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## Epicurean Friendship: How are Friends Pleasurable?

Authors	Strahm, Melissa Marie
Citation	Strahm, Melissa Marie. "Epicurean Friendship: How are Friends Pleasurable?." 2009. Thesis, Georgia State University. <a href="https://doi.org/10.57709/1059792">https://doi.org/10.57709/1059792</a>
DOI	<a href="https://doi.org/10.57709/1059792">https://doi.org/10.57709/1059792</a>
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EPICUREAN FRIENDSHIP:  
HOW ARE FRIENDS PLEASURABLE?

by

MELISSA STRAHM

Under the Direction of Timothy O'Keefe

ABSTRACT

Although the Epicurean ethical system is fundamentally egoistic and hedonistic, it attributes a surprisingly significant role to friendship. Even so, I argue that traditional discussions of Epicurean friendship fail to adequately account for the value (or pleasure) of individual friends. In this thesis I present an amended notion of Epicurean friendship that better accounts for all of the pleasure friends afford. However, the success of my project requires rejecting an Epicurean ethical principle. Because of this, I explore textual evidence both in favor and against the amended notion I propose and the ethical principle. After arguing against the ethical principle and dispelling additional objections against my

project, I conclude that Epicureans should endorse the amended notion of friendship I have developed.

INDEX WORDS: Epicurus, Friendship, Ethical egoism, Hedonism, The value of individual friends, Philodemus, Kinetic pleasure, Katastematic pleasure, Hellenistic ethics

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MELISSA STRAHM

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2009

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August 2009

To Dustin, I could have never accomplished this without your love and support.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all of those who have supported me along the way. I am especially grateful for Tim O'Keefe's guidance. His thoughtful comments and suggestions not only provided greater insight into the topic, he made the writing process quite enjoyable. In addition, I am thankful for my wonderful thesis committee: Andrew Altman, Andrew I. Cohen, and Sandra Dwyer. Not only has Sandra Dwyer provided provoking comments on my work, she has truly been a mentor for me throughout my stay at Georgia State. I am grateful for the guidance, support and encouragement she has always so freely offered. Thanks also to the Fall 2008 Epicurus class. My thesis was greatly benefited from the review, comments and discussion of my initial draft by Dan Issler, Timothy Clewell, William Baird, and Ricky Greacen. Also, thanks to Kevin Timpe who sparked my initial interest in philosophy and has always supported my pursuit of further study in the discipline. Finally, I truly owe this thesis and degree to the love and support of my family and friends.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Epicurus attributes a surprisingly significant role to friendship within his egoistic and hedonistic ethical system. So much so, that frequent praises of friendship for its ‘immortal value’ and ‘blessedness’ are littered throughout Epicurean texts (*SV* 52 and 78).<sup>1</sup> In fact, some sayings suggest that friendship is intrinsically valuable and requires altruistic attitudes (*SV* 23 and *DF* I 67). Many authors have focused upon the tension between apparent altruism and its contrast with egoist principles.<sup>2</sup> However, I will focus on yet another problem with this theory. Epicurean discussions of friendship generally explain the value of friendship in terms of the security it provides. Because discussions are limited to this one pleasure, the Epicurean notion of friendship is inadequate. This problem is particularly puzzling given that the Epicurean ethical system is fundamentally hedonistic.

In this thesis I will present an amended notion of Epicurean friendship that better accounts for all of the pleasure friends afford. It is crucial to note that the amended notion I present is not an interpretation of Epicureanism. I do not intend to dispute what it is that Epicureans actually say about friendship. Traditional interpretations of the texts do this task quite well.<sup>3</sup> Rather, I intend to argue what it is that Epicureans should say about friendship. I will

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<sup>1</sup> References to primary Epicurean texts will abide by the following notations: Vatican Sayings (*Sententiae Vaticanae*) = *SV*, Principle Doctrines (*Kuriai Doxai*) = *KD*, *Letter to Menoeceus* = *Ep. Men.*, *Letter to Herodotus* = *Ep. Her.*, *Letter to Idomeneus* = *Ep. Id.*, *Letter to Pythocles* = *Pyth*, *Diogenes Laertius* = *DL*. In addition, all direct quotations of these texts and Plutarch’s *A Pleasant Life* are from the Brad Inwood and L.P Gerson translation in *The Epicurus Reader*.

<sup>2</sup> Discussions based on the tension between altruism and egoism can be broadly divided into two camps: those that support an altruistic reading and those that deny altruistic elements. For an altruistic interpretation see: Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, 239-244 and Phillip Mitsis, *Epicurus’ Ethical Theory: The Pleasures of Invulnerability*, 103-117. For attempts to make the controversial sayings consistent without altruistic elements see: Mathew Evans, “Can Epicureans Be Friends?” and Tim O’Keefe, “Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?”.

<sup>3</sup> There are many examples of “traditional interpretations” of Epicurean friendship. For instance see: Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* 236-244, Mathew Evans, “Can Epicureans Be Friends?”, Philip Mitsis, *Epicurus’ Ethical Theory: the pleasures of invulnerability* 98-128, David K. O’Connor, “The Invulnerable Pleasures of Epicurean Friendship”, and Tim O’Keefe, “Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?”. As noted previously, there is great disagreement over whether Epicurean texts show signs of altruism. Beyond this, general agreement can be found amongst scholars regarding the most fundamental elements of Epicurean friendship: the basis of friendship (reasons

provide an amended notion of friendship that is accessible to Epicurean moral theory and more robust than the notion they traditionally espouse.<sup>4</sup>

To begin, I will provide a brief outline of Epicurean ethics and the role of friendship within it. The second chapter will set the stage for the central issue: the inadequate description of pleasure the traditional notion of Epicurean friendship provides. I will consider the potential pleasure found in spending an evening with a friend, and show that the explanation of this pleasure provided by the traditional interpretation is incomplete. It fails to capture the pleasure of the evening in general and more importantly, the pleasure of individual friends. I will draw upon Neera Kapur Badhwar's notion of "end friendship" to develop the latter point.

Although some pleasure is missing from the traditional notion of Epicurean friendship, I believe it can be accounted for within the Epicurean system. This will occupy the third chapter of our discussion. First, I will consider Epicurean treatment of affection in friendship. Next, I will argue that this affection can be described as pleasurable in Epicurean terms if it is understood as kinetic mental pleasure. I will then explain how admitting this pleasure resolves the inadequacies uncovered in the previous chapter. Finally, I will look to the second notion of friendship expounded by Torquatus in the *de Finibus* as a model for the amended notion of Epicurean friendship I endorse.

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for entering into friendship), what friendship requires and the role friendship plays in the life of wise Epicureans. I will provide a "traditional interpretation" in the section that follows. I designate the Epicurean notion of friendship as a "traditional interpretation/notion" in order to clearly contrast this with the amended notion of Epicurean friendship I ultimately endorse.

<sup>4</sup> The aim of my thesis is fairly modest. I do not intend to defend Epicurean friendship from all critics or argue for a generally acceptable notion of friendship. There are likely inadequacies beyond the one explored in this paper. In fact, I am inclined to agree with critics that Epicurean friendship falls short in several regards. However, the problem explored in this paper is something that must be addressed from the Epicurean perspective. I intend to tackle this project through suggesting several slight amendments to the traditional notion of Epicurean friendship. As a result, I will develop a more robust notion of Epicurean friendship according to Epicurean standards (ethical egoism/hedonism). While I am confident that this notion of friendship is much more plausible and satisfying than the original position generally speaking, I do not mean to suggest that it should satisfy all potential critics of Epicurean friendship.

However, the inadequacy of the traditional notion of Epicurean friendship cannot be resolved this quickly. Chapter four will show that the amended notion is inconsistent with the Epicurean ethical principle that mental pleasures depend on bodily pleasures. This is because the suggested pleasures are independent kinetic mental pleasures that do not necessarily relate to experiences of bodily pleasure. Thus, it may appear that endorsing my project will attribute an inconsistency to Epicurean moral theory. However, this is not actually the case. I will show that this inconsistency is already apparent within Epicurean texts. There is textual evidence both in support of the pleasures I develop and the troubling ethical principle. After looking at several Epicurean sayings regarding independent kinetic mental pleasures I will conclude that the Epicurean ethical system can and should support the pleasures I endorse.

Further evidence of this claim can be found in a discussion of Philodemus' moral psychology. In particular, Philodemus contrasts "natural anger" (or anger that is natural for wise Epicureans) with "empty anger". I will argue that a parallel can be drawn between the "natural anger" he describes and other emotions that are potentially natural for wise Epicureans. This parallel should include the affection friends feel towards each other, which is the basis of the notion of friendship developed in chapter 4. Thus, there will be sufficient reason to endorse the pleasures I propose.

Of course, there are objections to this position. The most troubling objections will be covered in chapter 6. In particular, I will dismiss fears that the pleasures I endorse rely upon and/or perpetuate false beliefs and empty desires. Once these objections have been dismissed, it will be clear that the notion of friendship I have developed is consistent with Epicurean tenets aside from the principle that mental pleasures depend on bodily pleasures. The final chapter will provide several independent reasons for rejecting the troubling ethical principle. Not only will

this will help to resolve the inconsistency noted in chapter 5, it will finally be safe to conclude that the amended notion of Epicurean friendship developed in this discussion should be endorsed by Epicureans.

## II. EPICUREAN ETHICS

Although Epicurean ethics is hedonistic, Epicureans are far from typical hedonists. As described by Cicero, Epicureans “do not simply pursue the sort of pleasure which stirs our nature with its sweetness and produces agreeable sensations in us: rather, the pleasure we deem greatest is that which is felt when all pain is removed” (*DF I 37*).<sup>5</sup> Thus, a distinction must be drawn between two kinds of pleasures: kinetic and katastematic. The latter is defined as a stable state of painlessness. Consider the following example: while sitting in front of my computer writing this paper I am experiencing no pain. I am not hungry or worried about anything in particular. I am content. According to Epicurus, this state of painlessness is actually pleasurable; it is a katastematic pleasure.

On the other hand, kinetic pleasures are active experiences of pleasure in relation to a particular pleasurable object. For instance, one might experience kinetic pleasure while eating a delicious piece of chocolate cake. Once the cake is gone, the kinetic pleasure of eating the cake subsides. Eating cake may contribute to painlessness if it satisfies hunger. In which case, the active pleasure contributes to a state of katastematic pleasure that lasts beyond the activity of indulgence. However, katastematically pleasurable states do not necessarily involve kinetic pleasures and can exist independent of particular pleasurable experiences/objects.<sup>6</sup> As shown in the example above, I am in a state of painlessness even though I am not currently indulging in

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<sup>5</sup> All direct quotations of Cicero’s *de Finibus* have been translated by Raphael Woolf and can be found in *Cicero: On Moral Ends* edited by Julia Annas.

<sup>6</sup> In some sense katastematic pleasure is active because an individual must reflect on her painless in order to be cognizant of the pleasurable state she is in. However, a wise Epicurean can be in a state of katastematic pleasure without indulging in any active pleasure.

any active pleasure (unless of course I consider the act of writing this paper pleasurable). In addition, katastematic pleasure is the limit of happiness. Once in this completely painless state, additional kinetic pleasures cannot increase the total pleasure experienced but only vary it in kind (*DF I 38*).

Epicurus further distinguishes between bodily and mental pleasures/pains even though he is a materialist and all pleasures are fundamentally material or bodily in nature. The difference between these kinds is that bodily pleasures/pains are those of typical sensory experiences (e.g. tastes, sounds, sights...). On the other hand, mental pleasures/pains include affections or emotions such as: joy, excitement, contentment, anxiety, and fear. There are corresponding bodily and mental katastematic and kinetic pleasures as well. The example noted above, eating a piece of chocolate cake, primarily refers to kinetic bodily pleasure. After all, the cake produces an active sensation in the taste buds that is pleasurable. In addition, individuals may experience some affective response to eating the chocolate cake. Contemplating this pleasurable experience produces a kinetic mental pleasure. Individuals take joy and delight in contemplating past, present and future bodily pleasures (*DF I 57*).

Epicureans refer to katastematic pleasure of the body and mind as *aponia* and *ataraxia* respectively. *Ataraxia* is described as a state of total mental peace and tranquility while *aponia* is lack of bodily pain. Epicureans further hold that mental pleasures and pains are greater than bodily ones because they extend beyond the present and into the past and future (*DF I 55-56*).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For instance, Torquatus notes that physical pain is certainly painful but this pain is greatly increased when accompanied with a false belief about “some eternal and infinite evil awaiting us” (*DF I 55*). In what sense mental pain is “greater” than bodily is a bit vague. Epicurus does not specify that mental pleasures/pains are quantitatively greater or experientially more intense than bodily ones. Rather he seems to rely on the intuition that mental pain and pleasure are more crucial to determining whether someone is in a happy state. According to Epicurus, mental pain is the most debilitating pain one can experience.

Because both katastematic and mental pleasure are deemed superior, *ataraxia* is highly acclaimed as the greatest of all pleasures.<sup>8</sup>

Desires also play an important role in the Epicurean ethical system. Unfulfilled desires can be destructive to *ataraxia* (*DF* I 43). As such, Epicurus argues that people should limit desires to those that are natural and necessary for life. These include basic needs for a happy life such as food and shelter. Any desires beyond these are unnecessary, difficult to fulfill and likely to cause pain (*DF* I 44-45 and *KD* 26). Epicureans often speak of the vain and empty desire for accumulating great wealth. Not only is great wealth unnecessary for securing natural and necessary desires, it has disastrous effects.<sup>9</sup> Individuals go to great lengths to accumulate wealth. They may sever relationships, seek the favor of corrupted individuals in power and grasp hopelessly to their wealth while living in constant fear of losing it.<sup>10</sup> Being confident in the future fulfillment of natural and necessary desires and eliminating vain and empty desires allows for the experience of *ataraxia* (*SV* 33).

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<sup>8</sup> Epicurus' catalog of pleasures has been met by several criticisms. In particular, Cicero argues that katastematic and kinetic are not two kinds of pleasure but rather two distinct ends: painlessness and pleasure (*DF* II 29-32). Further, some may wonder whether Epicurus' catalog of pleasures falls victim to objections regarding incommensurable qualitative distinctions in pleasures that Mill's hedonism faces. How does Epicurus commensurate katastematic v. kinetic and mental v. bodily pleasures? Unfortunately, there is no quick answer to these problems because they are issues Epicurus does not explicitly address. In fact, Epicurus' catalog of pleasures is an area of great controversy within scholarly work. Fortunately, a resolution of these issues is unnecessary for the present argument. A basic understanding of the distinctions in pleasure is sufficient for defending the pleasures of friendship I endorse.

<sup>9</sup> Epicureans have many passages discussing the destructive nature of the desire for wealth. For instance, see *SV* 25, 67, and 81. In addition, see *DF* I 59.

<sup>10</sup> Of course some wealth can be used to the advantage of securing future natural and necessary desires. However, Epicureans do not explicitly admit the necessity of some minimal amount of wealth to secure future needs. In fact, they argue everything humans need to be happy is supplied by nature and can be acquired with little effort/and or stress (*DF* I 45). According to J.M. Rist, Epicureans lived in small communities that collectively supported one another and although they had private property not communal assets, the wealthier members helped finance those that were less well off (12). Thus it appears some basic monetary level (perhaps as a whole community) is required to secure the future needs of members. Further, wealth may be useful in that it can be used to promote friendship if one gives to those around her (*SV* 67). Regardless of how helpful and perhaps even necessary some minimal level of wealth may be, developing a *desire* for wealth often becomes insatiable and destructive to *ataraxia*.

### ***Role of Friendship***

According to the Epicurean ethical system, having friends allows one to be confident that her future needs will be fulfilled even in times of difficulty (*KD* 27). Thus, Epicurean friendship is valued for its contribution to *ataraxia*; it is valued for the katastematic pleasure produced. As the Epicurean spokesman in Cicero's *de Finibus* asserts "solitude, and a life without friends, is filled with fear and danger; so reason herself bids us to acquire friends. Having friends strengthens the spirit, and inevitably brings with it the hope of obtaining pleasure" (*DF* I 66). The true value of friendship is not found in the actual help friends provide but in the confidence they will help (*SV* 34).

For example, a wise Epicurean may value a friend because she knows that the friend will help her if she loses her job (e.g. give her food and shelter if needed). While the actual reciprocation of the friend is valuable (if the wise Epicurean does in fact become unemployed), it is not as valuable as the confidence the wise Epicurean has in her friend's future help. This is because happiness is fairly impervious to physical pain. Epicureans claim, albeit controversially, that long-lasting physical pain lacks intensity and intense pain is short in duration (*KD* 4). Further, current mental pleasure can counterbalance or distract one from physical pain (*DF* I 56). Thus, the physical pain experienced in losing one's job is not truly destructive to *ataraxia* and the wise Epicurean can distract herself from this pain. However, happiness is not similarly impervious to mental pain. Anxiety about the security of future needs is extremely destructive to *ataraxia*. Thus, the true value of friendship does not come in a friend's actual fulfilling needs but the confidence in fulfilling future needs she provides.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Mathew Evans provides further support for this point in "Can Epicureans be Friends?". He claims "what makes friends precious to the Epicurean sage is not primarily the aid they will provide for him, but rather *the fact that he can count on them to provide this aid*" (417) (his emphasis). He further points to the fact that mental pleasures and

Given the emphasis placed on the confidence friends provide, establishing bonds of trust is imperative for friendship. This requires making great sacrifices for friends, perhaps even sacrificing one's own life (SV 56-57).<sup>12</sup> In fact, friends' interests are to be respected and pursued to the same degree as personal interests (DF I 68).<sup>13</sup> All of this is done because friendship uniquely provides a strong confidence in the future, which allows for a truly happy life.

### III. SETTING UP THE PROBLEM: INADEQUACIES OF EPICUREAN FRIENDSHIP

The traditional interpretation of Epicurean friendship provided above cannot adequately capture the value of friendship both in general and more importantly, from the Epicurean perspective. As hedonists, the value of friendship must be spelled out in terms of its contribution to pleasure. Thus, how is friendship pleasurable? The answer provided by this account is incomplete. To illustrate this point I will consider the potential pleasure derived from the following situation: Jenna spends an evening in conversation with her friend Nancy and finds this experience very pleasurable.

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pains are greater than bodily ones and that mental pleasures can counterbalance bodily pain (DF I 55-56, DL 22 = U 138).

<sup>12</sup> While this saying may appear implausible given the egoistic basis of Epicurean friendship, Mathew Evans argues that it fits consistently within the Epicurean framework. He claims that according to the Epicurean classification of pleasures, as implausible as it may appear, risk of physical pain and death are choice-worthy over neglecting one's friend. To defend this he points to some of the reasons I have noted above. He stresses the importance of attaining *ataraxia*, the ability to suffer bodily pain without sacrificing *ataraxia*, the role that friendship plays in attaining *ataraxia*, and the sacrifices required to maintain friendship (421-422). In fact, in Gregory Kavka's "The Reconciliation Project" he argues that supreme sacrifices like this can be prudent. After all, the potential punishment and social backlash one faces for reneging on obligations is severe. Thus it is generally better to follow through even when it requires eminent death (308).

<sup>13</sup> This is a controversial Epicurean saying. Most notably, scholars debate over whether this saying necessarily involves altruistic concern for the other. For arguments in favor of an altruistic interpretation see Annas (*The Morality of Happiness*, 239-240) and Mitsis (*Epicurus' Ethical Theory: The pleasures of invulnerability*, 100). However, as previously noted, I intend to bracket discussions of altruism from this paper and pursue an interpretation of Epicurean friendship consistent with Epicurean ethical egoism and hedonism. Regardless of whether this saying involves altruistic concern, I highlight it to illustrate the stringent requirement of personal sacrifice for the wellbeing of friends.

### ***Epicurean Explanation***

According to the traditional interpretation of Epicurean friendship, Jenna's evening with Nancy is pleasurable because it contributes in some way to *ataraxia*. For instance, perhaps Jenna and Nancy's conversation dispels fears of death and the gods, which may bring mental peace.<sup>14</sup> Also the evening may distract Jenna from current pain. According to Voula Tsouna, while beliefs and memories are often used by Epicureans to distract from current pain, non-cognitive interactions can serve this function as well. She specifically refers to the use of melodies, drunkenness and sex.<sup>15</sup> If these activities provide distractions, so too may conversations with friends. Finally, the evening spent with Nancy may strengthen the friendship. According to Mathew Evans, it is imperative that friends spend time together in order to foster strong bonds of trust.<sup>16</sup> The stronger the bonds of trust the greater the mental security. Jenna's evening spent with Nancy may contribute to *ataraxia* in all of these ways.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Failure of This Explanation***

These responses are unsatisfying. Intuitively, there is something pleasurable about the evening beyond its contribution to *ataraxia*. Jenna will enjoy the evening spent with Nancy aside from the topics discussed, the distraction provided or the strengthening of friendship. Further, not

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<sup>14</sup> The Epicureans assert that it is irrational to fear death and the gods. These fears disrupt *ataraxia*, and must be eradicated in order to live a happy life. Several therapeutic methods are given for this ailment. In particular, discussion of philosophy and the nature of the universe will help individuals rationally overcome such fears. For a discussion on this topic see Voluna Tsouna's *The Ethics of Philodemus* regarding 'therapeutic tactics' (84-87). Also see Martha Nussbaum, "Therapeutic arguments: Epicurus and Aristotle".

<sup>15</sup> Voula Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus* (86).

<sup>16</sup> Mathew Evans, "Can Epicureans be Friends?" (421-422).

<sup>17</sup> There are additional ways in which friendship contributes to *ataraxia*. For instance, Tim O'Keefe discusses the security friends provide from intellectual dangers in his essay, "Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?". Friends help each other stay true to Epicureanism and admonish the other when one strays from the path (278). In *The Ethics of Philodemus*, Voula Tsouna also discusses this important role. Philodemus has a lengthy discussion, *On Frank Speech*, which notes the use of criticism for moral correction within Epicurean communities. Tsouna claims, "frank speech is both a method of pedagogy and a way of speaking which forges bonds of benefits and gratitude among the members of Epicurean communities and is essential to the development of genuine friendships" (92). In addition, *Ep. Men.* 135 asserts that Epicureans should practice with "like minded individuals". Practicing the tenets of Epicureanism with Epicurean friends helps to strengthen friendships and one's commitment to the Epicureanism in general. All of these features of friendship are vital to securing *ataraxia*.

only is there some pleasure missing from the evening, this account fails to adequately capture the value of individual friends.

To illustrate these points, consider the famous letter Epicurus drafted for a friend on the day of his death. Although Epicurus was in extreme bodily pain, he emphatically argued “but against all these things are ranged the joy in my soul produced by the recollection of the discussions we have had” (*Ep. Id.* 10.22). Individuals can take current kinetic mental pleasure in remembering past “goods” (*DF* I 56). But, what sort of pleasure did this past good provide? Can memories of past states of *ataraxia* counterbalance pain or is Epicurus pointing to some active pleasure taken in conversations with his friend? While the texts are not very clear on this point, I believe that the pleasure referred to by Epicurus is more than merely *katastematic* pleasure.

After all, if it is contribution to *ataraxia* that Epicurus is calling upon, the actual memory Epicurus picks is incidental. He could pick any past event/object that secured *ataraxia* (e.g. harvesting wheat or taking vitamins).<sup>18</sup> Yet, it seems that the friend to whom Epicurus is writing and the particular conversations in question are not supposed to be incidental. Epicurus’ letter expresses affection toward the friend and past experiences that appear to make them essential to the pleasure Epicurus recalls. Thus, the evening and particular individual to which Epicurus refers are pleasurable aside from their contribution to *ataraxia*.

Returning to our original example, if contribution to *ataraxia* is the sole concern, Nancy can be replaced without altering the pleasure Jenna experiences. For instance, anything that can equally distract Jenna will be equally pleasurable. Among other things, drugs, good music and

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<sup>18</sup> The actions of harvesting wheat and taking vitamins both secure *ataraxia* because they provide security about future natural and necessary desires. For instance, the act of harvesting wheat provides tranquility and quells fears about lacking resources (in particular, food) necessary for happiness. The same may be said about vitamins to the extent that they secure future health. While both of these actions also clearly secure *aponia* because they avoid/alleviate physical pain, knowing that one has all that is required for future happiness and has done what they can to avoid future pain brings mental peace. Thus the activities themselves produce tranquility and remembering past activities like these revive the pleasure experienced.

other individuals can be substitutes for Nancy. The same holds for strengthening bonds of friendship, which can presumably be done with other friends. Further, if the pleasure produced lies in the ability to dispel the fear of gods, then any individual that shares the same conversation with Jenna will be equally pleasurable.<sup>19</sup> In fact, Epicureans readily admit the inessential role particular friends play in securing *ataraxia* because the Epicurean community is fully capable of securing the natural and necessary desires of its members (*KD* 40). Thus, the individual is left with an inessential role in the pleasure experienced.

Further, under the traditional interpretation it is hardly the “individual”, Nancy, that Jenna values. Given this account, friends are valued solely for those character traits that contribute to *ataraxia*. In particular, most individuals are valued for their ‘trustworthiness’ because this is the most vital component of friendship. However, simply valuing one trait hardly amounts to valuing the whole “individual”.<sup>20</sup> Thus, focusing solely on contribution to *ataraxia* fails to adequately capture the value of friendship in general, not to mention the value of individual friends.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Of course one may argue that more is required to ensure the same efficacy of conversation between Jenna and the other individual. For instance, the individual may need to have the same level of intellect and have a developed relationship with Jenna in order for the exact same conversation to have a similar result. The importance of this second element will be discussed shortly. However, theoretically, Nancy is replaceable under the traditional interpretation of friendship by individuals that are capable of producing a similarly efficacious conversation.

<sup>20</sup> I am not assuming that the individual is anything other than a bundle of character traits. Yet, simply valuing one trait does not amount to valuing the whole individual. Of course, the business of designating how many or which traits constitute the “individual” is certainly a tricky venture (one which I do not intend to embark upon). However, I take it to be fairly uncontroversial that valuing one trait fails to value the “individual”.

<sup>21</sup> A similar argument is presented by Gregory Vlastos in, “The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato”. He criticizes the Platonic notion of love in the *Symposium* for its apparent egoism, and the impersonal and insignificant role of the individual. He argues that Platonic love “does not provide for love of whole persons, but only for love of that abstract version of persons which consists of the complex of their best qualities” (31). Thus, the individual is not the object of love. Rather the qualities of the individual that instantiate the “form of beauty” are the true object of love. Neera Kapur Badhwar also discusses the importance of loving individuals for their character or personality rather than individual traits. She distinguishes between “ends” and “means” friendships. In “means friendship”, “the object of love is primarily or only the other’s incidental features” (2). As a result, the friend is replaceable by individuals that share those features (3). Of course, it is still up for question whether the amendments I suggest for Epicurean Friendship can satisfy the potential critiques of these authors. But unfortunately, this goes beyond the scope of my thesis.

Epicureans may attempt to get around this problem by arguing that ‘trustworthiness’ is embodied by various traits such as honesty and generosity. Also friends fulfill different trust roles (e.g. a friend at work as compared to a neighbor). Different traits may be valuable depending upon the role fulfilled by the friend. Perhaps many different traits are valuable for the completion of important tasks. While one person’s diligence is helpful, another person’s creative thinking comes in handy as well. The ability to successfully complete such tasks provides security regarding future needs. Thus, many different character traits are instrumentally valuable in their contribution to *ataraxia*, and these traits are capable of capturing the value of the whole individual, making her irreplaceable and essential to the pleasure experienced.

However, I do not believe that this suggestion resolves the problem. First, there are still many pleasurable personality traits that are not captured by this explanation. For instance, how does a good sense of humor contribute to *ataraxia*? Second, this doesn’t seem to be the reason why we value particular character traits. We do not value humor because it brings us peace of mind. Rather, we value humor because it makes us laugh, and we actively enjoy this character trait. In fact, it is not simply particular abstract character traits that are pleasurable. Sometimes the whole individual (aggregate of traits) generates an affective response and this is the root of an additional kind of value. For example, it is generally pleasurable to laugh at a joke no matter who the comedian is.<sup>22</sup> However, a deeper affective response is experienced from jokes told by individuals with whom we have developed relationships. Somehow the whole individual is relevant to the pleasure experienced.

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<sup>22</sup> Of course, there are some exceptions to this rule. It is unlikely that we will find individuals whom we despise, such as Hitler, to be humorous. Thanks to Andrew Cohen for illuminating this point. However, it is typically the case that we can enjoy character traits (such as humor) in strangers. In such cases, it is the actual character trait that produces pleasure, for we know little or nothing about the individual’s other traits and have no developed relationship with them.

Neera Kapur Badhwar can help us better understand this point. In “Friends as Ends in Themselves” Badhwar describes the pleasure of friendship in similar terms; the development of a deep affective response to individual friends produces a unique kind of pleasure. She attributes this to two important factors: (a) an individual’s mode of expressing character traits and (b) the historical development of individuals and their relationships with others. The combination of these elements produces a unique affection for individual friends. According to Badhwar, an individual’s mode of expression (i.e. their *style*) is the way in which they express the abstract character traits of which they are comprised.<sup>23</sup> No two individuals share the exact same historical identity.<sup>24</sup> Given the impact historical circumstances have on the development and expression of character traits, it is impossible for two individuals to share all of the same traits and mode of expression.<sup>25</sup> Badhwar suggests that friends develop affection for the traits and *style* of the other, which as an aggregate, are unique to the particular individual and produce a distinct kind of pleasure.<sup>26</sup>

Through familiarity or the “gaining of intimate knowledge of the other”, these traits are more greatly appreciated.<sup>27</sup> Knowledge is in some sense required for developing a deep affection for the characteristics of the other.<sup>28</sup> Intuitively, a shared history is important because it helps inform the way Nancy and Jenna interact with each other. Jenna can better sense sarcasm, excitement, frustration or any number of emotions in Nancy. Jenna can also better relate to Nancy given that she has knowledge of Nancy’s past. Additionally, Jenna and Nancy may be more comfortable with each other than with other individuals. While Jenna may have several close friends, her interactions with each of them are fundamentally distinct.

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<sup>23</sup> Neera Kapur Badhwar, “Friends as Ends in Themselves”, 19-20.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. The historical identity of an individual is simply the historical context of an individual life.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-20.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-3 and 19-23.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

Now that I have explored the kind of pleasure that is missing from the traditional account of Epicurean friendship, I must consider whether this pleasure can be incorporated into the Epicurean system. I will show that Epicureans can account for most of the crucial elements noted above.

#### **IV. POTENTIAL SOLUTION: EPICUREAN ACCOUNT OF THE ADDITIONAL PLEASURE**

##### *Attitudes in Epicurean Friendship*

Given the important role attitudes play in the missing pleasure of friendship, it is first pertinent to consider whether Epicureans discuss attitudes and what they say about attitudes in relation to friendship. Several discussions of attitudes can be found in various Epicurean texts. Attitudes of respect, admiration, gratitude, and beneficence are among those discussed. For instance, *SV* 32 asserts “to show reverence for a wise man is itself a great good for him who reveres [the wise man]”. At the outset of *de Rerum Natura*, Lucretius marvels at the intellectual prowess of his master, Epicurus. He states, “[w]hen all could see human life lay groveling ignominiously in the dust, crushed beneath the grinding weight of superstition...the first who ventured to confront it boldly, was a Greek. This man neither the reputation of the gods nor thunderbolts nor heaven’s menacing rumbles could daunt; rather all the more they roused the ardor of his courage and made him long to be the first to burst the bolts and bars of nature’s gates” (*DRN* I 62-79). Such powerful discussions of admiration towards Epicurus are not solely relegated to the written works of later Epicureans. The Epicurean community had a reputation of acting kindly towards one-another. Diogenes Laertius reports that Epicurus showed generosity and kindness towards community members (*DL* 10. 9-10). J.M Rist also comments on the

dynamics of the Epicurean community. In particular, they were generous, gracious and often praised each other.<sup>29</sup>

In fact, Julia Annas suggests that emotional affection for friends was more widely spread in Epicureanism than other Hellenistic systems. She claims, “they regarded it as best to live in small communities like Epicurus’ own Garden, and while this did not exclude arrangements like marriage, it is clear that an individual’s affection was spread further than was normal in Greek practice”.<sup>30</sup> Greeks generally had a small private life and a few close friends/relations. The Epicureans avoided intense relationships or “passions” like love because these are destructive to tranquility. But, they had many close friends to which they were minimally emotionally attached.<sup>31</sup>

The attitudes called upon by Epicureans may be valued for their therapeutic effect. Expressing admiration for the wise allows one to better emulate her worthy attributes.<sup>32</sup> Also, being beneficent and gracious strengthens friendship and as a result, mental security about the future. However, I believe these attitudes can be pleasurable beyond their contribution to *ataraxia*. Intuitively, attitudes are not simply neutral with regard to pleasure. Expressing praise shows admiration, which likely involves a positive emotional attachment to admired individuals. It feels good to admire people we respect. On the other hand, it feels good to be aware that our friends admire us and enjoy spending time with us. Similarly, acts of kindness and generosity are pleasurable. When Nancy acts kindly towards Jenna, this is not simply pleasurable because it reassures Jenna that Nancy will help in the future. The kindness actually feels good at the present

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<sup>29</sup> J.M. Rist, *Epicurus: An Introduction* (11-13).

<sup>30</sup> Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, 243.

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that Annas further uses this point to argue for an altruistic element of Epicurean friendship. However, her historical discussion of Epicurean communities is quite pertinent to establishing the prevalence of emotions within Epicurean psychology, ethics and friendship in particular.

<sup>32</sup> For instance, in both *DRN* III 1-7 and *DRN* V 1-50, Lucretius refers to Epicurus as a god and expresses his aspiration to imitate Epicurus out of the love he has for this wonderful man.

moment and lifts Jenna's spirit, so to speak. Jenna will also feel good about herself when she returns the favor. Thus, all of these attitudes are intuitively pleasurable.<sup>33</sup> Yet, before these attitudes can be used to explain the missing pleasure of friendship, I must consider how this pleasure can be described in Epicurean terms.

### *Kinetic Mental Pleasures*

I believe these pleasures can be captured within the Epicurean ethical framework if they are understood as kinetic mental pleasures. First, I suggest that these pleasures be classified as mental pleasures because they are clearly not bodily in nature. There are physical elements involved in Jenna's conversation with Nancy. But, it is not really the uttering and listening to sounds that makes the conversation pleasurable. Rather, some mental assessment of the situation produces an emotional response or affection towards the activity and more importantly, towards the individual with which Jenna engages.

This is also evidence for the kinetic nature of these pleasures. Emotional reactions involve active 'movements' in the soul rather than a 'stable' state.<sup>34</sup> The active pleasure Jenna takes in the evening spent with Nancy cannot be enjoyed once the night has ended. After Nancy has gone home, the pleasurable affection subsides. Of course, if Jenna recalls the evening she will find it pleasurable once again. Thus the evening may in fact contribute to *ataraxia*.<sup>35</sup> But in this case, it is the active pleasure experienced from the evening that leads to the tranquil state. As previously argued, there is ample reason to believe that Jenna experiences some affective

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<sup>33</sup> Not only is this a very intuitive point, but contemporary philosophers working on theories of friendship find pleasure a crucial component (by-product if you may) of friendship. For instance, see Badhwar's "Friends as Ends in Themselves", 19-23. Also, Kim Chong-Chong describes several benefits of friendship one of which is the pleasure of emotional attachment. He claims, "it is undeniable that one gets certain "goods" and "benefits" out of friendship, e.g. the joys and pleasures of companionship...the emotional feelings of warmth, intimacy, and security..." (355).

<sup>34</sup> Voula Tsouna's discussion of Epicurean psychology in *The Ethics of Philodemus* describes feelings as an active movement/experience in the soul (41-43).

<sup>35</sup> Recollection of past goods brings current mental pleasure. Jenna's past conversation with Nancy is pleasurable when recalled just as Epicurus enjoyed the memory of his dear friend.

response or attitude towards Nancy. I suggest this pleasure be understood as kinetic mental pleasure.

*Additional Value of the Individual*

There are important distinctions between the value of individuals under the traditional interpretation of Epicurean friendship and the amended version. For instance, the amended notion better captures the value of the whole “individual”. Through familiarity, affection is generated towards the “individual”, the bundle of character traits and mode of expression.<sup>36</sup> This is unlike the security produced from particular character traits. Also, the individual is seen as essential to the pleasure they produce. Jenna may have several friends that are all kinetically pleasurable. However, the kinetic pleasure or affection experienced with each individual is somehow distinct. Given the shared history between Jenna and Nancy, character traits and mode of expression of each individual, there are distinctive things about the manner in which Jenna and Nancy interact. Because of this, the particular kinetic pleasures produced by the relationship are distinctive and cannot be replicated by others.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the affection Jenna feels for each friend is distinct and the whole “individual” is essential to the pleasure experienced. This is not to say that any particular individual is essential for Jenna’s happiness. *Katastematic*, not kinetic,

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<sup>36</sup> One may object to this point because not all character traits are necessarily pleasurable and thus the whole individual is not valued. However, Badhwar dismisses this problem because she finds it impossible to value every facet of an individual and yet she argues this does not preclude the ability to develop affection for whole individuals. She claims, “the self is multi-faceted, and no one friend can love- or even evoke- every facet” (“Friends as Ends in Themselves”, 8). It is simply ridiculous to require friends to take pleasure in every single trait of another individual. In fact, it is often the case that the people we have the greatest affection for have several annoying traits. Yet, this does not distract from the affection we feel for the individual (at least not in all cases).

<sup>37</sup> This seems to be a fairly intuitive point. While we may experience the same affection or emotion towards various individuals, it is experientially distinct in each case. For instance, I love my husband dearly. I also love my mother. The love I feel for each is an instantiation of the same emotion. However, each instantiation is distinct given the relationship established between us. Further, affection felt for a particular individual cannot be replaced by another. If Nancy dies, Jenna can make new friends. But the new relationships will not provide the same affection she has lost.

pleasure is necessary for happiness and the katastematic pleasure produced by individuals is replaceable by others.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, the amended notion of friendship certainly provides a distinct value for individual friends. It may be tempting to describe this distinction in terms of instrumental and intrinsic value. After all, friends valued for katastematic pleasure are only valued for the actions or utility they can bring about. Thus, all friends are means to the same end (security). Further, it is only the particular useful traits that are valued in this way, and not the whole individual. On the other hand, valuing friends for kinetic pleasure amounts to valuing the whole individual. It seems as though the individual is intrinsically pleasurable (or pleasure producing).

However, I caution against any attempt to describe the value of friends with these terms. The only thing intrinsically valuable under Epicureanism is pleasure. Thus, in order for a friend to be intrinsically valuable, they must be a pleasure. It is however nonsensical to claim that an individual *is* pleasure, and thus constitutes an end under the Epicurean account.<sup>39</sup> Because of this difficulty, some authors have argued that although friends are not intrinsically valuable, *friendships* are valued in this way.<sup>40</sup> Yet, there are difficulties with this account as well. First, it seems the relationship is still valued instrumentally; it is valued for the pleasure it produces.<sup>41</sup> Second, this does not help clarify the value of individual friends, which is the task undertaken in

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<sup>38</sup>According to Epicureans, individuals are entirely replaceable with regard to katastematic pleasure. If Nancy should unfortunately come to her demise, the community of wise Epicureans will provide sufficient security of Jenna's future needs (*KD* 40). Much more will be said about this in chapter 5.

<sup>39</sup> I am grateful to Tim O'Keefe for helping to illuminate this point

<sup>40</sup> Tim O'Keefe discusses this potential argument in "Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?", 279. In particular, he refers to several proponents of this stance including: O'Connor, 185 and Rist, 131.

<sup>41</sup> See O'Keefe "Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?", 282-283. Further, Philip Mitsis hints at this difficulty in his discussion of Epicurean friendship. He claims that Epicurean friendship is guilty of conflating between "pleasurable pursuits" and "pleasures" (114). Just because friendship produces pleasure, it does not follow that it *is* a pleasure.

the beginning of this section. Although friends are now means to different ends, kinetic rather than solely katastematic pleasure, they are still valued instrumentally.<sup>42</sup>

Although a distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value may not fit the bill of this project, there are clearly important distinctions to be made. Under the amended notion of Epicurean friendship, the whole individual is responsible for a distinct kinetic mental pleasure. I believe this resolves much of the tension noted previously.<sup>43</sup> It explains the active pleasure Jenna and Nancy enjoy in the evening spent together. Also, it better explains how Jenna values Nancy in particular and why the pleasure she experiences cannot be replicated by other friends/activities. Even given these important additions to the Epicurean position, it is important to note that friends are still most valued for their contribution to *ataraxia*. This is because *ataraxia* is the limit of pleasure and thus the central focus of Epicureanism (*DF* I 38).

### ***Torquatus as a Model for Epicurean Friendship***

In order to better illustrate the independent kinetic mental pleasure I have in mind, I suggest we look at Torquatus' discussion of friendship in the *de Finibus*. Torquatus expounds three versions of friendship held by Epicureans, the second of which I believe provides a good model for the notion of friendship I have developed. According to Torquatus, this notion of

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<sup>42</sup> This is not to say that kinetic and katastematic pleasure represent two distinct ends. They are both pleasures and thus both part of the final end. However, they are distinct kinds of the final end and friends are now valued for their contribution to both of these kinds.

<sup>43</sup> However, it may be doubtful that it is fully successful at this task. For instance, Neera Kapur Badhwar would likely object to the value monism of Epicurean ethics and on this basis refuse to admit the possibility of true end friendship. According to Badhwar, a friend cannot be valued as an end if they are valued for contribution to pleasure (5). This is because valuing a friend for the pleasure they produce does not fully value the individual for who they are. In Badhwar's "Why It Is Wrong to be Always Guided by the Best: Consequentialism and Friendship" she claims, "In an end friendship, one loves the friend as an essential part of one's system of ends and not solely, or even primarily, as a means to an independent end" (483). Thus, she will likely find fault with Epicurean friendship. However, even so, much of Badhwar's discussion about the pleasure of friends is perfectly applicable to our discussion. Additional critics, such as Kim-Chong Chong, may likely argue that the value of the individual cannot be fully captured without reference to altruistic concern (353). However, it is not my intention to argue that Epicurean friendship can withstand critiques from defenders of altruistic and/or end friendship. The goal of my thesis is to present an intuitively appealing and robust notion of Epicurean friendship while remaining consistent with their egoistic and hedonistic ethical system. Accepting the additional pleasure endorsed in this paper will better account for the value attributed to individual friends from the Epicurean perspective.

friendship rests on the idea that friendship begins for utility but results in loving friends for their own sake. This transformation of friendship occurs “when the frequency of association has led to real intimacy, and produced a flowering of affection” (*DF* I 69).

The different kinds of pleasure developed in this paper neatly map onto the kind of friendship Torquatus’ describes. In the beginning, friends contribute to *ataraxia* through providing mental security. As such, friends produce katastematic pleasure. We can best understand this as a “utility friendship”. However, as the friendship blossoms and familiarity increases, a new kind of pleasure is produced in greater abundance. This pleasure is kinetic mental pleasure, or the pleasure of affection. As previously discussed, this pleasure allows one to value the whole individual. Further, the individual is essential to a distinct kinetic experience. Thus, friends become choice-worthy in themselves.<sup>44</sup>

However, some may rightly object to this interpretation of Torquatus’ second notion of friendship because it ignores what many believe to be apparent altruism. For instance, Torquatus prefaces this part of his speech by attributing it specifically to later Epicureans that worried about the egoistic basis of friendship (*DF* I 66 and 69). Thus, it is clear from the outset that this notion of friendship is not intended to be fully Epicurean and is ultimately revisionary. Cicero further confirms this point in *de Finibus* II by referring to this notion of friendship as the “more humane view” (*DF* II 82). Cicero interprets the second notion of friendship to hold that “friends are in the first instance sought for their utility, but as friendships deepen, we come to love our friends in

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<sup>44</sup> Using the phrase “choice-worthy in themselves” in regard to the kinetic pleasure of friendship is likely to spark objections. In fact, there is controversy over whether kinetic pleasures are ever deserving of this title given the Epicurean ethical system. J. M. Rist claims there is an inherent lack of motivation for Epicureans to choose kinetic pleasures because they are not necessary for happiness. The limit of pleasure is marked by *ataraxia*. Thus, while Epicureans may choose to vary their pleasurable experiences on a whim (select some particular kinetic pleasure), there is no systematic method for choosing between these pleasures or providing reasons for such choices (125-126). Philip Mitsis raises this issue as well (122). This is a challenging problem. But, it is a problem with the Epicurean notion of pleasure in general and is not peculiar to the amended notion I present. Epicureanism is hedonistic and all pleasures should be choice-worthy. More will be said about how to make sense of the motivation to select kinetic pleasures in chapter 6.

their own right...” (*DF* II 82). While Cicero claims that this notion of friendship serves his purposes quite well, it clearly conflicts with Epicurean ethics.<sup>45</sup>

I do not deny that Torquatus intended for this notion of friendship to involve altruism. However, for our purposes, I suggest we bracket this issue.<sup>46</sup> I am sure this appears to be a strange suggestion given that Torquatus clearly intends altruism to be the result of friendship. However, I still find this notion of friendship significant to our discussion for several reasons. First, the revision of Epicurean friendship that conflicts with Epicurean ethics occurs at the end of Torquatus’ explication. Thus, much of the story Torquatus tells is quite applicable to Epicurean friendship if we accept kinetic mental pleasures. The original, and clearly most important, basis of friendship is the utility or security friends provide.<sup>47</sup> Yet, as I have argued, katastematic pleasure is not the only kind of pleasure that friendship involves. Most importantly, Torquatus’ notion of friendship helps to clarify the way in which familiarity with individuals produces affection, which provides the independent kinetic mental pleasure I endorse.

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<sup>45</sup> Contemporary scholars are cognizant of this point as well. For instance, Tim O’Keefe discusses the differences between the three notions of friendship provided by Torquatus and the apparent altruism of the second notion in his essay, “Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?” (289-292).

<sup>46</sup> As discussed at the outset of this paper, it is my intention to provide a more robust understanding of friendship in Epicurean terms. This requires that friendship remain consistent with Epicurean ethics. Altruistic concern for friends is clearly inconsistent with the egoistic hedonism of Epicureanism. For further discussion on the point of conflict between these notions see Tim O’Keefe “Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?” (290-291).

<sup>47</sup> It is important to note that for Epicurean friendship, the utility of friendship should never be lost. Utility is fundamental to Epicureanism and thus inseparable from the notion of friendship. In addition, even Neera Kapur Badhwar, who is clearly in favor of end friendship, claims that utility from friends and the pleasure produced by friends survives the transformation (2-3 and 22). Thus, I assume that Torquatus’ interpretation should involve this commitment to utility as well. However, Torquatus does claim that, “at this point friends love each other for their own sake, regardless of any utility to be derived from the friendship” (*DF* I 69). However, the “regardless of utility” clause seems problematic. Badhwar argues in “Friends as Ends in Themselves” that claims like this support unconditional love and this is not the basis of true friendship. While time precludes a full discussion of her argument, she suggests that loving an individual unconditionally requires that you do not love the person for who they are. After all, in unconditional love you must continue to love friends through significant changes in personality and failure to provide pleasure/utility. It is not only impractical that friendships survive such changes, but it results in a notion of love for others that is universal and in no way related to the essential characteristics of the individual friend (9-11). Thus, I suggest that utility remains an important part of friendship throughout the transformation it undergoes. Even though this paper develops a new kind of pleasure that helps us better understand Epicurean friendship, this discussion does not require rejecting the utility base of this relationship.

Clearly, a further question may be raised at this point about whether the transition Torquatus' describes necessarily leads to altruism. This will be addressed in great detail to follow. For the time being, it should be clear that the initial stages of the transformation of friendship fit neatly into the classification of pleasures I have described and help to visualize what such friendship might look like.

## V. APPARENT TENSION IN ADOPTING KINETIC MENTAL PLEASURE OF FRIENDSHIP

However, there is a tension within Epicurean texts regarding the notion of pleasure I have developed. Tim O'Keefe discusses this problem and shows that perhaps the Epicurean failure to account for kinetic pleasure in interacting with friends is not an accidental omission. This kind of pleasure conflicts with the following Epicurean principle: "...the limit of mental pleasures is produced by a reasoning out of these very pleasures [of the flesh] and of the things related to these..." (*KD* 18).<sup>48</sup> Essentially, Epicureans believe that all mental pleasures are dependent upon reflections of pleasant sensual experiences. In other words, the object of kinetic mental pleasures (the object of joy/delight) is some bodily pleasure in the past, present or future.<sup>49</sup> This is further confirmed by Torquatus in Cicero's *de Finibus* (*DF* I 57).<sup>50</sup> All of this is quite troubling for my project. After all, I suggest the Epicureans endorse some kind of independent kinetic mental pleasure, or mental affection that springs from interactions with friends that are not themselves

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<sup>48</sup> The word "limit" in the passage noted above does not seem to mean quantitative limit. That is, it does not mean that the greatest mental pleasure possible is determined by the greatest bodily pleasure. Rather, I take "limit" to mean that the variety of mental pleasures possible depends upon the variety of potential reflections of various bodily pleasures.

<sup>49</sup> Epicureans do not explain whether this principle relates to kinetic or katastematic pleasure. I believe it refers to both. The examples noted above explain the dependency of kinetic mental pleasures on bodily pleasures. However, *ataraxia* is generally dependent upon certain bodily pleasures/pains as well. After all, mental tranquility is generally described as confidence in the future security of bodily needs, or the avoidance of future bodily pain (*SV* 33).

<sup>50</sup> Torquatus also claims some later Epicureans rejected this principle (*DF* I 55), which further confirms Epicurus' own commitment to this idea.

physically pleasurable. Thus, my suggestion obviously conflicts with the Epicurean ethical principle in question.<sup>51</sup>

In addition, there are several sayings that apparently deny independent kinetic mental pleasures. For instance, *KD* 11 claims that, “if our suspicions about heavenly phenomena and about death did not trouble us at all and were never anything to us, and moreover, if not knowing the limits of pains and desires did not trouble us, then we would have no need of natural science”. Thus, pursuing natural science produces no pleasure aside from its contribution to *ataraxia*. In addition, many sayings that praise philosophy and contemplation do so solely for their instrumental value in dispelling false beliefs (*Ep. Men.* 132 and *Pyth.* 85). Thus, these independent mental activities are valued solely for their contribution to *ataraxia*, not some kinetic pleasure they produce. However, the notion of pleasure I have developed cannot be dismissed this quickly. In fact, there is actually textual evidence in support of postulating independent kinetic mental pleasures.

### ***Textual Evidence in Favor of Independent Kinetic Mental Pleasures***

In particular, consider the following saying, “In other activities, the rewards come only when people have become, with great difficulty, complete [masters of the activity]; but in philosophy the pleasure accompanies the knowledge. For the enjoyment does not come after the learning but the learning and the enjoyment are simultaneous” (*SV* 27). This seems to suggest that philosophy is not simply pleasurable for its contribution to *ataraxia*. Rather, the activity of

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<sup>51</sup> Tim O’Keefe also addresses this potential conflict in “Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?” (283). O’Keefe defends the principle that mental pleasures depend on bodily pleasures in order to dismiss an interpretation of Epicurean friendship that claims friendship is intrinsically pleasurable. If friendship is intrinsically pleasurable, then activities with friends must be pleasurable *per se*. However, O’Keefe points out that this position is inconsistent with the principle illustrated above. The overall goal of his paper is to give an interpretation of several troubling Epicurean texts about friendship that is consistent with the Epicurean egoistic and hedonistic ethical system. In order to do so, he considers several possible interpretations like the one dismissed in this discussion. Ultimately, he endorses a behavioral interpretation of Epicurean love that explains the apparent altruistic actions of wise Epicureans without actually attributing any emotional attachment that is problematic on egoistic/hedonistic grounds.

acquiring knowledge is itself pleasurable. Further support of this claim can be found in Diogenes Laertius' report of Epicurean ethics. He states the wise Epicurean "will take more delight in contemplation than other men" (*DL* 10 120).

In addition, Lucretius frequently expresses deep admiration and awe for the natural order in his *de Rerum Natura*. The text opens with a hymn to Venus celebrating her workings on earth. Lucretius does not believe gods are active agents on earth and as such this hymn is truly a hymn to nature itself (*DRN* I 1-30).<sup>52</sup> Contemplating nature produces attitudes of wonderment and awe that likely constitute an independent pleasurable experience in the mind.

Thus, there is evidence of independent kinetic mental pleasures within Epicurean texts. Philosophy is mentally stimulating and attitudes of awe towards nature produce a pleasurable feeling in the soul. I believe that conversations with friends can be mentally stimulating like philosophy. Also, experiences with friends can produce pleasurable attitudes similar to the contemplation of nature. Thus, although explicit textual support of independent kinetic mental pleasures with regard to friendship is lacking, there is reason to adopt my interpretation.

### ***Philodemus and Natural Emotions or "Bites"***

Philodemus provides a detailed discussion of Epicurean moral psychology in the famed Herculaneum papyri. Within this discussion Philodemus contrasts two kinds of anger: "natural anger" (*orge*) and "empty anger" (*thymos*).<sup>53</sup> Of particular importance to our discussion is the difference between these kinds of anger and the roles they play in the wise Epicurean's life. I will use this distinction to draw a parallel between other potentially natural emotions for the wise Epicurean, some of which I suggest produce pleasure (kinetic mental pleasure to be exact).

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<sup>52</sup> For a discussion on the nature of gods see *Ep. Hdt.* 76-77. This passage asserts that because gods are blessed, they cannot be in charge of the orderings of the material world. Controlling the world in this way is sure to produce great anxiety and anxiety is contrary to the perfect blessedness of the gods. Thus, natural phenomena should not be attributed to a divine being.

<sup>53</sup> Voula Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus*, 196.

However, before beginning this investigation, it is important to first lay out a few fundamental features of Epicurean moral psychology.

Expounding Epicurean moral psychology is a difficult task. The most important remaining discussion is from the Herculaneum papyri. However, the text is in poor condition and it is sometimes difficult to discern whether Philodemus is revising or expounding Epicurus' own commitments. Thus, there are notable limitations to providing a thorough explanation of Epicurean moral psychology. In this discussion I will draw primarily from Voula Tsouna's *The Ethics of Philodemus*. I will also supplement the discussion with Julia Annas' treatment of anger in "Epicurean Emotions". While neither author can give an exhaustive understanding of the complex Epicurean system of moral psychology due to the rough condition of texts and lack of discussion on the part of Epicureans, I will take what I can from these expositions and fill in the missing links where necessary.

To begin, Tsouna explains there is an intricate and reciprocal psychological relationship between beliefs, dispositions, desires and emotions. Beliefs inform desires and dispositions, and desires and dispositions in turn reinforce and inform the development of beliefs.<sup>54</sup> For instance, if an individual believes that accumulating wealth is good, she may develop a desire for wealth and a disposition to react positively towards ventures that lead to gains in wealth. At the same time, a strong desire for wealth can reinforce one's belief that wealth is a good thing. Also, people can be disposed to develop beliefs about situations.<sup>55</sup> For instance, if I am disposed to be greedy and enjoy the accumulation of wealth, I may come to believe that my sister's birthday is a bad thing because it requires spending some of my wealth on a birthday present for her.

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<sup>54</sup> Voula Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus*, 35-38 and 222.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 221-222.

Further, dispositions and beliefs play an important role in emotions. Emotions are comprised of cognitive and non-cognitive elements; they involve a belief about a particular situation and some affective response to this belief (which can have both mental and physical manifestations).<sup>56</sup> However, beliefs are not always sufficient to bring about emotional reactions.<sup>57</sup> Dispositions also play a crucial role. While it is not extremely clear why this is the case, I believe dispositions increase the likelihood of experiencing affective responses towards particular beliefs.<sup>58</sup> For example, let's consider two school children: Blake and Todd. Blake is sensitive to or disposed to feel hurt by the critiques of his peers. Todd on the other hand, is not disposed to react in this manner. Rather, Todd has a keen ability to blow off any cruel remarks. Suppose that both Blake and Todd hold the same belief, the belief that a fellow classmate poked fun of him. Given the difference in disposition, Blake may experience sorrow while Todd does not. This difference in reaction confirms the vital role dispositions can play for emotions.

Julia Annas further elaborates on the discussion of emotions by appealing to the role of desires. I take her discussion to suggest the following: desires enhance emotional reactions to particular situations.<sup>59</sup> Once again, consider Blake and Todd. Let's suppose that Blake not only has a disposition to be hurt by the actions of his peers but he also has a desire to be respected by other children. When Blake's peers poke fun of him, he is not only disposed to be upset, but his desire for respect amplifies his reaction and causes intense sorrow.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 39-41.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 43 and 238. Julia Annas discusses the necessary yet potentially insufficient nature of beliefs in the production of emotions as well (154).

<sup>58</sup> For further discussion on the multifaceted functions of dispositions see Tsouna's discussion of virtues and vices in chapter 2 of *The Ethics of Philodemus*. She notes, "like the virtues, the vices are states that Philodemus describes as stable dispositions to believe certain things and to feel and behave in certain ways, under certain circumstances, for certain reasons" (32). However, the primary difference between vice and virtue is that vices are dependent upon and dispose people towards false beliefs that are destructive to happiness (34). Discussion of the false beliefs behind common vices and the manner in which they inhibit happiness see pages 35-37.

<sup>59</sup> Julia Annas, "Epicurean Emotions", 153-154.

Now that the foundation has been laid we can better understand Philodemus' exposition on anger. Anger (both "natural" and "empty") is an emotion. As such, it involves a belief and affective response. Essentially, anger is an affective reaction by an individual to a belief that she has been harmed. I consider anger a negative emotion because the affective response is painful. Some of the physical elements of this pain include: increase of heart rate and blood pressure, turning red, sweating, shaking, swollen veins... among other things. There is also mental torment involved in anger that can lead to great anxiety.<sup>60</sup> In fact, I believe anger can produce independent mental kinetic pain. The pain of anger is based on a perceived wrong done by some individual. However, this need not be a physical wrong. For instance, perhaps the wrong is slander and results in bruising one's reputation. While this may have physical repercussions (e.g. the loss of a job and lack of proper resources to fulfill natural and necessary desires as a result), the slander itself has no direct physical effect and yet causes anger, which results in great mental pain.

Philodemus distinguishes between "natural anger" and "empty anger". While both kinds involve the basic elements noted above, they differ in crucial respects. Julia Annas nicely captures the distinctions between these kinds by comparing anger to Epicurus' classification of desires. She notes, "natural desires are opposed to empty desires, which are dependent on an empty belief".<sup>61</sup> Similarly, she claims that "empty anger" is based upon an empty or false belief. What kind of false beliefs might anger involve? Well, Tsouna suggests "empty anger" involves mistaken beliefs about being wronged, the degree or intensity of the wrong experienced, and the potential for pleasure in retaliation.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Tsouna refers to the mental torment of anger as "a painful psychic condition" that is extremely destructive to happiness, 37.

<sup>61</sup> Julia Annas, "Epicurean Emotions", 148.

<sup>62</sup> Voula Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus*, 40-41.

According to the discussion above, the belief of being wronged may not be sufficient to produce anger. The disposition to react towards perceived harm with anger (i.e. irascibility) greatly increases the likelihood of generating a response.<sup>63</sup> Further, Annas discusses the way in which a desire for retaliation increases the intensity of “empty anger”. Punishment is required to protect the security of individuals in a society. But punishing wrongdoers is not pleasurable and should not be desired by the wise Epicurean.<sup>64</sup> Having a faulty desire for retaliation leads to great physical and mental pain. For example, let’s suppose that a wealthy entrepreneur becomes enraged at a business partner that he believes to have run off with a small portion of his fortune. Regardless of whether the belief is actually correct, by Epicurean standards, the embezzlement is not detrimental to the entrepreneur’s happiness for excess wealth is not necessary in life. However, the entrepreneur is filled with rage (a rage clearly disproportional to the wrong he has suffered) and becomes determined to exact revenge. In the process he may spend huge sums of money hiring investigators to track his partner down. “Empty anger” such as this, can completely destroy the happiness of the entrepreneur.

Let us now turn to “natural anger”. Voula Tsouna explores in what sense this emotional response is “natural”. She reports that although “natural” is an ambiguous term, Philodemus appears to mean: “advantageous...results from a correct understanding of nature... and unavoidable”.<sup>65</sup> According to Philodemus, when people are truly injured (i.e. the individual has a correct belief about being wronged), they will unavoidably experience “natural anger” as a

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 210. However, I should note that Annas and Tsouna disagree about the specific role that dispositions play in the development of anger. Annas thinks that part of the distinction between “natural” and “empty” anger lies in the lack of a disposition towards anger in the first and a presence of this disposition in the second (163). However, Tsouna claims that even a wise Epicurean has a disposition towards anger but it is not a bad one. This explains how some wise Epicureans appear more prone to anger than others. Yet, no wise Epicurean is disposed to the rage of “empty anger” (234-237). Because of this disagreement I merely suggest we understand dispositions to increase the chance of anger; they are not necessary or sufficient for the occurrence of either type.

<sup>64</sup> Julia Annas, “Epicurean Emotions”, 153.

<sup>65</sup> Voula Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus*, 224-225.

response.<sup>66</sup> This emotion is based upon correct beliefs about the world, a healthy disposition and desires, and results in affection to the degree or intensity correctly warranted by the gravity of the wrongdoing.<sup>67</sup> In addition, Annas notes that revenge is desired only to the extent that it is a necessary response for maintaining a well-functioning society.<sup>68</sup> The required punishment is easy to carry out and no intense pain results from the dissatisfaction of this desire because it is not based upon an expectation of pleasure.<sup>69</sup>

However, given that “natural anger” is still anger, it is painful. Philodemus refers to it as having “biting force”.<sup>70</sup> Borrowing from Philodemus’ terminology, Voula Tsouna refers to small emotional reactions (or pains) experienced by the wise Epicurean as “bites”. These reactions are short lived and weak in strength. Tsouna attributes this mainly to the fact that emotions involve beliefs, which are susceptible to influence by reason.<sup>71</sup> Given the great psychological control and

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<sup>66</sup> I noted previously that beliefs are not always sufficient to produce an emotional response. However, Tsouna’s claim that “natural anger” is “unavoidable” suggests that a correct belief about being harmed is sufficient to produce “natural anger” (43). She does not clearly explain why this is the case. Yet the answer is fairly intuitive. However, correct beliefs about being wronged are not sufficient to bring about “empty anger” or rage. This kind of extreme anger is only produced when individuals have false beliefs, an irascible disposition and/or a faulty desire for revenge.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 224-225.

<sup>68</sup> Julia Annas, “Epicurean Emotions”, 159-160.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 160 and Voula Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus*, 225. Further, I should note that the affection, or pain experienced, in reaction to a wrongdoing should be proportional to the wrong suffered. If someone cuts in front of you in traffic (supposing he has wronged you in some way, maybe causing you to miss a green light and thus arrive late to work), you should not be so outraged that you chase the person down and shoot him. The traffic offense only warrants a minor reaction. On the other hand, I do not believe it is a conceptual necessity that the desire for punishment be proportional to the wrong suffered. A stable society is imperative to happiness. Thus, wise Epicureans will desire that all wrongdoers be punished. As Andrew I. Cohen has nicely pointed out, someone may object to this claim and argue that it is natural to have a stronger desire for justice when the wrongdoing is severe, and this desire is very destructive to happiness. For instance, when a child is murdered, the parents often spend the rest of their lives seeking justice. While this strong emotional reaction is often experienced in response to horrendous crimes, I do not believe wise Epicureans will find themselves in this situation. The parents in this example appear to be obsessed with revenge. They are going far beyond their duty to ensure justice is served. We can suppose that all that is required to fulfill the desire for justice is to do one’s part in the investigation. It is not required that one take matters of the law into their own hands and become private detectives. Rather, this obsession with revenge creates “empty anger” which is truly destructive to happiness and can easily ruin one’s life. The natural desire for justice to be served is far more modest than the faulty desire for revenge.

<sup>70</sup> Voula Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus*, 221.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 48. Evidence of the cognitive control of Epicureans can be found in *DRN* III 308-322 in which Lucretius discusses the ability to shape one’s natural disposition through education. Further, the main therapeutic tactic for exterminating false beliefs and desires is rational discourse and gaining knowledge about natural phenomena. Thus,

awareness of wise Epicureans, the “bite” can be quickly relieved.<sup>72</sup> Thus, this natural and negative emotion is not truly destructive to the *ataraxia* of the wise Epicurean.

An example of “natural anger” might involve the reaction a wise Epicurean will experience towards a drunk driver that caused a car accident resulting in bodily harm to her. She will inevitably be angry with the man for his irresponsible action and the physical injury he caused. Further, she will file charges against the driver and attend court hearings to ensure that justice is served. However, the anger experienced is related to a correct belief about bodily harm, it is experientially proportional to the wrong she has suffered, and it involves no intense desire for revenge. Given the wise Epicurean’s correct beliefs about the situation and realization that the “bite” of pain caused by this “natural anger” will pass quickly, her *ataraxia* is undisturbed.

Although “natural anger” and “empty anger” are both rightfully called anger they differ greatly. They involve different beliefs, dispositions, desires and even affective results. “Empty anger” is a response to false beliefs about the world that generally includes a poor disposition, sometimes a faulty desire, and is intense in pain. “Natural anger”, on the other hand, is a response to true beliefs about the world with a good disposition, good desires, and results in a slight “bite” of pain. Although wise Epicureans are vulnerable to “natural anger”, they never suffer the effects of the other.

I propose we extend Philodemus’ discussion of anger to other emotions. If anger can be a natural reaction in wise Epicureans, isn’t it likely that other emotions are natural as well? In fact, I believe that gratitude, admiration and fondness are natural emotions for individuals to

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correct beliefs should dispel irrational fears and faulty desires. For more information on therapeutic tactics see both Voula Tsouna’s *The Ethics of Philodemus* (74-87) and Martha Nussbaum’s “Therapeutic arguments: Epicurus and Aristotle”.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 50. Extending Julia Annas’ analogy with natural and empty desires, natural desires are easy to fulfill. Because of this, any pain experienced is short-lived. On the other hand, empty desires are difficult if not impossible to fulfill. Thus, these cause great pain to individuals. Given the wise Epicurean’s acute awareness of the world, she will realize that the wrongdoing is not terrible and will not destroy her happiness. She will experience some pain as an inevitable result, but will be quickly and easily relieved.

experience towards their friends. Further, since “natural anger” can produce independent kinetic mental pain, I believe these positive natural emotions can produce independent kinetic mental pleasure.<sup>73</sup>

Yet I must note there are limitations and objections to the parallel I suggest. First, there is hardly any discussion of positive emotions in Philodemus’ writing, and it is not clear that Philodemus’ discussion of “natural anger” can or should be attributed to orthodox Epicureanism. One may worry that extending the scope of natural emotions increases potential pain for wise Epicureans. Further, Annas would object to my position on the basis that pleasure cannot be experienced as a result of natural emotion. She suggests that all pleasure produced by emotions is the result of faulty beliefs/desires thus reducing the parallel I have drawn to one between “empty anger” and other empty emotions. While it will take significant argumentation to dismiss all of these concerns, I suggest we look at the textual limitations to begin with.

First, the discussion of positive emotions within Philodemus’ writings is sparse. Even so, I believe there is evidence to support my position. According to Tsouna, the failure to discuss positive emotions can likely be attributed to the therapeutic nature of Epicurean ethics. Epicureans are concerned with providing a path to the good life for individuals. Thus, the focus of Philodemus’ work is on those things that obstruct this path to happiness and the “passions” are clearly one of the most stubborn roadblocks for individuals.<sup>74</sup> In addition, Philodemus’ reference to “bites” is not solely relegated to discussions of anger. The term is used to designate other

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<sup>73</sup> Sandra Dwyer raised an interesting point regarding the parallel I have drawn between “natural anger” and other potential natural emotions. She questioned whether all natural emotions have “empty” counterparts like “natural anger”. While I do not have an answer to this question, it appears that many natural emotions will have empty counterparts. For instance, if admiration/gratitude are natural it is plausible to assume that some intensely experienced admiration/gratitude based upon false beliefs and accompanied by faulty desires might occur. An unwise individual may become obsessed or infatuated with individuals they admire. However, the potential for counterpart empty emotions is not problematic for the Epicurean position because wise Epicureans are not vulnerable to these frustrations.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-38 and 221-222. For further discussion on therapeutic elements of Epicurean philosophy see Martha Nussbaum, “Therapeutic arguments: Epicurus and Aristotle”.

instances in which it is natural to experience pain; death and misfortune are among those noted.<sup>75</sup>

Thus there is reason to believe that Epicureans admit a wider range of natural emotions than simply anger.

The last five columns of *On Anger* present a comparison of gratitude and anger. Although the condition of the text is extremely difficult at this point, Tsouna believes the argument goes as follows: gratitude is natural and is experienced by the wise Epicurean. It involves the perception that someone has benefited her. If the wise Epicurean experiences gratitude, she must also recognize when others have harmed her and as such experience anger. Essentially, it makes no sense to admit one emotion and deny its contrary.<sup>76</sup> While Tsouna cautions that her interpretation may be flawed on account of the poor condition of the text, I believe this is good evidence for admitting natural positive emotions.

However, even if natural positive emotions fit within Philodemus' framework, it is unclear whether Philodemus' discussion is revisionary or true to original Epicurean tenets. Perhaps Philodemus borrowed his theory on emotions from other Hellenistic philosophers rather than earlier Epicureans. After all, according to Voula Tsouna, other Hellenistic philosophers used the term "bites" within their discussions of emotions, some even before Philodemus.<sup>77</sup> However, although Philodemus shares terminology with other Hellenistic philosophers, his

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<sup>75</sup> There appears to be some ambiguity in the term "bites" as employed by Philodemus. Tsouna notes on page 47 that "bites" are synonymous with emotions; they involve both cognitive and affective components. Yet, in Philodemus' discussion of death he remarks that it is in some instances natural to feel a "bite" of sorrow while this is not based upon a belief about the evil of death. Perhaps it can be argued that it is based on the belief that one's death will be painful, or cause pain to one's family (although whether this is a legitimate concern for a psychological egoist is a different question). Either way, there appears to be some difficulty with the use of the term. Generally, "bite" means "emotion" for Philodemus even though it sometimes merely designates the affective component.

<sup>76</sup> Voula Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus*, 231.

<sup>77</sup> Voula Tsouna focuses on the historical difficulty of attributing Philodemus' discussion of "bites" or emotions to other Epicureans. She notes, "we do not know whether that concept ['bites'] was initially formed by Zeno or invented by Philodemus, or whether it was used by all Epicurean groups of the first century BC or only by Philodemus and his disciples" (46).

understanding of emotions is notably different.<sup>78</sup> Thus, there is reason to believe that the ideas expounded by Philodemus are, if not original to early Epicureans, at least original to Philodemus' brand of Epicureanism.

Tsouna further claims that Philodemus intended to attribute his theory on "natural anger" to earlier Epicureans.<sup>79</sup> In fact, there is reference to anger within other Epicurean works. In particular, *KD* 1 asserts that the gods are not affected by anger and gratitude as humans are. Tsouna believes this is because emotions are natural and unique to human experience.<sup>80</sup> Further, *SV* 62 refers to "justifiable" and "irrational anger" of parents. This looks like the distinction Philodemus draws between "natural" and "empty anger". However, the sources of the Vatican collection of sayings are largely unknown. Some can be traced directly to Philodemus but it is unclear whether this saying belongs among those. Yet, I still believe Philodemus' discussion does wonders to illustrate how positive emotions can fit within the Epicurean framework, regardless of whether Epicurus himself specifically endorsed them.

However, one may object to endorsing Philodemus' notion of "natural anger" in fear that the parallel I have drawn between "natural anger" and other natural emotions may be too

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<sup>78</sup> In particular, Tsouna contrasts Philodemus' position with the Stoic position (44-51). She argues that the central difference is that the sage actually experiences pain in Epicurean "bites" while Stoic "bites" or more technically *eupatheia* are peaceful and constant states (48). This is because for Philodemus, "bites" are actually emotions. The Stoic state of *eupatheia* is one in which the "sage senses the 'bite' of some pre-emotional state" but remains unharmed by the involuntary and irrational movement of the mind (48-49).

<sup>79</sup> Voula Tsouna, *The Ethics of Philodemus*, 202.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 231. The Epicurean treatment of gods is quite complex and perhaps contradictory to their staunch naturalist metaphysics and epistemology. According to Long and Sedley's interpretation of Epicurean theology, gods are merely thought constructs as opposed to material entities. They are mental personifications of the concept of 'blessedness'. So, the wise Epicurean aspires to be and in some cases actually becomes deified through attaining the 'blessed' attributes (145-148). While *KD* 1 claims that an idealized human or god is not victim to the pain of anger, it also asserts that experiences of gratitude are similarly foreign. This may appear to challenge the pleasure I propose. However, according to Philip Mitsis (*Epicurus' Ethical Theory: the pleasures of invulnerability*, 125) and J.M. Rist (*Epicurus: An introduction*, 154-155) there is reason to believe gods do in fact enjoy kinetic pleasure from friends. Because gods are perfect, they experience maximal pleasure. Yet, Philodemus notes that gods have friends (Philodemus *De dis* 3, fragm 84, col. 1.2-9, 15-16). Because friends need not provide any security for gods, they must produce some kinetic pleasure, like the pleasure described in this paper. Epicurean theology is a hotbed of controversy for the Epicureanism in general. There are obviously conflicting claims about the experiences of gods. However, if ideal humans have an aversion to pleasure, this would present a very odd and implausible version of hedonism.

successful. It may require the acceptance of additional negative natural emotions as well. This will leave the wise Epicurean vulnerable to more pain, which is surely undesirable from the Epicurean perspective.<sup>81</sup> However, as shown above, there is some reason to believe Epicureans already endorse Philodemus' framework. Even if they do not explicitly accept "natural anger", there is discussion of other emotions within early Epicurean texts. As discussed in Chapter 4, Epicureans often refer to attitudes such as gratitude and admiration.<sup>82</sup> Philodemus' framework helps to explain how these emotions fit within the Epicurean ethical system. In addition, it seems highly implausible that wise Epicureans have the cognitive control to avoid "natural anger" let alone other natural emotions.<sup>83</sup> Finally, even if this parallel results in the addition of new negative natural emotions the "bites" caused by these emotions are not destructive to the *ataraxia* of wise Epicureans.<sup>84</sup>

Julia Annas provides two additional objections that may be more troubling than the first. According to Annas, the analogy between anger and gratitude should include that "in both cases [the wise Epicurean] will not react very strongly".<sup>85</sup> Although the pain of "natural anger" is always weak and short in duration, this slight pain can be thoroughly reduced through rational deliberation and the cognitive control of wise Epicureans. Annas believes the same holds for gratitude. Thus, wise Epicureans are not in a position to enjoy pleasure from emotional reactions, at least not significant pleasure of any sort.

There are several ways to respond to the first objection. To begin, while the wise Epicurean may not "react very strongly" to emotional affects, this does not preclude the possibility of experiencing pleasure. In fact, it is clear from the very parallel drawn by

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<sup>81</sup> I am grateful to Andrew I. Cohen for suggesting this potential objection.

<sup>82</sup> See *SV* 32, *DRN* I 62-79, *DL* 10. 9-10.

<sup>83</sup> More will be said about Epicurean psychology in Chapter 7.

<sup>84</sup> See pages 32-33 of this discussion.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* 161.

Philodemus that there are likely some emotional reactions (such as gratitude) that do in fact produce pleasure as a natural result. Further, while the wise Epicurean can mitigate the “bite” of pain experienced from anger and should do so since pain is bad, why would she respond in this way to pleasure? After all, pleasure is enjoyable.

Second, Annas suggests that according to Epicurean psychology, “only false beliefs lead us to enjoy the expression of an emotion”.<sup>86</sup> She claims the expectation of pleasure in anger is solely due to the false belief that revenge is a good/pleasurable thing. However, this is not so, and revenge should not be desired. As a result, the wise Epicurean experiences no pleasure in anger. Annas believes this idea should be extended to encompass all emotions.<sup>87</sup>

I believe that this objection may prompt a more serious problem for my position. However, as currently presented, this objection is not so troubling. Showing that the pleasure experienced in anger is the result of faulty beliefs/desires does little to prove that this is the case for all other emotions. Of course pleasure in anger is the result of faulty beliefs/desires. After all, pleasure is not intuitively a natural response to this negative emotion. On the other hand, gratitude and admiration intuitively involve a positive response. Thus, simply because pleasure is alien to “natural anger” it does not follow that pleasure is alien to all natural emotions.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Julia Annas, “Epicurean Emotions”, 161.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 161-162. Annas expresses her disapproval of this implication. After all, she notes, “revisions of belief that are welcome when they cool down anger are not so obviously a good thing when they leave us cold in other areas” (161). Nonetheless she finds this a necessary extension of Philodemus’ discussion on anger.

<sup>88</sup> It should be clear that the analogy Annas draws between the experience of pain in anger and other natural emotions is different from the parallel I have drawn between “natural anger” and other potential natural emotions. I have argued that if we allow for negative natural emotions (such as anger) we should allow for positive natural emotions (such as gratitude). However, it does not follow that the experience resulting from these various natural emotions should be similar. Rather, negative natural emotions intuitively involve pain while positive natural emotions involve pleasure. Thus, Annas’ conclusion that all natural emotions involve pain is clearly false. However, this point does not preclude the existence of positive natural emotions.

## VI. POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS AND ADDITIONAL OBJECTIONS

While Julia Annas' analogical argument does little to prove that pleasure is necessarily alien to all natural emotions, perhaps her conclusion can be defended in another way. One may argue that it is simply a matter of fact that the positive natural emotions (and independent kinetic mental pleasures more broadly) I endorse rely upon and perpetuate false beliefs and/or desires. For instance, perhaps these pleasurable attitudes are derivative of a desire for the pleasure provided by a particular individual. Also, they may be based upon some belief that the individual is intrinsically valuable.

Having false beliefs/desires can be extremely destructive to *ataraxia*. For instance, they serve as the basis for many of the "passions" or negative emotions. Epicureans are adamantly dedicated to eliminating the potential for developing negative emotions.<sup>89</sup> Further, false beliefs often lead to irrational fears, which destroy happiness.<sup>90</sup> In fact, Lucretius dedicates several volumes to the workings of nature in order to dispel false beliefs and subsequent irrational fears. He emphatically professes that knowledge of nature is crucial for attaining happiness (*DRN* I 146-150 and II 10-20). If the kind of pleasure I have described requires the adoption of false beliefs/faulty desires, it is likely to hamper happiness and is clearly not a worthwhile pursuit for the wise Epicurean. Thus, objections motivated from a concern about both faulty desires and false beliefs are rightfully problematic from the Epicurean standpoint. I will dismiss each in turn.

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<sup>89</sup> Certainly the preceding discussion on anger proves this point. In addition, *SV* 18 urges people to avoid developing sexual passions at all costs, even if this requires spending less time with loved ones. Sexual passion is grounded upon an insatiable unnecessary desire of the other that leaves individuals wrought with pain. This obsession with love often leads one to neglect his interests, squander his inheritance, and lose face with the community (*DRN* IV 1058-1140). Many of the therapeutic tactics developed by Epicureans are designed to mitigate the passions by eradicating false beliefs/desires. For greater discussion on this topic see both: Voula Tsouana, "The Ethics of Philodemus" (72-90) and Martha Nussbaum, "Therapeutic arguments: Epicurus and Aristotle"

<sup>90</sup> Believing that death is bad for the individual who dies causes one to fear their own death. This fear is destructive to happiness. Further, faulty theological beliefs are the source of great anxiety for many individuals.

### *Faulty Desires Objection*

Perhaps pleasurable attitudes are the result of desire satiation, the desire for the pleasure of a particular friend. Philip Mitsis claims that this desire is extremely problematic for Epicureanism because it leaves the wise Epicurean vulnerable to pain upon the frustration of this desire. This in turn compromises the acclaimed invulnerability of her happiness.<sup>91</sup> For instance, if Jenna comes to desire the distinct pleasure of her experiences with Nancy, she likely will suffer pain if this desire goes unsatisfied.<sup>92</sup> However, this renders happiness far too vulnerable to outside factors, such as the death of Nancy. After all, the distinct kinetic mental pleasure provided by Nancy is irreplaceable, unlike her contribution to *ataraxia*.<sup>93</sup> In order to avoid the vulnerability caused by the frustration of desires, Epicurus urges individuals to limit desires to those that are natural and necessary for life (*KD* 26, *SV* 33). Particular individuals are not necessary for happiness (*KD* 40). Thus, wise Epicureans should avoid any such desire for the other.

This is a very serious objection from the Epicurean perspective. To dispel this fear I will first argue that the kinetic mental pleasure of friendship is not dependent upon a desire for particular individuals. Further, even if this desire does develop, it will not increase vulnerability as Epicureans fear. Wise Epicureans can experience kinetic pleasure apart from desire satiation. For instance, Epicurus asserts “we believe that self-sufficiency is a great good, not in order that we might make do with few things under all circumstances, but so that if we do not have a lot we

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<sup>91</sup> Philip Mitsis, *Epicurus' Ethical Theory: The pleasures of invulnerability*, 124- 125. Mitsis sites *KD* 1 which claims the happiness of the wise of Epicurean is very impervious to pain.

<sup>92</sup> It is unclear whether all unfulfilled desires cause pain. The Epicureans certainly warn against developing vain and empty desires because these are difficult if not impossible to fulfill and generally cause great mental torment (*DF* I 44-45). However, *KD* 26 claims that only unfulfilled necessary desires are sure to bring pain. Other desires need not cause pain and they are easy to dispel. But there is at least some chance that an unfulfilled desire for a particular individual will cause pain and this pain will be destructive to happiness.

<sup>93</sup> The security a particular friend provides can be replaced or compensated for by the community of wise Epicureans (*KD* 40).

can make do with few, being genuinely convinced that those who least need extravagance enjoy it most” (*Ep. Men.* 130-131). Even though the wise Epicurean is not in need of extravagance, she can take pleasure in luxuries when they come along.<sup>94</sup> Thus, Jenna need not desire Nancy in order to enjoy the pleasure of Nancy’s company.

However, a critic may respond that this is the case for infrequent indulgence in luxuries. On the other hand, friendships require consistent indulgence and cultivation, which presupposes some desire for the other. However, even if the development of friendship does presuppose some desire, it would not necessarily be a desire for particular individuals.<sup>95</sup> The security of natural and necessary desires is what motivates the development of friendships (*DF I 69*). Particular individuals are not essential to the security they provide. Just as one’s desire for food can be satisfied by various entrees, one’s desire for security can be fulfilled by various individuals as well.

Perhaps the critic will concede this point but argue that close friendships of the kind endorsed in this thesis require cultivation beyond what is needed for security and this is motivated by desire for individual friends.<sup>96</sup> Once again, I do not believe this is necessarily the case. Torquatus describes the “flowering of affection” as something that springs naturally from utility relationships (*DF I 69*). Further, Mathew Evans argues that strong bonds of trust (which

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<sup>94</sup> It is however difficult to explain the motivation for selecting certain kinetic pleasures in the absence of a desire for them. Both Rist (125-126) and Mitsis (122) discuss this problem with Epicurus’ classification of pleasures. Given that Epicureanism is hedonistic, there should be some motivation for selecting any pleasure regardless of whether it is specifically desired or required for happiness. More sense can be made of this motivation if we distinguish between preferences and desires. Individuals can have preferences for a particular kind of food without desiring that food, nor needing that particular food for happiness. For instance, if the wise Epicurean has the choice of eating rice and beans or barley cakes, she can prefer barley cakes and select them on that basis without necessarily desiring barley cakes. The same can be said about friends and any number of pleasurable activities. Jenna may have a preference for the distinct kinetic mental pleasure Nancy provides. This however does not presuppose that she has a desire for Nancy

<sup>95</sup> Epicurus does not explicitly address any potential desire for friends and I do not attribute this possibility to his work. After all, there is no mention of friendships among the natural and necessary desires discussed by Epicurus. For instance, see *DF I 43-45*, and *KD 26*.

<sup>96</sup> Thanks to Andrew Altman for raising this line of potential objections.

require intense cultivation) are necessary for the security wise Epicureans hope to achieve.<sup>97</sup>

Thus, there is reason to believe that the utility basis/desire for friendship is sufficient motivation for the production of the affective response. Of course the kinetic mental pleasures produced become choice-worthy. Jenna will choose to spend time with Nancy in place of other friends because she enjoys the pleasure distinct to Nancy. But, as shown above, there is motivation to indulge in pleasures aside from desire satiation and the original motivation for developing the relationship has little to do with the particular individual.

It may be difficult for many individuals to indulge in the pleasure of particular friends without developing a desire for them. However, Jenna (as a wise Epicurean) will guard herself against this outcome. After all, wise Epicureans are well aware of the potential pain unsatisfied desires can cause and they have a great deal of cognitive control.<sup>98</sup> Thus, Jenna will indulge in the pleasure Nancy provides without developing a desire for this particular individual.

Further, even if wise Epicureans do develop a desire for particular individuals, I do not believe it will be as destructive to their happiness as Mitsis suggests. According to Mitsis, “by developing friendships we become more vulnerable to chance, pain and betrayal”.<sup>99</sup> After all, friends often lie and betray each other. This can be potentially devastating to the happiness of wise Epicureans. However, wise Epicureans will not be friends with individuals that are untrustworthy. If a wise Epicurean does find herself in this situation she will likely dissolve the friendship or at least dissolve any emotional attachment to the individual.

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<sup>97</sup> Mathew Evans, 421-422.

<sup>98</sup> Evidence of the cognitive control of Epicureans can be found in *DRN* III 308-322 in which Lucretius discusses the ability to shape one’s natural disposition through education. Further, the main therapeutic tactic for exterminating false beliefs and desires is rational discourse and gaining knowledge about natural phenomena. Thus, correct beliefs should dispel irrational fears and faulty desires. For more information on therapeutic tactics see both Voula Tsouna’s *The Ethics of Philodemus* (74-90) and Martha Nussbaum’s “Therapeutic arguments: Epicurus and Aristotle”.

<sup>99</sup> Philip Mitsis, *Epicurus’ Ethical Theory: The Pleasures of Invulnerability*, 124.

In addition, the desire to spend time with a particular friend is fairly easy to fulfill. It is extremely rare that Jenna be deprived of Nancy's presence permanently. If however, Nancy were to die, Jenna would likely experience some pain. But being a wise Epicurean, Jenna will realize that Nancy is not really necessary for her happiness and this understanding will certainly help mitigate any small chance of pain this desire does present.<sup>100</sup> Jenna's memories of Nancy will also provide some pleasure to counterbalance the pain. As reported by Plutarch in *A Pleasant Life* 1105e "sweet is the memory of a dead friend". Further, the support and security provided by the Epicurean community will greatly reduce any disturbance experienced (*KD* 40). Thus, Mitsis exaggerates the vulnerability of wise Epicureans. Even if they develop desires for the distinct kinetic pleasure of particular friends, this does not pose any significant threat to *ataraxia*.<sup>101</sup>

### ***Faulty Beliefs Objection***

The second objection holds that one cannot truly develop affection for an individual without valuing the individual as an end independent of her contribution to pleasure. Tim O'Keefe expresses a similar concern with respect to attitudes towards nature. He notes that if feelings of awe towards nature rest upon or require a superstitious belief about the providential

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<sup>100</sup> It is often professed that the wise Epicurean can be happy on the rack because of their great mental control and ability to counterbalance current pain with pleasurable thoughts. For instance, see *Ep. Id.* 10.22. After all, Epicureans believe that all intense pains are only short lasting and long lasting pains are easy to endure (*SV* 4).

<sup>101</sup> Mitsis may be pointing at a deeper issue regarding the vulnerability of friendship (one that surpasses the potential vulnerability caused by an unfulfilled desire for the other). Mitsis argues that Epicurean friendship leaves the wise individual vulnerable to great pain because of the risks it requires one take on behalf of friends (124-125). I agree there is some tension with the vulnerability of friendship and supposed invulnerability of wise Epicureans. However, this tension is not unique to the amended notion of friendship endorsed in this thesis. Epicurus is quite aware that fostering strong bonds of trust will require great sacrifices for others (*SV* 56-57). Even so, he does not believe sacrifices will leave the wise Epicurean's happiness in shambles as Mitsis suggests. After all, the cognitive control of wise Epicureans is superior to any potential for physical pain friendship poses (*Ep. Id.* 10.22). Whether Epicurus' arguments are successful/plausible is certainly beyond the scope of this project. However, it may be argued that the affective component endorsed in this paper does actually leave the wise Epicurean more vulnerable to pain (in particular emotional distress) than she would otherwise be. This objection will be discussed in chapter 7.

design of nature, then such feelings must be destructive to *ataraxia* because they perpetuate false beliefs.<sup>102</sup>

Given Epicurus' commitment to egoistic hedonism, the only thing that is truly "good" is one's own pleasure. Admitting that things aside from pleasure are intrinsically valuable as independent ends conflicts with the staunch egoism endorsed by the Epicurean ethical system.<sup>103</sup> In the *Tusculan Disputations* 41-42 Cicero claims that for Epicureans, the category of the "good" can be filled with nothing other than the pleasures of sensation. He claims that Epicurus is even wary to accept that "mental rejoicing" can be counted among the goods. This is because Epicurus wants to avoid considerations of virtue and wisdom as "good", which are often offered by "those who are called wise". This raises yet another reason to deny the pleasures I have endorsed, for fear that allowing these experiences into the category of the "good" (even if solely for the pleasure produced) might lead to developing false beliefs about what should be valued.

However, I do not believe that developing attitudes towards friends and nature require or perpetuate false beliefs. First, awe towards nature may develop from a belief about nature's abundance and provision of the natural and necessary desires for human life.<sup>104</sup> Perhaps affections develop from experiencing the beauty of nature through contemplating its intricate parts. In *DRN* II 600-660 Lucretius presents a popular hymn from the cult of the Great Mother and explains that referring to nature as a god is truly an expression of the wonders of earth. He

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<sup>102</sup> Tim O'Keefe "The Cycle of Life and the Fear of Death" (57-60).

<sup>103</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of the difficulties other-regarding attitudes would introduce to the Epicurean ethical system see Tim O'Keefe's "Is Epicurean Friendship Altruistic?"

<sup>104</sup> For instance, see *DRN* I 250-262 and VI 1-8. In Lucretius' discussion of the cycle of matter he vividly describes the manner in which the rains replenish the earth, which causes trees to bear abundant fruit that feeds the animals. All of which contributes to the flourishing of human communities. Everything that humans need to be happy is supplied by nature and can be acquired with little effort/and or stress (*DF* I 45). While contemplating the abundance of nature certainly contributes to *ataraxia* (because it calms one's worries about future goods) the activity of contemplating this fact might itself produce pleasure.

does not object to anthropomorphic references to earth as long as they do not depend upon false beliefs. Thus, in principle, he seems to have no problem with basking in awe towards nature.

I believe the same can be said for friendship. In fact, one can begin to develop affection towards a complete stranger. I have often found myself smiling and laughing with someone that I hardly know. In such cases, I am enjoying the company of a stranger and at times looking forward to future interaction with them.<sup>105</sup> Of course, as Badhwar and Torquatus suggest getting to know the person increases the pleasure because I gain familiarity and fondness of personality traits and mode of expression.<sup>106</sup> Yet, no belief about the intrinsic value of the stranger presupposed the development of my affections. Thus, experiencing independent kinetic mental pleasures towards friends does not necessarily require a false belief about the intrinsic value of the individual.

However, while friendship may not begin with faulty beliefs, it may be argued that continual indulgence in the distinct independent kinetic mental pleasures described will *necessarily* lead to the development of a faulty belief about the value of the individual and thus altruistic concern for the other. After all, this is the model Torquatus suggests in his exposition of

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<sup>105</sup> There are of course situations in which we enjoy interactions with complete strangers with no expectation or desire for future interactions. In fact, it might be the belief that it is a temporary engagement that makes some strangers so fascinating/enjoyable. This is likely the mentality involved in a one-night-stand. I am thankful to Anderw Cohen for raising this point. Even so, the enjoyment experienced is seemingly unrelated to a belief that the stranger is intrinsically valuable. Rather, it rests on the belief that the engagement is temporary which may very well be a true belief. Further, there are many situations in which we do look forward to future interaction with strangers. After all, we typically develop friendships through several interactions with a stranger in which familiarity slowly blossoms. However, the pleasure experienced in such situations is similarly unrelated to a preexisting belief about the intrinsic value of the individual.

<sup>106</sup> Neera Kapur Badhwar, "Friends as Ends in Themselves", 22. For Torquatus' discussion see *DF* I 68-69.

the second notion of friendship in the *de Finibus* I 67-69.<sup>107</sup> While this objection appears convincing<sup>108</sup>, I do not believe this has to be the case.

First, it is important to note that under the amended notion of Epicurean friendship, friends do not possess some intrinsic value. Although they are the source of a new kind of pleasure, they are still valued *because* of the pleasure they produce. The wise Epicurean will realize that friends are still ultimately valued as instruments towards her own happiness. Thus, there is no initial conflict between the stance I have proposed and the staunch egoism and hedonism of Epicurean ethics.

However, an unrelenting critic may continue to push for the necessary development of a false belief and altruistic concern given the affection I have described. To dismiss this point let's consider Torquatus' discussion of friendship once again. Torquatus draws an analogy between familiarity towards friends and other objects. He claims that, "familiarity can make us fall in love with particular locations, temples and cities; gymnasia and playing-fields; horses and dogs..." (*DF* I 69). I believe this analogy is actually evidence against the altruistic result of familiarity. Intuitively, individuals do become emotionally attached to and experience affinity towards these objects. In fact, these objects are often claimed to possess "sentimental value". But these objects are valuable because of the sentiment they invoke and are not generally considered something that we have disinterested concern for. Further, given the cognitive control and awareness of wise Epicureans, it is unlikely they will allow for familiarity to extend to this undesirable

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<sup>107</sup> Kim-Chong Chong makes a similar claim in "Egoism, Desires, and Friendship". He argues that true friendship requires deep affection, which can only be attained if the individual is treated with genuine other-concern (354-355).

<sup>108</sup> Cicero certainly found this argument compelling. He claims that evidence of the addition of altruism by later Epicureans suffices to defend his stance on friendship and proves that Epicureanism is fundamentally inconsistent (*DF* II, 82).

result.<sup>109</sup> Thus, there is no reason to believe the wise Epicurean will necessarily develop a false belief or altruism given the attitudes I have described.

Mathew Evans draws a similar conclusion in “Can Epicureans be Friends?”. He subscribes to a notion of Epicurean friendship that involves some emotional attachment between individuals. In particular, he notes that to avoid objections about the lack of motivation for the wise Epicurean to act kindly towards friends, Epicureans must prove that “the sage’s attitude toward his friends is not one of cold, unemotional detachment”.<sup>110</sup> Yet, he claims that valuing friends as independent ends is a “significant and *preventable* source of mental disturbance” for wise Epicureans.<sup>111</sup> I highlight his assertion that this belief is “preventable” to illustrate that it is not the necessary result of experiencing independent kinetic mental pleasures of friends.<sup>112</sup>

Given these points, I do not believe that wise Epicureans are at great risk for developing false beliefs. In fact, Diogenes Laertius reports that, “once a man has become wise he can no longer take on the opposite disposition nor feign it willingly. But he will be more affected by feelings- for they would not hinder his progress towards wisdom” (*DL* 10 117). This further confirms that wise Epicureans can enjoy affections without developing false beliefs. Thus, it is clear that endorsing independent kinetic mental pleasures in friendship does not pose any significant threat to the Epicurean system. These pleasures do not necessarily depend upon, perpetuate or lead to the development of faulty desires/beliefs. As long as a wise Epicurean

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<sup>109</sup> See *DRN* III 308-322. Further testament to the psychological control of wise Epicureans can be seen in the following dramatic claim made by Torquatus in Cicero’s *de Finibus*, “we have within us the capacity to bury past misfortune in a kind of permanent oblivion, no less than to maintain sweet pleasant memories of our success” (*DF* I 57). Of course, this quote is in reference to past pains, but it still captures the strong psychological control that Epicureans possess

<sup>110</sup> Mathew Evans, “Can Epicureans be Friends?”, 421. However, Evans says very little about what this emotional attachment might involve and passes over the point quite quickly.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 421.

<sup>112</sup> Julia Annas presents a similar argument in *The Morality of Happiness* (242). Although Annas argues for an altruistic interpretation of Epicurean friendship, she suggests that there is no necessary connection between familiarity and altruism. Rather, her reasons for attributing altruism to Epicureanism are based upon other Epicurean claims.

approaches friendship with the correct beliefs, she is capable of experiencing far greater pleasure than initially allowed within the traditional notion of Epicurean friendship.

## VII. THE PROBLEMATIC PRINCIPLE

Not only will the amended notion of Epicurean friendship provide a more robust account of the pleasure involved in friendship and the value of individual friends, I believe there are independent reasons for rejecting the ethical principle that all mental pleasures/pains depend on bodily ones. Remember that the relationship of dependency is that mental pleasures/pains involve reflections upon past, present or future bodily pleasures/pains.<sup>113</sup> Epicurus does not specify on exactly what grounds he holds this ethical principle. There are two possible interpretations: (a) this is an empirical claim about human psychology; humans *do in fact* only experience mental pleasure/pain in relation to bodily pleasure/pain, or (b) this is a normative claim; humans *should* only experience mental pain/pleasure in relation to bodily pleasure/pain. I will argue that it is not clearly an empirical fact and further, there are not sufficient normative grounds for adopting this ethical principle either.

### *The Problematic Principle as an Empirical Claim*

The empirical claim is problematic. There are many things that people take mental pleasure and pain in aside from contemplating bodily pleasures/pains.<sup>114</sup> For instance, I take joy in reading good literature and poetry even though it is not sensually stimulating. The thoughts and emotions invoked by the passages are pleasing in some way independent of any pleasurable bodily experience in my past, present or future state. Further, just as I enjoy spending time with

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<sup>113</sup> Also note that both bodily and mental pleasures/pains are material. Further, bodily pleasures/pains are those of typical sensual experience (taste, smell, touch...).

<sup>114</sup> This is not to say that Epicureans can take kinetic mental pleasure aside from all sensation. Epicureans are empiricists. All knowledge depends upon bodily sensation (*DF* I 30, and *Ep. Her.* 38). Thus, in order to experience anything or have any thought, one must refer to concepts constructed through bodily experiences. However, this dependency of mental pleasures on bodily experiences is distinct from the dependency embraced in the ethical principle.

friends, I happen to dislike watching action films. The experience of watching action films does not cause bodily pain. Even so, I experience some emotional discomfort from the activity.

Although others may not necessarily share my distaste for action films, I doubt this kind of sentiment from particular experiences is unique to me. Thus, it is safe to say that humans can at times experience mental pleasure/pain aside from bodily pleasure/pain.<sup>115</sup>

### ***The Problematic Principle as a Normative Claim***

Now, normatively speaking, the Epicureans may want to argue that humans *should not* indulge in such experiences. In fact, it might be argued that the empirical phenomenon of independent mental pleasures/pains is due to the corruption of society and propagation of faulty desires/beliefs. While such an argument may be plausible, I believe there is little reason for Epicureans to endorse a normative interpretation of this principle either.

According to Philip Mitsis, Epicureans place great emphasis on “self-evident truths based on perception”.<sup>116</sup> In fact, self-evident perceptual truths serve as the basis for the entire Epicurean system. Epicureans hold a naturalist epistemology in which sensation is the basis of all knowledge (*DF* I 30, and *Ep. Her.* 38). From basic knowledge about the natural world, Epicureans derive their metaphysical and ethical principles. In particular, Epicurus notes a few psychological facts he finds readily apparent and uses these to defend psychological hedonism/egoism. For instance, in the *de Finibus* I 29 Torquatus asks: “what is the final and ultimate good?”. For Epicureans, this is an empirical question and the answer is: pleasure. All

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<sup>115</sup> A critic of the pleasures I endorse may stubbornly attempt to reduce all pleasures, in some way or another, to sensual experiences. For instance, I may feel mental pain from watching action films to the extent that action-packed scenes remind me of past physical discomforts in my life. I agree that some mental pleasures/pains appear reducible in this way. However, even if the movie fails to represent or remind me of past painful experiences, I may still find it currently displeasing. I am highly skeptical of any attempt to reduce all mental pleasures/pains to bodily ones.

<sup>116</sup> Philip Mitsis, *Epicurean Ethical Theory: the pleasures of invulnerability*, 107. This discussion focuses on what Mitsis believes to be undeniable altruism within Epicurean texts on friendship. While he claims that an associationist account is perhaps available to Epicureans, there is not enough textual support to defend any such account. However, given the Epicurean system, if they were to provide a defense for altruism it would likely be “grounded in empirically verifiable psychological facts” (107).

creatures seek pleasure from the time of birth and nature herself bids our accordance with pleasure (*DF* I 30). Yet, it also appears to be a self-evident truth that humans do in fact experience mental pleasure/pain independent of bodily pleasure/pain. Thus, given the Epicurean commitment to self-evident empirical truths, the pleasures endorsed in this essay should be readily accepted rather than denied.

Even further, it is not clear how or why this principle should have normative force. Perhaps this principle is valued because Epicureans are fearful of the “passions” and the destruction these negative emotions can inflict upon the happy individual. Thus, they encourage people to withhold from indulging in any independent mental experiences to minimize the chances for and intensity of these emotions. However, this seems overly protective. As discussed in Chapter 5, wise Epicureans are not vulnerable to the intense pain of empty emotions or “passions”. Further, Chapter 6 has shown that the wise Epicurean can safely indulge in natural emotions without developing false beliefs/desires. Thus it seems as though there is little reason to preclude independent kinetic mental pleasures from the Epicurean account.

However, the critic may argue that even though wise Epicureans are not at risk for developing faulty beliefs/desires or experiencing the intense pain of the “passions”, the amended notion of friendship leaves individuals more vulnerable to pain than the traditional account. If Epicureans allow for independent kinetic mental pleasures, they must also allow for independent kinetic mental pains. For instance, Torquatus suggests in *DF* I 68 that individuals will not only feel joy at a friend’s pleasure but they will experience reciprocal pain when the friend is in trouble. *SV* 67 further confirms this by claiming that one should feel sympathy towards a friend’s sorrow.

While I cannot deny that the amended notion of friendship appears to leave the wise Epicurean more vulnerable to pain, I do not find this sufficient reason for endorsing the problematic ethical principle. First, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, there is ample evidence to show Epicureans do discuss various emotions. Further, if those discussed are natural emotions as Philodemus describes, the potential for pain is slight. After all, “bites” are not destructive to the *ataraxia* of wise individuals. I have also given testament to the supposed cognitive control of Epicureans. According to *SV* 67, one should not “lament” a friend’s suffering but have “thoughtful concern”. Thus, the wise Epicurean should react to the misfortune of a friend while realizing that the friend is not intrinsically valuable and thus necessary for happiness. This will allow for potential pain to be rationally mitigated by the wise Epicurean’s correct beliefs.<sup>117</sup>

Thus, independent mental pleasures/pains do not pose any significant threat to the wise Epicurean’s happiness. Not only does it appear that independent kinetic mental pleasures are an empirically grounded psychological fact, there is no clear normative reason for eradicating them from experience. Finally, the problematic principle in question leaves the Epicureans with highly implausible and unsatisfying psychology. Denying humans the ability to experience independent

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<sup>117</sup> Some critics may argue that guarding oneself from experiencing significant pain precludes the possibility for deep affection and true friendship. I am grateful to Andrew I. Cohen for raising this point. If Jenna has a truly intimate relationship with Nancy, she cannot rationally mitigate the sympathy she will experience if Nancy develops a life threatening disease. Thus, perhaps the pleasures I endorse are illusory. Affective pleasure cannot be experienced without a deep connection that leaves even wise individuals vulnerable to pain. However, this objection seems exaggerated. We can experience many degrees of affection for others. All affection is pleasurable even if it is not the deepest affection possible. On the other hand, I do not deny that the pleasures I endorse may seem shallow. One may argue that deep affection should be a goal of Epicurean friendship and Epicureans should not guard themselves from pain in this way. For instance, Gregory Kavka notes the pleasure involved in friendship makes it choice-worthy even though it involves great vulnerability (310). However, there are problems with adopting this argument. First, although Epicureans do claim that some pains should be selected in order to secure greater future pleasure and avoid future pain (*SV* 73), kinetic pleasures are not necessary for happiness. The wise individual can be entirely happy so long as they have the security of natural and necessary desires. Thus, there doesn’t seem to be motivation for selecting kinetic pleasures that involve great pains. In relation to this point, the Epicureans would have to re-think their commitment to the invulnerable happiness of wise individuals (*KD* 16). Because it is my intention to provide a more robust notion of friendship while remaining true to Epicurean ethics, I do not endorse this argument. Thus, my position may be vulnerable to critics, like Badhwar, that believe a deep level of intimacy is required for any robust notion of friendship. However, it is important to remember that it is not the intention of this thesis to argue that Epicureanism is capable of providing an entirely satisfying account but rather to show how a more robust notion can be provided.

mental pleasures is a very unattractive position, especially from a hedonistic perspective.<sup>118</sup>

Without any obvious normative reasons for insisting upon this claim, it is difficult to understand why this principle is part of the Epicurean system to begin with. Thus, there is ample reason for rejecting the principle that mental pleasures/pains depend on bodily pleasures/pains.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Epicurean friendship is one of the most difficult topics within the Epicurean ethical system. I have argued that the traditional notion of Epicurean friendship fails to account for all of the pleasure afforded by friends and as a result, fails to account for the value of particular individuals. However, I have shown that this can be overcome while remaining consistent with the major tenets of Epicurean ethics. This requires positing independent kinetic mental pleasures experienced through the development of attitudes/affection towards friends. These attitudes are developed through familiarity with the characteristics of individuals, their mode of expression and shared history between the individuals.

These attitudes explain the experientially distinct pleasure in spending time with particular friends. Under the amended notion, friends are not solely valued for their contribution to *ataraxia*, although this constitutes a very important part of the value of friendship in general. They are irreplaceable and essential to the kinetic mental pleasure experienced, pleasure that cannot be replicated by other individuals.

However, endorsing the amended notion of Epicurean friendship requires that the Epicurean principle of the dependency of mental pleasures on bodily pleasures be rejected from

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<sup>118</sup> Many people may object to the plausibility, desirability and/or health of a moral psychology based on hedonism and egoism. For instance, Paul Bloomfield levels this charge in “Why It’s Bad to Be Bad”. He argues that theories in which morality is mere convention that bows to self-interest are incompatible with true self-respect, which is necessary for psychic health. However, it is not my intention to defend Epicurean moral psychology from its critics. I simply mean to show that (a) independent kinetic mental pleasures do fit within the Epicurean psychological system (if the troublesome principle of supervenience is rejected) and (b) the supervenience of mental pleasures on bodily is highly unintuitive and leaves Epicurean psychology in an even more problematic position. Whether the rest of Epicurean psychology is acceptable to moral theorists is a far different question.

the ethical system. While attributing such a glaring inconsistency to a philosophical system is generally uncharitable, I have demonstrated that there is good reason to believe that this tension already exists within Epicurean texts. Not only do the Epicureans often discuss attitudes experienced towards friends, some passages even suggest that independent mental activities can be pleasurable *per se*. Also, there is evidence that later Epicureans denied this problematic principle (*DF I 55*).<sup>119</sup> In fact, Philodemus' discussion on "natural anger" provides a perfect analogue for the kind of natural emotions/affection I have in mind.

Further, I have shown there is nothing problematic in theory about rejecting the principle that mental pleasures depend on bodily ones and endorsing independent kinetic mental pleasures. These pleasures do not depend upon, perpetuate, or lead to the development of faulty desires or beliefs. In addition, I have even presented independent reasons for rejecting the problematic principle. As an empirical fact, this principle is certainly questionable. Further, there are no apparent normative grounds for defending the principle either. In fact, endorsing independent kinetic mental pleasures and rejecting the problematic principle provides a more plausible understanding of human psychology, without which the Epicurean theory would be very bare.

Failure to account for all of the pleasure of friendship is a trying problem from the Epicurean perspective. After all, Epicurean ethics is fundamentally hedonistic, and thus should adequately account for all of the pleasure afforded by friends. Further, there is evidence to show that the tension regarding independent kinetic mental pleasures is apparent within Epicurean texts. Adopting the amended notion of Epicurean friendship I endorse resolves these problems while providing a more plausible notion of Epicurean psychology and a more satisfying notion of

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<sup>119</sup> The Cyrenaic account of hedonism also denies that mental pleasures are dependent on bodily pleasures. This can be seen in Diogenes Laertius' comparison of the two hedonistic systems (*DL 2 89*). Of course, the Cyrenaics and Epicureans have other areas of conflict (such as the Cyrenaic belief that bodily pains are worse than mental pains). However, it is of some interest that other Hellenistic hedonistic schools rejected this principle as well.

friendship in general. For all of these reasons, the Epicureans should endorse the amended notion of Epicurean friendship.

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