, for example, P. E. Digeser, "Friendship Between States," *British Journal of Political Science* 39 (2008): 323-44, Catherine Lu, "Political Friendship among Peoples," *Journal of International Political Theory* 5 (2009): 41-58, and Graham M. Smith, "Friendship and the World of States," *International Politics* 48 (2011): 10-27.

³¹ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1159a33-1160a23.

³² See J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

³³ Smith, *Friendship and the Political*, 226-27.

³⁴ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1161b.

³⁵ See John von Heyking and Richard Avramenko (eds), *Friendship and Politics: Essays in Political Thought* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 1; Devere and Smith, "Friendship and Politics," 341-42, and Smith, *Friendship and the Political*, 1-3.

³⁶ For example: "friendship. . . proceeds from two loving each other" (Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Potentia Dei*, trans. English Dominican Fathers, Westminster, MA: The Newman Press, 1952, q. 10); "friendship. . . is the complete confidence of two persons in revealing their secret judgements and feelings to each other" (Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 216); "friendship is a way of conceptualising the bonds between person and person" (Smith, *Friendship and the Political*, 4); emphases added.

³⁷ For dedicated discussion—which is surprisingly sparse—of the theme of friendship in Arendt’s thought see Margaret Canovan, “Friendship, Truth and Politics: Hannah Arendt and Toleration,” in *Justifying Toleration: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Susan Mendus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 177-98; Shin Chiba, “Hannah Arendt on Love and the Political: Love, Friendship, and Citizenship,” *Review of Politics* 57 (1995): 505-35; and Lisa Disch, “On Friendship in ‘Dark Times’,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 285-312.

³⁸ Arendt’s most systematic treatment of her account of the political is presented in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

³⁹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 180-81.

⁴⁰ See Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 176-88. For a critical analysis of Arendt’s connection to the theme of recognition see Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁴¹ Hannah Arendt, “Socrates,” in *The Promise of Politics* (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), 17.

⁴² Arendt, “Socrates,” in *The Promise of Politics*, 18.

⁴³ Hannah Arendt, “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing,” in *Men in Dark Times* (San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1968), 24.

⁴⁴ Arendt, “Socrates,” in *The Promise of Politics*, 16.

⁴⁵ Arendt, “Socrates,” in *The Promise of Politics*, 175. Greater attention is gradually being given to the central role played by the concept of “world” within Arendt’s thinking; see, for instance, Eveline Cioflec, “On Hannah Arendt: The Worldly In-Between of Human Beings and its Ethical Consequences,” *South African Journal of Philosophy* 31 (2012): 646-63; Ella Myers, *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World* (London and Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013); and Siobhan Kattago, “Why the World Matters: Hannah Arendt’s Philosophy of New Beginnings,” *The European Legacy* 18 (2013): 170-84.

⁴⁶ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 103.

⁴⁷ Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences*, 49-50, 142.

⁴⁸ Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences*, 112, 123.

⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 297.

⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1962), 49-51. As Emmanuel Levinas has put it, the world is “presented in its very being as a center of action, as a field of activity or of care”. Emmanuel Levinas, *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl’s Phenomenology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 119.

⁵¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁵² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 162.

⁵³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968).

⁵⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 7-11, 22-33.

⁵⁵ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 7.

⁵⁶ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 57.

⁵⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 179.

⁵⁸ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 177.

⁵⁹ See Hannah Arendt, “What is Freedom?” in *Between Past and Future* (New York and London: Penguin Books, 1993), 154.

⁶⁰ I borrow the locution “disjunctive synthesis” from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004). The phrase usefully captures Arendt’s conception of political relations that simultaneously connect and divide and, moreover, reinforces a sense of plurality that is irreducible to a binary logic of identity that would reject the world as a kind of “excluded middle.”

⁶¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 177.

⁶² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 243; Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1963), 86; Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954* (New York: Schocken Books, 1994), 406.

⁶³ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155a3-24.

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Books VIII and IX.

⁶⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *The Course of Recognition* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2005), 218-19.

⁶⁶ Ricoeur, *The Course of Recognition*, 220-42. Here Ricoeur appeals to the example of the gift as examined in the influential work of Marcel Mauss, in order to characterize mutual recognition.

⁶⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 9; Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 107.

⁶⁸ See Hanna Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt’s Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 303 n. 93.

⁶⁹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 55.

⁷⁰ In this way befriending the world can be regarded as a variation on Arendt’s notion of “amor mundi” (love of the world), which she had originally considered as the title for her book published as *The Human Condition*; see the letter of 6 August 1955 in Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, *Correspondence, 1926-1969* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1992). It might also be seen as the kind of “partisanship for the world” for which Arendt praises Lessing; see “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing,” in *Men in Dark Times*, 8.

⁷¹ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 19-27. For an insightful discussion of Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction and its relation to typologies of enmity, see Gabriella Slomp, *Carl Schmitt and the Politics of Hostility, Violence and Terror* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). If, as Slomp argues, Schmitt’s notion of friendship refers to “an existential bond between agents struggling to create their political identity” (118), then we might say that in an Arendtian vein it refers instead to the existential bond formed between those acting together to bring a common world into being.

⁷² See Arendt, “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing,” in *Men in Dark Times*, 26-31.

⁷³ Examples include the Franco-German case of building up an international friendship and shared European space of political interaction following the Second World War, the Argentine-Brazilian initiative to build regional integration as a space for friendship, and the growth of regional and global social forums as participative mechanisms of transnational political friendship. See the contributions in Simon Koschut and Andrea Oelsner (eds), *Friendship and International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

⁷⁴ Arendt, “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing,” in *Men in Dark Times*, 26.

⁷⁵ Arendt, “The Crisis in Culture,” in *Between Past and Future*, 221.