

Introduction

Re/production and the work of friendship

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The connection between friendship, production and reproduction is a long one. As far back as Plato the notions are found to be connected. Consider, for example, the connection between friendship and re/production in *The Symposium*. Here friendship is connected to the re/production of a variety of social, political, and philosophical goods. In other words, friendship is connected to the nurturing and development of structures of order and value. However, one thing is notable about the dialogue in *The Symposium* – it is a dialogue between men. Whilst reproducing structure, these men exclude what they cannot do with each other: physically reproduce themselves to produce not just a form of life but new life. Yet women in general remain absent from the symposium, and are marginalised by the social structure and the focus of the speeches themselves. Noting this, it is perhaps more than an accident that Socrates' own speech is not strictly in his own voice, but takes the shape of the retelling (reproduction) of the teachings of the priestess Diotima. Diotima, then, plays a significant role in the dialogue – reproducing herself and her world through the mouth of Socrates. In *The Symposium* there is a complex dynamic of friendship, inclusion, and exclusion. Every production has a dual aspect: it both produces what is included and excluded, what is present and what is absent.

Two more examples might be suggestive of this general connection; one 'religious', one 'secular'. First we might consider the notions of friendship which are developed by the Christian thinkers (Augustine and Aquinas both produce models along these lines). The concern of these relationships – insofar as they are *Christian* relationships – is to re/produce an ideal of a Christian community. The relationships are an attempt to found a socio-political order, and to live up to a set of standards and values which offer an alternative first to the pagan world of Rome (with its hierarchies and power), but later provide a lead in shaping community itself. The first Christians recognised and helped each other – later Christians sought to help the world. They did so by providing a living model, by allowing others to benefit from it, and encouraging others to emulate it. By way of comparison, the second example concerns the revolutionary movements which began at the end of the eighteenth century and continued into the twentieth. The revolutionaries in both the North American colonies and France sought to fashion relations anew. The story of this trajectory has been one that has seen the privileging of certain forms of fraternity and (latterly) solidarity. No doubt this is deeply gendered. However, it also cannot be doubted that what these revolutionaries sought to do was to produce an new model of being with others. In those forms of friendship the revolutionaries found not only the practical means to pursue their aims, but also a model of how person should relate to person that they sought to reproduce in society at large.

Each of the articles in this present volume have connections to this theme. Each connects in a different way and at a different level. Yet all consider the connection between friendship and re/production – friendship as a 'work'. Sibyl Schwarzenbach considers civic friendship to be a

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form of 'ethical action or praxis'. She argues that it is concerned with 'the reproduction of flourishing relations for their own sake [...] whether personal or civic'. Schwarzenbach's article therefore makes the connection not only between friendship and re/production, but also between the personal and the political. In this respect, the article is not only a contribution to feminist political theory, it also stands in the tradition of understanding friendship as both personal and political that can be traced back to *The Symposium*. Vesa Leppänen's article focuses of sociability between paid domestic workers and customers. It draws our attention to the intersection between friendship and work, and the ultimate interconnectedness between the personal and the political. As Leppänen finds, whilst the sociability that the domestic workers cultivate helps them achieve their tasks, it is also cultivated for its own sake. It could be said that this form of friendship (necessarily) blurs the lines between the formal and the informal, the public and the private, and offers a different model of relating. Finally, Claus Emmeche's article offers an account of the 'borderology' of friendship in academia. Emmeche draws our attention to the relationship that friendships play in both the sustaining and production of academic work – and some of the difficulties this involves. We might reflect on this to think again about the role of re/production here: the academic friends reproduce in each other not only ideas but also practices. The academic friends form the nucleus of a community, a way of being with each other, that is not only productive of academic work, but is also reproductive of the conditions for work itself.

Thus, friendship can be seen to have an intimate connection to re/production. This re/production works in a myriad of ways. Friendship seems to take the way of being together that the friends produce and to reproduce it; if not a in the exact form of the friendship itself, then at least as the conditions for such friendships to emerge. This, then, can be said to be the work of friendship – a work which in producing itself reproduces for others.

Note on the author

Graham M Smith is currently writing a monograph on friendship and political theory for Edinburgh University press (expected 2018). He is the author of *Friendship and the Political: Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Schmitt* (2011) and the co-editor of *Friendship in Politics: Theorizing Amity In and Between States* (2008 with Preston King). His articles include 'Friendship and the World of States' (2011) and 'Friendship and Politics' (2010 with Heather Devere). Along with Preston King and Heather Devere, Graham also edits AMITY. He teaches political theory at Leeds University, UK.