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The Torsion of Politics and Friendship in Derrida, Foucault and Rancière

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This paper intervenes in the contemporary re-evaluation of the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida and in queer theories and historiographies of friendship – particularly in the influential work of the late Alan Bray – by arguing that Jacques Rancière’s conceptualisation of politics as wrong (or ‘tort’) offers a crucial ‘twist’ to queer critical-deconstructive approaches to politics, friendship and democratic citizenship. By reading Derrida’s (1997) figure of ‘virile homosexuality’ in terms of a problematically exclusionary logic, this paper demonstrates that whilst Rancière’s political thinking is very close, even indebted to Derridean deconstruction, his polemical conception of politics aligns him more productively with Foucault’s later work on friendship as ‘a way of life.’ Re-read through Rancière, Foucault’s slogan for the inventiveness of queer cultures of friendship is given a political form as that which interrupts, or ‘twists,’ the ‘proper’ (police) ordering of classes and identities by inventing new and always particular sequences of relationality.

The development toward which the problem of homosexuality tends is the one of friendship. (Foucault, 1997: 136)

This double exclusion of the feminine in this philosophical paradigm would then confer on friendship the essential and essentially sublime figure of virile homosexuality. (Derrida, 1997: 279)

The torsion or twist that causes politics to occur is also what establishes each class as being different from itself. (Rancière, 1999: 18)

There is a peculiar relation between the first two of these epigraphs, both taken from texts published in English translation in the same

year, and both originally published in French three years earlier.[1] What strikes me as peculiar is that these two statements, each in their way central to each thinker's respective argument, appear to conjoin 'friendship' and 'homosexuality' in parallel yet divergent ways. Where Foucault sees this conjunction as a tendency, a line of 'development,' Derrida sees it as 'exclusion' from a paradigm, an exemplary 'figure.' One might be tempted to characterise this divergence in terms of Foucault's endeavour to (keep) *open* a relation between these two terms, and Derrida's strategic *closure* of this relation into a 'sublime figure.' Such a reading would require a far more careful interpretation of Derrida's text, not least from the perspective of Foucault's relative absence from it, of which I can only provide an outline here; but this divergence gives some leverage to intervene in the current re-evaluation of Foucault and Derrida in queer theories and historiographies of friendship, particularly in the influential work of the late Alan Bray. The reasoning of this intervention will in turn provide the basis for arguing that Jacques Rancière's conceptualisation of politics as '*tort*,' or a 'wrong,' offers a crucial supplement to queer critical-deconstructive approaches (whether 'Foucauldian-Deleuzian' or 'Derridean') to politics, friendship and democratic citizenship. Hence the third epigraph: for what Rancière's historical tracking of the utopian dream of a 'community of equals' opens up – through a reconceptualisation of politics as the torsion that interrupts the 'proper' ordering of orders, classes and identities – is the possibility of another way of recontextualising, or better, *twisting* that shared inheritance of politics, friendship and equality routed through *philia*, the Christian 'spiritualisation' and institutionalisation of brotherhood, and the codification of fraternity in the French republicanism. I will argue that whilst Rancière's argument is very close, even indebted to Derridean deconstruction, there are significant disagreements over the relation of politics, democracy and equality that might be most productively affiliated with the later Foucault's articulation of 'friendship as a way of life.'

This recontextualising intervention begins with an anecdote retold by one of the editors of the present edition of this e-journal. In their moving tribute to Alan Bray, which prefaces his contribution to a collection of conference papers on 'love, sex, intimacy and friendship between men' in the early modern period, Michael O'Rourke and Katherine O'Donnell (2003a) recount the moment in his talk when Bray predicted that 'it will be Derrida's *Politics of Friendship* and not Foucault's *History of Sexuality, Volume One* which will dominate such discussion in the next twenty years.' (84) This claim of a historical shift is repeated and reinforced in Bray's posthumously published book, *The Friend* (2003), which is capped by two references to *Politics of Friendship*. In his 'Introduction,' Bray confesses that reading Derrida's book made him realise that they were both 'asking at root the same questions' (2003: 8), and at the end of his 'Afterword,' reviewing the gradual emergence of historical scholarship of friendship across a range of disciplines, it has become the 'defining moment [...] which drew together those uncertain ethics of friendship that had unmistakably reasserted themselves by this point at the end of the

twentieth century' (2003: 322). So, what are the questions that Derrida holds in common with Bray – and what constitutes 'those uncertain ethics of friendship'? If *Politics of Friendship* 'bookends' *The Friend* it is because Bray finds in Derrida a companion analysis of a historical shift, or 'turning point,' in the ethical and political position of friendship in 'late modern culture' (2003: 2). He explains this imagined companionship in terms of a shared interest in the peculiar 'uncertainties' of friendship:

In the traditional cultures I describe, friendship was ultimately inalienable from the particular loyalties in which it was begun, as in the contemporary world on which Derrida reflects. The ethical uncertainties of that stance were pivotal in the ethics of the world I have described. There is, of course, no return now to the friendship of traditional society, but the ethics of friendship have an archaeology, if I may put it that way, that can be recovered... (2003: 8)

In a narrative common to an expanding body of contemporary friendship studies, across the range of disciplines he mentions, Bray seeks to show that where once friendship had played a 'significant' public role in 'traditional,' pre- and early modern cultures, the emergence of modern civil society and institutions meant that friendship has 'not been perceived as a public matter, or more precisely *ought* not to be so. Yet increasingly it is' (2003: 2). For Bray, and others within an emergent inter-discipline of 'friendship studies,' it is friendship's particularity – or better, its *peculiarity* – that made it both the object of suspicion within the institutions of modernity and the site of contemporary experimentation with para-institutional forms of living. Also in common with others, Bray identifies this 'increasingly' public reassertion of friendship in late modernity with feminism and the attendant critique and apparent 'crisis in masculinity,' but he concedes that it has found its 'most contested form' in claims that homosexual friendship constitutes an alternative form of *family* (2003: 2). Interestingly, Bray immediately distances *The Friend* from being confined to such a 'narrow' debate, by recasting it 'within a broader contemporary crisis in the ethics of friendship' that touches upon overlapping questions of identity, loyalty and collectivity, 'of which sexuality has been one, *but only one*, strand' (2003: 8, emphasis added). Although Bray's shift of focus has itself been contested, in particular in the redrawn division of 'sexuality' and 'friendship,'[2] he is surely right in this respect. For although feminist, gay and lesbian, and queer theoretical and political activisms have made sexuality central to conceptions of political citizenship, it would be a mistake to make it the sole, ontological ground of social relationality. Not least because the political challenge posed by each and all of these activisms is how we are to understand, use or connect *any* of the crucial terms involved in such debates – not simply 'sexuality,' but also 'family' (Budgeon and Roseneil, 2002), 'kinship' (Butler, 2002), 'friendship' (Bell and Binnie, 2000), 'public' (Berlant and Warner, 1998), not to mention the concepts of 'ethics' and 'politics' themselves. None of these terms can ultimately provide the ground for all the rest.

This desire to 'widen the debate' might explain Bray's reticence about the first volume of Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1979), given its incontestable influence in the formation of the disciplinary field of queer studies. It might be that, for Bray, the name and work of Foucault is too closely bound up with the categorial privileging of 'sexuality' at a certain historical moment in queer studies. Hence why it is so strange that he makes no mention of the second and third volumes of Foucault's unfinished history, *The Uses of Pleasure* (1984) and *The Care of the Self* (1986), or other later texts, such as the interview, 'Friendship as a Way of Life' (1981), in which friendship plays such a crucial role.[3] In and across these texts, friendship features both as a Greek solution to the precariousness of sexual desire, which lies at the heart of their 'aesthetic morality' (1984: 221), and as a kind of becoming of homosexuality, a 'mode of life' that Foucault defines as 'a historic occasion to reopen affective and relational virtualities' across an entire 'social fabric' (1997: 138). Indeed, the image of friendship that Foucault sketches is peculiarly open in this interview, insofar as it is dissociated from any 'intrinsic qualities of the homosexual.' Tom Roach (2005) succinctly summarises Foucault's strategy as 'refus[ing] to tell his gay audience what to "do" with friendship nor does he tell them exactly what it "is" or "means"; and that it 'in the end seems an utterly amorphous and malleable relation that can become just about anything' (2005: 58). This is crucial to understanding the creative potential of friendship that Bray also explores in *The Friend*, a connection that David Halperin makes when he draws on both texts in the context of discussing the 'impoverished' relationality that characterises the heteronormative weave of modern social institutions, and the imperative within (and without) queer cultures to expand and invent 'new relational possibilities' (Halperin, 2004: 35). In the less often cited conclusion to 'Friendship as a Way of Life,' Foucault returns to this need for invention by making the political point that to invent a 'mode of living' entails demonstrating the fundamental *groundlessness* of what counts as intelligible:

There ought to be an inventiveness special to a situation like ours and to these feelings, this need that Americans call 'coming out', that is, showing oneself. The program must be wide open. We have to dig deeply to show how things have been historically contingent, for such and such reason intelligible but not necessary. We must make the intelligible appear against a background of emptiness and deny its necessity. We must think that what exists is far from filling all possible spaces. To make a truly unavoidable challenge of the question: what can be played? (1997: 139-40)

In what follows I will take up this question of what might be played, or thought out, in the always-particular (even peculiar) political relationality of friendship as it figures within and between the work of Derrida, Foucault and Rancière.

A queer-friendly democracy (to come)

This observation about the fundamental groundlessness of the political is what makes *Politics of Friendship* so important for future direction(s) in queer theories and politics of friendship (O'Rourke, 2005; 2006). Derrida's deconstructive reading of a certain philosophical tradition of friendship works patiently and persistently to question the hegemonic schema of 'a *familial, fraternalist* and thus *androcentric* configuration of the political' (1997: viii, trans. modified). The '*schematic* of filiation' that runs through the political accentuates the linkages of State, civil society, family and especially fraternity, with Derrida drawing equivalence between the non-dialectical remainder of 'the *life* of the family and civil society' within the dialectic of the State – one of his recurrent concerns in *Glas* (1986), for example – and the seemingly ubiquitous reference to 'confraternity or brotherhood' in the discourse of democracy (1997: viii).[4] His argument that a certain 'configuration of politics' through friendship and fraternity has always accompanied a *specifically French* genealogy of the concept of democracy, 'almost always' associated with equality and freedom in the 'republican motto' (1997: viii), implicates not only the values of political citizenship, sovereignty, allegiance, community, but also thereby opens up paths by which queer theory might analyse the political ramifications of heteronormative filiation. So when Derrida asks why the figure of the friend would be '*like* a brother' and whether 'the politics of such a "beyond the principle of fraternity"' would 'still deserve the name "politics,"' he not only pulls at threads of the dialectic of family and State, the institution of the couple and of sexual difference, which he had already started (and goes on) to unravel elsewhere (1983; 1986; 1987; 2004), but also in so doing opens up further possible paths for future queer interventions into discourses of 'community,' 'friendship' and 'the political.' This attention to the brother and the filial, therefore, may not be entirely novel within his work, but this hegemonic configuration of *fraternity* as the 'principle' of the political *is* (1997: viii).[5]

Derrida's deconstructive reading of the philosophical tradition of fraternal friendship as the exemplary political figure is in many ways a gift to queer theory, since it provides a way of tracking these homosocial tropics across canonical texts 'on friendship' by Aristotle, Plato and Cicero, via those by Montaigne, Kant and Nietzsche, right up to thinkers who would count among Derrida's closest philosophical friends, such as Bataille (2001), Blanchot (1988; 1997), and Nancy (1991; 1993).[6] However, at the same time, his reading also works, much more problematically, to shore up this tradition. This shoring up occurs when Derrida configures that queer figure of the brother-friend as *exclusionary*. Not that the identification of 'exclusions' is itself the problem, since framing his enquiry in terms of the 'double exclusion of the feminine' – that is, friendship between women, and friendship between men and women – allows Derrida to expose the structures of the constitutive boundaries and assumptions of this hegemonic paradigm. The problem lies in the *configuration* of *this* exclusionary logic. Derrida identifies such exclusive 'fraternization' with the 'essential and essentially sublime figure of virile homosexuality' (1997: 279). Why? This formulation (as given in the epigraph above) is itself

unchanged from an earlier paper, first published in English, in which he argues that the ‘exclusions of the feminine would have some relation to the movement that has always “politicised” the model of friendship at the very moment one tries to remove this model from an integral politicisation’ (Derrida, 1988: 642). Mapping the effects of such a movement of (de)politicisation, he points out, would entail an extensive analysis of the gendered distribution of public and private, the political and the domestic. Derrida’s conjunction of this ‘double exclusion’ and a ‘virile homosexuality’ is both consistent and consequential for his analysis of the very possibility of a just politics. Alex Thomson underscores this point when he argues that, for Derrida, this exclusion of the feminine (and of sexual difference) would make it ‘impossible to address inequality between the sexes *within* politics, except at the cost of reducing the sister to a brother’ (2005: 21). This *is* Derrida’s argument: ‘Sisters, if there are any, are species of the genus brother’ (1997: 156).[7] The stakes are high but the phrase itself is surely problematic: so what does Derrida mean by ‘virile homosexuality’?

First, the adjective ‘virile’ refers us to ‘manliness’ and ‘masculinity’; but also to the power of (sexual) potency, potentiality and self-generation. Derrida thus tracks an equation of friendship with the ‘virility’ of sovereign, public virtue from Aristotle to Nietzsche (and beyond), insofar as such ‘virile virtue’ binds the politics of friendship to a classical metaphysical schema of activity and passivity, the actual and the virtual, which he states is never very far away in Aristotle’s *Ethics* (1988: 633). The virility of virtue is what binds friendship to this privileged brotherhood at every level: from Aristotle’s praise for loving rather than being loved to Montaigne’s spiritual union that excludes women, who lack the ‘capacity’ for it, and even to the inversions and ruptures of a certain ‘community without community of thinkers to come’ (Bataille, Blanchot and Nancy, for example), marked by the ‘teleopoietic’ call of Nietzsche: ‘the addressees are brothers, and their coming virtue remains virile. *The Gay Science* [...] says that declared enemies are indispensable for men who must “rise to the level of their own virtue, virility (*Männlichkeit*), and cheerfulness”’ (1997: 61-2). Nietzsche reaffirms the political strength of ‘virtue,’ even (or particularly) when he perverts and hyperbolises the inherited concepts of ‘friend’ and ‘enemy.’ This virile autarchy, which lies at the heart of every conception (and perversion) of virtuous friendship in this philosophical tradition, is nonetheless shot through with traces of a more originary *passivity*: an ‘immemorial’ and ‘minimal’ friendship that always already structures the very possibility of assuming the responsibility to speak, to decide or to act – what Derrida refers to as ‘the other’s decision in me’ (1988: 634-5). A certain passivity thus haunts the potency and sufficiency of friendship’s ‘virile virtue.’

It is for this reason that the citizen-brother couples of Montaigne’s text provide the principle defile for Derrida’s formulation.[8] In a famous passage from ‘Of Friendship,’ which Derrida quotes at length in a footnote, Montaigne proclaims the ‘incapacity’ of women for the ‘holy bond of friendship,’ because their souls do not ‘seem firm enough to

withstand the clasp of a knot so lasting and so tightly drawn [*assez ferme pour soutenir l'etrenne d'un nœud si pressé*] (Montaigne, 1998: 315). According to Montaigne, it seems that it is a *spiritual* fault that rules 'women' out of a 'more full' form of 'loving-friendship' – 'if it were possible to fashion such a relationship,' he adds – that would encompass the union of both body *and* soul (Montaigne, 1998: 315). This famous passage, with its famously *virile* image of a taught knot, provides the initial evidence upon which Derrida builds his argument that, for Montaigne and the hegemonic tradition which he is made to exemplify, the cause of women's claimed inadequacy for friendship 'lies less with marriage than in woman, in her sex' (Derrida, 1997: 191, n. 6). Yet Derrida seems to ignore or obliterate the fact that Montaigne, in the sentence directly following this passage, dismisses the possibility of such a perfect combination of physical with spiritual love existing *between men*: 'And that other Greek license is justly abhorred by our mores' (Montaigne, 1998: 315-16).[9] On closer examination, it would appear that Montaigne discounts both heterosexual *and* homosexual relations from this paradigm of friendship because he aligns each with the body and with desire. For this *is* Derrida's own overriding question:

The principal question would rightly concern the hegemony of a philosophical canon in this domain: how has it prevailed? Whence derives its force? How has it been able to exclude the feminine or heterosexuality, friendship between women or friendship between men and women? Why can an essential inventory not be made of feminine or heterosexual experiences of friendship? Why this heterogeneity between *éros* and *philia*? (1997: 277)

A series of questions to which, it seems, the exclusionary figure of a 'virile homosexuality' is the (at least provisional) answer. Derrida notes that these canonical oppositions constitute 'an unstable domination undermined from within,' unable to stifle their own deconstruction, but whose domination becomes 'all the more imperious' as a result (1997: 277). However, by laying out this system of exclusions along divisions not only between 'femininity' and 'virility,' '*éros*' and '*philia*,' but also between 'heterosexuality' and 'homosexuality,' Derrida allows the rhetoric of 'exclusion' to overlay a grid of positions in which sexuality is discounted at the very moment it matters most.[10] This attentiveness to fraternal friendship as a 'virile' figure of exclusion itself excludes from consideration any *other* 'other.'

Indeed, it is only towards the end of *Politics of Friendship* that Derrida pauses to reflect on what he sees as the politico-rhetorical infirmity of such exclusion, noting the 'not yet' with which both Montaigne and Nietzsche undercut the apparent hegemony of 'the double exclusion of the feminine,' by urging us 'to stop speaking simply of exclusion' (1997: 290). But this gesture comes too late in a text built upon a conviction in the hegemonic homosocial functioning of friendship, in which reference to homosexuality is almost entirely absent, save as the figure for the 'double exclusion of the feminine.' [11] Such a strategy may even have the effect of making the tradition appear all

the more invulnerable (or more virile, perhaps?). When Derrida states, in relation to Blanchot's peculiar tribute to Foucault, that the 'Greek model of *philia* could never be "enriched" otherwise than with that which it has violently and essentially attempted to exclude' (1997: 300), one cannot help but wonder whether feminist historical scholarship of female friendships – such as Lillian Faderman's *Surpassing the Love of Men* (1980) which was an essential reference point in Foucault's late thinking of friendship – would have made any impact upon Derrida's strategy.[12] At the same time, this insistent identification of the virile virtue of fraternal friendship as exclusionary effectively shuts out any question of the positive and possibly liberatory social and historical relations of homosexuality and friendship (precisely the kind of social history pioneered by Bray, for example), and the task of retracing the fragile spaces and times in which queer cultures of friendship might have made themselves felt. So, although I am not so certain that Derrida doesn't *allow for* such fissures or interruptions, strategically at least,[13] it remains the case that he *chooses not to speak* about them.[14]

This exclusionary figure of 'virile homosexuality' is thus central to the way in which Derrida *chooses* to read this French idiom and inheritance of the political as phratrocentric 'democracy' – a figure that encompasses a 'tradition' from Montaigne and Michelet to Blanchot and Nancy. Indeed, it is the deconstruction of such a tradition that allows for the articulation of 'another equality' that can only come from the other, from the other who is both to come and always already presumed in the very act of proclaiming his or her absence. The issue here is not that Derrida is wrong to state that women and 'the feminine' have been excluded from a political-philosophical tradition of thinking about friendship, nor to deny that this tradition has 'explicitly tied the friend-brother to virtue and justice, to moral reason and political reason' (Derrida, 1997: 277). Instead, he brings about a *wrong* by figuring that exclusion in terms of '*homosexuality*' ('virile' or not). In fact, this wrong (in Rancière's use of *tort*, a twisting or wringing of a given discursive formation or conceptual schema)[15] is what opens up the politics of friendship at the very moment Derrida (and his commentators, such as Thomson) fail to notice it – or transpose it (like Byrne and McQuillan). It is precisely because Derrida pins the history of democracy to the hegemonic 'closure' of an exclusively fraternal figure of politics that he can speak of the promise of an *other* democracy that always remains 'to come': 'even when there is democracy, it never exists, it is never present, it remains the theme of a non-presentable concept' (1997: 306). A democracy-to-come is deconstruction's virtualised, non-presentable surplus; it is the future of 'a certain democracy' that is the promise of any deconstruction – to think an always-other possibility.[16] This is an absolute break, such that even on the very final page of *Politics of Friendship*, Derrida can only ask: 'Is it possible to open up the 'come' of a certain democracy which is no longer an insult to the friendship we have striven to think beyond the homo-fraternal and phallogocentric schema?' (1997: 306). This question in itself performs an interesting series of gestures. First, we might note that the

displacement of 'virile homosexuality' by 'the homo-fraternal and phallogocentric schema' renders the sense and state of the 'homo' undecidable here. It is not strictly nor simply the 'homo-' of an ontological sameness or similitude, since the possibility of thinking friendship 'beyond' it can only refer us back to Derrida's preceding formula. Second, what is (thought) 'beyond' has itself long been subjected to 'insult,' insofar as Derrida's question concerns the *possibility* of its eventual cessation ('*no longer* an insult') as much as the history of its effects. What is the rhetorical-political force of this 'insult' operative in this canonical 'homo-fraternal and phallogocentric schema'? Who has been insulted? Who feels it? And who, or what inflicts it? Because 'insult' is of a piece with 'exclusion,' insofar as it names a relation marked by negation that transforms another subject (into 'the insulted,' 'the excluded,' and so on), this formulation of 'insult' is highly problematic for similar reasons as the rhetoric of 'exclusion.' As with the figure of exclusion, Derrida is content to call to a time in which there would 'no longer' be such an insult.

Democracy for mongrels

Community wanted to forge equals through brotherhood. The problem was that it had equals already, in the shape of hybrid beings, mongrels of various aspect, all of which bear the stamp of inequality... (Rancière, 1995: 80)

The concept of 'democracy' has always been linked to insult. As Rancière never ceases to point out, it *begins* as 'an insult in the mouths of Athenian aristocrats' (2009: 116), whose echoes he finds in contemporary critiques of a democratic 'illness,' manifested in complaints about everything from Muslim students wearing headscarves in French schools to homosexual marriage ceremonies (2006: 1). If Plato's inaugural critique of democracy as rule by the 'drawing of lots' is always his point of reference it is because it shows that democracy, if it is anything, is first a 'polemical name' that interrupts the proper, ordered distribution of places and meanings. Disturbing any 'proper,' proportionate distribution of places or qualification for rule – whose origin would lie in age, wealth, education, status, parenthood – the democratic 'drawing of lots' represents 'the paradox of a qualification which amounts to the absence of all *arkhê*, to a "qualification without qualification"' (Rancière, 2007: 90).[17] Paradoxically, it is this anarchic 'government by chance' that consequently makes democracy the only available form of *political* government, for it provides the only available form of political qualification common to both rulers and ruled: the absence of all qualification for rule, which means that *anyone* can rule. Pulling at this thread, Rancière defines democracy as neither institution nor power, but rather as the 'an-archic' principle of equality that restates this absence of any *arkhê*. Democracy becomes coextensive with a conception of politics that arises from a radically anarchic, egalitarian presupposition: the equality of *anyone* and *everyone*. What he refers to as the 'hatred of democracy' thus arises precisely because democracy is first of all the 'paradoxical condition of politics,' which

confronts us with the foundational violence of every act of institution: it is 'the point where every ultimate legitimization is confronted with its ultimate lack of legitimacy' (2006: 94). In other words, it confronts us with the uncomfortable recognition of the fundamental inequality and illegitimacy of *any* social order or community.

Like Bray's account of the 'anxious ethics of friendship,' Rancière's account of the 'democratic paradox' lays claim to a 'common ground' with Derrida's 'aporetic structure of democracy' (2007: 84). Indeed, although he claims to present a more 'radical' conception of democracy than that of Derrida's 'auto-immunity,'[18] Rancière remains very close to Derrida in this formulation of democracy as a 'supplementary, grounding power, which both legitimises and delegitimises every set of institutions and the power of any one group of people' (Rancière, 2007: 91).[19] The point of difference, according to Rancière, lies in their respective conceptions of the relation between democracy and alterity. Rancière reads Derrida's calls for an otherness 'which must come from the outside' in terms of 'a thread from the pure receptivity of the *khôra* through to the *other* or *newcomer*, whose inclusion demarcates the horizon of a "democracy to come"' (2007: 91). It might be objected that this is a polemical (mis)reading of Derrida, whose articulation of 'the other's decision in me', as we have seen, is far queerer than Rancière concedes.[20] But having 'set up' Derrida in this way, which both appropriates elements of Derrida's conceptual lexicon ('*X sans X*') and expropriates the logical schema of its staging, Rancière makes his 'simple' objection:

Otherness must not come to politics from outside. Politics has its own otherness, its own principle of heterogeneity. Democracy is precisely this principle. Democracy is not the power of a *self*, on the contrary, it is the disruption of any such power. Democracy means the disruption of the circularity of the *arkhê*. If politics is to exist at all, this anarchical principle must be presupposed. This principle precludes the self-grounding of politics and turns it into the site of division. (2007: 92)

Rancière's objection is that whilst the fractured time of a 'democracy to come' (as promise and an 'infinite openness to the other') allows Derrida to keep his distance from any triumphalist declarations of liberal democracy, it remains the only conception of 'democracy' with which to oppose this oligarchic 'state practice' (Rancière, 2007: 99). In other words, he worries that Derrida's opposition 'between an institution and a transcendental horizon' loses sight of 'democracy as practice', which might be able to account for the 'process of political subjectivisation' (2007: 98) that generates new forms of political speech and intervention.

Although we might ask whether Rancière's formulation is, in fact, so very far removed from Derrida's own aporetic relation to alterity and decision, it is worth noting Rancière's unambiguous refusal of its unconditional, or 'hauntological,' structure. Rancière refuses what he sees as an 'ethical overstatement of otherness' in the messianic

promise of *the* other ‘to come,’ insisting instead on the political power of a ‘heterology’: ‘[t]here is not one infinite openness to otherness but many ways of inscribing the part of the other’ (Rancière, 2007: 99). This is not to oppose an ontology of the multiple, or multitude, to the One, but to refuse to fix the positions in a given political dispute within an ontological relation of exclusion. When Derrida argues that to think ‘*an alterity without hierarchical difference at the root of democracy*’ means to ‘free a certain interpretation of *equality* by removing it from the phallogocentric scheme of *fraternity*’ (1997: 232), this equality – the inclusion of the excluded – is always marked as ‘to come.’ Derrida pitches the aporia of fraternal friendship between the infinite alterity of the promise held in a ‘democracy to come’ and the ‘absolute past’ of ‘a friendship prior to friendships, an ineffaceable friendship, fundamental and groundless, one that breathes in a shared language (past or to come) and in the being-together that all allocution supposes’ (Derrida, 1997: 236). But suspended between promise and immemorial past, Derrida’s phenomenological aporia remains a ‘curiously static formula’: the friend, or friendship, to come must represent an ‘absolute’ future in order to retain the other’s force of radical ‘irruption’ of the self’s finite horizons (Webb, 2003: 120). According to Rancière, Derrida’s deconstruction of political ontology in this ‘post-foundational’ hauntology of a democracy to come risks ‘substantialising the “otherness” that undermines the foundationalist project’ (2003: 12). At a point of almost absolute proximity to Derrida, precisely around the reconfiguring of the relation(s) between equality and fraternity, Rancière states: ‘For my part, I tried to conceptualise democratic practice as the inscription of the part of those who have no part – *which does not mean the “excluded” but anybody or whoever*’ (2007: 99, emphasis added). It is this shift from ‘the “excluded”’ to the ‘anybody,’ to ‘the part of those who have no part,’ that is decisive – both for Rancière’s political thought and for its possible contribution to queer theorising of friendship, community and democracy.

How so? At one level, both Derrida and Rancière locate friendship and community, via fraternity and democracy, within a paradoxical (or aporetic) political sequence of ‘equality’. But where Derrida’s configurations of exclusionary friendship and a democracy to come remain perched between two unconditional temporalities, Rancière sees democracy as a ‘process of political subjectivisation’ (2007: 98) – an invention of ‘new voices’ and ‘new objects’ that creates ‘a specific time, a broken time and intermittent legacy of emancipation.’ (2007: 99) This conception of politics as the ‘intermittent’ invention of new relations of emancipation echoes Foucault’s articulation of a queer ‘inventiveness special to a situation like ours’ (1997: 139), in which *contingency* of the intelligible is both demonstrated and opened up to the political demand for ‘new relational possibilities.’ (Halperin 2004: 35) For both Foucault and Rancière it is a matter of thinking the becoming of an aesthetic politics, in which the ordering, or ‘distribution,’ of the sensible-perceptual field is the place where politics can intervene. ‘Politics is aesthetic in that it makes visible what had been excluded from a perceptual field, and in that it makes audible what used to be inaudible. It inscribes one perceptual world within

another' (Rancière, 2004b: 226). These two incompatible 'distributions of the sensible' are *politics* and *police*: the latter is 'the division of the sensible that claims to recognise only real parties to the exclusion of all empty spaces and supplements';[21] and the former is 'the mode of acting that perturbs this arrangement by instituting within its perceptual frames the contradictory theatre of its "appearances"' (2004: 226). In other words, politics is aesthetic because it operates at the level of appearances: 'it makes visible what had been excluded from a perceptual field, and [...] makes audible what used to be inaudible' (2004: 226). Politics is therefore synonymous with an interruption of the regular 'police' ordering of the social, demonstrating its contingent foundation by (re)introducing, or 'staging,' the equality that every hierarchy must presuppose in its attempts to justify itself. This means that, for Rancière, politics rarely happens:

Politics only occurs when these mechanisms are stopped in their tracks by the effect of a presupposition that is totally foreign to them yet without which none of them could ultimately function: the presupposition of the equality of anyone and everyone, or the paradoxical effectiveness of the sheer contingency of any order. (1999: 17)

It is for this reason that Rancière argues that democracy is *incommensurable with every institution of community*, insofar as it is defined as 'what muddles community, what continually reduces it to its own messiness; it is the *unthinkable* aspect of community' (Rancière, 1995: 67). In this way, Rancière uses the concept of politics to name an irreducible supplement to any given social order or community; it is that property which always interrupts, or *thwarts* (a favourite trope), the coherence of 'police.' [22]

Such a definition of politics means not only that it is a rare occurrence, but also, and most importantly, that it is always 'local and occasional' (1999: 139): 'Politics only occurs *when...*' This is because politics' 'exceptionality' does not have a 'specific place' of its own, but "'takes place"' in the space of the police, by rephrasing and restaging social issues, police problems and so on' (Rancière, 2003: 8). The demonstration of this fundamental equality "'takes place"' in the staging of a wrong, or '*tort*,' which should not be conflated with a resolvable dispute between parties, such as a lawsuit, for example. For Rancière, a wrong is not procedure brought about by two parties, but a process of naming subjects whose existence had not been registered in society prior to its declaration. A wrong is thus what measures the incommensurability of these two orders or communities – police and politics, or 'the declared political community and the community that defines itself as being excluded from this community' – by making 'the part of those who have no part' *appear* on the political stage as 'those of no account' (1999: 38). It is crucial to grasp that the staging of a wrong constitutes a process of twisting, or wringing the police order of the social. Drawing upon the etymological roots of *tort*, Jean-Philippe Deranty (2003) emphasises the

interrelatedness of politics of the police in Rancière's logic of the wrong:

The social order is wrung because it must produce ontological inequality since hierarchy is its basic *arkhe*, while at the same time this inequality is only logically possible on the basis of radical equality. As can be seen here, the play on the word *tort* (from *tordre*, to twist), both a wrong within, and a twisting of, the ontology of the social field is the key to Rancière's political ontology. (§5)

Politics *wrings* the police ordering of the social. What Deranty neatly describes as Rancière's *twisted* 'anti-ontology' (2003: §5) implies the superimposition of an egalitarian logic over the police order of the community, not in a fixed ontological relation of antagonism (*pace* Marchart (2007)), but insofar as the wrong consists in what the politics *does to* the police order. 'There is no ontological gap but a twist that ties together the contingency of equality and the contingency of inequality' (Rancière, 2003: 12). This twisting of the social fabric does not, however, bring about a solution to the contradiction between the supposed fullness of the police distribution of the social and the lack of the 'part that has no part,' since the verification of equality is always occasional and cannot form any social bond in its own right. It can only demonstrate and verify this contingent equality of 'anyone and whoever' by including it as excluded, as 'counted.' As such, political subjects do not enact a pre-existent identity, but merely verify an equality denied them by conjoining 'the world where those rights are valid and the world where they are not'; a verification that consists in twisting together '*a relation of inclusion and a relation of exclusion*' (Rancière, 2004a: 304, emphasis added).

Rancière provides numerous cases of this 'double relation of inclusion and exclusion,' where 'new subjects' – such as proletarians, workers and women in the nineteenth-century – stage their inclusion in a given social distribution by 'setting up the gap between their supposed inclusion and their real exclusion' (2003a: §17). Returning to the example of arguments over 'gay marriage,' indicated in the introduction, we might usefully link this 'double relation' to the way in which the paradox of demanding equal rights for gay men and lesbians to have their union recognised (legally, institutionally and socially) leaves in place the institutional, heteronormative institution of marriage (and the equally institutionalised form of 'the couple') as *the* (exclusive) form of social relationality. This paradox is part of a debate well rehearsed across a range of political positions from within queer studies (see Bell and Binnie, 2000; Butler, 2002; Halperin, 2004; Roach, 2005), but what Rancière's conception of politics introduces is an insistence on the logic of *tort* at work here. Indeed, Todd May takes it up as an example in his account of Rancière's political thought:

A politics of gay rights, for instance, confronts a world that preaches but does not live equality with a *singular construction* of the universality of equality. Here, now, in this demonstration, in this

wedding ceremony, in this act of love, the universality of equality is constructed, over and against the police order that at once posits and denies equality. (2007: 112-13)

Although he rightly underlines the always-occasional nature of the 'singular universal' – 'here, now, in this demonstration' – May does not go far enough in explaining the relevance of Rancière's insistence on 'wrong' in this instance. 'Gay marriage' is not reducible to the exposure of the lie lived by a 'world' that doesn't practice what it preaches. Or rather, it does not *just* demonstrate such a contradiction over 'rights.' It also crucially, momentarily, puts into play the more utopian possibility of inventing forms of social relationality, of rights and of institutions, quite different from those currently existing: to 'think that what exists is far from filling all possible spaces' (Foucault, 1997: 140), which may open the way to 'rework and revise the social organization of friendship, sexual contacts, and community to produce non-state-centred forms of support and alliance' (Butler, 2002: 21). In other words: that 'homosexuality' names the trajectory by which the inclusion of those excluded doesn't restore a social fabric, but reopens the gaps whereby new 'affective and relational virtualities' might be invented.[23]

In the final analysis, it is by shifting our attention from the exclusionary legacy of a fraternal politics of friendship to the *twisting* of places and properties in the staging of political dissensus (the inclusion of the excluded and the exclusion of the included), that Rancière's work makes available a language of relationality sensitised to the 'relational virtualities' at the heart of Foucault's unfinished work on friendship. For Foucault as much as Rancière, this utopian politics of an always contingent equality might be described as 'the art of warped deductions and mixed identities' insofar as it only ever stages 'the local and singular construction of cases of universality' (Rancière, 1999: 139). But this is not a showdown between two republican mottos, 'Fraternity' and 'Equality';[24] rather, it is a shift in focus that alters the relation of 'community' and 'politics,' which comes to emphasise the invention of *particular* sequences of relationality – and most particularly, friendship. As David Webb argues with regard to Foucault's later work on 'the care of the self', friendship possesses 'no form of its own, and so the singularity of friends results from the fact that the conditions of each friendship themselves are always particular, always concrete, and unlike those of any other.' (2003: 138) If Foucault claims that friendship is the 'development toward which the problem of homosexuality tends,' it is because he defines 'homosexuality' is an 'always particular' task of becoming, or invention, rather than the discoverable truth of an identifiable sexuality (Foucault, 1997: 136). The task of inventing 'always particular' relations does not necessarily invalidate existing institutional forms of social relationality, but it cannot but interrupt or 'short-circuit' their assumed coherence and plenitude:

Institutional forms can't validate these relations with multiple intensities, variable colors, imperceptible movements and changing

forms. These relations short-circuit it and introduce love where there's supposed to be only law, rule, habit. (Foucault, 1997: 137)

As Rancière argues with regard to the two modes of distribution of the sensible, politics and the police, the effect of these new forms of relationality lies in demonstrating the inclusion of a lack, the *excluded*, within the institutional rule of law and habit. Once again, this logic of a wrong as a process of becoming (or subjectification) can be transposed back into Rancière's writing on fraternal community and the community of equals: the paradox of democracy entails that the inequality in any fraternal community always presupposes the (impossible?) community of equals, which it excludes. Thus, if the community of fraternity always works to disguise the division of the equal-unequal that it institutes, the community of equals must always remain 'an *insubstantial* community of individuals, engaged in an ongoing creation of equality' (1995: 80, emphasis added), which is to say, the *virtuality* of new forms of social relationality.

As we have already seen, Derrida's strategic figuration of a 'virile homosexuality' paradoxically works to *reinforce*[25] the hegemonic 'exclusion' of female and queer friendship: first, the place of women in this history is defined solely in negative terms of their effective absence or silence, without a sense that another tradition, language or history of female friendship might co-exist with the hegemonic one; and second, the exclusion of 'heterosexual' friendship by a dominant 'virile homosexuality' not only ignores the sexual ambivalence of certain hegemonic texts on friendship and democracy, but also effectively silences the historical-political precariousness and persecution of queer friendship cultures.[26] This is not to claim that Derrida, 'deconstruction,' or even this way of conceiving the hegemonic role of friendship in the philosophical tradition is necessarily homophobic. It is rather to show that something is wrong with the central argument of *Politics of Friendship*, in which the exclusionary logic of a hegemonic 'fraternization' brings about a wrong by attaching that figure of homosexuality, and the fate of a 'democracy to come' along with it, to an 'insult.' In contrast, for Rancière, democracy is invented as a 'polemical name' that always interrupts, or 'muddles,' any fraternal community insofar as that communal desire to 'forge equals through brotherhood' always disavows those 'mongrels,' the excluded, that 'bear the stamp of inequality' (1995: 80). So we might modify Derrida's problematic adherence to an exclusionary figure of homosexuality, not by simply inverting its terms (which would be a misunderstanding and worse) nor by cunningly transposing its terms (as in Byrne and McQuillan's 'translation'), but by allowing Rancière's formulation of politics to open up the litigious torsion between these names: friend, brother, citizen, man, homosexual, and whomsoever 'other' to come... Each of these names might serve as the 'singular universal' that would reaffirm and restate the equality of anyone and everyone, by contesting the lines of inclusion and exclusion of the police order. 'Political subjects exist in the interval between different identities,' which is why there is 'never *one* subject' of democracy but rather multiple 'forms of subjectivisation

in the interval between two identities' (Rancière, 2007: 95, 96). It is in this way that Rancière's twisted political 'anti-ontology' operates by installing a logic that divides each 'class' against itself in order to keep putting the universal into play.

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Notes

1. Both texts also had prior publications, albeit at different ends of the previous decade: Foucault's interview, 'Friendship as a Way of Life,' first appeared in an edition of the (then still monthly) magazine, *Gai Pied*, in 1981; whilst Derrida's self-styled 'essay' (1997: vii) drew upon his 1988-89 weekly seminar, 'Politics of Friendship.' If this coincidence and non-coincidence of dates is merely a quirk of the temporal lag of republication and translation, which might itself complicate efforts to determine their contemporaneity given that both texts are engaged precisely with questions of *how to* make an intervention into 'the contemporary.'

2. Valerie Traub (2004) argues that Bray's refusal to confine his enquiry within the narrow equation of sexuality and the erotic might risk leaving open the field of ontological definition to those who would claim to know only too well what homo- (or hetero-) sexuality *is*. Consequently, her friendly criticisms of what she defines as a persistent 'analytic tension between eroticism and friendship' (2004: 345) in Bray's work, which installs a 'strategic ambiguity carried out in the name of ethics' (2004: 349), are reminiscent of familiar complaints that Derrida (and 'deconstruction' in general) indefinitely 'defers' the most pressing questions ('ontology,' 'epistemology,' 'politics,' etc).

3. Foucault's absence from Bray's book represents a missed conjunction with methodological shifts in his work after *The Will to Knowledge*, particularly in his account of the relation between

sexuality and friendship in *The Uses of Pleasure* (see Foucault, 1986: 1-32). This situation is mirrored in Derrida's own remark about Foucault – in fact, the *sole* reference to Foucault's work therein – at the very end of *Politics of Friendship*. In the context of a commentary on Blanchot's *Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him*, that '*philia* remains strangely marginalised, not to say left in silence, in his [Foucault's] last works, at least those published to date' (1997: 301). We might forgive Derrida's error here, given the publication dates discussed previously (Foucault's *Dits et écrits* are published the same year as *Politiques de l'amitié* (1994)), but again we might ask: what of *L'usage des plaisirs* and *Le souci de soi* (both published in 1984)? The absence of any reference by Derrida and Bray to these texts is all the more perplexing given their respective aims of recovering 'an archaeology' the ethics of friendship (Bray, 2003: 8), and tracing the *genealogy* of that 'essential and essentially sublime figure of virile homosexuality' (Derrida, 1997: 279).

4. This question further implicates his own *genealogical* enquiry into the friend as 'brother,' of course, since the concept of 'genealogy' itself presupposes the institution of heteronormative lineage and inheritance. Needless to say, this is a question to which Derrida is more than attentive.

5. It is for this reason that we need to take seriously his wish that this book be read as 'a modest and belated contribution' to the work of friends (and others) at the Centre for Philosophical Research on the Political, which operated at the Ecole Normale Supérieure between 1980 and 1984, under the direction of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy. (For the founding and closing documents of the Centre, see Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy (1997: 105-47). The fact that the second (and final) publication from the Centre, *Le retrait du politique* (Galilée, 1983), included Rancière's essay, 'La représentation de l'ouvrier ou la classe introuvable' (89-111), would thus add yet another direction to the present line of enquiry.) Oliver Marchart rightly identifies the Centre as 'the location for the most intense and influential re-elaboration so far [...] of the difference between politics and the political,' thus germinating the common concern with post-foundational political thought that link Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe with Badiou, or Lefort with Laclau and Mouffe, as all members of various "clans" of left Heideggerianism' (2007: 61). And what of Rancière? (See note 22, below.)

6. In a long footnote on Bataille's phrase, 'the community of those who have nothing in common,' Derrida routes the teleopoietic legacy of Nietzsche through these three thinkers, but remains reticent about the residual rhetoric of 'fraternization' in their work: 'There is still perhaps some brotherhood in Bataille, Blanchot, and Nancy, and I wonder, in the innermost recess of my admiring friendship, if it does not deserve a little loosening up, and if it should still guide the thinking of community, be it a community without community, or a brotherhood without brotherhood' (1997: 48, n. 15).

7. Note Derrida's evident delight in the following example: 'In this Christian space [...] one remembers the letter of the great and good Saint Francis of Assisi, who could not help but write to a nun: "Dear Brother Jacqueline"' (1997: 156).

8. The privileging of Montaigne's text also lies, as Martin McQuillan (2005) points out, in the fact that Derrida explicitly situates the political figuration of friendship in a *specifically French* idiom and republican rhetoric of fraternalism, to which Montaigne's essay provides such a paradoxical bequest.

9. Marc Schachter (2008) demonstrates that Derrida's omission of this clause is facilitated by standard modern editorial revision of this essay, in which a paragraph break is introduced after woman's 'exclusion' from friendship. It is possible to return to the first edition of the *Essais* (1580), as Schachter has done, to show that the hegemonic exclusion of 'heterosexuality' and pederasty were originally articulated by Montaigne: 'But no example of this sex has yet been able to achieve it, and that other Grecian license is justly abhorred by our mores' (Montaigne, 1580, cited Schachter, 2008: 154). Only in subsequent revisions for the 1588 edition did Montaigne introduce punctuation to turn these two clauses into two sentences, and add the authority of the 'Ancient schools of philosophy' about woman's exclusion from it. However, the paragraph break (as replicated by Derrida) is a wholly modern invention, traceable to the eighteenth-century editors of the *Essais* (Schachter, 2008: 154-6). Such philological scrutiny is itself influenced by Derrida's own micrological readings, but what interests me here is not to read Montaigne's essay as some kind of 'confession' that his 'perfect friendship' with La Boétie might have been still more perfect had it also been erotic; nor the attendant problematic overlay of friendship, eroticism, pederasty and homosexuality at work here. Instead, what I would extract from this scene of philological forensics is the way in which the historical instability of this text exposes the apparently unacknowledged political capacities of Derrida's choice of words in designating 'the hegemony of a philosophical canon.'

10. Steven Garlick raises an analogous problem when he notes that although Derrida rightly highlights the hegemonic 'masculinity' of a philosophical tradition of friendship, he does not account the extent to which the hegemonic notion of friendship has become 'effectively "feminized"' as early as the beginning of the twentieth century: 'We need to ask (as Derrida does not) how the current 'feminine' condition of friendship articulates with the overwhelmingly 'masculine' tradition. Does this not leave men (in particular) in something like an impossible, or impassable, position?' (2002: 563, 571) Not unproblematic itself, Garlick's argument has the virtue of begging the question: what is meant by 'feminised' or 'masculine' (or even 'virile') friendship, and the 'difference' between them? A question to which no one, Derrida and his critics included, seems to have an adequate answer.

11. As Schachter observes: 'Derrida would have written a different book had this observation been his starting point rather than one of his conclusions' (2008: 164). Indeed, whilst Bray appears not to have detected this absence in his own praise for this book's 'uncertain ethics,' this is not the case in Eleanor Byrne and Martin McQuillan's (1999) transposition of Derrida's phrase in a deft reading of the fraternal figure of 'democracy' through Disney's Hugo adaptation, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Wise & Trousdale, 1996, USA). Resetting the context to post-1989 (Disneyland) Europe, Byrne and McQuillan revise Derrida's formulation of a 'virile' hegemonic tradition of the fraternal-political by adding another exclusion: 'Democracy as friendship for Disney is always structured as male, even when it is female, and as a homo-virile virtue excludes the possibility of a homosexual relation' (1999: 150). In this way, the double exclusion of female and 'heterosexual' friendships can be rewritten as 'the double exclusion of the feminine and the homosexual,' brought about by 'the inscription of a homo-fraternal (homosexual-homophobic) and phallogocentric schema' (McQuillan & Byrne, 1999: 149-50). This is Derrida rewritten through Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's (1985) crucial paradigm of the continuum of homosocial and homosexual desire. But their rewriting of the matrix of 'homo' and 'hetero' here begs the question: why did Derrida ascribe this decisively hegemonic exclusion to a figure of 'virile homo-sexuality,' when the erotic and sexuality are effectively written out of the text (as we saw with the decisive quotation from Montaigne) in a way more consistent with the foreclosed operation of 'homo-sociality'? For Schachter, this is a *strategic* decision on Derrida's part: to have acknowledged the 'intermittent presence' of women in this tradition, and likewise to register the problematic presence of eroticism and pederasty instead of sublimating it within a figure of 'virile homosexuality,' would have opened 'a fissure in his own comments on the subject' (2008: 164). However, I am not so certain that 'fissure' (or interruption), 'decision' or 'choice' are such straightforward operations (see note 14, below).

12. See, in particular, Faderman's comparative analysis of Montaigne's essay and eighteenth century women's epistolary friendships (1980: 65-73). Foucault references her book in both late interviews (1997; 1997a).

13. Joanna Zylinska makes a similar complaint when she states that Derrida 'leaves all these questions in suspense, as if unable or unwilling to proceed any further.' However, she also grants the strategic possibility of such suspension, as if such withholding of an answer may well be 'performing a political act by posing femininity as a question' (2001: 99-100).

14. What kind of 'choice' is this? I have in mind Derrida's (1997; 2005) expression of friendly 'non-critical concern' with Nancy's rhetoric of fraternity in *The Experience of Freedom* (1993: 72): 'What is the political impact and range of this chosen word, among other possible words, even – and especially – *if the choice is not deliberate?*' (1997:

305, emphasis added). This analysis of a 'non-deliberate choice' is still more sustained in *Rogues*: 'So why retain the word *fraternity* rather than another?' – 'What does *fraternity* still name when it has no relationship to birth, death, the father, the mother, sons and brothers?' (2005: 58, 167). As Derrida recognises, Nancy's defence might very well be that he is simply recounting and analysing a history of this 'received concept,' without necessarily subscribing to it; 'it's not me who is saying this,' Nancy (or Derrida, or anyone) can always say (2005: 59). This is interesting. So I am simply asking about Derrida's own choice of words in his microanalyses of politics of friendship, 'even – and especially – if the choice is not deliberate': *why retain the word 'homosexuality' rather than another?*

15. Instead of fraternity, as we shall see, Rancière links the concept of democracy to an anarchic equality of *tort*, or wrong, a configuration that points to his relevance for queer theoretical reflections on the politics of friendship insofar as it signifies a consonant movement of 'twisting' or 'torsion' of all social relationality, which 'short-circuits the natural logic of "properties"' (1999: 13).

16. Interestingly, the rhetorical-political force of the insult is central to Didier Eribon's argument, in *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self* (1999), that the experience of being the object of insult becomes the foundational structure of gay subjectivity: 'A gay man learns about his difference through the force of insult and its effects – the principal one being the awareness of a fundamental asymmetry instantiated by that particular linguistic act' (1999: 16). What is striking about Eribon's reliance upon the performative force of the insult in Eribon's argument is, as Tom Roach (2005a) astutely notes, its Derridean rather than Foucauldian resonance.

17. This echoing of Derrida's avowedly 'Blanchotian' syntax of '*X sans X*' can be read as a respectful gesture, in the context of his tribute essay to Derrida, but also as a polemical one, in the context of Rancière's disagreement with Derrida's (qualified) messianism of a 'democracy to come.' In an interview with Peter Hallward, Rancière deliberately distances his work from any relation to Blanchot or the uses of his work (2003: 208).

18. Democratic 'auto-immunity' has two aporetic functions: first, the right to unlimited auto-critique, even to the point of attacking democracy as such; and second, the power of democratic governments to curtail (or even suspend) democratic rights, in order to protect 'democracy' from enemies who would exploit those rights (see Derrida, 2005: 28-41).

19. See, for example: '*Deconstruction is an institutional practice for which the concept of the institution remains a problem*' (Derrida, 2002: 53).

20. I would like to add this particular formulation to Michael O'Rourke's (2006: 24-5) impressively 'partial' listing of queer tropes in Derrida's work.

21. Rancière (1999: 28) credits Foucault's essay, 'Omnes and Singulatim' (2000), as the origin of his use of this term; see also Ross (2002: 22-5).

22. 'The political rests on the supplementary "power of the people", which both founds it and withdraws its foundations' (Rancière, 2007: 91). Such a conception of the relation between 'politics' (*la politique*) and 'the political' (*le politique*) leads Marchart to cast Rancière's approach (along with that of Badiou) as a simple "reversal" (2007: 119) of the 'post-foundational' logic of 'the political difference' (see note 9, above). He describes Rancière's conception of politics as 'precisely what is antagonistic to policing: true politics – as a process of equality – effectuates a break with the order of policing, thus demonstrating the contingency of the latter (2007: 120). This all-too-brief attempt to include Rancière within these "clans" of left Heideggerianism' strikes me as rather unconvincing. Marchart tends to flatten the way in which Rancière *interrelates* politics and the police: politics might *interrupt* the order of policing, but it does not 'break' with it.

23. In this sense, Rancière is far closer to Foucault's later texts than May seems to notice; but he is also arguably brought closer to Derrida's deconstructive attempts to open up always other possibilities. See, not just for example, his references to gay marriage and the couple in his dialogues with Elisabeth Roudinesco (2004: 34-5).

24. Not least because of the complex and specifically French historical contexts that accompany them. The historical emergence of a specifically French emphasis on fraternity provides both Rancière and Derrida with common reference point in the work of Pierre Leroux, the nineteenth-century French utopian (or romantic) socialist. Whilst for Derrida, Leroux's claim to universal fraternity is exemplary of a French republican legacy of exclusionary 'fraternization'; for Rancière (1995) the significance of Leroux's utopian socialism for modern communitarian thought lies in the 'paradox' of the community of equals. In short: the moment when, mid nineteenth-century 'communists' such as the Icarians, the 'community of property' became the means by which equality might be realised, the only two models of community available via Leroux's *De l'Egalité* (1838) were the Classical/Greek and the Christian/monastic *fraternities*, which offered only two models: a community of masters (Athenian guardians) and a community of slaves (monastic orders).

25. In *The Uses of Pleasure*, Foucault explains that the male erotic relation becomes the object of acute moral consideration in Greek culture, precisely because of the perception of a boy's *virility*. The

disquiet or unease that he finds in the Greeks' 'aesthetic morality,' as it related to the boy's body, derives from the fragile status of legitimate desire and the fugitive nature of its beauty. This is because the boy cannot be both loved *and* virile: 'He must not bear any physical mark of virility; but it must be present as a precocious form and a promise of bearing: to conduct oneself as the man that one not yet is' (Foucault, 1984: 221). At this fearful moment of loss, friendship becomes both 'morally necessary' and 'socially useful,' with Xenophon advising that the best course of action lies in converting 'the bond of love (bound to disappear) into a relation of friendship, of *philia*' (1984: 221). At the moment that erotic (and implicitly 'feminine') *passivity* co-exists with anything more than the promise of properly 'virile' masculinity, the order of social division intercedes, in the form of friendship. Yet this is a very different conception of the durability and steadfastness of virile virtue of male friendship from that offered by Derrida, in one major respect: in Derrida, 'homosexuality' is named as the 'virile' force of exclusion of sexual difference from friendship; whilst according to Foucault, it seems that male friendship, for the Greeks, becomes virile at the moment it *leaves behind* 'homosexual' eroticism. It should also be noted that Foucault's reading overlaps with Derrida's emphasis on the hegemonic privileging of activity over passivity, of 'loving' over 'being-loved' in *Politics of Friendship* (even if Derrida seems to have forgotten it's existence): 'This is one of the frequent themes of moral reflection on this kind of relation, [...] it is also a precept, since it is not good to love a boy who has passed a certain age, no more than for him to allow himself to be loved [*pour lui de se laisser aimer*]' (Foucault, 1984: 221).

26. Such a claim is itself limited because a more expansive reading would have to return to those passages in *Glas* in which Derrida works through (and across) sexual difference and the brother-sister relation in Hegel's reading of *Antigone* and his letters (1986: 148ff). Such a qualification is implicit, I think, in Schachter's own reservations: 'I submit that the ongoing opening up to a democracy to come requires attention to the vexed place of women in the friendship tradition *and* an unpacking of the ambivalences of the "homo" that, at least for the Derrida of *Politics of Friendship*, remained occluded' (2008: 18).

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