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PHIL 436

### What Epicurean Friendship is Not: the Vulgar and the Divine

Friendship stood at the heart of Epicurean communities.<sup>1</sup> Epicurus himself states unequivocally that friendship is essential for reaching a state of blessedness.<sup>2</sup> In the *Vatican Sayings*, Epicurus, or one of his followers, declares that friendship is an immortal good whereas wisdom is a mortal good.<sup>3</sup> Only a bit earlier the same text, he gushes in quasi-poetic language that “friendship dances round the world, heralding all of us to awaken to blessedness.”<sup>4</sup> This same text offers one of the the most intriguing and contentious statements concerning Epicurean friendship: “every friendship is choiceworthy in itself, even though it has taken its beginning from utility.”<sup>5</sup> Friends them-

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the paper I use the following abbreviations for key primary texts: Abbreviations of key texts: *Kuriai Doxai* = *KD*; *Sententiae Vaticanae* = *SV*; *Letter to Menoeceus* = *Ep. Men.*; *Letter to Pythocles* = *Ep. Pyth.*; *de Finibus* = *DF*; *Diogenes Laertius' Lives of the Philosophers* = *DL*. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup> *KD* 27: “Of all that wisdom provides for the fullest happiness of one’s entire life, by far the greatest is the acquisition of friendship” (ὦν ἡ σοφία παρασκευάζεται εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὅλου βίου μακαριότητα πολὺ μέγιστόν ἐστιν ἢ τῆς φιλίας κτήσις). The concept of μακαρία is also referenced in *KD* 1 when Epicurus speaks of the gods.

<sup>3</sup> *SV* 78: “The noble soul is devoted most of all to wisdom and to friendship — one a mortal good, the other immortal” (ὁ γενναῖος περὶ σοφίαν καὶ φιλίαν μάλιστα γίγνεται, ὦν τὸ μὲν ἐστὶ θνητὸν ἀγαθόν, τὸ δὲ ἀθάνατον). Immortal goods are also mentioned at *Ep. Men.* 135.

<sup>4</sup> *SV* 52: ἡ φιλία περιχορεύει τὴν οἰκουμένην κηρύττουσα δὴ πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ἐγείρεσθαι ἐπὶ τὸν μακαρισμόν. See Armstrong 2011: 105-28 on the initiatory language is this and other Epicurean statements concerning friendship.

<sup>5</sup> *SV* 23: πᾶσα φιλία δι’ ἑαυτὴν αἰρετή, ἀρχὴν δὲ εἴληφεν ἀπὸ τῆς ὠφελείας. I follow Usener’s emendation (αἰρετή = choiceworthy) rather than Long and Sedley’s received text (ἀρετή = excellence or virtue). For ἀρετή over αἰρετή, see Brown 2002: 68-80. For αἰρετή over ἀρετή, see Armstrong 2011.

selves are so valuable that Epicureans often commemorated the memory of a deceased friend.<sup>6</sup> In order to garner and maintain friendships, Epicureans are called to run risks,<sup>7</sup> endure pain,<sup>8</sup> feel pain when a friend is tortured,<sup>9</sup> appreciate a friend's character,<sup>10</sup> live among friends,<sup>11</sup> and even be willing to die for a friend.<sup>12</sup> These and other statements led one scholar to dub Epicurus a "philophile."<sup>13</sup> Yet these glowing endorsements of friendship's necessity for the blessed life appear incongruous with Epicurus' larger ethical stance. As Matthew Evans poses the question, how can Epicurus be a "philophile" and a "staunch ethical egoist"?<sup>14</sup> In the last thirty odd years, numerous scholars have attempted to reconstruct how Epicurus and his followers could consistently follow his ethical principles (egoism and hedonism) and simultaneously cultivate genuine friend-

<sup>6</sup> Us. 213: "Sweet is the memory of a dead friend" (ἡδὺ ἢ φίλου μνήμη τεθνηκότος). Epicurus wrote memorials for his brothers Chairedemos and Agathoboulos (DL 10.27-8). See further, Clay 1998, 55-74.

<sup>7</sup> SV 28b: "It is necessary to risk pleasure for friendships" (δεῖ δὲ καὶ παρακινδυνεῦσαι χάριν, χάριν φίλιας). Note the word-play on the noun χάρις (pleasure) and the preposition χάριν (for the sake of). A distinction between long- and short-term pleasures appears at play (cf. KD 8, *Ep. Men.* 129, SV 73).

<sup>8</sup> Plut *Adv. Col.* 1111B (Us. 546): "choosing friendship for the sake of pleasure, he suffers the most grievous pains for his friends" (καὶ τῆς ἡδονῆς ἔνεκα τὴν φιλίαν αἰρούμενος ὑπὲρ τῶν φίλων τὰς μεγίστας ἀλγηδόνας ἀναδέχεσθαι).

<sup>9</sup> SV 56-7: "The sage does not feel a greater pain when he is tortured than when his friend is tortured" (ἀλγεῖ μὲν ὁ σοφὸς οὐ μᾶλλον στρεβλούμενος <ἢ στρεβλουμένου τοῦ φίλου>).

<sup>10</sup> SV 15: "We treasure our character as our own, whether or not it is worthy in itself or admired by others; and so we must honor our fellow men, if they are good" (ἦθη ὥσπερ τὰ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἴδια τιμῶμεν, ἂν τε χρηστὰ ἔχωμεν, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ζηλούμενα, ἂν τε μή· οὕτω χρὴ καὶ <τὰ> τῶν πέλας, ἂν ἐπιεικεῖς ὦσιν).

<sup>11</sup> *Ep. Men.* 135: "So practice these and similar things day and night, by yourself and with a like-minded friend" (ταῦτα οὖν καὶ τὰ τούτοις συγγενῆ μελέτα πρὸς σεαυτὸν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς <καὶ> πρὸς τὸν ὅμοιον σεαυτῶ).

<sup>12</sup> DL 10.120: "And he will on occasion die for a friend" (καὶ ὑπὲρ φίλου ποτὲ τεθνήξεσθαι).

<sup>13</sup> Evans 2004, 407.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 407.

ships. These studies have yielded positive results, clarifying the issues and structuring the sufficient conditions for a solution, although the topic remains unsatisfactorily resolved.

One major stumbling block for any attempt at such a resolution lies in the scanty information concerning just what Epicurean friendship *is*. As the texts above demonstrate, the majority of evidence on Epicurean friendship concerns either its value or its actions. There are, however, two sources that provide some account of what Epicurean friendship is, or more precisely, what it is not—Epicurus' *SV* 39 and Philodemus' *De dis* 3.<sup>15</sup> The former distinguishes true friendship from vulgar relationships, while the latter distinguishes the perfect fellowship of the gods from ideal human friendships. Taking these distinctions together, Epicurean friendship is found to reside somewhere between vulgar relationships and divine fellowship. This paper considers whether this negative definition of Epicurean friendship illuminates how it might relate to Epicurean egoism and hedonism.

The paper has three parts. Firstly, I examine the two negative definitions of Epicurean friendship as found in *SV* 39 and *De dis* 3. Here I reconstruct what it means for a friendship to be neither vulgar nor divine, but intimately linked to both. Secondly, I consider what Cicero says on the subject, both in his criticisms of Epicurean friendship and in Torquatus' explication of the three Epicurean approaches to friendship in *DF* 1. I

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<sup>15</sup> Primarily coll. 84.15-20 and 84.26-85.7

hope to show that Cicero improperly focuses upon and misrepresents Epicurus' representation of the vulgar facet of friendship; however, Torquatus' three approaches represent unique attempts to develop a positive account of Epicurean friendship, thus suggesting that Cicero had at least some understanding of the predominantly negative definitions offered by Epicurus and Philodemus. Unfortunately whether Cicero knowingly or unknowingly misrepresents Epicurean friendship remains impossible to determine. Finally, I turn briefly to consider how this picture of Epicurean friendship, existing between the vulgar and the divine, affects one's interpretation of Epicurus' accounts of friendship's value and foundation.

Before we turn to ancient texts, however, it may prove beneficial to examine what scholarship says about these texts and issues. As noted above, studies of Epicurean friendship have almost exclusively focused on how this view of friendship could square with Epicurus' hedonistic and egoistic ethical philosophy.<sup>16</sup> In general, scholars answer that Epicurean ethics and Epicurus' picture of friendship are either incompatible or compatible. The champions of the incompatibility camp are undoubtedly Philip Mitsis<sup>17</sup> and Julia Annas.<sup>18</sup> Both generally argue, alongside Cicero, that Epicurean egoism precludes the types of friendship Epicurus extols. As Evans points out, their argument rests upon "the valuation condition on friendship," which holds that "if X is a genuine friend

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. DeWitt 1936, who offers a linguistic and historical analysis of Epicurean *contubernium*.

<sup>17</sup> Mitsis 1989, ch. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Annas 1995, ch. 11.

of Y, then X values Y's well-being for its own sake, or for Y's own sake."<sup>19</sup> Since this view of friendship is incompatible with egoism, Mitsis and Annas blunt Epicurus' egoism in favor of a more altruistic image of friendship, particularly the image of intrinsically valuable friendship in *SV* 23. For Mitsis, a consistent ethical system requires softening the egoism, such that an Epicurean can have a "disinterested concern for his friends."<sup>20</sup> Similarly, for Annas, Epicurean friendship is a corrective to full-blown egoism because it allows for feelings of "real other-concern."<sup>21</sup>

These positions contrast with the more recent trend to focus first on Epicurean egoism and then to attempt to square the view of friendship with it. Scholars in this camp argue that Epicurus is a thorough-going egoist, yet his view of friendship is still compatible. John Rist, for example, takes Epicurean friendship to derive from egoistic need, although its purpose—relations with happy and intelligent people—is "valuable per se."<sup>22</sup> David O'Keefe agrees that friendship is compatible with egoism, but departs from Rist's view that Epicurean friendship is intrinsically valuable. O'Keefe argues that in all other aspects of ethical theory, Epicurus is clearly an egoist, thus Mitsis' and Annas' views are inconsistent.<sup>23</sup> This would be tolerable if no consistent picture was available, but O'Keefe carefully works through the sources to demonstrate that such an ego-

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<sup>19</sup> Evans 2004, 408.

<sup>20</sup> Mitsis 1989, 102.

<sup>21</sup> Annas 1995, 240.

<sup>22</sup> Rist 1980 122, 124.

<sup>23</sup> cf. Stern-Gillet 1989, 275–288.

ist view of friendship is available. O’Keefe’s solution involves a two-level view of motivation whereby loving our friends is a “policy of action,” not an ultimate value.<sup>24</sup> Matthew Evans takes this position a step further, arguing that O’Keefe’s solution represents an indirect form of egoism, where “the sage adopts his friend’s good as an ultimate practical end, independent of, yet equal in authority to, his own.”<sup>25</sup> Evans argues that even direct egoism, however, where “the sage adopts only his own good as an ultimate practical end, but discovers via deliberation that his own good stands or falls equally with his friend’s,” can be compatible with friendship on the grounds of mutual security.<sup>26</sup> Each of these three positions relies upon some kind of distinction between friendship’s value and its consequent actions. Accordingly, each deals extensively with SV 23. Each compatibilist scholar must demonstrate how friendship is “choice-worthy in itself,” while the state of *ataraxia* is clearly set as the only ethical end-in-itself.<sup>27</sup> This will be our challenge as well. But let us begin our examination, not with friendship’s value or its actions, but with its definition.

In a unique and oft under-appreciated dictum, Epicurus states explicitly what Epicurean friendship *is not*. Epicurus distances his school’s view of friendship from charges of vulgarism by declaring:

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<sup>24</sup> O’Keefe 2001, 293.

<sup>25</sup> Evans 2004, 413.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, 418.

<sup>27</sup> *Ep. Men.* 128

A friend is not one who is constantly seeking some benefit, nor one who never connects friendship with utility; for the former trades kindness for compensation, while the latter cuts off all hope for the future.

SV 39

οὐθ' ὁ τὴν χρεῖαν ἐπιζητῶν διὰ παντὸς φίλος, οὐθ' ὁ μηδέποτε συνάπτων· ὁ μὲν γὰρ καπηλεύει τῇ χάριτι τὴν ἀμοιβήν, ὁ δὲ ἀποκόπτει τὴν περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος εὐελπιστίαν.<sup>28</sup>

Epicurus advocates a strange balance. On the one hand, an Epicurean ought not to seek benefit as an end-in-itself; on the other hand, for an Epicurean to disregard the utility of friendship is likewise foolish. The former is a faultily vulgar view of friendship, while the latter is a faultily ideal view. Like Goldilocks, Epicurus is looking for an account of friendship that is “just right,” not too vulgar and not too idealistic. Clearly Epicurus’ understanding of “utility” (χρεῖα) is central to interpreting this statement’s view of the middle ground. In another dictum, Epicurus once again links utility with friendship:

We do not have need of the utility of friends, but of a trust in their utility.

SV 34

οὐκ οὕτως χρεῖαν ἔχομεν τῆς χρεῖας <τῆς> παρὰ τῶν φίλων ὡς τῆς πίστεως τῆς περὶ τῆς χρεῖας.<sup>29</sup>

This statement accords easily with the first half of Epicurus’ negative definition above. It is not a desire for utility that draws us to our friends, even if our trust in their continued utility helps perpetuate our relationship. The supposed friend in SV 39 who con-

<sup>28</sup> *Vatican Sayings* 23, 28, 34, 39, 52, 56-7, 66, and 78 all concern friendship, as do *Key Doctrines* 27 and 28.

<sup>29</sup> Note the pun on χρεῖα (a la SV 28). 23 offers a similar sentiment: friendship “has taken its beginning from utility” (ἀρχὴν δὲ εἴληφεν ἀπὸ τῆς ὠφελείας).

stantly seeks utility from his friendships becomes a mere trader in benefits (χάρῃτι). The vulgar extreme of friendship merely looks for external benefits.

But what of the excessively idealistic picture of friendship in the second half of *SV* 39? Epicurus faults this angelic friend for “cutting off all hope for the future” (ἀποκόπτει τὴν περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος εὐελπιστίαν). This future hope clearly echoes *SV* 34, where confidence in a friend’s future utility (πίστεως τῆς περὶ τῆς χρείας) is marked as the “need” of friendship. While one ought not to incessantly look to gain present utility out of my friendships, one should have this forward-looking perspective on utility. For Evans, this future confidence is essential. If the chief end of man is *ataraxia*, a lack of disturbance, then “an agent's belief that he will avoid catastrophic pains in the future is at least partially constitutive of his psychological well-being.”<sup>30</sup> This is undoubtedly true, and confidence in future security appears to be one of friendship’s key values, yet Evans’ claim that utility is the primary provision of friendship oversteps the bounds set in *SV* 39. Epicurus does not suggest any temporal distinction in *SV* 39 as he did in *SV* 34. To seek utility (χρείαν ἐπιζητῶν) is to seek either present or future utility. Insofar as utility is one’s sole goal in a friendship, whether utility today or in the future, one cannot be considered a genuine Epicurean friend, merely a trader of benefits. A future-oriented view of friendship’s utility thus does not preclude one from “constantly seeking utility” and falling into the vulgar form of friendship.

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<sup>30</sup> Evans 2004, 418.



How then can one avoid friendship's Scylla and Charybdis? To counter-balance Epicurus' focus on utility, Philodemus' focus on divine friendship may prove a profitable corrective. In his treatise on the nature of the gods (*De dis* 3),<sup>31</sup> Philodemus considers the fellowship (συμφυλία) among the gods and contrasts it with friendships among humans:

So that even if fellowship for [the supply of] external needs to make them live together is not there, they share their affections. For it is not possible to hold together in association without any social intercourse at all. And certainly even for us, the weak, who require friendship for external needs in addition, one has no needs in relation to friends he has lost ... our feeling of wonder at their similar characters to our own ... holds [us] together [in even] the highest affection. And such other needs as the gods have, they accept from each other, even though they can also acquire these things for themselves, as we ourselves sometimes do from those who have such things, i.e. as we would like but do not need.<sup>32</sup>

The gods foster relationships among one another, not because they require external benefits, but because of a desire for "social intercourse." The fellowship of the gods is the ideal form of friendship, one that does not rest upon need. Living in a perfect state of blessedness, the Epicurean gods are, by definition, completely self-sufficient (αὐτάρκεις); they have no needs. Nonetheless, these self-sufficient beings "share their affections." This practice of the gods is proved by common mythical knowledge. Clearly the gods associate with one another (think of the trial in Euripides' *Eumenides*), yet "it is

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<sup>31</sup> For Greek text, see Arrighetti 1958 and Arrighetti 1961; the standard edition, with commentary, is Diels 1917a, b. All fragment numbers use Diel's standard system, though translations derive from best possible rendering of text, though comparison of Arrighetti and Diels. See further, Armstrong 2011, 123-8.

<sup>32</sup> Fr. 87.13-19 and fr. 83.1-6; translation modified from Armstrong 2011, 126-7. See Diels 1917, 5 for his translation.

not possible to hold together in association without any social intercourse at all.”

Philodemus’ reasoning for the fellowship of the gods can be reconstructed thus:

- [1] If the gods associate with one another, then they socialize with one another.
- [2] If the gods socialize, they “share their affections.”
- [3] The gods associate with one another.
- [4] So, the god’s share their affections.

This sharing of affections is the heart of divine fellowship, which Philodemus explicitly demarcates from human friendship, which is rooted in weakness. As Philodemus says later in *De dis*, “one should not think each and all of the gods are friends, in the sense in which we are commonly said to be ‘friends.’”<sup>33</sup> There is a clear distinction between divine fellowship and human friendship. It is also clear that the distinguishing factor is human weakness consisting in “requiring friendship for external needs in addition.” The “in addition” refers back to the divine sharing of affections and conversation. This is a key point, as Philodemus, like Epicurus, simultaneously distinguishes and links divine and human friendship.

In another treatise, *On Frank Criticism*,<sup>34</sup> Philodemus notes that the greatest value of friendship comprises precisely such sharing of emotion and conversation:

We can show by reasons that as numerous and beautiful as are the things that come to us by friendship, none is so great as having someone to whom one shall tell what is in one’s heart and whom one shall hear speaking back. For very greatly does our nature desire (ὀρέγεται) to reveal to others what it is thinking.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Fr. 84.15.

<sup>34</sup> Περὶ παρρησίας (= P.Herc. 1471).

<sup>35</sup> Translation adapted from Armstrong 2011, 126. For Greek text, see Konstan et al. 1998.

David Armstrong succinctly sums up the point: “Here, then, is the primary motivation for friendship in its highest form: a reaching out (ὄρεξις) for shared self-expression common to all intelligent individuals.”<sup>36</sup> Just like the Epicurean gods, humans can desire friendship in order to “share their affections.”

Both Epicurus and Philodemus discuss what Epicurean friendship *is* by distinguishing what it *is not*. Yet both also demonstrate that these differences are ones of degree, not of kind. For Epicurus, friendship is not vulgar. It does not simply seek utility; however, utility does play some role in friendship. For Philodemus, friendship is not divine fellowship. It does require utility; however, humans can enjoy shared self-expression. At the crux of both binaries lies utility, and this is typically where critics focus their energies. One such critic—the paradigmatic ancient critic—is Cicero. In what follows, I wish to rehearse Cicero’s principle critique of the Epicurean view of friendship in order to gain another picture of what Epicurean friendship *is not*. Cicero misrepresents what Epicurean friendship is by improperly focusing upon Epicurus’ representation of the vulgar facet of friendship, but he does so in a manner that may prove illuminating.

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<sup>36</sup> Armstrong 2011, 126.

Writing a generation before Horace, Cicero frequently lampoons the Epicureans and their strange practices.<sup>37</sup> He faults Epicurean friendship for two related reasons: (1) it objectifies the friend and (2) it promotes selfishness. Both criticisms are presented throughout his corpus using mercantile language. As Daniel Hanchey points out, Cicero consistently associates Epicureans and practical measuring:

In *De Orat.* 3.285, *Fin.* 2.58, and *Fin.* 5.93, the Epicureans are described as measuring on a calculus of pleasure (*voluptas*); at *Fin.* 2.85 they measure by profit and payment (*emolumentum* and *mercedes*); in *Leg.* 1.41, they measure by their own benefit (*sua commoda*); in *Nat. Deor.* 1.113 they use their stomachs (*venter*) to measure.<sup>38</sup>

Cicero sees insufficiencies in measurement based on any of these standards when assessing value in a social context such as friendship. First, a friendship in which one friend measures the benefit or pleasure of the other necessarily objectifies that friend, reducing him to benefits received. Second, measuring friendships leads to selfishness, as each friend will quantify the benefits likely to be received in order to weigh the health of the friendship as a whole.

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<sup>37</sup> Standard Roman *mores* led many to reject Epicureanism. For example, Plutarch and Seneca wrote extensive polemics against Epicurus and his followers, although they infrequently consider Epicurean friendship as a topic in itself. One of Epicureanism's most dogged critics, Plutarch examines Epicurean friendship only once, at *Adv. Colot.* 1111B: "he chooses friends for the pleasure he gets, but says that he assumes the greatest pains on their behalf." Seneca discusses Epicurean friendship explicitly in his *Ninth Epistle*, and, like nearly all ancient critics, his rejection of Epicureanism centers on its hedonist calculus: "that which you describe is business, not friendship" (*ista, quam tu describis, negotiatio est, non amicitia*, *Ep.* 9.10).

<sup>38</sup> Hanchey (forthcoming). I am grateful to Dr. Hanchey for allowing me to read his forthcoming paper on "Commercial Exchange and Epicurean Value-Judgment in Cicero's Dialogues."

Cicero favors the language of mercantile measurement to satirize Epicurean relationships. For the sake of brevity, I offer only two prime examples. First, he distinguishes true friendship, which seeks benefits *for* one another, with Epicurean friendship, which seeks benefits *from* one another:<sup>39</sup>

quam si ad fructum nostrum referemus, non ad illius commoda, quem diligemus, non erit ista amicitia, sed mercatura quaedam utilitatum suarum.<sup>40</sup>

*Nat. Deor.* 1.122

If we will refer it to our own benefit, and not to the advantage of another, whom we esteem, then this will not be friendship, but some mercantile calculation of its own utility.

Next, Cicero compares Epicurean friendship, which is sought for the “hope of profit” (*spe mercedis*), to lending good deeds at interest (*beneficium faeneramur*):

Ut enim benefici liberalesque sumus, non ut exigamus gratiam (neque enim beneficium faeneramur sed natura propensi ad liberalitatem sumus), sic amicitiam non spe mercedis adducti sed quod omnis eius fructus in ipso amore inest, expetendam putamus. Ab his qui pecudum ritu ad voluptatem omnia referunt longe dissentiunt.

*Laelius* 31

For just as we are not beneficent and generous in order to extract favor (for we do not lend good deeds at interest, but are naturally prone to generosity), so too we think friendship should be sought not because we are drawn by a hope for profit, but because its every benefit is contained in love itself. These ideas differ sharply from the ideas of those who, in the manner of cattle, base everything on pleasure.

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<sup>39</sup> O'Connor 1989: 177-81 suggests that at the heart of nearly all Roman criticism of Epicurean friendship is the view that it is necessarily ignoble and lacks virility.

<sup>40</sup> Epicurus is named shortly following this passage at 1.123: “But still Epicurus’ book concerns sanctity” (*At etiam liber est Epicuri de sanctitate*).

The implication of this banking metaphor is clear: Epicureans treat friendship like an investment.<sup>41</sup> Whereas commercial exchange, by definition, takes into account some measurement of utility, Cicero believes that one ought to engage in friendship only for its own sake. For him, Epicurean friendship is vulgar precisely because it is sought for the sake of an external benefit.

Various characters in Cicero's dialogues attempt to defend Epicurean friendship. In *De finibus*, for example, the Epicurean Torquatus attempts to justify his school's conception of friendship by pointing out that Epicureans make a pact to ensure equity in the relationship. Cicero will have none of it:

Posuisti etiam dicere alios foedus quoddam inter se facere sapientis, ut, quem ad modum sint in se ipsos animati, eodem modo sint erga amicos; ... an vero, si fructibus et emolumentis et utilitatibus amicitias colemus, si nulla caritas erit, quae faciat amicitiam ipsam sua sponte, vi sua, ex se et propter se expetendam, dubium est, quin fundos et insulas amicis anteponamus?

*Fin.* 2.83

You proposed that some [Epicureans] say that wise men make some pact among themselves in order to be disposed toward their friends just as they are toward themselves. ... But if we cultivate friendships for benefits, gains, and utility, and if there is no charity that produces friendship of its own accord and by its own force, to be sought from and for its own sake, then is there any question that we would prefer estates and apartment buildings to friends?

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<sup>41</sup> Seneca uses a banking motif throughout *Ep.* 9 when speaking directly to Lucilius: "that I may pay my debt at once and square the account, so far as this letter is concerned" (*ut statim tibi solvam, quod debeo, et quantum ad hanc epistulam paria faciamus, Ep.* 9.6); "put it down to my credit, though I have already wiped out my debt for the present day" (*quam tu boni consule, etiam si hunc diem iam expunxi, Ep.* 9.20). This may be a play on the same motif seen here.

Cicero questions how Torquatus' pact could produce the charity "that produces friendship itself of its own accord" and simultaneously avoid a selfish desire for "benefits, gains, and utility." Once again, Cicero utilizes commercial imagery to suggest that Epicurean friends will always, in the end, place one another on the same level as real estate—a means to an end.

To see how Cicero's one-sided image of Epicurean friendship ultimately falls short, we may merely recall the Epicurean texts on friendship discussed above. Contrary to Cicero's account, where Epicureans are "drawn by a hope for profit," Epicurus admits that friendship is often accompanied by pain, yet remains desirable (SV 28). Cicero also faults Epicureans for their supposed selfish desire for "benefits, gains, and utility." In VS 34, however, Epicurus clearly states, "the use of friends is not that they are useful, but that we can trust in their usefulness." Finally, SV 39 most clearly reveals the issue at stake. In the first phrase, Epicurus offers a picture of friendship that is explicitly contrary to Cicero's account: "A friend is not one who is constantly seeking some benefit." In the second phrase, however, Epicurus appears to agree with Cicero: "[A friend is not] one who never connects friendship with utility." Although Epicurus does not and cannot ignore the vulgar facet of friendship, which "connects friendship with utility," Cicero consistently ignores friendship's divine aspect.

Nonetheless, glimpses of Epicurus' and Philodemus' more nuanced image of friendship do filter through Cicero's texts. One prime example comes in Torquatus' ex-

position of the three Epicurean attempts to describe in positive terms what exactly Epicurean friendship looks like.<sup>42</sup> Given the historical context of describing Epicurean friendship by what it is not, these three approaches make sense as reactions to such a trend. Insofar as these accounts are responses to Epicurus' (and Philodemus'?) negative definition, it would suggest that Cicero had at least some knowledge of these texts, further implicating his one sided representation. Regardless, each of these approaches to Epicurean friendship marks an important step forward in the development of Epicurean philosophy. Where Epicurus and Philodemus tell us what friendship is not, these articulations of Epicurean relations attempt to demonstrate what such a relationship is.

Let us briefly run through the three approaches. The first camp (*DF* 1.66-8) attempts to demonstrate how an instrumentalist view of friendship nonetheless can produce a relationship wherein we love our friends as we love ourselves. David O'Keefe succinctly summarizes this first position thus:

"(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 egoist grounds."<sup>43</sup>

This approach is typically thought to contain some amount of "doublethink," insofar as loving others as much as oneself on egoistic grounds appears logically inconsistent. As

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<sup>42</sup> Torquatus' entire discussion of friendship covers *DF* 1.65-70. All translations are those of Annas and Woolf 2001.

<sup>43</sup> O'Keefe 2001, 290.



noted earlier, O'Keefe attempts to resolve this inconsistency by distinguishing between value and behavior. One's values are egoistic, but one's behavior is (appears?) altruistic. Thus, "to 'love' our friends as much as ourselves is a matter of not favoring our interests over theirs when deciding how to act."<sup>44</sup> Such a friend would neither "constantly seek utility" nor "never connect friendship with utility," because he acts in such a way as to garner trust while still valuing his own pleasure and security. In order to skirt Epicurus' two poles, therefore, this approach offers a psychological disjunction.

The second approach (1.69) turns to a temporal disjunction to resolve Epicurus' puzzle.<sup>45</sup> At first, friendship is sought for personal pleasure, but once intimacy has been fostered, then one comes to love his friends for their own sake. Although the description is short, it appears that this theory offers no distinction between values and actions. Over time, one's values, and subsequently one's actions, evolve toward a more altruistic state. The change occurs on the level of motivation. At the outset of the relationship, the friend is not loved for his own sake, but over time the friend comes to be loved for his own sake. Such a temporal disjunction recalls *SV* 34, "We do not have need of the utility of friends, but of the trust in their utility." To the degree that "trust" is future-oriented, this second approach fits well with this dictum.

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, 293.

<sup>45</sup> This approach is unlikely to return to Epicurus himself. When refuting this theory in book 2, 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" (*DF* 2.82). Whereas Cicero admits that he recognizes echoes of Epicurus in Torquatus' exposition of the first approach (*DF* 2.82).

The third and final theory of Epicurean friendship (1.70) appears to be a sub-set of the first. Here, the friends make a pact (*foedus*) with one another to love each other as much as themselves.<sup>46</sup> This approach makes explicit what remains implicit in theory one. A pact manifestly disjoins one's motivations from one's actions. The friend promises to act altruistically, even though he is motivated egoistically. One might ask, given that this offers an explicit disjunction between behavior and motivation, if such an interpretation of the first theory is strengthened or weakened? On the one hand, this approach could appear as a sub-theory to approach one. Both resolve Epicurus' paradox by distinguishing egoistic valuation from altruistic action. On the other hand, Torquatus states that he is offering the three chief Epicurean accounts of what friendship is, thus they all ought to differ from one another. As the difference between two and three is what they disjoin, should one expect another type of disjunction at theory one? Regardless, this final approach demonstrates that a two-level view of motivation was endorsed by some Epicureans.

For Epicurus, however, these two motivations are not in a hierarchy, as O'Keefe would argue, but both are first order motivations. The Epicurean values both security/utility and fellowship. As noted earlier, one values security because of its intimate relation to *ataraxia*. Friends are highly useful in achieving mental and physical security (a *katastematic* pleasure), thus we value them. The value is instrumental. Likewise, fellow-

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<sup>46</sup> This is the theory that Cicero rebuffs with the claim, discussed above, that it reduces friends to the level of property; see p. 14.

ship among friends is an instrument to other important pleasures—self-expression and conversation (*kinetic* pleasures).<sup>47</sup> Because “sharing my affections” with another happy and right-headed (because he or she is Epicurean) person is pleasurable, one seeks friendships. In order to square Epicurus’ lofty view of friendship’s value with his egoism, one does not require a two-level picture of psychological motivation. Epicurus appears to place local motivation (utility/security) and theoretical motivation (fellowship) together. Both are instrumental means for the end of personal *ataraxia*.

How might such a view of motivation map onto the negative definition complex articulated by Epicurus and Philodemus? Taken together, these two accounts of what Epicurean friendship *is not* place genuine friendship between vulgar relationships and divine fellowship. For Epicurus, genuine friendships are distinguished from vulgar relations by their attitude toward utility. Vulgar relationships either constantly seek or never seek utility; true friendship, however, understands that utility is a natural part of friendship without making it the sole purpose of the relationship. For Philodemus, genuine human friendships are distinguished from divine fellowship by the necessity of utility. Gods, as self-sufficient entities, need no external aid, such that nothing is absolutely useful to them; human beings, however, as weaker entities, require much aid, making many things useful. True friendship might require utility, but it aims to enjoy divine-like fellowship. As David Armstrong puts it, “friendship in its ideal form tran-

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<sup>47</sup> Philodemus states that the gods would not have complete happiness without friendship (*De dis* 3, fr. 84, col. 1.2-4), in that they could not derive the kinetic pleasure of conversation (3.84.13, 36-39).

scends its beginnings as a response to our human needs and frailties.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, if vulgar friendship merely looks for external benefit and divine friendship merely looks for intellectual self-expression, genuine Epicurean friendships would seek both security and fellowship.

Although an aspect of any Epicurean relationship is utilitarian, true friendship transcends such concerns. That is to say, friends are useful, but it is not solely on this account that one cultivates friendships. The picture of friendship painted by Epicurus and Philodemus is simultaneously idealistic and practical. Neither takes precedence on the other, and both ought to counter-balance each other. In order to avoid constantly searching for utility in your friends, one needs to recognize that simple fellowship and conversation are themselves pleasurable. In order to avoid, however, an unrealistic picture of friendship, one must remember that humans are frail and require aid from one another. Torquatus demonstrates that Epicureans thought long and hard on how practically to live out this tenuous balance. In the end, Epicurean friendship appears to be neither utterly vulgar or divine nor is it devoid of vulgar and divine aspects. It lies precariously between them, tottering on the edge of sordidness and idealism. To walk this fine line, Epicureans must value both of friendship’s pleasures—security and fellowship; one no more than the other.

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<sup>48</sup> Armstrong 2011, 126.

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