

Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?

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Abstract: Epicurus is strongly committed to psychological and ethical egoism and hedonism. However, these commitments do not square easily with many of the claims made by Epicureans about friendship: for instance, that the wise man will sometimes die for his friend, that the wise man will love his friend as much as himself, feel exactly the same toward his friend as toward himself, and exert himself as much for his friend's pleasure as for his own, and that every friendship is worth choosing for its own sake. These claims have led some scholars to assert that Epicurus inconsistently affirms that friendship has an altruistic element. I argue that the Epicurean claims about friendship can be reconciled with egoism and hedonism in psychology and ethics. Friendship is valuable because having friends provides one with security more effectively than any other means, and having confidence that one will be secure in the future either is identical to *ataraxia*, or the grounds on which one has it.

0. Introduction

Epicurus is strongly committed to psychological and ethical egoism and hedonism. However, it is not easy to square these commitments with many of the claims made by Epicureans about friendship: for instance, that the wise man will sometimes die for his friend (*DL* 10 121), that the wise man will love his friend as much as himself, feel exactly the same toward his friend as toward himself, and exert himself as much for his friend's pleasure as for his own (*DF* 1 67-68), and that every friendship is worth choosing for its own sake (*SV* 23).¹ These claims have led some scholars (*e.g.*, Phillip Mitsis and Julia Annas)² to assert that Epicurus inconsistently affirms that friendship has an altruistic element. I will argue that the Epicurean claims about friendship can be reconciled with egoism and hedonism in psychology and ethics.

This paper has 6 main parts. First, I sharpen the question posed in the title: what do we mean to ask, when we ask whether Epicurean friendship is altruistic? In the second section, I give a general argument, based upon the rest of Epicurus' philosophy and the principle of charity, for why we ought to interpret the Epicurean position on friendship as egoistic. Many of the sayings and positions attributed to Epicurus and the Epicureans require much interpretive work. I interpret them along egoistic lines, when these passages are not always either clearly egoistic or clearly altruistic in themselves, and here I justify this approach. In the third section, I

¹ Henceforward, references to these and other texts will be made according to the following conventions: *Kuriai Doxai* (Principle Doctrines) = *KD*; *Sententiae Vaticanae* (Vatican Sayings) = *SV*; *Letter to Menoeceus* = *Ep. Men.*; *Letter to Pythocles* = *Ep. Pyth.*; *De Finibus* (On Goals) = *DF*; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* = *DL*.

² Mitsis (1988) chapter 3, Annas (1993) chapter 11.

explain the reasons Epicurus has, within his egoistic ethics, for thinking that friendship is valuable. I argue that friendship is valuable because it affords one safety from danger, and thus allows one to face the future with confidence. In the last three sections, I show how this picture of the value of friendship can be reconciled with Epicurean texts that seem to undercut it. Discussing these texts also fills out the picture of friendship briefly sketched in section three. In section four I deal with *Vatican Saying* 23, according to which friendship is worth choosing for its own sake. The fifth section is an extended consideration of the first of the three Epicurean theories of friendship expounded in *DF* 1: that the wise Epicurean will love his friend as much as he loves himself, because doing so is the most effective way of securing his own pleasure, which is the only thing he values for its own sake. I defend this theory against charges of doublethink or internal inconsistency and show how it too can be fit within an egoistic interpretation of Epicurus. Finally, in the sixth section, I consider additional problematic sayings about friendship attributed to Epicurus, in particular, his claim that sometimes the wise man will die for his friend.

1. Egoism and Altruism in Epicurus

Asking whether Epicurean friendship is “altruistic” might be misleading. Often, altruism means either (psychologically) having a desire to favor the interests of others over my own interests, or (ethically) that I *should* favor the interests of others over my own. If altruism is taken to mean “self-sacrificing” in this sense, then altruistic friendship is probably out of the question for Epicurus. Certainly, he thinks that we should not *sacrifice* what is in our interest for the sake of the interests of others, nor does he think that we ever desire that the interests of others be fulfilled *in preference to* our own interests. But in any case, those who claim that Epicurean friendship is ‘altruistic’ usually do not mean that it is *self-sacrificing*. For instance, Mitsis, when asserting that Epicurean friendship *is* altruistic, says that this altruism amounts to “showing disinterested concern for [one’s] friends.”³

Thus, my concern in this paper is about what type of regard Epicurus thinks that we have for the interests of our friends. According to Epicurus, are my friends valuable to me for their own sake, or merely instrumentally? To put the point another way: is Epicurean friendship

³ Mitsis (1988) p. 102. See also Mitsis (1988) p. 98 on “altruism” as “caring for others apart from their instrumental value.”

purely *self-regarding*, or is there any *other-regarding* element in Epicurean friendship? *Should* I care about the interests of my friends for their own sake, apart from any instrumental value that promoting those interests might serve for myself (ethical other-regardingness)? And *do* I care about the interests of my friends for their own sake, beyond any concern I have about how the interests of my friends might serve to further my own interests (psychological other-regardingness)?⁴

These questions can be clarified by contrasting what I take Epicurus' answers to them to be with the answers of Aristotle and Hume:

Aristotle and ethical other-regardingness: According to Aristotle, one of our ends, if we are virtuous, is the well-being of our friends, and not because, by promoting that end, we get some *further* end of our own—that would be the friendship of utility or pleasure. I value my friend for his own sake. But part of what constitutes my own *eudaimonia*, my happiness, is that my friends do well. I wish to lead a certain kind of life (a *eudaimôn* one), and a constituent of that type of life will be these friendships, and the activities of these friendships.⁵ So the conception here is not exactly *altruistic*, since I seek my own good through the friendship. Nonetheless, my friendship with the other is valued for its own sake, as good in itself, not as valuable for the sake of something else that I gain from it. This friendship is a *part* of my own happiness. Another way of putting the point: the Aristotelian friendship of virtue might be *self-interested* but is not purely *self-regarding*.⁶

I want to argue that, unlike an Aristotelian friendship of virtue, the good of my friend is not something valuable for its own sake according to Epicurus, but has value only instrumentally, as in Aristotelian friendships of utility or pleasure. Epicurean friendship is purely self-regarding.

Hume and psychological other-regardingness: Hume believes that people can have an immediate desire that another person be happy, especially a friend, and once one has such a

⁴ See Annas (1993) pp. 223-226 for more on this distinction, and how non-instrumental regard for others can fit within eudaimonistic theories.

⁵ So we can ask whether it is (a) the good of my friend that I value for its own sake, or (b) my virtuous activity in promoting my friend's good. Much of what Aristotle says suggests the latter. On either reading, his theory plainly does not assign a merely instrumental regard for the friend and for the friendship.

⁶ White (1992) pp. 285-286, makes basically the same point. The terminology he uses, however, is "Egocentrism" vs. "Egoism" rather than "self-interested" vs. "self-regarding."

desire, then pursuing it becomes a part of one's self-interest. But this desire is not thereby selfish: "we may feel a desire of another's happiness or good, which, by means of that affection, becomes our own good, and is afterwards pursued, from the combined motives of benevolence and self-enjoyments."⁷ According to Hume, I may get pleasure from interacting with my friend, but that does not show that I value my friend *for the sake of* the pleasure. Instead, the love of my friend is anterior to the pleasure I feel. He criticizes Hobbes and Epicurus on precisely this point:

In the first place, they [those like Epicurus and Hobbes, who are psychological egoists] found, that every act of virtue or friendship was attended with a secret pleasure; whence they concluded, that friendship and virtue could not be disinterested. But the fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous sentiment or passion produces the pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a pleasure in doing good to my friend, because I love him; but I do not love him for the sake of that pleasure.⁸

This latter psychological position is what I wish to deny of Epicurus—for Epicurus, I love the friend for the sake of the pleasure I get from him. There is no immediate liking of the friend or desire for his good.

To say that friends are valued and are valuable merely as instrumental goods is stronger than claiming that pursuing friendships can be justified on egoistic grounds, since that claim is open to those who think that one values one's friends also for their own sakes, such as Hume and Aristotle.⁹

2. Why to Presume that Epicurean Friendship is Egoistic

I believe that there ought to be a strong presumption, when trying to interpret the Epicurean texts dealing with friendship, to interpret them so that friends are only instrumental goods. I have three reasons for thinking this.

2a: General egoism in ethics and psychology. Epicurus' own writings, and the reports on Epicureanism, are strewn with statements of an across-the-board egoism in both ethics and

⁷ David Hume (1975) Appendix ii p. 302.

⁸ From "Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature," in Hume (1985) pp. 85-86.

⁹ Henceforward, I will sometimes talk about trying to interpret Epicurus' position along 'egoistic' or 'hedonistic' lines, since repeatedly stating 'consistently with his ethical and psychological hedonism and egoism' would be awkward. I choose one word or the other, depending on whether the main stress is that *one's own* pleasure is the end, or one's own *pleasure* is the end. But not too much should be read into this; I am trying to show how Epicurus' position on friendship is consistent with both his egoism and his hedonism in both ethics and psychology, as sketched out above.

psychology. The main thrust of Epicurean ethics is that only one's own tranquillity has non-instrumental value to oneself. The virtues,¹⁰ the sciences,¹¹ *etc.*, all have value only insofar as they conduce to one's own pleasure (where pleasure is conceived of primarily as *ataraxia*, or tranquillity). For instance, immediately after arguing that the virtues are valued only for the sake of the pleasures that they produce, Torquatus (the Epicurean spokesman in Cicero's *De Finibus*), says: "pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically attractive and alluring..." (*DF* 1 54) Securing one's own pleasure is also the ultimate motivation for every action: "[Epicurus maintains that] feelings of pleasure and pain...lie at the root of every act of choice and avoidance." (*DF* 1 23)¹²

Even those who think that there is a non-egoistic element in Epicurean friendship admit that this introduces an inconsistency in Epicurean ethics.¹³ So given Epicurus' general position in ethics and psychology, there should be a strong presumption, when trying to make sense of Epicurus' position on friendship, that friends are also only instrumental goods, on pain of otherwise attributing a serious inconsistency to him.

2b: Dependency of Epicurean ethics on psychological hedonism. Additionally, admitting that one values one's friends for the friends' own sake would undercut the basis of Epicurus' ethics. Epicurean ethics cannot be separated from Epicurean psychology. Like other ancient ethical theorists, Epicureans are thoroughgoing naturalists—their egoistic hedonism in ethics is based on their egoistic hedonism in psychology. They think that one's own pleasure is the good because they think that one's own pleasure is what we all do ultimately aim at. In the *De Finibus*, Torquatus' repeated strategy, when he is arguing in favor of Epicurean *ethics*, is to try to show that the virtues, learning, and other things which people commonly think are valued for their own sake, are all *really* valued only because of the pleasure that they bring to oneself. The following passage illustrates the tight connection between Epicurean psychology and ethics:

¹⁰ *DF* 1 42-43 and *Tusculan Disputations* 3.41-42, among many other places.

¹¹ *KD* 11-13: natural science is only an instrumental good, valuable because it dispels the fear caused by myths about the gods being the causes of natural phenomena.

¹² tr. Rackham (1931) for this and other passages in *DF*. See also *DF* 1 30, where Torquatus asserts that all animals seek pleasure and shun pain, and that these are the *only* standards to guide action, and his attempt in *DF* 1 34-36 to show that the pleasure principle was the motive behind the brave deeds of his ancestors.

¹³ Mitsis admits that "such a view of the good [according to which the good of one's friends is intrinsically valued and valuable] conflicts with the rigid instrumentalism of the rest of Epicurus' doctrines." (Mitsis (1988) p. 116).

Pleasure and pain moreover supply the motives of desire and of avoidance, and the springs of conduct generally. This being so, *it clearly follows* that actions are right and praiseworthy only as being a means to the attainment of a life of pleasure. But that which is not itself a means to anything else, but to which all else is a means, is what the Greeks term the *telos*, the highest, ultimate or final good. It must therefore be admitted that the chief good is to live agreeably. (DF 1 42)

So to give up their egoistic hedonism in psychology would be a serious blow to the Epicurean ethical program.¹⁴

The consistent Epicurean cannot admit that he values the welfare of his friend simply for his own sake and yet maintain that the friendship derives its *value* entirely from the pleasures that it gives him. For the Epicureans, we cannot separate out what I *value* from what is *valuable* for me.¹⁵

Psychological hedonism and egoism are the underpinnings of the entire Epicurean ethical doctrine and cannot be given up lightly. If the Epicureans were to admit that one could value things other than one's own pleasure for their own sakes, then attaining *these* things—like friendship, virtue, learning, *etc.*—would constitute *eudaimonia*.

2c: References to egoism in friendship. A final reason to presume that Epicurus does not think that we value our friends for their own sake is that several sources attribute to Epicurus ethical and psychological egoism when it comes to how we value other people, including our friends, in particular. Many passages in Epicurus' own writings (and in the *De Finibus*) say that friendship gains its value from the tranquillity that it affords us. I will be discussing these passages later. In addition, other authors assert that, according to Epicurus, friendship is valuable

¹⁴ This is why the cradle arguments are so important to the Epicureans for establishing their ethics—infants are supposedly especially clear-cut examples of what people are all *really* aiming at, since they are not nearly as complicated (and corrupted) as adults.

¹⁵ Cf. John Stuart Mill's proof of the Principle of Utility, in *Utilitarianism*, chapter 4. One might object that this claim I am making on behalf of the Epicureans cannot be reconciled with their repeated assertions that most people value the wrong things, such as partying continuously and gaining power and wealth, things that are not really valuable for them. However, Epicurus never criticizes what people value *per se*. Rather, he presents *internal* criticisms of what one values—given your other desires, the value that you place upon wealth (for instance) is misguided, because it leads you to be unable to get what you really want, which is pleasure. Thus, much of Epicurean philosophical therapy is a form of *unmasking*—people *think* that they value X for its own sake, but they do not. They really value X because they believe it will get them pleasure, and Epicurus criticizes this desire as based upon false beliefs about what conduces to pleasure.

only because of the pleasure it produces, and that we care about other people only because we believe they will help us gain pleasure.

For instance, Diogenes Laertius reports that “Courage does not come to be by nature, but by a reasoning out of what is advantageous. And friendship comes to be because of its usefulness...” (*DL* 10 120)¹⁶ And Lactantius asserts that, according to Epicurus, nobody cares for another person except for his own advantage,¹⁷ while Plutarch says that Epicurus disparages human nature as being the only kind that has no disinterested affection, and can only love others if there is some hope of gaining thereby.¹⁸

These reports are from late or hostile sources, so they are not decisive. Nonetheless, they should give us significant pause before we say that Epicurus believes there is an intrinsically other-regarding element in friendship.

Therefore, Mitsis is being short-sighted when he says that people who wish to maintain Epicurus’ egoism in friendship are mainly concerned with preserving the “elegant simplicity” of Epicurus’ theory.¹⁹ There are quite powerful reasons based on the principle of charity to presume that Epicurus will ascribe to friends only an instrumental value.

3. Why does Epicurus believe that friendship is valuable?

Given Epicurus’ ethical theory, what reasons does he have for valuing friendship? I believe that for Epicurus friendship’s chief value lies in the security from physical danger that it affords one, although it also provides protection from intellectual dangers .

3a: Security from physical danger. The main reason given by Epicureans for the importance of friendship is the safety that friendship gives you: with friends to protect you, your life will be secure from danger, whereas the friendless life is beset with dangers and risks. (*DF* 1 65-66) Friends provide a kind of “mutual aid” society; the friends protect one another from

¹⁶ tr. based on Inwood and Gerson (1988). Unless otherwise noted, other translations are also based on Inwood and Gerson (1988). Here and elsewhere I have replaced their translation of *chreia* and its cognates as “utility” with “usefulness,” “help,” or the like, so as to avoid any potential confusions stemming from assimilating what Epicurus says to modern utilitarian doctrines.

¹⁷ *Divin Instit.* iii 17, 42; (Usener 540).

¹⁸ Plutarch, *On Affection for Offspring* 495A (Usener 527). Plutarch says this right after he tries to show that other animals do obviously show disinterested affection. Hence Plutarch says that, if this disinterested affection exists among other animals, the Epicureans must be claiming that human nature is the *only* kind that is this low. He is not claiming that Epicureans believe that other animals display disinterested affection, but that humans do not.

¹⁹ Mitsis (1988) p. 103.

danger and provide for one another in time of need.²⁰ If you are surrounded by friends, and thus able to eliminate all fear of your neighbors, your life will be most pleasant.²¹ O'Connor rightly emphasizes the communal nature of Epicurean friendship. Its focus is not on the one-on-one interaction between friends, but on how having a network of friends who look out for one another is beneficial to all.²² In their communities, Epicureans tried to implement this type of friendship.

Thinking of one's friends as composing a "mutual aid" society might seem an impoverished notion of friendship, but it is plausible, especially because of the importance Epicureans attach to avoiding fear. Having friends will help you to avoid bodily pain, and freedom from bodily pain (*aponia*) is certainly important for Epicurus. Even *more* important, however, is having confidence about the future, and having reason not to fear that one *will be* in great bodily pain. Tranquillity (*ataraxia*) results from having confidence about the future. As Epicurus says, someone who is confident that his basic bodily needs will be met can rival even Zeus in happiness.²³ And because of this, he maintains that it is not so much the actual help from our friends that we need, but confidence that they *will* help us.²⁴

3b: Security from intellectual danger. A network of friends can also provide an *intellectual* mutual aid society. This benefit of friendship is not featured as prominently in the

²⁰ Seneca, in *Letters on Ethics* 9.8 (Usener 175) reports that the reasons that Epicurus gives for why a wise man would want to have friends are so that he might have somebody to attend him when he is sick and help him when he is imprisoned or impoverished.

²¹ *KD* 40. The arrangement described in *KD* 40 obviously echoes the Epicurean 'justice contract.' The neighbors described in *KD* 40 have the firmest pledge of security, while the Epicurean 'justice contract' is an agreement 'neither to harm nor be harmed.' However, I think *KD* 40 is properly read as describing the relationship between friends, since the people in *KD* 40 are described as "enjoying the fullest intimacy," and Epicurus says that these people do not grieve over any "untimely deaths," echoing his recommendation in *SV* 66 that we should not mourn over our friends who have died.

²² O'Connor (1989). In fact, O'Connor thinks that, for the Epicureans, *philia* is better translated "fellowship" than "friendship."

²³ *SV* 33. Plutarch also reports that Epicurus says in his work *On the Highest Good* that the good of the soul lies in the stable condition of the body and confidence about what the body's condition will be like (*A Pleasant Life* 1090F-1091A (Usener 68)).

²⁴ *SV* 34. Stephen Everson, in hearing this description of the value of friendship during a presentation of an earlier version of this paper (at the 22nd Annual Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, Trinity University, San Antonio, April 1999), asked why this same function could not be better provided by amassing enough money to hire a large group of flunkies as bodyguards. Epicurus' reply would probably be that one can be more confident about the help of one's friends than the help of hirelings, since hirelings might be willing to betray you if they thought they would thereby be able to make more money. Also, if your friends are thought of, not just as a few people with whom you associate, but a network of compatriots you rely on, then it is more plausible to think that such a network, bound together by the recognition of mutual usefulness, can provide the best security.

Epicurean sources we have, but several sources considered together make it clear that friendship reinforces proper philosophy, provides models of conduct, and helps prevent one from developing vain desires. The extant fragments of Philodemus' *On Frank Criticism* show that forthright philosophical discussion and censure are central to Epicurean pedagogy, and that this practice of speaking frankly is considered part of "the office of a friend."²⁵ Epicurus recommends practicing his ethical precepts with like-minded friends in order to avoid disturbance (*Ep. Men.* 135). Within an Epicurean community, being surrounded by right-thinking compatriots helps to sustain one on the straight and narrow. There were even mugs of Epicurus, celebrations of his birthday, and the like, to help bring the community members together and reinforce Epicurus' teachings.²⁶

4: Is friendship intrinsically valuable? The challenge of SV 23

There is good reason even within a purely egoistic reading of Epicurus' ethics, therefore, to value friendship quite highly: friendship is one of the best means for producing confidence about the future, and facing the future with serenity is supremely valuable. However, *SV 23*, as standardly emended, is the greatest stumbling block to regarding Epicurean friendship as purely an instrumental good: "Every friendship is worth choosing for its own sake, though it takes its origin from the benefits [it confers on us]."

Mitsis makes this saying the cornerstone of his interpretation, and it is easy to see why. Here, if nowhere else, it seems that there is a direct statement that friendship has intrinsic value, and Mitsis writes that friendship has intrinsic value for Epicurus, because within friendship, one shows "disinterested concern for his friends,"²⁷ and Annas says that in Epicurean friendship one feels "genuine other-concern."²⁸ However, there are powerful reasons not to accept this initial appearance of other-regardingness, since it introduces an obvious incoherence into Epicurus' philosophy. Luckily, there are at least three ways of accommodating *SV 23* within an egoistic and hedonistic interpretation of Epicurus' theory of friendship, each of which is more plausible

²⁵ Philodemus (1998) col. XIXb. See also the editors' introduction, pp. 5-8 and 10-20, and Fr. 15, 28, 41, 43, 50, 81, and 84.

²⁶ Cicero derides the celebrations of Epicurus' birthday in *DF 2* 99-103. For more discussion of the details of the Epicurean communities and how they had celebrations, mugs of Epicurus, *etc.*, see Clay (1998) pp. 67-74.

²⁷ Mitsis (1988) p. 102.

²⁸ Annas (1993) p. 237.

than the altruistic interpretation. Retaining the manuscript reading would also remove the problem, but there are good grounds for emending the text.²⁹

4a: Friendship is intrinsically pleasant: a first suggestion on how to reconcile SV 23 with egoism. Because SV 23 asserts that *friendship* is intrinsically valuable, both Annas and Mitsis claim that Epicureans assert that *one's friend* is intrinsically valuable. However, the two assertions do not amount to the same thing. One can value the relationship with one's friend for its own sake, not just for the sake of some further good that one gains from the relationship, without thereby having a disinterested concern for *the good of one's friend*.³⁰

This leads to the following, attractive suggestion for how to fit SV 23 within an egoistic ethics.³¹ We have a natural and necessary desire for friendship: having friends is necessary for happiness, although not for life itself. We desire friendship for its own sake, not simply for the sake of satisfying some further desire, just as, when we are hungry, we desire to eat food; we do not want to eat food to satisfy some *further* desire. Like satisfying other desires, we find pleasurable the *process* of gaining friends (the process of satisfying a desire—a kinetic pleasure) and the *state* of having friends (the state of having one's desire satisfied—a katastematic pleasure). Thus, we have an egoistic and hedonistic reason for entering into friendship—friendship is pleasant—even though friendship is intrinsically valuable, that is, not valued simply for the sake of some further good we get out of it. For this reason, I will call this position the “friendship is intrinsically pleasurable” view (FIP). According to FIP, we find friendship to be pleasant in itself, like the objects of other natural and necessary desires, such as food and shelter.³²

²⁹ The revision involves emending an *aretê* (virtue) to *hairêtê* (choiceworthy). Long and Sedley (1987), following the original ms, translate SV 23 as follows: “All friendship is an intrinsic virtue, but it originates from benefiting.” The emendation is fairly minor, and it is easy to see how the error (if it is an error) could have crept in during transcription. More importantly, what the phrase ‘an intrinsic virtue’ would mean is unclear. Furthermore, Epicurus thinks that virtues are only instrumentally valuable, so it is unlikely that he would want to *contrast (de)* ‘an intrinsic virtue’ with something that originates from its benefits. In any case, the original text would not pose a problem for an egoistic interpretation of Epicurus, since friendship, as a ‘virtue in itself,’ would have only instrumental value, as do the other virtues. Further references on this issue are in Long and Sedley (1987), vol. 2, p. 132.

³⁰ O'Connor also makes this point (O'Connor (1989) p. 185). However, Torquatus' description of Epicurean friendship in *DF* 1 does give Mitsis and Annas further justification for moving from the claim in SV 23 about the value of friendship to their claim about the value of one's friend. I consider this passage below.

³¹ Several audience members at the 22nd Annual Workshop in Ancient Philosophy made suggestions along these lines. In the form I present it here, it is closest to a proposal by Jim Hankinson.

³² Other scholars have also tried to explain away the appearance of ‘altruism’ in SV 23 along these lines. Long and Sedley say, “It seems credible that Epicurus could have described friendship in this way, even though he treats the

4b: Problems with FIP. I would like to be able to attribute FIP to Epicurus. FIP is consistent with the overall egoism and hedonism of Epicurus' ethics, unlike Mitsis' and Annas' interpretation, while allowing a concern for the value of friendship that seems less crude than simply viewing friends as a "mutual-aid society." Also, saying that one can simply take pleasure in having friends and interacting with them, without this pleasure arising from an instrumental concern for getting something further from one's friends, seems humane and plausible. Whatever the independent plausibility of FIP, however, there are at least three reasons, of increasing seriousness, not to attribute it to Epicurus:

(1) *Descriptions of the value of friendship.* Although FIP can explain SV 23, it does not fit in as well with other texts we have. In *De Finibus* and elsewhere, even though friendship is described as necessary for happiness and as supremely pleasant, the reason given for friendship being so valuable and pleasant is that it affords one security, as described earlier. The orthodox Epicurean texts do not say that interacting with one's friends is pleasant *per se*, nor do they say that we have a desire for friendship as such, apart from the expectation of the further benefits that one attains from friendship. FIP is more consonant with the second Epicurean theory expounded by Torquatus in *De Finibus*, where association with one's friend causes one to develop a disinterested fondness for one's friend. This theory, however, is an innovation by later Epicureans in response to academic criticisms, and it is inconsistent with orthodox Epicurean views.³³

If this argument from silence were the only grounds for disputing FIP, FIP might be acceptable. It could be said that even though most of the texts we have describe friendship as being valuable for the sake of the security and other goods it produces, it does not follow that

standard moral virtues as purely instrumental goods ... Friendship, so integral to happiness ... would thus be an inherently pleasurable state of mind, and not just a means to that end. On this interpretation, F1 [SV 23] does not imply anything as strongly altruistic as 'loving a friend just for his own sake.'" (Long and Sedley (1987) p. 137.) Rist makes a similar suggestion: "When Epicurus says that friendship is to be chosen for itself, perhaps he merely means not that it is ultimately valuable, but that it leads directly and without intermediaries to the acquisition of pleasure." (Rist (1972) p. 131.) In addition to the shortcomings of FIP that I will describe in section 4b, however, these interpretations have problems of their own. Long and Sedley leave unanswered the question of why this "state of mind" would be intrinsically pleasurable. Also, it seems strange to think of friendship as a "state of mind." Rist does not describe friendship as a state of mind, but he does not specify *why* friendship would lead directly to pleasure. Also, even if friendship does lead directly to pleasure, it would seem that it is still the pleasure that is valued for its own sake, not what produces the pleasure, no matter how directly.

³³ I discuss the second Epicurean theory in more detail later. However, FIP does not fit perfectly with the second theory, either, since it says that one has a disinterested love of one's friend, not an immediate desire for friendship.

this *excludes* friendship from also being intrinsically pleasurable. Furthermore, if FIP allows us to explain SV 23 in a way that is consistent with Epicurus' ethics, as well as make better sense of the extravagant claims made elsewhere about the value of friendship, this gives us good reason, based upon the principle of charity, to accept FIP as an Epicurean view. However, there are other reasons not to ascribe FIP to Epicurus.

(2) *The objects of our desires are not choiceworthy for their own sake.* FIP depends on drawing a parallel between friendship, which is desired for its own sake, and other objects of immediate desire, such as food and drink. However, not even food, drink, and the like are valued for their own sake, according to Epicurus. In *Ep. Men.* 128, Epicurus says that the two things that are valued for their own sake are *aponia* (bodily painlessness) and *ataraxia* (tranquillity). For Epicurus, it is *the pleasurable psychic states of having one's desires satisfied and having confidence that they will be satisfied* that are valued for their own sakes, not the objects of these desires themselves.³⁴ Thus, even if a parallel could be drawn between friendship and the other immediate objects of natural desires, such as food, this would not be enough by itself to explain how Epicurus can consistently describe friendship as worth choosing for its own sake, since not even food is worth choosing for its own sake.

This objection could be overcome, as follows: although *food* is not worth choosing for its own sake, *eating food*, as a process of satisfying one's desire for food, is pleasant, and the state of *having eaten food*, and now being satiated, is supremely pleasant. In fact, the state of being satiated is identical to one's katastematic pleasure; it is not a means to producing that pleasure. And if one sometimes passes up such pleasures as not being choiceworthy, it is only for the sake of further pleasures. Similarly, if one has a desire to have friends, then the state of having this desire satisfied—the state of having friends—is itself a katastematic pleasure, not merely a means to producing pleasure, and it is thus worth choosing for its own sake.³⁵ *Having friends* and

³⁴ See also Plutarch's report: Epicurus thinks it is the stable condition of the flesh and the reliable expectation concerning this condition that give us the highest and most secure joy (*A Pleasant Life* 1089d (Usener 89)). I take it, then, that these things are what we desire for their own sakes, and that food, drink, and the like are valuable because they are needed to obtain this homeostatic state.

³⁵ This might help to answer how friendship could be regarded as an "intrinsically pleasurable state of mind," as Long and Sedley suggested. However, this does raise a further issue: it seems that what is really intrinsically valuable, then, is one's *belief that one has friends*, rather than the actual relationship itself, which can still be regarded as a means to satisfying one's desire to have such a relationship.

having one's desire to have a friendship satisfied are so intimately connected that, even if, strictly speaking, SV 23 would be slightly inaccurate in describing *friendship* as being worth choosing for its own sake, FIP allows us to see why it would be natural for Epicurus to describe friendship as worth choosing for its own sake.

(3) *The Dependence of Mental Pleasures on Bodily Pleasures.* Thus far, despite the objections above, FIP does seem plausible. However, we must now challenge the main thesis behind it: that a person can have an immediate desire for friendship, like one's other natural and necessary desires, and thus find friendship intrinsically pleasurable. If friendship is intrinsically pleasurable, it must be as a mental pleasure. Epicureans do say that friendship helps secure physical pleasures for oneself, such as having food and protection from assault. However, if friendship is supposed to be valuable for its own sake, and not merely for the sake of securing such physical goods, then interacting with one's friends and knowing that one's friends are around would themselves need to be pleasurable, and these could only be mental pleasures, not physical ones.

However, according to the Epicureans, all mental pleasures depend on bodily pleasures, so activities like conversations with friends would not be pleasurable *per se*.³⁶ In the *De Finibus*, Cicero says that Epicurus would never allow that pursuits like literature and learning are pleasurable in themselves. Later in the dialogue Torquatus agrees with this, although he also says that some later Epicureans (who do not speak with any authority) do allow mental pleasures that do not arise out of bodily ones.³⁷ Mental pleasures are superior to bodily ones, since they encompass the past and future, not just the present, but they depend on bodily pleasures in the following way: we gain the mental pleasure of *ataraxia* when we can be confident that we will be able to meet our bodily needs in the future. So, it is not just an accidental omission that the value of friendship is described in terms of the security from physical danger that friendship provides instead of the pleasure that comes simply from having friends and interacting with

³⁶ "Epicurus thinks that all joy of the soul supervenes on the prior experiences of the body," Clement of Alexandria *Stromates* 2.21,130.8-9 pp. 184-5 St. (Usener 451). Also see *DF* 1 55. This does not mean that one must be experiencing bodily pleasures in order to experience mental pleasures, since even somebody in extreme physical pain can be tranquil, as long as he has pleasant memories of past pleasures and confident expectations that the future will be pleasant.

³⁷ *DF* 1 25 and *DF* 1 55.

them—it is part and parcel of the Epicureans’ view of the origin of pleasures and pains, and their denial that mental pleasures can be divorced from physical ones.³⁸

This is the primary obstacle to attributing FIP to Epicurus. Epicurus’ view that all mental pleasures depend on bodily ones may be implausible; if so, FIP may be superior to Epicurus’ own account of how friendship can be pleasurable. However, since Epicurus does think that mental pleasures depend on bodily ones, it would be inconsistent for him to admit that having friends can itself be pleasant, apart from expectations of security or memory of past benefits.

Nonetheless, if attributing FIP to Epicurus were the only way to accommodate SV 23 within an egoistic interpretation of Epicurean friendship, I would accept it rather than Mitsis’ view. Even though it conflicts with the Epicurean doctrine that all mental pleasures supervene on bodily pleasures, that is a much smaller inconsistency, and at a further remove from the texts on friendship, than the great inconsistencies generated by assigning an altruistic, other-regarding concern for his friend to the Epicurean wise man.

4c: Friendship is a component of *ataraxia*: a second suggestion on how to reconcile SV 23 with egoism. Although mental pleasures are dependent on bodily pleasures, they are still valued for their own sake. Tranquillity is intrinsically valuable, even though it is largely based upon a confidence about not being in bodily pain in the future. The simplest way to make SV 33 consistent with Epicurus’ overall ethics is to assert that friendship is simply identical to *ataraxia*, or at least is a component of *ataraxia*, and since *ataraxia* is worth choosing for its own sake, friendship would be as well.

³⁸ There are many ancient testimonia directly attributing the doctrine of the dependence of mental on bodily pleasures to Epicurus, and statements of his own that support this doctrine. (In addition to the sources cited above in n. 23, 34, 36 and 37, see also *Tusculan Disputations* 3.41, *DL* 2 89, Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 12, 546f (406 U), and Plutarch *A Pleasant Life* 1088e (417 U).) Nonetheless, some scholars have raised doubts on this point. For instance, Long and Sedley write that this doctrine cannot account for the pleasures derived from the removal of fear of death and the gods, and from remembering philosophical conversations (*DL* 10 22). (Long and Sedley (1987) vol. 1 p. 132). Annas, relying on Philodemus’ *On Anger*, states that there can be natural desires (such as the desire for retaliation) that are not dependent on bodily desires (Annas (1993) pp. 194-200 and Annas (1989)). (I believe that Philodemus’ conclusion that the ‘naturally angry’ person ends up being called *unangered* undercuts Annas’ argument, but I will not pursue that point here.) See also Purinton (1993), esp. pp. 312-314, for another interpretation, according to which katastematic pleasures depend on kinetic pleasures (so it is not merely the anticipation of future *aponia* and memory of past *aponia* that results in *ataraxia*), and all kinetic pleasures are bodily, so that mental pleasures still *do* depend on bodily pleasures. In any case, raising doubts about this doctrine would help increase the plausibility of FIP, which in turn would make my project of reconciling SV 23 with an egoistic interpretation of Epicurus easier. Unfortunately, I find the *prima facie* evidence for attributing this doctrine to Epicurus strong, even though I think that in itself it is highly dubious.

This thesis—that friendship is, in some sense, a component of *ataraxia*—has been proposed by Matt Evans,³⁹ and I will call it the “Friendship is a Component of *Ataraxia*” (FCA) thesis. The obvious question confronting FCA is how friendship, a relationship between two or more people, can be intelligibly identified as a component of *ataraxia*, a psychic state of an individual.

Evans tries to answer this question by pointing to the central roles that security and trust play in Epicurean friendship. Essential to a true friendship is the trust that friends have in one another, their assurance that, in the future, they will provide for one another’s needs. Facing the future fearlessly and with confidence that one’s needs will be met, however, just is *ataraxia*, not simply a means to it, and is worth choosing for its own sake.

Although friendship is a relationship between people, an *essential component* of this relationship (*not* merely a means to securing the relationship) is my trust that my friends will provide for me when I need their assistance.⁴⁰ Having confidence that my needs will be met in the future, however, and thus lacking anxiety about the future, *is* the psychic state of *ataraxia*. (However, this confidence is not *simply* a matter of knowing that my friends will be there to help me out, but also of having other beliefs that make me trust that the future holds nothing to fear; *e.g.*, knowing that “death is nothing to us,” that the needs of the body are easy to satisfy, that intense pains are limited in duration, *etc.* This is why I say that friendship is a *component* of *ataraxia* according to this view, not simply identical to it *tout court*.) In choosing to form a friendship, one is also choosing to have a well-grounded confidence in the help of one’s friend, and this confidence is worth choosing for its own sake.

³⁹ Evans, unpublished manuscript. My discussion of the “component thesis” is simply my paraphrasing of Evans’ own ideas, which are developed in much more detail in his own work. I am indebted to him for his way of formulating the relationship between mental and physical pleasures, and the importance of security for Epicurean friendship. Although I had pointed to the dependence of mental on bodily pleasures and to the central role of security in Epicurean friendship in earlier versions of this paper, his discussion of these subjects is much more clear than my own was, and I am happy to incorporate his work in my own.

⁴⁰ Unfortunately for Evans, it now sounds as if it is a *component* of friendship, rather than friendship *tout court*, that is the same as a component of *ataraxia*. In order to avoid this consequence, Evans could restate his view as follows: in the same way that we can view justice both as (i) a feature of social institutions (and relations among people) and (ii) a personal virtue which allows people to conform to the dictates of societal justice for the right reasons, so too we can view friendship both as a relation amongst people and as the psychic state of the friends that allows them to enter into this relationship. And when Epicurus says that friendship is worth choosing for its own sake, he is referring to friendship as a psychic state.

Whether one finds FCA acceptable hinges on how natural one finds identifying confidence about the future as a component of true Epicurean friendship, and identifying this confidence as a component of *ataraxia*. I do not find either particularly strained, although I am hesitant to attribute them to Epicurus on the basis of SV 23. The importance of trust and confidence in true Epicurean friendship is manifest, and thinking of this confidence as a *component* of friendship, rather than a means to it, is fairly natural. It is also not *too* difficult to identify having confidence in the help of one's friends as a part of *ataraxia*. However, I think it is more natural to take trust in one's friends, along with the key Epicurean beliefs about the workings of the world, as the *grounds* for being confident about the future and tranquil, rather than themselves being *identified* with tranquillity. Epicurus standardly says that having correct beliefs about the workings of the world is the *ground* for one's confidence about the future,⁴¹ and hence for one's *ataraxia*. If trust in one's friends can be cashed out as having correct beliefs about the help one will receive from one's friends, then by parity of reasoning these correct beliefs ought also to be interpreted as a ground for having confidence about the future, not a component of *ataraxia* itself. And thus, they would not be intrinsically valuable.

Nonetheless, even if SV 23 would be slightly inaccurate in describing *friendship* as being worth choosing for its own sake, FCA allows us to see why it would nonetheless be natural for Epicurus to describe friendship in this way, given the close connection between *having friends* and *having confidence about the future* and between *having confidence about the future* and *ataraxia*.

4d: Assigning SV 23 to the 'timid' Epicureans. Despite the criticisms of both FIP and FCA above, I think that either is plausible (FCA more so than FIP). Thus, even if we regard the emended text of SV23 as Epicurus' own, there would still be no good reason to attribute an other-regarding element to Epicurus' theory of friendship on its basis, since the altruistic interpretation is highly implausible.

⁴¹ See, for instance *KD* 11-13, and *Ep. Pyth.* 85: correct beliefs about the workings of the world are needed *in order to gain* confidence about the future and banish groundless fears, but these correct beliefs are not the same as the confidence that they engender.

However, FIP and FCA do have some problems, and neither seems to fit easily with everything else in Epicurus' ethics. We can avoid these problems by not attributing *SV 23* to Epicurus, but instead attributing it to later Epicureans. Such a solution would normally appear *ad hoc*, especially since later Epicureans were generally doctrinally conservative.⁴² In this case, however, the solution is credible. *SV 23* is transmitted only in the *Vatican Sayings*. Not all of the *Vatican Sayings* are from Epicurus; some are from his followers. Furthermore, we have independent evidence that there *was* a group of later Epicureans (the "tender-minded," timid Epicureans who give the second justification of friendship Torquatus recounts in *De Finibus* 1) who *do* hold that the original motive for entering into friendship is self-interested, but that later one comes to value one's friend for his own sake.⁴³ *SV 23* makes perfect sense in light of the 'timid' Epicurean theory of friendship: we enter into relations with other people in order to gain pleasure (and thus, friendship takes its origins from the benefits that it confers on us), but we later come to care for our friends for their own sake (and thus, friendship becomes worth choosing for its own sake). On this interpretation, we could say that the original Epicurean doctrine of friendship was tough-mindedly self-regarding, but that later Epicureans, as described in *De Finibus*, softened this view in response to criticism, and it was probably a member of this group to whom we can ascribe *SV 23*. If (i) attributing the emended version of *SV 23* to Epicurus would force us to conclude that Epicurus is inconsistent, (ii) we know that some of the *Vatican Sayings* are from later Epicureans, and (iii) we know that there is a group of later Epicureans who had a theory of friendship in light of which *SV23* can be easily explained, then attributing *SV 23* to these later Epicureans is reasonable.

4e: *SV 23*: Conclusion. As I argued in section 2 of this paper, there should be a heavy presumption against interpreting Epicurus' theory of friendship as altruistic, and I think that there are at least four other ways of accommodating *SV 23* within Epicurus' theory, each of which is more plausible than the "altruistic" interpretation. In the spirit of Epicurus' theory of multiple

⁴² See Sedley (1989) for more on the extent and sources of Epicurean doctrinal conservatism.

⁴³ The second theory of friendship runs as follows: although we originally enter into friendship for self-interested motives, spending time together engenders familiarity, so that we come to love our friends for their own sake, even if we gain no advantage from the friendship. This is likened to the process whereby we (supposedly) come to have disinterested affection for pets, familiar activities, our home city, and the like, by repeated association with them. In the second theory, it is explicitly denied that friendship is desirable only for the sake of one's own pleasure.

explanations, I will not prematurely insist that any one of them is certainly correct,⁴⁴ but I do think that the probability of one of them being correct is much higher than the probability that Epicurus thought we must value the welfare of our friends simply for their own sake.

The simplest and strongest way to avoid the problems of *SV 23* is to attribute it to later Epicureans. This can be done quite naturally, since we have a group of likely suspects already described by Cicero, with whose view *SV 23* fits in very well, and the *Vatican Sayings* do contain material from later Epicureans. If one accepts this theory, then Epicurus himself does not describe friendship as worth choosing for its own sake; instead, for him and earlier Epicureans, it is worth choosing because of the security from danger (and the confidence in that security) that it affords.

However, even if *SV 23* is Epicurus' own, there are three ways of avoiding interpreting Epicurus' theory as altruistic. The first way is FIP. The main difficulty with FIP is that it apparently violates the Epicurean maxim that all mental pleasures are dependent on bodily pleasures and postulates an independent natural and necessary desire with friendship as its object. Otherwise, however, it fits the descriptions that we have of the value of friendship better than does the 'altruistic' interpretation, and the inconsistency that it foists upon Epicurus is less glaring and less central than the one attributed to him on the 'altruistic' interpretation. The second way is FCA. Although it does require some moderately strenuous gymnastics to identify friendship as a component of *ataraxia*, and thus as worth choosing for its own sake, the maneuvers it requires are plausible, and the picture of the value of friendship that emerges on FCA fits in extremely well with the stress in Epicureanism on the centrality of security both for friendship and for *ataraxia*. Finally, we could retain the original manuscript reading of *SV 23*, which poses no problems for an egoistic interpretation of Epicurus' theory (see n. 29).

5. *DF 1*: Egoistically loving your friend as much as you love yourself

Let me now turn to Torquatus' exposition of the first of three Epicurean theories on friendship in *DF 1*. There are three reasons why I look at this passage in particular: (1) It is one of the few places that contains an extended argument for Epicurus' view on friendship, not just

⁴⁴ *Ep. Pyth.* 85-8. Unlike in the Epicurean theory of multiple explanations, however, I think that only one of the possible explanations is correct, not all of them.

aphorisms. Understanding it will help us to understand many of Epicurus' more epigrammatic remarks. (2) This passage is itself a source of some of the seemingly most altruistic sayings of the Epicureans on friendship: in it, Torquatus claims that the wise man will love his friend as much as himself, feel exactly the same toward his friend as toward himself, and exert himself as much for his friend's pleasure as for his own (*DF* 1 67-68). (3) It reports a genuinely original Epicurean view, as opposed to the revisionist second Epicurean theory expounded by Torquatus.⁴⁵

Torquatus, in his exposition of the first theory, argues as follows: (i) our friends' pleasures are not desired by us to the same degree as our own, but (ii) friendship is necessary for us to attain the greatest pleasure for ourselves, and (iii) friendship requires us to love our friends as much as ourselves, so that (iv) we do love our friends as much as ourselves, on egoistic grounds. Torquatus elaborates on (iv), saying that the wise man will feel exactly the same toward his friend as toward himself, exert himself as much for his friend's pleasure as for his own, *etc.*

5a: Seeming problems of Torquatus' argument. At least initially, this position suffers from obvious problems. The first, and most serious, is that there appears to be an immediate internal contradiction: we care only for our own pleasure for its own sake,⁴⁶ and yet we also care for our friends and our friends' pleasures as much as we do for ourselves and our own pleasures. Also, the process that Torquatus describes, in which you come to love your friend as much as

⁴⁵ When discussing the second theory, Cicero remarks, "You quoted another and more humane dictum of the more modern Epicureans, which so far as I know was never uttered by the master himself. This is to the effect that, although at the outset we desire a man's friendship for utilitarian reasons, yet when intimacy has grown up we love our friend for his own sake..." (*DF* 2 82) Torquatus says that the second theory was developed as a response to attacks on the Epicureans by the skeptical Academy (*DF* 1 69). Cicero adds that he recognizes a saying of Epicurus' own in Torquatus' exposition of the first theory: friendship derives its value from the pleasure it gives us. (*DF* 2 82)

However, it is not certain that *any* of the three passages correctly represent Epicurus' own view. Evans, for instance, argues that *all three* of the theories represent attempts by later Epicureans, in response to critics of Epicurus' egoism, to fit the altruistic notion that one should "love one's friend as much as oneself" within the confines of Epicurus' egoistic theory. According to Evans, to try to respond in this way to the critics was misguided, and Epicurus himself would have rejected the altruistic demand rather than trying to accommodate it. O'Connor (1989) p. 184 argues along similar lines, and calls Torquatus' argument "lame." I am sympathetic to Evans' and O'Connor's stance, and I think that if there were no way of consistently reconciling the first defense of friendship with Epicurus' overall ethics, employing their maneuver would be preferable to attributing a blatant inconsistency to Epicurus. However, there is no indication in the passage that the first theory of friendship is a later innovation, and if an interpretation consistent with Epicurus' ethics can be given—as I believe it can—the passage can help us to understand Epicurus' theory more fully than Epicurus' own more aphoristic material which we have available.

⁴⁶ The passage does not explicitly say this: it says only that we do not esteem our friends' pleasures *as highly as* our own. This would itself be enough to generate a contradiction, if the Epicurean is supposed also to value his friends' pleasures exactly the same as his own. But I think that Torquatus is understating the position here, and that, under the first theory, *only* one's own pleasure is valued for its own sake. I argue for this later.

yourself, suffers from psychological implausibility: is it possible to decide, on egoistic grounds, to cultivate a disinterested love of others?⁴⁷ This isn't a *contradiction*—after all, people can play all sorts of mind games with themselves⁴⁸—but it does seem that the presence of the blatantly egoistic motive would undercut the attempt to develop a disinterested love.

Additionally, the Epicurean Wise Man apparently suffers from a serious case of doublethink. Does the person who develops this disinterested love on egoistic grounds at that point really love his friend for the friend's own sake? If he does, then he is no longer an egoist (*pace* the standard Epicurean position). If he does not, he is engaging in "doublethink." He loves his friend for the friend's own sake, because by loving his friend for the friend's own sake, he can thereby maximize his own pleasure, which is the only thing he considers intrinsically valuable. The position, as described, is either inconsistent about how it describes the final ends of the Epicurean Sage, or (consistently within itself) it ascribes to the Epicurean Sage inconsistent motives.

5b: Reasons internal to the passage for an egoistic interpretation. The text, considered in itself, does not clearly exhibit what Torquatus means when he asserts things like 'the wise man will love his friend as much as himself.' Therefore, it is worthwhile to stress the reasons *within this passage* for interpreting them egoistically, in addition to the general reasons given in section 2. I touched upon the main reason for this just now: within the context of the first argument, Torquatus says that *only one's own pleasures* are valued and valuable for their own sakes. Not attributing a blatant contradiction to somebody within a few lines is a minimal application of the principle of charity.

Furthermore, the justification for entering into friendship is framed explicitly in terms of attaining pleasure for oneself. And at the end of the passage, immediately after describing how the Epicurean will feel exactly toward his friend as he does toward himself, Torquatus adds, "All that has been said about the essential connection of the virtues with pleasure must be repeated

⁴⁷ Cicero points out this problem: " 'It pays me,' says he, 'to be a disinterested friend.' No, perhaps it pays you to seem so. Be so you cannot, unless you really are; but how can you be a disinterested friend unless you feel genuine affection? Yet affection does not commonly result from any calculation of expediency." (DF 2 78)

⁴⁸ For instance, consider the person described in Pascal's wager, who cannot believe in God initially, but gets himself sprinkled with holy water, has masses said for himself, and engages in other sorts of psychological trickery in order to make himself believe in God, because he thinks having this belief is prudent.

about friendship.” (*DF* 1 68) Torquatus, in the earlier sections of the *De Finibus*, had gone on at length about how the virtues are valued *only* as instrumental goods, so the comparison strongly suggests that the same instrumental view is being taken here toward the value of friendship. And in *DF* 2, when discussing this Epicurean theory of friendship, Cicero says that he recognizes “a saying of Epicurus himself—that friendship cannot be divorced from pleasure, and that it deserves to be cultivated for the reason that without it we cannot live secure and free from alarm, and therefore cannot live agreeably.” (*DL* 2 82)

At first the passage seems to say only that our friends’ pleasures are not desired by us *to the same degree* as our own, and that our loving our friends as much as ourselves is *justified* on egoistic grounds. This may seem to leave open the possibility that although friendship is *justified* instrumentally, nonetheless there might be an element of intrinsic other-regardingness psychologically.⁴⁹ However, Torquatus’ later description of the *second* Epicurean position, that of the timid revisionist Epicureans, shows that the assertion that “our friends’ pleasures are not desired by us to the same degree as our own” is an understatement, and that, according to the first position, friendship is valued *entirely* on instrumental grounds. Torquatus, when describing what it is in the first position that causes the “timid” Epicureans to offer their alternative account, says that “[they] fear that if we hold friendship to be desirable *only for the pleasure that it affords to ourselves*, it will be thought to be crippled altogether.” And then they develop a theory in which, although the friend initially is prompted only by a desire for his own pleasure, he later develops a love for the other which is *not* rooted in a desire for one’s own pleasure. The contrast with the first theory is clear: in the first theory, not only is the first approach prompted by a desire for pleasure, but that desire also continues to be one’s sole motive later on, even though one does love the friend as much as oneself.

5c: Reconciliation: how to love others equally as oneself on egoistic grounds. We now come to the crux: how can we reconcile the Epicurean insistence that the Wise Man loves his friend as much as himself with the equally strong insistence that friendship is only valued and valuable because of the pleasure that it affords oneself? The first seems to demand that the

⁴⁹ Although this itself would be seriously problematic for the Epicurean ethical theory (see section 2b) and would not save the passage from contradicting itself (see section 4b).

Epicurean be other-regarding, while the second demands that the Epicurean be only self-regarding. In other words, how is it possible to love others as much as oneself on egoistic grounds?

My proposal is that we should interpret the talk about “loving one’s friend as much as oneself” in *behavioral* terms. “Love your friend as much as yourself” prescribes a policy of action, instead of describing what one ultimately values. As Torquatus puts it: we desire pleasure for ourselves, and we see that friendship is one of the best means of attaining that end. If we are wise, however, we will also realize that we must *treat* our friends as well as we *treat* ourselves in order to have a stable friendship. Thus, on egoistic grounds, we do treat our friends as well as we treat ourselves.⁵⁰ To “love” our friends as much as ourselves is a matter of not favoring our interests over theirs when deciding how to act. If we are good friends, we cannot allow our friends to suffer some great pain for the sake of ourselves avoiding some smaller pain. At a common-sense level, we can’t harm our friends for the sake of some advantage to ourselves. Even more strongly, we must weigh their interests equally with our own when deciding how to act. Doing so is needed in order to maintain a true friendship, and true friendships are one of the best means for us to attain *ataraxia*.

At this point, one might object that the position is still contradictory, if not at the level of feelings, then at least at the level of strategy and the final goals of my actions. As I describe it, it appears that my pleasure is the final goal of my every action, with all else being pursued only instrumentally as means to that end, but also at the same time (inconsistently) that the pleasure of my friend is *also* the final goal of my action, since I weigh his pleasures equally with mine when deciding how to act.⁵¹

There is no inconsistency here, however. Some analogies will help to make clear how this position is consistent. The first comparison is with act vs. rule utilitarianism.⁵² Let’s assume that

⁵⁰ Mitsis (1988) p. 113 describes a similar interpretation of the passage before dismissing it as ascribing inconsistent ends to the Epicurean. I discuss this objection below.

⁵¹ Mitsis (1988) p. 113 and Annas (1993) pp. 241-242 raise objections along these lines.

⁵² I’m taking “act” vs. “rule” utilitarianism here as two methods for determining what to do, as opposed to being two different theories about the criterion of the rightness and wrongness of actions. Others might disagree with this characterization of what is distinctive about act vs. rule utilitarianism and object that the “rule-utilitarian” as I’m describing him is simply an act-utilitarian who utilizes rules of thumb. However, my point does not rest upon whether my use of the terms conforms to all other uses, as long as the basic distinction between two different decision-making strategies is clear.

my ultimate aim is to maximize overall utility. I might recognize that to pursue this goal directly would be self-defeating. If I try to do whatever seems to me at the moment to have maximal utility, this strategy will ensure (given my own epistemic limitations) that I will make the wrong choices at many points and *not* maximize utility. So I follow a certain set of rules instead, even when it appears to me that following these rules, in particular cases, does not have the best overall results.⁵³ This “rule-utilitarian” does not have contradictory final ends; neither does the Epicurean.

We can put this point in terms of first- vs. second-order strategies. Using a second-order strategy, I can decide that the best first-order strategy is to weigh equally my friends’ pleasures and pains and my own, because when deciding among first-order strategies I can determine, based upon my *ultimate* goal of maximizing my own pleasure, that this is the best strategy to pursue. If I were instead to pursue a first-order strategy of favoring my own interests over my friends’ interests whenever I thought I would thereby gain, I would ultimately do much worse in attaining pleasure than the *sapiens* who weighs his friends’ pleasures and his own equally. Similarly, the rule-utilitarian might argue that by not using the first-order strategy of trying to maximize utility directly he does much better than the crude act-utilitarian does at attaining the ultimate goal of maximizing utility. There is no equivocation here by the *sapiens* about value: on the level of what characteristics make something valuable, only my own pleasure makes things valuable, whereas on the level of what factors I consider in my decision procedure, my friends’ pleasures and my own are weighed equally.⁵⁴

An ancient example of distinguishing between what is valuable and what one aims at in deciding what to do can be found in the Stoics’ target simile, which is used to make sense of their doctrine that we ought to aim at preferred indifferents, such as health, even though they are

⁵³ There might be a problem with ‘exceptions’ to these rules causing rule utilitarianism to collapse back into act utilitarianism, but I do not address that issue, since all I need for my purposes is that this position is at least *prima facie* coherent.

⁵⁴ An influential modern example of a utilitarian distinguishing between different levels of thinking along these lines is Hare (1981), part I, esp. section 3 (pp. 44-64), and also section 8 in part II (pp. 130-146). Bales (1971) does an excellent job of distinguishing between “right-making characteristics” and “decision-making procedures” and shows how it is consistent for a utilitarian, on good utilitarian grounds, to employ a decision-making procedure that does not involve estimating and comparing probable consequences of alternative particular acts. The classic source of such a distinction is Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapter 2, where he stresses the necessity of “subordinate principles” for regulating conduct.

not good in themselves, since only virtue is good in itself. If the target simile succeeds, it shows that there is no contradiction in the Stoics' view. They believe that we must aim at the target (the preferred indifferents) as best we can, in order to achieve what we *really* want to accomplish, which is virtue, since virtuous action consists in "[doing] everything in one's power ... with a view to obtaining the predominating things which accord with nature [i.e., the preferred indifferents]." ⁵⁵ Similarly, to aim equally at the good of one's friend and of oneself in one's actions, to weigh them equally, is consistent with doing so for the sake of ultimately attaining pleasure for oneself.

It is true that there is one sense in which the Epicurean values his friends as much as himself (he weighs their pleasures and pains equally with his own in deciding what to do) and another in which he does not (he regards only his own pleasure as having intrinsic value for himself). But the Epicurean position does not depend on *equivocating* on these two senses, any more than the Stoic equivocates who says that the preferred indifferents are both valuable (in one sense) and not valuable (in another), or the rule-utilitarian equivocates who (in one sense) aims at only utility and (in another) aims at things other than utility as his final goal. Nor does the position involve any doublethink. After all, Torquatus starts his exposition of the first Epicurean theory by stating that according to its proponents only one's own pleasure has value for oneself, and the later context makes this commitment even more clear (see section 5b above). Nonetheless, according to this position one *can* love one's friend equally as oneself. Given that the self-regarding nature of the position is underlined at both the beginning and end of its exposition, the most reasonable way of interpreting the passage is to read Torquatus as saying that, even though only one's own pleasure has intrinsic value, there still is *another* sense in which one loves one's friends equally as oneself—that is, one *treats* one's friends as well as one treats oneself. This sense of 'loving' one's friend as much as oneself would strike many critics as

⁵⁵ Stobaeus 2.76, 9-15, reporting the views of Antipater, trans. Long and Sedley (1987), 58K. On the target metaphor, see *DF* 3 22, and Gisela Striker (1985). On the necessity of preferred indifferents for the exercise of virtue, see also *DF* 3 50ff. I realize that other objections can be brought against the Stoics' view of the value of preferred indifferents. However, my use of the target metaphor to illustrate the coherence of the Epicurean position, and to show that the sort of distinction I am attributing to the Epicureans is not anachronistic, does not depend upon the Stoic position being free of difficulties.

too niggardly to deserve the name ‘love,’ and Cicero makes precisely this charge.⁵⁶ However, the Latin verb *diligo* (the term used by Torquatus, translated as ‘love’ in the key passage) and the Greek verb Φιλέω (the term for ‘friendship’ love) admit of both affective and behavioral uses. The meanings of both *diligo* and Φιλέω allow one to say that one ‘loves’ another using these terms, in the sense that one has a disposition to *treat* one’s friend well, and there is some precedent in Aristotle for viewing ‘love’ in this way.⁵⁷ Another apparently problematic claim that Torquatus makes while expounding the first theory is that the wise man will “have exactly the same feelings toward his friend as toward himself” (*DF* 1 68). However, the Latin phrase rendered above as *feeling* exactly for one’s friends as one does for oneself can also mean, more

⁵⁶ *DF* 2 78. Note, however, that he uses forms of *amo* when charging the Epicurean with lacking ‘love’ of one’s friends, whereas the word used by Torquatus for ‘loving’ one’s friend as oneself, *diligo*, can more naturally be thought of in behavioral terms. See note 57 for more on this issue.

⁵⁷ Here is the key passage from *DF* I 67 (with Rackham’s translation): “Quod quia nullo modo sine amicitia firmam et perpetuam iucunditatem vitae tenere possumus neque vero ipsam amicitiam tueri nisi aequae amicos et nosmet ipsos diligamus...” (“Without friendship we are quite unable to secure a joy in life which is steady and lasting, nor can we preserve friendship itself unless we love our friends as much as ourselves.”)

On *diligo*, see e.g., Lewis and Short (1975), which says that “Prop., to distinguish one by selecting him from others; hence, in gen., to value or esteem highly, to love.” The associated noun/participle *dilectus* similarly has a behavioral sense ‘picking out, choosing’, as does the associated adjective *diligens* ‘diligent, attentive, scrupulous’. An alternative translation that highlights this aspect of the term might be ‘...unless we *care for* our friends as much as ourselves.’ Further undermining the suspicion of equivocation is that Torquatus does not use a form of *diligo* in describing the *value* of one’s own pleasure on the first theory. Instead he says that “amicitiam propter nostram voluptatem expetendam putemas” (“we regard friendship as desirable for the sake of our own pleasure”), in line with the ‘two-level’ interpretation. (*DF* I 68)

Φιλέω also has both affective and behavioral uses. Aristotle gives precedent for seeing the love of one friend for another in terms of what the friends *do*. He defines Φιλέω in *Rhetoric* 2.4 as wishing good things for another and being disposed to get these goods for him to the extent one can. Thus he defines ‘loving’ primarily in terms of what one does for another, although he adds that it has to be for the right reason (i.e., for the sake of one’s friend), and would thus say the Epicureans do not really love one another. Elsewhere he relaxes the restriction on the motive of the beneficial behavior, and the Epicurean (as I describe him) would qualify as loving his friend, albeit in a way lower than in the virtue friendship. See *EE* 7 ii 14 1236a 33 ff.: the friendship of usefulness is the friendship of most people, in which the people “love one another because they are useful,” and in this friendship (as in all) one wishes goods for one’s friend (*EE* VII xi 5, 1244a20 ff.). The sense of “loving one’s friends as much as oneself” that I attribute to the Epicureans fits Aristotle’s definition of friendship in terms of mutual (and mutually aware) goodwill (i.e., wishing of one another’s good) motivated by one of three factors, which can include the usefulness of the other person (*NE* 8 ii 4, 1156a2 ff.). See also Aristotle’s assertion in *NE* 8 v 3, 1157b29 ff. that the love of friendship is primarily a fixed disposition to wish the friend’s good, *not* an emotion one feels, and some of the senses of Φιλέω in Liddel and Scott (1968): “2. treat affectionately or kindly, esp. welcome, entertain a guest,” and “4. show outward signs of love, esp. kiss.” (NB: I am not trying to assimilate Aristotle’s position to Epicurus’ here, nor am I denying that there are affective components to Aristotelian friendship, nor am I denying that there are affective uses and components to Φιλέω and *diligo*. I am simply saying that primarily behavioral senses of loving one’s friends equally as oneself are available in the meanings of these terms, and that the view that loving others is mainly a matter of what one *does* is suggested, if not ultimately endorsed, by some of Aristotle’s writings.)

generically, ‘being disposed’ towards them as one is towards oneself, which is compatible with my interpretation.⁵⁸

5d: Is a ‘Two-Level’ Strategy Available to Epicurus? Examining KD 25. I think that this interpretation of the *DF* 1 argument is bolstered by its consonance with other Epicurean texts that describe the nature of friendship. Something like the distinction between first- and second-order strategies that I sketched above can be found in other Epicurean texts that deal with friendship. For instance, *SV* 34 states: “we do not need the help of our friends so much as we need confidence concerning that help.” Here, Epicurus says that *confidence* in one’s friends is more important than *direct* usefulness; however, having this confidence is what is ultimately most important for attaining what one needs, and hence for the friendship being useful. Nothing in *SV* 34 indicates that gaining benefits from the friendship is not what is *ultimately* important. Nonetheless, even if gaining these benefits is what matters in the end, it is more important to have the trust and confidence of one’s friend than it is to be directly benefited.⁵⁹ In *SV* 39, Epicurus writes, “the constant friend is neither he who always searches for help, nor he who never links [friendship to help]. For the former makes gratitude a matter for commercial transaction, while the latter kills off good hope for the future.”

As discussed above (sections 3a and 4c), security is more important than the immediate benefits that one derives from one’s friend because of the place of fear in the Epicurean theory—confidence banishes fear, and it is the *fear* of bad things happening to us that is the main destroyer of *ataraxia*, not the bad things themselves.

⁵⁸ The passage runs as follows: “Quocirca eodem modo sapiens erit affectus erga amicum quo in se ipsum, quosque labores propter suam voluptatem susciperet, eosdem suscipiet propter amici voluptatem.” (Rackham trans.: “Therefore the wise man will have exactly the same feelings toward his friend as toward himself, and will work for his friend’s pleasure as much as he will for his own.”) However, the phrase Rackham translates as “having the same feelings” is ‘erit affectus...’ *Adfectus* need not refer to ‘feeling’ specifically; it is much more generic than that, and I would prefer to take it as simply “being disposed” or “being inclined” toward one’s friend as toward oneself, where the context (and rest of the sentence) supplies the sense in which one is ‘inclined’ toward one’s friend; i.e., one will work on his behalf equally as on one’s own. (See Lewis and Short (1975), under *afficio*: “Of persons, in gen. sense, disposed, affected, moved, touched.”) This reading is strengthened by Cicero’s discussion of friendship in *De amicitia* 56-57, where he criticizes the view that we must have the same feelings/dispositions for our friends as for ourselves. The wording of this view is almost the same as in the passage above (using a form of *adfectus*), and Cicero criticizes it on the grounds that we should not *treat* our friends the same as we treat ourselves.

⁵⁹ The centrality of trust for friendship in Epicureanism is also shown by Epicurus’ opinion that the members of a community should not have a common stock of property, because to do so implies distrust, and distrust is incompatible with friendship. (*DL* 10 11)

I think that these passages show that Epicurus is aware of the distinction between aiming immediately at getting what is beneficial to oneself, vs. aiming at something other than direct benefits, but in such a way as is consistent with (ultimately) attaining what one desires. Hence, aiming at both one's own pleasure and one's friends' pleasure is not an abandonment of an instrumental view of friendship's value at all, although initially it might seem to be.

Annas, however, believes that even though Epicurus "needs" a two-level strategy, something like what is sketched out above, we cannot ascribe such a view to him, "even implicitly."⁶⁰ She writes that Epicurus, to the extent that he seems aware of 'two-level' views, rejects them. Her main text in support of this contention is *KD 25*:

If you fail to refer each of your actions on every occasion to nature's end, and stop short at something else in choosing or avoiding, your actions will not be consistent with your theories. (tr. after Long and Sedley (1987))

Annas says that "[*KD 25*] seems to imply that in every act of friendship I should be asking myself, not about the welfare of my friend, but directly about my own final end, pleasure."⁶¹

I see little reason to interpret *KD 25* this way. First of all, there is scant evidence in the rest of Epicurus' ethics to support Annas' contention that, in every action I perform, I ask myself how it will give me pleasure, repeatedly weighing the consequences of individual actions in a sort of Benthamite felicity calculus. Epicurus' general ethical reasoning is much more "second-order" than that. Instead of asking, "Will this action get me what I desire?" the usual Epicurean questions are, "What desires should I have so that I can most effectively satisfy them?" and "What type of life should I lead and what sort of character should I have in order to gain tranquillity?" Once these questions are answered—and in the case of friendship, when considering what type of life to lead, the answer will be that I need to weigh the pleasures and pains of my friends equally with my own when deciding what to do—I do not need to refer individual actions to the goal of maximizing my pleasure.⁶²

⁶⁰ Annas (1993) p. 242

⁶¹ Annas (1993) p. 241

⁶² See Mitsis (1988) pp. 19-39 for further persuasive discussion of the differences between Epicurus' calculus and a Benthamite utility calculus. Pleasure for Epicurus is not an occurrent sensation that can vary in quantity and be maximized in a Benthamite fashion; instead, one wants to achieve a lasting and secure state of tranquillity, in which pleasure can no longer be increased, but only varied. (*KD 18*) Although Epicurus does say in *Ep. Men.* 130 that we should choose among pleasures and displeasures by "comparative measurement and an examination of the

Secondly, who would Epicurus be attacking, if *KD 25* were directed against a two-level theory? As far as I know, no opponent of Epicurus had proposed a two-level theory for him to attack, and we do not see any formulation of and attack upon ‘two-level’ theories anywhere else in the Epicurean corpus.

To discover what Epicurus is trying to do in *KD 25*, I think we should look at the immediate context of the *Kuriai Doxai* that follow it, since *KD 25* is the first in a series of *Kuriai Doxai* that concern ethical issues. *KD 26*, *29*, and *30* deal with which desires one should retain, and which desires one should eliminate. *KD 26* says that desires that cause no pain when ungratified should be eliminated, and that we should also eliminate desires that cause pain or whose objects are difficult to procure, while *KD 29* and *30* give Epicurus’ trifold division of desires into natural and necessary, merely natural, and ‘vain and empty.’ In this context, I take the upshot of *KD 25* to be that we need to think through what we pursue, and what desires we retain, making sure that the way that we are leading our lives will actually bring us the pleasure that we are pursuing. If we do not carefully make sure that every single one of our actions is correctly aimed at pleasure, then we will, as a matter of fact, often swerve aside and hit some other end—for instance, we will gain political power, or have statues erected in our name—but not attain pleasure. And in this way, our actions will not be consistent with our theories, since pleasure is what we are aiming at.

Epicurus makes a similar point in *KD 6* and *7*. In *KD 6*, he says that the ‘natural good’ of public office is gaining confidence from other men, and in *KD 7*, he says that people want to become famous and respected in order to gain security from others. He then goes on to say, “if the life of such men is secure, they acquire the natural good; but if it is not secure, they do not have that for the sake of which they strove from the beginning...” Now, Epicurus believes that fame and political power do *not* in fact bring one security from others, and he would presumably say that the actions of these men are not consistent with their theories, since they will stop short

advantages and disadvantages,” in context this is simply a recommendation to weigh prudently the long-term consequences of one’s actions (and thus sometimes forego pleasures and choose pains) instead of heedless embracing whatever will bring one pleasure now. The result of this comparative measurement (as described in *Ep. Men.* 130-132) is a dedication to self-sufficiency and a renouncing of desires for luxury items and profligate pleasures.

of what they are ultimately aiming at and instead arrive at some other end. Thus, the target of *KD* 25 is not some unknown proponent of a two-level theory, but is instead the mass of people who have disordered desires that prevent them from getting what they are aiming at. Epicurus is emphasizing that every one of our actions must be correctly ordered so as to attain our *telos*.

In *KD* 27 and 28, Epicurus says that friendship is the greatest means for gaining blessedness and confidence, in *SV* 28 he asserts that we must be willing to run some risks for the sake of friendship, and in *SV* 39 he says that we must not always link friendship to what is useful. All of these claims fit in well with *KD* 25 and with the Epicurean ‘two-level’ strategy I have been describing. The wise Epicurean realizes that friendship is needed for happiness, so he will be willing to do what it takes to secure a friendship. This involves taking risks on behalf of one’s friends, and not linking the aid one gives to one’s friends too closely to the expectation of always getting an equal or greater payback. If Torquatus is right, we should weigh our friends’ pleasures and pains equally with our own when making decisions about matters like protecting our friends from attack, providing them with physical sustenance when they need it, *etc.* As a wise Epicurean, I would see that a decision procedure of weighing my friends’ pleasures and pains equally with my own would be the most effective one for creating the sort of trust that is needed in order to have the security that a circle of friends can provide, which in turn conduces to my own *ataraxia*, the ultimate goal of all my actions. (It also conduces to the *ataraxia* of my friends, but it is not their *ataraxia* that is intrinsically valuable to me, but my own.) Such a “second-order” strategy, far from contradicting Epicurus’ writings on friendship and his other *dicta* on ethics, instead harmonizes well with them.

Annas also writes that, even if a “two-level” strategy is adopted, it brings about problems of its own, since it involves a kind of “schizophrenia” in the mind of the agent, who needs to keep the two levels carefully compartmentalized, since otherwise they are “pretty certain to conflict.”⁶³ But I do not see why they would conflict, on Epicurus’ view. Part of the problem might be that Annas interprets Torquatus’ view in *De Finibus* as resulting in a contradiction, because it is one which tries to “[give] the interests of friends intrinsic value within a hedonistic

⁶³ Annas (1993) p. 241

theory.”⁶⁴ But this is not what Torquatus says—in fact, he starts his defense of the first Epicurean position by stressing that, within it, one does *not* value one’s friends’ pleasures *per se* as one does one’s own pleasure. He nowhere says that one’s friends’ pleasures gain intrinsic value; instead, he says that the good friend strives for his friends’ pleasures as much as for his own, and feels as much pain on behalf of his friends’ distress as he does his own, because doing so is best for securing pleasure for *oneself*.

6. Interpreting Other Problematic Texts

Neither *SV* 23 nor *DF* 1, then, gives us good reason to interpret Epicurean friendship as altruistic. Finally, let us briefly consider the other texts that are commonly cited as evidence for an altruistic, or other-regarding, view of Epicurean friendship.

6a: High-flown praise of friendship. Sometimes the extravagant terms in which friendship is praised are themselves given as reason for why Epicurus must think that we value our friends for their own sakes: *e.g.*, friendship is an “immortal good” (*SV* 78) which “dances around the world announcing to all of us that we must wake up to blessedness.” (*SV* 52) However, there is no good reason to think this. After all, Epicurus also writes, “Of the things which wisdom provides for the blessedness of one’s whole life, by far the greatest is the possession of friendship.” (*KD* 27) If friendship is thought to be the best way to attain the only intrinsic good, which is one’s own pleasure, it would be appropriate to praise it extravagantly. Also, since Epicurus (and the Epicureans) knew that they would be attacked, on the grounds of their hedonism, for destroying the basis for any true friendship, they had good propaganda reasons to praise friendship in high-flown, over-the-top terms. And Epicureans are fond of using over-the-top rhetoric across the board anyway. Subtlety and ironic understatement are not their strong suits.

6b: Extravagant claims made about dying for one’s friend and the like. How can an egoistic account of the value of friendship be squared with Epicurus’ dictum that sometimes the wise man will die for a friend, as well as the other extravagant claims made about the lengths one will go for one’s friend? First of all, I admit that these sayings *are* quite extravagant and hard to

⁶⁴ Annas (1993) p. 242

justify on hedonistic and egoistic grounds. However, two things can be said to show that we should not abandon an egoistic interpretation of Epicurean friendship because of these claims:

(1) *Death is nothing to us*. Given the Epicurean attitude toward death, and the Epicurean conception of pleasure and pain, some things that would seem like great sacrifices to most people will not be nearly as significant to Epicureans. Dying is not as bad as most people believe, nor is giving up great amounts of wealth, nor are many of the other sacrifices one makes for one's friend.

Also, if having confidence in one's friends is supremely important for attaining *ataraxia*, making large sacrifices on a friend's behalf would be reasonable. In *SV 56-57*, Epicurus says that if you betray your friend, your life will be totally upset and confounded. This is reminiscent of Epicurus' contention that you should never break the laws, because even if you were not caught, you would always live in fear that you *might* get caught, and thus you would never be at peace. (*KD 34-35*) Thus, I think that Epicurus would say that if you had to choose between dying for your friend (with death being "nothing to us") and betraying your friend (and thus living out an anxious, upset life), the prudent thing to do would be to die for your friend.

(2) *Parallel with other extravagant claims*. The main reason not to abandon an egoistic interpretation of Epicurean friendship, despite the lofty claims about what a true friend will do, is the parallel of these claims with other implausible claims made by Epicurus. For instance, Epicurus says that the wise man would be happy on the rack. (*DL 10 118*) We do not infer, from that claim, that Epicurus is not a hedonist, even though I think that, given his conception of *eudaimonia*, he is not at all justified in this claim about the wise man. Instead, we think that it just shows that Epicurus is willing to exaggerate, and to make implausible, extravagant claims about the invulnerability of the wise man to fortune. Another example is Epicurus' claim that the virtues are both necessary and sufficient for happiness. (*Ep. Men.* 132) It is easy enough to think of situations where the virtuous person does not seem to be happy, if happiness is thought of as pleasure (or even as tranquillity), and where the vicious person can attain pleasure, as Cicero is happy to point out (*DF 2 54-63*). Nonetheless, we still think that Epicurus regards the virtues as instrumental goods: we do not say "If Epicurus thought that the virtuous person would be happy

on the rack, he must think that the virtues are intrinsically valuable.” This is because Epicurus explicitly says that the virtues have only instrumental value. I think that we should follow the same strategy with regard to friendship, and take Epicurus at his word on the status of friendship and the value of other people, despite the extravagant claims he makes on behalf of friendship.

7. Conclusion

Nothing that Epicurus says about friendship shows us that he abandons his psychological and ethical hedonism when it comes to friendship. Friendship is valuable because having friends provides one with security more effectively than any other means. However, in order to have a stable group of friends, it is essential that the friends trust one another, and that friends weigh the pains and pleasures of each other equally when deciding how to act. This is how we should understand the statement that a true friend “loves his friend as much as himself.” Epicurus’ position on friendship is internally consistent, as well as being consistent with his egoism and hedonism.

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