

FRIENDSHIP AND COMRADESHIP

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Philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome believed that one of the most important topics of ethics was that of friendship. In fact, Aristotle, who wrote the first textbook on ethics, devotes two sections of his ethical treatise ^{to} of friendship while all the other ethical topics get only one at most.

Aristotle's teacher Plato wrote a dialogue on friendship, the LYSIS, starring his teacher Socrates asking two young men friends all the right questions and getting all the wrong answers. Plato later wrote another dialogue, SYMPOSIUM, a bigger and better one, on LOVE. A gate-crasher of the banquet, ALCIBIADES, tells the ~~banquet~~^{dinner} guests about his days of comradeship with his old war comrade Socrates who was put up for decoration for valor in combat at Potidaea. , but didnt get it because his family was not as socially prominent as that of the comrade~~s~~ -- Alcibiades -- himself -- whom the philosopher risked his life to save. ^

A man closer to our time who DID get a medal for valor - Admiral Jim Stockdale, former president of the Naval War College -- received the nation's highest military award, the Congressional Medal of Honor, for loyalty to his comrades and country for what an Athenian general in another of Plato's dialogues, the LACHES, calls "endurance of soul." Stockdale spent more than seven years in a Hanoi prison, half of it under torture and solitary confinement.

- Now this same Jim Stockdale, after his return at the end of the Vietnam war, spent an afternoon in Colorado

with a man who had written a book called THE WARRIORS. He was ^{the} late J. Glenn Gray, a professor at Colorado College where all four of the Stockdale sons did their undergraduate studies. Gray was a veteran of World War II and his book is a series of mediations about comradeship, friendship, ^{love} and death, based on his own experiences with combat forces in Europe. ^{44/45} Gray writes of comradeship, how it is, unlike friendship in which we chose our friends, a given thing, a relation we are thrown into -- strongest when the band of comrades is bound together by experience of hardship, danger, wounds, and ever-present death. He says of comradeship:

In moments like these, many have a vague awareness of how isolated and separate their lives have hitherto been -- and how much they have missed -- living [only] in the narrow circle of family and a few friends. . . . [But] with the boundaries of the Self expanded, we sense a kinship never known before. The "I" passes insensibly into a "we" , the "my" becomes "our" and individual fate loses its central significance.

Earlier in ^{the century} ~~our time~~, the German novelist Erich Maria Remarque, in his tale of trench warfare of the first World War, gives us ^{the} words of his young narrator after days, weeks, of mud and merciless bombardment: more this

We did not break down, but adapted ourselves, — we were young, our twenty years. . . helped us in this. But by far the most important result was that it awakened in us a strong, practical sense of esprit de corps which in the field developed into the finest thing that arose out of the war - COMRADESHIP . . .

(FSA Comrade) → I am no longer alone, a shuddering speck of existence alone

in the darkness -- I belong to them and they to me,
we all share the same fear and the same life, we are nearer
than LOVERS, in a simpler, hardier way.

To this day the army of the Federal German Republic is ruled by
a basic law, the law of the Soldier (Soldatengesetz) By
law, you, soldier or sailor, must be Kameradschaftlich. By law,
uncomradely behavior (Unkameradschaft) is liable to severe
punishment. Germany has no tomb of the Unknown Soldier.
Instead, there is a song sung on the most solemn
occasions, "Ich hatte einen Kameraden."

What is the difference between comradeship and
FRIENDSHIP? In THE WARRIORS, Glenn Gray, following
Aristotle, speaks of the highest form of friendship
as true or perfect friendship. Not the pleasant
acquaintance, not the amiable business colleague you
have lunch with for mutual benefit. Aristotle calls
these friendships of UTILITY; each knows the other
is deriving profit from the friendship. (We could interpolate
here what we might call the Friendship
of Crucial Expediency. The Turks have a word for it

ARKADAŞIM ÖDEYECEK

a r k a d a ş h í m 'ó d e y a j é k

"MY FRIEND WILL PAY!")

Nor, says the philosopher, are "friendships of delight"
the perfect friendship. These apply to the friendship of young people
bubbling over with an enthusiasm which is ^{it} intense as it is temporary

Aristotle requires that true friendship be RARE, and
his remarks on this have been paraphrased to make the
aphorism, "He who has many friends has no friend." Montaigne,
turned it into "O my friends, there is no friend,"

in his
essay on
friendship

an antinomial version used by French deconstructionist Jacques Derrida in his address to the annual meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Society, December, 1988 in his paper "The Politics of Friendship."

To Aristotle, perfect friendship requires two good men equal in worth who desire each other's good, not for utility nor simply for pleasure. Each enjoys the happiness of the other's company, yet each preserves his own identity.

In THE WARRIORS, Gray echoes this, saying that in friendship we do not pass over entirely to the "we"; each friend preserves the "I", the independence, the autonomy of Self:

The essential difference between comradeship and friendship consists in a heightened awareness of SELF in friendship and in the suppression of self-awareness in comradeship. Friends do not seek to lose their identity as comrades and erotic lovers do.

The same distinction between comradeship and friendship had already been made by a different voice, a young voice of noblest France, that of Simone Weil, a teacher of philosophy who, in her own strange way, died of heartbreak for her country and for justice

In a perfect friendship, the two friends have consented to become two, not one.

~~As GRAY SAYS,~~ True friendship is not casual.
~~In military service, we are GIVEN comrades; we have no choice about it -- Unlike comrades, friends are CHOSEN.~~

→ In an ancient and sophisticated culture such as that of Japan, friends are not easily made, friends in the high and strict sense. In Japan, friendship is not entered into lightly, even in the closest relationship one

respects the Selfhood of the other, and one protects the integrity of oneself:

sitasi nakanimo reigi ari

That is to say "our relationship is close and intimate, but we must preserve the rules of courtesy toward one another." An old Arabic saying agrees with this:

Keep your hearts together, but your tents apart.

At a seminar meeting at the Naval War College, the assignment for the day Aristotle's NICHOMACHEAN ETHICS, an officer said to ~~the group~~ ^{his comrades} discussing the matter,

I have two or at most three true friends, but they are in the civilian sector. In the eighteen years I have been in the service, I have never yet found what I would call a true friend, never one to whom I could bare my soul.

Most of the group seemed to believe, (though ^{they} were tactful enough not to put it that way,) that the officer's failure to find a true friend in the military must come from some fault, ^{in him} some lack in the ^{there must be} militarily friendless man. But one or two, without agreeing with the proposition "friendship, true friendship, cannot be formed in military life," said that one could understand a little. One ~~said~~ ^{remarked} that the competition in the officer ranks of the military tend to work against the formation of perfect friendship, ^{may} for the other man may be a potential rival for preferment and promotion. But ~~one~~ Another pointed to the transiency, the quick turnover of tour, this leading to separataion and absence before the time necessary for the DEVELOPMENT, the growth necessary to friendship was given. But another

Aristotle makes a similar point: long absences make it difficult to keep up a friendship. Since friends like to do things together, hunt together, drink together, form engage in sports together, short time together, or for the sake of the situation.

But another

officer brushed these considerations aside, saying that it is wrong to claim that in a true friendship one must "bare one's soul" to the other. ^② In his preface to his translation of Montaigne's ESSAIS, ^① Donald Frame makes a similar point:

When we talk to a friend we do not constantly confess and plumb the depths of our soul for to do so is to threaten by excessive self-concern, the tacit equilibrium that friendship assumes and needs.

Robert Burns, national poet of Scotland, has his own way of saying it:

Ay free, aff han'
your story tell
when wi' a bosom cronie,
But still keep something
to yourself'
Ye scarcely tell to onie.

~~##~~

Must true friends be equals? Aristotle insists that ~~the~~ perfect friendship cannot exist between superior and inferior. But superior and inferior in what sense, we should ask. In rank? in social status? in vision? devotion? mental health? Think for a moment of Cervantes's DON, surviving remnant of a noble family, and the sturdy peasant Sancho chosen by the Don to be his squire and companion on his knightly ventures. Surely, as the tale goes along, knight and squire become both good friends and ~~good~~ true comrades. More than one Spanish commentator has noted that in the later adventures, Don Quixote ~~undergoes~~ undergoes a ⁶ certain "Sacrificios", while Sancho in turn experiences a little "Glorificación".

Do comrades love one another? Aristotle says that the love of comrades is like the love of brothers. Patrick Duncan has made a ^{motion picture} film about Vietnam, "84 Charlie Mopec" a ^{FILM} film of that conflict seen through a combat motion picture photographer's eyes. Reviewing the film, a critic says

Mr Duncan attempts to convey how men in battle develop a fierce attachment for one another. The members of Mr Duncan's ²quad refer to themselves a "Brothers" and speak openly of their LOVE.

Jim Stockdale tells us that when a comrade was thrown back into his cell after beating or torture in the ropes, his fellow-POWs would tap a message to him through the solid cell walls, "I LOVE YOU JERRY." This, of course, is the love of brothers, not the love we know ~~as~~ the love between men and women. The Greeks called that love EROS and claimed that the love of the sexes was but a particular man of a cosmic force that holds heaven and earth together ^{- estatic} a mediator between the divine and the mortal. They believed that EROS was the child of the wargod ARES ^{he} (Mars) and Aphroditē (Venus) , reminding us that Homer's great poem of MIGHT celebrated a war, the archetype of all wars, the conflict between Greeks and Trojans, began with a quarrel over a beautiful woman.

Can men and women be comrades? ^{as comradeship} or ~~that~~ always a matter of male bonding. In our country, as well as in others, women are prevented by law from serving in a combat capacity in the military. ^{as} Up to now they do not have the chance to prove themselves ^{as} combat comrades. Army Captain Linda Bray led an attack in the ^{recent} Panama operation, but she was ~~doing her duty~~ as a Military Police officer. ^{In a} lead editorial of ^{Inspired by} Saturday 6 January (1990) the New York TIMES presented two sides of a debate that touches to the heart of relations

In the

CAP
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between the sexes. According to the TIMES,
the traditional argument goes:

The purpose of an army is to win wars, not promote equality. History shows that human factors like group cohesion, far more than weapons, determine victory. Women would erode group cohesion because they distract men, who by instinct or culture would seek to protect them, and because they cannot enter into the male bonding process by which the esprit of combat units is u built up.

judicious

To this, the TIMES presents a response:

Before President Truman's order of 1948, group cohesion was also used as an argument against integrating Black soldiers into white units. Once inetegration was imposed, the argument was found to be meritless.

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Let us leave to others further argument for and against the question: can men and women be comrades. It can easily be seen that there is much more to it than a matter of bonding of the sexes in combat.

The discussion would need to be very much widened to include comradeship in peacetime, ⁱⁿ noncombatant assignments. ← military

Can men and women be FRIENDS, true friends --in or outside the military? Can there be perfect friendship between a man and a woman? The question has enlisted a host of would-be answerers. They range from the refinement of former French Academy member ^{small book} Abel Bonnard ^{THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP} to a recent pop movie which the fastidious might call vulgar, Rob Reiner's film "When Harry met Sally" Bonnard, who barely escaped a firing squad after the Liberation of '44, says YES, men and women can be friends, but only within LOVE. Understandable, up to a point. ~~We listen with approval~~ to the man who says, ^③ "My best friend is my wife,"; ^① we are not surprised at ~~it~~. That is a paradigm case ~~of~~ of friendship within love.

③ to hear a man say

But what about a man and woman who are not married to one another -- in or out of the military. Can they be true friends, yet keep a certain distance between them such that the attachment remains, as Henry James would say, virtuous? Or 'Platonic' as others would say, though this is not what Plato meant exactly. Bonnard replies, yes, men and women can indeed be true friends but only within love. Even if the pair preserve that certain distance that keeps the relation above reproach, even if they never touch one another physically, there is always present under the surface of their friendship, the tincture of love, that touch of Eros, that gives to such friendships their special tone, tension, tang, ~~peculiar~~ value.

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So much for LOVE in relation to comradeship and friendship. We ^{mention} ~~touch~~ it only because, like WAR to the generals, LOVE is too important to be left to the lovers. We must pass on to one last large and quite different question, perhaps the hardest. Can nations be friends? We might say OF COURSE; think of the cordial alliances among nations with common interests, shared concerns. Think of the wars in which allies have stood shoulder to shoulder against a formidable enemy.

True, the skeptic might reply, but when the shooting stops, the armistice declared, the peace treaty signed, sometimes strange things happen. The former enemy becomes a friend; the former ally becomes a threat. Our skeptic would have it that history teaches us that peoples and countries have changed their friendships as frequently as New York and Paris change fashions. Is this the way of true friendship? Isn't one of the marks of authentic friendship that it LASTS, and is not just a temporary social arrangementxxx .

Aristotle would say that friendships between city-states are friendships of utility with all the deviation from true friendship that utility implies. We might add that nations do not, as a rule, base their foreign policies squarely on the principles of personal morality. This does not mean that the conduct of one nation to another need be iniquitous, cynical, Machiavellian -- the bravo's stiletto at the ready, the assassin's poison-bottle at hand. Traditional personal ethics tells us that there is more to ethics than putting ourselves first, that we should recognize others as sovereign ethical beings like ourselves, that our neighbor should not be used as a means, as a tool only, but that we should share with him in the common quest for happiness, a state of well-being not founded ~~entirely~~ ^{SIMPLY} on our personal security; → Not to force the other to our will; to respect his truth as he respects ~~ours~~ ^{OURS}. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia often quoted the Arab proverb, "Your friend is he who tells you the truth, not he who agrees with everything you say."

But the hard necessity of survival compels the nation state -- whether it be a large industrial democracy or a small pastoral country to put its own security first, without necessarily violating that of others. There is still much greed in the world, as Luther says in his TREATISE ON SECULAR AUTHORITY, 'still evil techings, uncontrolled passions; ^{most of us} ~~we~~ are still ~~the~~ children of the Kingdom of the World, not yet of the Kingdom of God. So it is, as the philosophers would say, the ESSE of the state to protect itself and its legitimate interests, by force if necessary, though its BENE ESSE is sharing good with others. The first duty of a sea captain

is not the comfort of the passengers, but the safety and security of the ship.

There remains to this day a gap, a space, between personal and political morality. Over the centuries it has narrowed considerably, though interrupted at times by terrible lapses. All persons of good will hope that a day will come when that open space between personal and political morality will be, if not entirely closed, at least made significantly smaller, so nearly closed as to be to the betterment of us all, nations and citizens, peoples and countries. Yes, says Kant in his ~~PERPETUAL PEACE~~ PERPETUAL PEACE, but until then every nation should keep its hand on the hilt of its sword. History is not over yet, though of late some ^{clever} people in ~~the government~~ Washington ^{and} announcing that history has come to an end, and they use arguments from Hegel, good or bad, to clarify their claim.

No, History is not yet done. We haven't even got to the end of the second act of the play. Hegel's owl of Minerva may fly only at night, but comradeship and friendship watch neither clock nor calendar -- though the ~~time~~ contemplative joy of comradeship may come best in the ^{hour} when the hard task is done, mission accomplished, fear of death or failure for the moment at least assuaged. ^{At that hour} ~~Then~~ we can say after the poet Auden:

Equal with my comrades then
I still recall the moment when
Fear gave his watch no look;
the lion grieves loped from the shade
and on our knees their muzzles laid
and Death put down his book.