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CICERO AND EPICURUS ON PLEASURE AND FRIENDSHIP*

ABSTRACT

Ancient writers, including philosophers such as Aristotle, often depict friendship as a source of pleasure; by contrast, in his Laelius de amicitia*, Cicero describes such relationships as sweet and delightful, but never connects them with* uoluptas*, which for him is a largely negative term reserved for Epicurean doctrine. This paper argues that there is more to this pointed use of language than Cicero's well-known dislike of Epicureanism. Considering first the Latin philosophical vocabulary of pleasure and then the vexed question of what exactly qualifies as pleasure according to the Epicurean system, the paper makes the case that Cicero believed (probably correctly) that the pleasures of friendship as conceived of by himself and many ordinary language-users would not in fact qualify as instances of Epicurean* uoluptas*. If, as Epicurus appears to have held, all pleasures are either bodily or mental, and all mental pleasures are derived from bodily ones, then many activities experienced as pleasurable in and of themselves—including many traditional elements of friendship—are not in fact Epicurean pleasures.*

Keywords: Cicero; Epicureanism; friendship; pleasure; philosophy; *De amicitia*; *De finibus*

Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* famously distinguishes three types of friendship according to their objects: virtue friendship, directed at the good (ἀγαθόν); pleasure friendship, directed at the pleasant (ἡδύ); and utility friendship, directed at the advantageous (χρήσιμον).[1] All of these qualify as φιλία, but the one based on virtue is far superior to the other kinds. As an additional bonus, its practitioners—though motivated by higher considerations—do not lose out on the benefits provided by the other two types since, by definition, virtuous friends who love each other for their moral qualities at the same time find each other pleasant and useful.[2]

By contrast, Cicero in his *Laelius de amicitia* recognizes only virtue friendship: 'friendship cannot exist except among good men', *boni*, who are inspired by love for each other's excellence.[3] Like Aristotle, he stresses that such a high-minded relationship entails usefulness (*utilitas*); the latter is, as it were, a welcome by-product of *amicitia*, but is never the motivation for pursuing true friendship, which comes about naturally from affection for the other person.[4] As he pithily puts it (in a description of his speaker

* My thanks for comments and suggestions go to audiences at Toronto, NYU and Palermo; to Phillip Mitsis and Jim Zetzel, who read drafts of the paper; and to Bruce Gibson and *CQ*'s anonymous referee.

[1] *Eth. Nic.* 8.2–3.

[2] *Eth. Nic.* 8, 1156b13–15, 1156b22–3, 1157a1–3.

[3] *Amic.* 18 *nisi in bonis amicitiam esse non posse*. The speaker is Laelius, but I am working on the assumption that he is a mouthpiece for Cicero's own views. It is unclear whether Cicero was drawing on the *Nicomachean Ethics* in particular, but he was certainly familiar with Aristotelian/Peripatetic thought on friendship; see Gell. *NA* 1.3 for his use of Theophrastus' *On Friendship*. Occasionally, Cicero also mentions lesser, 'vulgar' friendships (without explaining their nature), but he always comes back to the virtue-based relationship that is his true concern (*Amic.* 22, 76, 77, 100).

[4] *Amic.* 26–32, 51–5, 100.

Laelius' friendship with Scipio the Younger), 'friendship didn't pursue advantage, but advantage followed on friendship'.[5] Here and elsewhere, Cicero seems to argue against both popular Roman ideas of *amicitia* as self-serving social networking and the Epicurean view of friendship as a mere instrument for the procurement of pleasure.[6]

If Cicero thus grants *utilitas* a place in the friendship among *boni*, he never says that this kind of relationship is productive of pleasure. Unlike Aristotle, who freely discusses the ἡδονή inherent in virtue friendship, Cicero uses *uolupta(te)s* rarely in *De amicitia* and never to refer to the pleasures specifically of friendship. The word occurs two times in a neutral context[7] and three times in discussions of putative philosophical goods, typically with outspoken or silent disapproval: 'some people [propose] pleasures [as the highest good], something that is appropriate for beasts'; 'people who in the manner of farm animals refer everything to pleasure'; 'those who have handed themselves over entirely to pleasure'.[8] In these cases, the reference is clearly to the Epicureans, who consider pleasure the *summum bonum* and who come in for much criticism in *De amicitia*, even though—like other philosophers and philosophical schools throughout the dialogue—they are never mentioned by name.[9]

Does this mean that Cicero does not consider friendship to be enjoyable? On the contrary: Laelius again and again waxes ecstatic about the delights granted by friendship: 'They seem to take the sun out of heaven, those who remove friendship from life—friendship than which we have no better gift from the gods, none that is more delightful (*iucundius*).'[10] *iucundus* and *iucunditas* are repeatedly applied to the experience of friendship, as are *delectare* and *oblectatio*.[11] Perhaps Laelius' favourite characteristic of *amici* and *amicitia*, however, is that they are 'sweet', *dulcis* or *suauis*.[12] He exclaims, 'What is sweeter than to have someone to whom you dare to talk about all things as if to yourself?',[13] and reanimates the dead metaphor of taste inherent in the idea of sweetness by calling the *suauitas* of a friend's speech and character a 'not inconsiderable seasoning of friendship' and claiming that old friendships are the sweetest, just as old wines tend to be.[14]

In stressing the delights and especially the sweetness of friendship, Cicero is following the general Graeco-Roman consensus. In his 1905 dissertation on the topoi found in ancient discussions of friendship, Gottfried Bohnenblust observes that, despite all disagreements on the origin and purpose of friendship, there is a general stress on 'das Angenehme (ἡδύ, dulce, suave)'.[15] Like Cicero, a number of writers even claim that there exists *nothing* sweeter or more enjoyable than a friend or friendship itself: 'while in my right mind, I would compare nothing to a delightful friend', declares Horace, and

[5] *Amic.* 51 *non igitur utilitatem amicitia sed utilitas amicitiam secuta est*.

[6] See K. Volk and J.E.G. Zetzel, *Cicero: Laelius de amicitia* (Cambridge, 2024) on *Amic.* 26. On Epicurean views of friendship, see below.

[7] *Amic.* 87 (the enjoyment of life), 91 (the pleasure experienced by a man who is being flattered).

[8] *Amic.* 20 *multi etiam uoluptates. beluarum hoc quidem extremum* (picked up again in 22); 32 *qui pecudum ritu ad uoluptatem omnia referunt*; 86 *ei qui se totos tradiderunt uoluptatibus*.

[9] On this strategy, see Volk and Zetzel (n. 6), 23.

[10] *Amic.* 47 *solem enim e mundo tollere uidentur qui amicitiam e uita tollunt, qua nihil a dis immortalibus melius habemus, nihil iucundius*.

[11] *iucundus/iucunditas*: 47, 49, 51, 55, 84, 88, 102; *delectare/oblectatio*: 22, 49 (twice), 51, 101, 103.

[12] *dulcis*: *Amic.* 22, 66, 88, 90; *suauis*: *Amic.* 66, 67, 88 (*insuauis*).

[13] *Amic.* 22 *quid dulcius quam habere quicum omnia audeas sic loqui ut tecum?*

[14] *Amic.* 66 *accedat huc suauitas quaedam oportet sermonum atque morum, haudquaquam mediocre condimentum amicitiae*, 67 *ueterrima quaeque, ut ea uina quae uetustatem ferunt, esse debent suauissima*.

[15] G. Bohnenblust, *Beiträge zum Topos* περὶ φιλίας (Berlin, 1905), 29.

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Plutarch states point-blank that 'there is nothing sweeter than friendship and nothing else that offers more joy.'[16]

Cicero's strategy in *De amicitia* is thus clear: he will not allow 'pleasure' a place in friendship, leaving the term *uoluptas* to those 'beastly' hedonists, the Epicureans.[17] At the same time, he extols the joys of friendship, freely using such terms as *delectare*, *suauis*, *dulcis* and *iucundus*. Unlike Aristotelian virtue friendship, Ciceronian *amicitia* does not entail pleasure, but it is definitely sweet.

Cicero's polemical move of eschewing pleasure while still embracing sweetness is made possible by a subtle semantic shift that occurs when the philosophical terminology of pleasure is translated from Greek into Latin. The Greek term for pleasure, used by Aristotle and Epicurus, among others, is ἡδονή, a noun that is obviously related to the adjective ἡδύς 'sweet'. The adjective and derived adverb are themselves regularly used in philosophical contexts to refer to the pleasant and pleasurable: thus, for example, the acolytes of Aristotelian pleasure friendship pursue exactly τὸ ἡδύ (see above), and the final goal of Epicureans is to live ἡδέως 'sweetly, pleasantly'.[18] In Greek, then, pleasure equals sweetness, and Cicero's rhetorical ploy of separating the two simply would not work.

In Latin philosophical writing, ἡδονή becomes *uoluptas*, a choice that appears straightforward, given a large semantic overlap between the words.[19] Cicero himself makes this point when discussing Epicurean pleasure in *De finibus* (2.13):

> et quidem saepe quaerimus uerbum Latinum par Graeco et quod idem ualeat: hic nihil fuit quod quaereremus. nullum inueniri uerbum potest quod magis idem declaret Latine quod Graece quam declarat uoluptas.
>
> Sure, we often search for a Latin word equivalent to a Greek one and one that means the same thing. In this case, there is no need to search: no word can be found that more exactly signifies in Latin the same thing as in Greek than *uoluptas*.

Cicero goes on to explain that other potential candidates, such as *laetitia* and *gaudium*, fail on the grounds that they denote only mental pleasures, while *uoluptas*, like ἡδονή, is experienced by both the body and the mind.[20]

[16] Hor. *Sat.* 1.5.44 *nil ego contulerim iucundo sanus amico*; Plut. *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* 51A–B πάντων ἥδιστόν ἐστιν ἡ φιλία καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο μᾶλλον εὐφραίνει; cf. Cic. *Amic.* 47 (cited in n. 10 above).

[17] On the polemical comparison of the Epicureans to animals (cf. *Amic.* 20, 32, cited above), see D.P. Hanchey, 'Cicero's rhetoric of anti-Epicureanism: anonymity as critique', in S. Yona and G. Davis (edd.), *Epicurus in Rome: Philosophical Perspectives in the Ciceronian Age* (Cambridge, 2022), 37–54, at 45–6.

[18] E.g. Epicurus, *Ep. Men.* 132 = *KD* 5. Throughout this paper, I am disregarding other Greek words for pleasure/the pleasant occasionally employed by Epicureans and other philosophers, focussing on the central term ἡδονή.

[19] According to C. Moreschini, 'Osservazioni sul lessico filosofico di Cicerone', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, classe di lettere e filosofia* 9 (1979), 99–178, at 149, 'la equivalenza di ἡδονή con *voluptas* si imponeva da sola'; more cautious is J.G.F. Powell, 'Cicero's translations from Greek', in J.G.F. Powell (ed.), *Cicero the Philosopher* (Oxford, 1995), 273–300, at 299. P. Gordon, *The Invention and Gendering of Epicurus* (Ann Arbor, 2012), 109–38, by contrast, considers the translation tendentious and argues that Cicero and other writers purposely made use of the negative connotations of *uoluptas* to denigrate Epicureanism. Note, though, that Cicero did not pioneer the use of *uoluptas* for (Epicurean) ἡδονή, which is already found in Lucretius.

[20] *Fin.* 2.13. Both Lucretius and Cicero occasionally use *laetitia* for Epicurean mental pleasure: Lucr. 3.116, 142, 150; Cic. *Fin.* 1.25, 55, 57, 67; 2.13, 14, 96, 97; cf. F. Peters, *T. Lucretius et M. Cicero quo modo vocabula Graeca Epicuri disciplinae Latine verterint* (Münster, 1926), 14.

Even so, something is lost in translation while something else is gained. Frequently found in comedy and apparently a feature of colloquial speech, *uoluptas* can refer to any 'agreeable experience or sensation' (*OLD* 1a), including the creature comforts that the characters of comedy typically pursue. Thus, for example, one Plautine character declares that he will delight *uoluptate uino et amore* (*Merc.* 548), while another lists among *uoluptates* 'laughter, jokes, kissing, dancing, sweet talk and good will'.[21] The ubiquitous use in Plautus of *mea uoluptas* to address one's beloved further attests to the word's association with sensual and sexual pleasures.

While there is thus nothing inherently disreputable in the term *uoluptas*, there is also nothing high-minded; as Cicero puts it, *uerbum ipsum uoluptatis non habet dignitatem*.[22] Terminology colours perception: a philosophical school that goes after *uoluptas* might appear in a more negative light than one that pursues ἡδονή. The same, incidentally, is true for modern languages: the pleasure or *plaisir* at which hedonists aim in English and French sounds considerably more positive than the *Lust* that becomes the object once the same doctrine is translated into German.[23]

Cicero, at any rate, endeavours throughout his philosophical work to make *uoluptas* into a bad word, among other things by casting personified Pleasure as a rival to *Virtus*, a rhetorical move made additionally attractive by the alliteration.[24] In non-philosophical contexts, though, he continues to use *uoluptas* in its anodyne sense, as when he expresses formulaic 'pleasure' at receiving a letter.[25] The same practice is followed by Seneca, though he jokingly clarifies that he is using the word in the everyday, not the philosophical, sense (*Ep.* 59.1):

magnam ex epistula tua percepi uoluptatem; permitte enim mihi uti uerbis publicis nec illa ad significationem Stoicam reuoca. uitium esse uoluptatem credimus. sit sane; ponere tamen illam solemus ad demonstrandam animi hilarem affectionem.

I got great pleasure from your letter—for allow me to use ordinary language and don't take it in the Stoic sense. We Stoics think that pleasure is a vice. Fair enough, but even so we are accustomed to use the word to indicate a delighted state of mind.

For a philosophically trained Roman, even expressing everyday delight can turn into a semantic minefield.

Another disadvantage of *uoluptas* is that, unlike ἡδονή, it lacks a proper adjective to describe what is 'pleasant' or 'pleasurable'.[26] The archaic adverb *uolup*, from which the noun is derived, is nearly entirely restricted to comedy and to the fairly colourless idiom *uolup esse* 'be a source of pleasure'. The derivative adjective *uoluptarius*, by contrast, meaning 'characterized by or concerned with sensual pleasure' (*OLD* 1a) or 'devoted to

[21] Plaut. *Stich.* 657–9 *quot ego uoluptates fero,* | *quot risiones, quot iocos, quot sauia,* | *saltationes blanditias prothymias*. For the possibility that such Plautine mentions of *uoluptas* are themselves allusions to Epicurean doctrine, see G. Garbarino, *Roma e la filosofia greca dalle origini alla fine del II secolo a.C.* (Turin, 1973), 557–9.

[22] *Fin.* 2.75. More damningly at 2.12 *inuidiosum nomen est, infame, suspectum*. Cicero's dislike of the word is probably influenced by its Epicurean connotations, but even so suggests that to speakers of Latin quotidian *uoluptas* might not at first hand appear to be a likely candidate for a serious philosophical good.

[23] Cf. C. Baladier et al., 'Pleasure', in B. Cassin (ed.), *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon* (Princeton, 2014), 788–99.

[24] See e.g. *Fin.* 2.44, 3.1; Gordon (n. 19), 112–14.

[25] See Gordon (n. 19), 136–8.

[26] Cf. Gordon (n. 19), 131.

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pleasure, pleasure-loving' (*OLD* 2), already has the negative connotations that come to the fore when the word is borrowed into English as 'voluptuary'.

To work around this problem, Roman philosophical writers discussing pleasure, especially in the context of Epicureanism, take recourse (whether consciously or not) to the original meaning of ἡδονή and describe *uoluptas*, too, as sweet, *suauis* or *dulcis*. A good example is the (in)famous opening of Lucretius' second book, where, in addition to 'sweet', pleasure is also said to be 'delightful' (*iucundus*):[27]

> **suaue** mari magno turbantibus aequora uentis
> e terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
> non quia uexari quemquamst **iucunda uoluptas**,
> sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere **suaue** est.

It is **sweet**, when winds churn up the water on the great sea, to watch from land the great toil of another person—not because it is a **delightful pleasure** if someone is suffering, but because it is **sweet** to realize of what evils you yourself are free.

Torquatus, the Epicurean spokesman in the first book of *De finibus* likewise uses *suauis*, *iucundus* and derivatives to describe Epicurean pleasure, as does Cicero himself in his rebuttal in Book 2, adding *dulcis* to the mix.[28] His very definition of *uoluptas* is a showcase of the Latin philosophical vocabulary of pleasure as it had established itself in Cicero's time: *laetitiam in animo, commotionem suauem iucunditatis in corpore*.[29]

In light of this linguistic usage, then, Cicero's strict separation of sweetness and pleasure in *De amicitia* is striking. Subhuman *uoluptas* is reserved for the Epicureans, while friendship is extolled for being sweet and delightful—that is, affording exactly what both popular sentiment and such philosophers as Aristotle would describe as pleasure, but what Cicero seems to be at pains never to refer to as such. This seems especially jarring in light of the fact that Epicurus famously promoted friendship, declaring—as attests Cicero's own character Torquatus in *De finibus*—that 'of all things that wisdom has provided for the happy life, nothing is greater than friendship, nothing more productive, nothing more delightful (*iucundius*).'[30] For the Epicureans, friendship provides a significant avenue to the pleasure that is the *summum bonum*, but you would not be able to tell this from Cicero's *De amicitia*.

Cicero's animosity towards Epicureanism is well known,[31] and we might chalk up his pointed use of vocabulary simply to a zealous and unfair strategy of denying the disreputable hedonists a place in the delightful world of virtue friendship that Cicero is expounding. However, while the anti-Epicurean slant of *De amicitia* is clear, especially in the dialogue's strong stance against the idea that friendship is pursued for the sake of *utilitas* (see above), I believe that there is more to Cicero's avoidance of the term *uoluptas* for the delights of *amicitia* than a knee-jerk dislike of the Garden. In Cicero's mind, or at

[27] Lucr. 2.1–4. Compare Cicero's use of *iucundus* for the delights of friendship in *De amicitia* (see above). On *suauis* and *dulcis* in Lucretius, see D. Fowler, *Lucretius on Atomic Motion: A Commentary on* De Rerum Natura *Book 2, Lines 1–332* (Oxford, 2002) on Lucr. 2.1.

[28] *suau-*: *Fin.* 1.37, 39, 57; 2.11, 13, 24, 25, 30, 64, 88, 91; *iucund-*: *Fin.* 1.25, 37, 39, 42, 53, 57, 59, 62, 65, 67, 70, 72; 2.6, 8, 13, 14, 18, 23, 49, 50, 51, 70, 75, 82, 105; *dulc-*: *Fin.* 2.10, 16, 18, 30, 39, 114.

[29] *Fin.* 2.13 'joy in the mind, a sweet movement of delight in the body'.

[30] *Fin.* 1.65 = Epicurus, fr. 539 U. *omnium rerum quas ad beate uiuendum sapientia comparauerit nihil esse maius amicitia, nihil uberius, nihil iucundius*; Torquatus is adapting (and expanding on) Epicurus, *KD* 27. Compare Laelius' statement at *Amic.* 47 that among the gifts of the gods there is *nihil … melius … nihil iucundius* than friendship (cf. n. 10 above).

[31] On Cicero's attitude to Epicureanism, see recently C. Lévy, 'Cicero', in P. Mitsis (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Epicurus and Epicureanism* (New York, 2020), 476–86.

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least in his linguistic use in the dialogue, *uoluptas* is reserved specifically for Epicurean pleasure. However, I suggest that Cicero believes—and may well be correct in believing—that the pleasures of friendship as he envisages them would not actually qualify as pleasures according to Epicurus.

In *De amicitia*, Cicero does not advance an overt argument to this end, but we can draw on his earlier discussion of Epicurean ethics, including friendship, in the first two books of *De finibus* for a clearer sense of his opinions.[32] Cicero's treatment there points to a number of putative problems or inconsistencies within Epicurean thought and terminology, with many of which scholars of Epicureanism are still grappling today. Owing to the facts that, apart from three letters and a couple of collections of maxims, Epicurus' own works survive only in fragments and that we have to rely on later reports (including notably Cicero's) in reconstructing his doctrine, many aspects of what at first glance appears to be a straightforward philosophical system turn out to be quite unclear and remain hotly debated.

As for the Epicurean view of friendship itself, this is today, and was clearly already in antiquity, one of the greatest bones of interpretative contention.[33] Briefly, the problem is that for Epicureans pleasure is the *summum bonum*, the final goal that is pursued for its own sake, whereas everything else is pursued for the sake of pleasure. As we have seen, friendship is especially privileged among the things that are instrumental for pleasure—an attractive proposition, but one that leads to serious problems. Since in the eyes of many readers, ancient and modern, friendship implies a genuine altruistic valuing of friends for their own sake, the Epicurean promotion of friendship seems to undermine fatally the basic Epicurean tenet that pleasure is the only thing that is a good in and of itself. As it happens, Epicurus himself on occasion seems to come dangerously close to endorsing the pursuit of friendship as a good in its own right.[34] This ambivalent attitude to friendship is comparable to Epicurus' treatment of the virtues, including justice, which are also famously viewed as not choiceworthy in themselves, but only in so far as they are necessary instruments for securing a pleasurable life.[35] Even so, readers from antiquity to the present have occasionally suspected that Epicurus must somehow value the virtues for themselves, something that would be a fatal blow to his minimalist, single-good system.[36]

While these issues touch on the subject of this article and will continue to come up, my main concern in what follows is another: *which of the manifold experiences and feelings that people might describe as pleasurable, sweet, delightful, etc. actually qualify as pleasures in the Epicurean sense?* While there is ample literature on many controversial aspects of Epicurean hedonism, this question receives very little airtime in contemporary scholarship, even though it was, I believe, of great concern to Cicero, as

[32] For recent philosophical readings of *De finibus* Books 1 and 2, see the following chapters in J. Annas and G. Betegh (edd.), *Cicero's* De Finibus*: Philosophical Approaches* (Cambridge, 2016): D. Frede, 'Epicurus on the importance of friendship in the good life (*De Finibus* 1.65–70; 2.78–85)', 96–117; P.-M. Morel, 'Cicero and Epicurean virtues (*De Finibus* 1–2)', 77–95; and J. Warren, 'Epicurean pleasure in Cicero's *De Finibus*', 41–76.

[33] P. Mitsis, 'Friendship', in P. Mitsis (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Epicurus and Epicureanism* (New York, 2020), 250–83 offers a thorough discussion of the issues, with detailed review of earlier scholarly approaches.

[34] See especially *Sent. Vat.* 23 πᾶσα φιλία δι' ἑαυτὴν αἱρετή· ἀρχὴν δὲ εἴληφεν ἀπὸ τῆς ὠφελείας 'every friendship is choiceworthy for itself, but it takes its origin from utility.' Note that αἱρετή is Usener's emendation of the transmitted ἀρετή.

[35] See Cic. *Tusc.* 3.42 = Epicurus, fr. 69 U. = 22.2 A.; Cic. *Fin.* 1.42–54; Ath. *Deipn.* 12.546f = Epicurus, fr. 70 U. = 22.4 A.; Diog. Laert. 10.138 = Epicurus, fr. 504 U.

[36] See further below.

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well as other ancient critics of Epicureanism, including, as we will see, Plutarch in his polemical *A Pleasant Life Is Impossible according to Epicurus*.

These are the relevant tenets of Epicurean hedonism:

(i) There are bodily and mental pleasures.[37]
(ii) Bodily pleasures are primary; based on sense perception, they occur only in the moment. Mental pleasures are derivative of bodily pleasures, but are superior, having the advantage that—through memory and anticipation—they extend to the past and future.
(iii) Some pleasures involve a process by which a desire is fulfilled and a pain removed. For example, the pleasure of drinking fulfils the desire for hydration and removes the pain that is thirst.
(iv) The greatest pleasure, however, is a steady state characterized by the absence of all bodily and mental pain: ἀπονία (freedom from bodily pain) and ἀταραξία (freedom from mental disturbance).[38]

So what would be examples of pleasures that fit this Epicurean scheme? Unfortunately, the surviving Epicurean literature offers only few concrete illustrations. As for bodily pleasures, apart from the highest pleasure of painlessness, the typical examples are eating, drinking and sex. More generally, Epicurus included all agreeable sensations furnished by the senses, as Cicero reports in the *Tusculans*:[39]

nec equidem habeo quod intellegam bonum illud, detrahens eas uoluptates quae sapore percipiuntur, detrahens eas quae rebus percipiuntur ueneriis, detrahens eas quae auditu e cantibus, detrahens eas etiam quae ex formis percipiuntur oculis suauis motiones, siue quae aliae uoluptates in toto homine gignuntur quolibet sensu.

There is nothing that I can consider a good if I exclude the pleasures that are perceived by taste, those that are perceived in sex, those that come from hearing music, and the sweet motions that are perceived from shapes by the eyes, or any other pleasures that arise in the entirety of a person by whatever sense.

As for the mental pleasures, these consist in the enjoyment and the recollection of bodily pleasures, as well as in their anticipation, including ideally the confident belief that one will be able securely to extend one's present state of bodily painlessness into the future.[40]

[37] In the wholly corporeal Epicurean system, all pleasures, including those of the mind, are bodily in that they are based on the movement and configuration of atoms; even so, the Epicureans maintain the traditional distinction between the body and the mind, which (as explained in detail in the third book of Lucretius) are separate corporeal substances, by whose temporary unity living beings are constituted. Thus, the Epicurean bodily and mental pleasures discussed in what follows are those experienced by the corporeal body and the corporeal mind, respectively. See also n. 53 below.

[38] See Epicurus, *Ep. Men.* 131. This kind of stable condition appears to be what Epicurus calls 'katastematic' pleasure, while the pleasures of desire-fulfilment are 'kinetic'. Since, however, there is some controversy over the exact meaning of these terms, I will not be using them here.

[39] Cic. *Tusc.* 3.41 (cf. Cic. *Fin.* 2.7) ~ Ath. *Deipn.* 12.146e = Epicurus, fr. 67 U. = 22.1 A. Cicero stresses that he is translating verbatim, a strategy he often employs with Epicurus, to prove that he is not making up the (to him) shocking content (*ne quis me putet fingere*); see G.F. White, '*Copia verborum*: Cicero's philosophical translations' (Diss., Princeton, 2015), 176–95.

[40] On Epicurean mental pleasures, see J. Warren, *The Pleasures of Reason in Plato, Aristotle, and the Hellenistic Hedonists* (Cambridge, 2014), 79–103, 175–209.

Thus, according to Plutarch, Epicurus considered 'the stable condition of the flesh and the confident expectation of this' to be 'the highest and most secure joy'.[41]

Even though there is ample evidence that, as Cicero's Torquatus puts it, the Epicureans 'hold that the pleasures and pains of the mind arise from the pleasures and pains of the body',[42] this tenet has met with doubt. Thus, for example, A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley write in *The Hellenistic Philosophers*:[43]

> But the superiority of mental to bodily pleasure … can hardly be restricted to the mind's ability to remember and anticipate the body's absence of pain. Such a restriction fails to account for the pleasures deriving from removal of fears of death and the gods, Epicurus' ability to overcome bodily pain with joyous remembrance of philosophical conversations …, and, above all, the enormous emphasis placed upon the pleasures engendered by friendship.

It is not clear, however, that Epicureans really were unable to explain the kinds of mental pleasures enumerated by Long and Sedley as ultimately based on bodily pleasure. Clearly, Epicurus does not reckon only with such straightforward mental delights as the memory of a good meal had today and the anticipation of another one tomorrow, but includes more complicated chains of hedonic cause and effect. Thus, the freedom from fear of death and of the gods—a major element of ἀταραξία—is the pleasure of the firm knowledge that, lacking existence and hence sensation after death, one will suffer no physical harm (for example through decay of the body or tortures in the underworld), and that in one's lifetime the gods will never punish or capriciously hurt one. What Epicureanism teaches is exactly the kind of mindset and behaviour that gives people both the ability to avoid bodily pain in the present and the certainty that they will be able to do so in the future. This might explain also Epicurus' contention that, in studying philosophy, pleasure accompanies the very acquisition of knowledge (*Sent. Vat.* 27): this does not mean that the intellectual activity of philosophizing is pleasurable in itself, but that the budding Epicurean's realization that one need not fear physical pain, and will be able to live 'undisturbed', is an immense mental pleasure ultimately derived from a physical one.[44]

A similar argument can be made about Long and Sedley's 'joyous remembrance of philosophical conversations', a reference to Epicurus' famous death-bed letter to Idomeneus, in which the philosopher describes his ability to counteract excruciating physical pain with τῇ τῶν ἡμῖν γεγονότων διαλογισμῶν μνήμῃ.[45] If, as seems likely, the remembered discussion was indeed what Epicurus elsewhere calls 'διαλογισμοί conducive to a blessed life', the mental pleasure both at the time and in recollection would have consisted in the joyful realization that pain need not be feared and that our ἀταραξία is entirely up to us.[46] As for Long and Sedley's final point, the pleasure of friendship is of course what is at issue in this article, but, on a purely instrumental understanding of Epicurean friendship, its pleasure would be the experience of

[41] Plut. *Non posse* 1089D = Epicurus, fr. 68 U. = 22.3 A. τὸ γὰρ εὐσταθὲς σαρκὸς κατάστημα καὶ τὸ περὶ ταύτης πιστὸν ἔλπισμα τὴν ἀκροτάτην χαρὰν καὶ βεβαιοτάτην ἔχει.

[42] *Fin.* 1.55 *animi autem uoluptates et dolores nasci fatemur e corporis uoluptatibus et doloribus*; cf. Epicurus, *KD* 18; Plut. *Non posse* 1088E = Epicurus, fr. 429 U., *Non posse* 1090F–1091A.

[43] A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1987), 1.124.

[44] For a different reading of *Sent. Vat.* 27, see Warren (n. 40), 80–2.

[45] Diog. Laert. 10.22 = Epicurus, fr. 138 U. = 52 A.

[46] Epicurus, *Ep. Pyth.* 84 τῶν εἰς μακάριον βίον συντεινόντων διαλογισμῶν. For the meaning of διαλογισμοί in the letter to Idomeneus, often rendered vaguely as 'conversations' but probably meaning specifically 'philosophical discussion/arguments' (cf. LSJ III), see J. Giovacchini, 'Le souvenir des plaisirs: le rôle de la mémoire dans la thérapeutique épicurienne', in L. Boulègue and C. Lévy (edd.), *Hédonismes: penser et dire le plaisir dans l'antiquité et à la renaissance* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2007), 69–83, at 72 n. 13.

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confidence not only that our friends are useful to us right now but especially that they will remain so in the future.[47] We can rely on our friends for assistance in achieving a life free from bodily and mental pain, whether such help takes the form of material support or—especially if both we and our friends are Epicureans—the joint philosophizing that leads to our desired ἀταραξία.

It thus seems to me that, *pace* Long and Sedley, Epicureans are perfectly capable of explaining what they consider mental pleasures by ultimately predicating them on bodily ones, whether past, present or future.[48] For an Epicurean argument contemporary to Cicero that posits such a chain reaction in order to explain hedonic experience and motivation, we may take another look at the opening to *De rerum natura* Book 2, partly quoted above. Lucretius makes clear that the pleasure one feels at watching storm-tossed sailors from safe land is not sadism or *Schadenfreude* (2.3 *non quia uexari quemquamst iucunda uoluptas*) but the knowledge of being free from the evils from which others are suffering (2.4 *sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suaue est*)—both the bodily pains and dangers of the seafarers in distress and, metaphorically, the wrong attitudes of non-Epicureans, which cause them both to experience bodily pains in the present and, worse, to anticipate them for the future. When Lucretius concludes that 'nothing is sweeter than to inhabit the well-fortified serene temples of the wise erected by learning',[49] he does not mean that practising philosophy is a pleasure in and of itself, but that it is 'sweet' exactly because it affords the certainty that one is immune to any unbearable bodily or related mental pain, both present and future.

On this understanding of Epicurean hedonism, then, it is questionable whether certain objects or activities that ordinary people might consider pleasurable would actually qualify as pleasures in the Epicurean sense. This includes even some activities that modern scholars in discussions of Epicureanism have casually used as examples of Epicurean pleasures. Panos Dimas, for instance, mentions 'reading a book', but, unless we are talking about a work of Epicurean philosophy, it is hard to see how this would cause bodily pleasure or a mental pleasure based on a bodily one.[50] Raphael Woolf's 'taking a walk' is also at least open to doubt:[51] one could argue, of course, that the exercise involved is providing bodily pleasure and/or the mental pleasure of knowing that one's fitness regime helps preserve one's bodily ἀπονία for the future; if the walk leads through a beautiful landscape or city, one might also undergo some 'pleasant motions' of visual sense perception. Even so, I suspect that for many people in our post-romantic era the experience of taking a walk goes beyond these pedestrian elements and involves a more holistic pleasure, one that may no longer be the pleasure of Epicurus. Finally, 'doing crossword puzzles' and 'throwing darts in contests at the pub', suggested by John

[47] See especially *Sent. Vat.* 34.

[48] That mental pleasures derive from bodily ones thus does not necessitate the existence of a bodily pleasure at the same time as the mental pleasure is experienced. If the mental pleasure is one of recollection, the pleasure recalled itself no longer exists (and what may be recalled may itself be a mental pleasure, though this will by necessity itself ultimately be derived from a bodily pleasure). In the case of anticipation of the future, the projected bodily pleasure may fail to materialize, while, in the case of the mental pleasure that is the freedom from the fear of death, it is not the pleasant sensation of painlessness that is anticipated but the absence of sensation altogether. Even this last special case, though, still seems to qualify as a mental pleasure derived from a bodily one in that it is the pleasant absence of a fear of bodily pain.

[49] Lucr. 2.7–8 *nil dulcius est bene quam munita tenere | edita doctrina sapientum templa serena*.

[50] P. Dimas, 'Epicurus on pleasure, desire, and friendship', in Ø. Rabbås et al. (edd.), *The Quest for the Good Life: Ancient Philosophers on Happiness* (Oxford, 2015), 164–82, at 175.

[51] R. Woolf, 'Pleasure and desire', in J. Warren (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism* (Cambridge, 2009), 158–78, at 176.

Cooper as part of a whole series of pastimes an Epicurean might enjoy,[52] appear to be activities that—however pleasurable we ourselves may find them—are well-nigh impossible to interpret as bodily pleasures or mental pleasures derived from bodily ones.[53]

Modern readers who enjoy the activities adduced by Dimas, Woolf and Cooper would, of course, most likely maintain that they find them pleasurable as such. However, as Cicero in *De finibus* delights in pointing out, the problem is that orthodox Epicureans cannot claim *haec enim ipsa mihi sunt uoluptati* (*Fin.* 1.25)—that is, that anything provides pleasure in and of itself, unless it consists in, or in some way derives from, bodily pleasure. Disqualified from being such putative 'pleasures in their own right' are not only the intellectual pursuits of Cicero's interlocutors Torquatus and Triarius (who, like Dimas, enjoy reading books)[54] but also the virtuous actions of Torquatus' ancestor M. Torquatus Imperiosus, who notoriously had his own son executed for disobeying military orders, something that according to Cicero cannot be explained as hedonistically motivated.[55] Epicureans cannot hold that virtue is intrinsically pleasurable, only that it is conducive to pleasure—which in the case of a father who orders the death of his son is open to serious doubt.[56]

Cicero returns to this argument at the end of his speech against Epicureanism in *De finibus* Book 2, bombarding Torquatus with a series of questions (107):

illud autem ipsum qui optineri potest, quod dicitis omnis animi et uoluptates et dolores ad corporis uoluptates ac dolores pertinere? nihilne te delectat umquam—uideo quicum loquar—te igitur, Torquate, ipsum per se nihil delectat? omitto dignitatem, honestatem, speciem ipsam uirtutum, de quibus ante dictum est, haec leuiora ponam: poema, orationem cum aut scribis aut legis, cum omnium factorum, cum regionum conquiris historiam, signum, tabula, locus amoenus, ludi, uenatio, uilla Luculli (nam si 'tuam' dicerem, latebram haberes: ad corpus diceres pertinere)—sed ea, quae dixi, ad corpusne refers? an est aliquid quod te sua sponte delectet? aut pertinacissimus fueris, si in eo perstiteris ad corpus ea quae dixi referri, aut deserueris totam Epicuri uoluptatem, si negaueris.

But how can this be true, that (as you maintain) all pleasures and pains of the mind derive from pleasures and pains of the body? Does nothing ever delight you—I know who I'm talking to—yes, you, Torquatus, does nothing ever delight you in and of itself? Forget about dignity, honour, even the splendour of the virtues, about which I spoke earlier. I'll mention some more trivial things: a poem, a speech you are writing or reading, researching the history of all events and countries, a statue, a painting, a beautiful landscape, games, hunting, the villa of Lucullus (for if I said 'your villa', you would have a way out: you would say it pertains to your body)—all these things I've mentioned, are you connecting them to the body? Or is there anything that delights you as such? If you persist in saying that they are all connected to the body, then you are really

[52] J.M. Cooper, *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton, 1999), 509.

[53] Cooper (n. 52), 513 n. 39 ingeniously tries to get around this by pointing to the fact that in the Epicurean materialist universe all mental activities are ultimately bodily ones, and that therefore 'reading, following an argument, listening to music, playing bridge and so on, is a bodily pleasure'. This disregards Epicurus' careful distinction between bodily and mental pleasures, where 'bodily' pertains to the human body as opposed to the human mind; both are corporeal entities but with different operations and capacities (see n. 37 above).

[54] *Fin.* 1.25 *quid tibi, Torquate, quid huic Triario litterae, quid historiae cognitioque rerum, quid poetarum euolutio, quid tanta tot uersuum memoria uoluptatis affert?*

[55] See *Fin.* 1.23, 25; 2.60–1, 72, 105.

[56] Torquatus actually attempts to explain his ancestor's actions as hedonistically motivated: *Fin.* 1.35 *saluti prospexit ciuium, qua intellegat contineri suam* 'he was watching out for the well-being of the populace, from which he knew his own depended'. See also n. 70 below.

most stubborn—but if you say that they aren't, then you are completely abandoning the Epicurean concept of pleasure.

Intellectual activity, beautiful man-made or natural objects and leisurely pastimes are things in which Torquatus and no doubt many other people take what in ordinary language would be called pleasure—but this is not pleasure in the Epicurean sense.[57]

Cicero's point is that Epicureanism's single-minded refusal to ascribe intrinsic value to anything other than bodily pleasure and its mental anticipation, appreciation and recollection puts the system under enormous pressure. Not only can there be no *goods* other than pleasure (which means, among other things, that virtue or friendship cannot be considered good and choiceworthy in and of itself), but there cannot even be any *pleasures* beyond enjoyable sense-stimulation, its mental reflection, and ἀπονία and ἀταραξία. As soon as Epicurus or one of his followers can be shown to value as intrinsically good and/or pleasurable something —whether it be hunting, philosophizing, friendship or virtue—in addition to their restrictive *summum bonum*, then the entire doctrine, predicated as it is on a single narrowly defined good, is in danger of collapsing (*Fin.* 1.25):

homines optimi non intellegunt totam rationem euerti si ita res se habeat. nam si concederetur, etiamsi ad corpus nihil referatur, ista sua sponte et per se esse iucunda, per se esset et uirtus et cognitio rerum, quod minime ille uult, expetenda.

The good folks don't understand that their whole doctrine is turned over if this is so [viz. that things are pleasurable in their own right]. For if they concede that these things are delightful in and of themselves, even if they have nothing to do with the body, then virtue and intellectual activity would be choiceworthy *per se*—which he [Epicurus] doesn't want at all.

The existence of too many pleasures would be ruinous to the minimal brand of hedonism promoted by Epicurus.

Is Cicero's depiction of Epicurean doctrine correct on this point? It is often claimed that Cicero's understanding of Epicureanism was faulty and/or that he unfairly distorted Epicurean views for his polemical ends. The first is unlikely. As Carlos Lévy points out, Cicero studied with two Epicurean scholarchs, Phaedrus and Zeno of Sidon, and was personally acquainted with many Epicureans, Greek and Roman alike.[58] He also had access to a considerable body of Epicurean writing, including the works of Epicurus himself, nearly all of which is inaccessible to us. This alone should make us wary of assuming that modern scholars would be in a position to have a better grasp on Epicurean doctrine than such a well-trained individual much closer in time and with a much better library.

As for the second point, Cicero makes no bones about his disapproval of Epicureanism and is often highly polemical in discussing the school. Even so, I do not think that he would deliberately misrepresent Epicurean tenets, something that it would

[57] One could attempt to argue that some of the more aesthetic delights Cicero enumerates involve actual bodily pleasure via a stimulation of the senses as described by Epicurus in Cic. *Tusc.* 3.41 ~ Ath. *Deipn.* 12.146e = Epicurus, fr. 67 U. = 22.1 A., cited above. However, it seems that the artistic connoisseurship with which someone like Torquatus would presumably enjoy a statue or a painting encompasses rather more than the mere experience of 'sweet motions that are perceived from shapes by the eyes'. The vexed question of whether Epicurus believed that poetry affords some kind of pleasure and, if so, which aspects of it, cannot be discussed here.

[58] Lévy (n. 31), 476. On Cicero's Epicurean friends, see further N. Gilbert, 'Among friends: Cicero and the Epicureans' (Diss., Toronto, 2015).

be hard to get away with, given the widespread interest in Epicureanism among the upper classes in mid-first-century Rome.[59] Cicero himself in *De finibus* introduces Epicureanism as a philosophical system that is 'very well known to most people'[60]; there would thus be little scope for telling downright falsehoods without being called out by his readers.

As it happens, most—but not all (see below)—modern scholars who consider the issue seem to agree with Cicero's restrictive interpretation of Epicurean pleasure, as does, notably, Plutarch in his dialogue *A Pleasant Life Is Impossible according to Epicurus*.[61] In this work, the main speaker Theon sets out to prove the apparently paradoxical proposition that 'it is not even possible to live pleasantly according to them', them being the hedonistic Epicureans.[62] At great length, Plutarch makes essentially the same point as Cicero in *De finibus*: if, according to Epicurus, pleasure is restricted to bodily pleasures and those mental pleasures derivative of them,[63] then there is very little left for Epicureans to enjoy. Notably, neither the contemplative nor the active life can hold any charm for the deprived denizen of the Garden, who will never know the many pleasures other people derive from intellectual investigation or virtuous action—since, of course, for Epicureans, these are not pleasures at all.[64]

Both in antiquity and today, however, there have been people with a different understanding of Epicureanism, believing that Epicurus must have held one or both of the following:

(i) There are things that are *goods* in their own right beyond bodily pleasure and the mental pleasure derived from it; and
(ii) There are things that are *pleasurable* in their own right beyond bodily pleasure and the mental pleasure derived from it.[65]

As for the first, virtue and friendship are the obvious candidates. In *De finibus*, Torquatus reports that a subsection of 'more timid' (*timidiores*) Epicureans fear that, 'if we think that friendship should be sought for the sake of pleasure, then friendship seems, as it were, completely lame.'[66] They therefore believe that we first select friends in a purely utilitarian fashion, but then come to love them 'for themselves' (*propter se ipsos*). Among modern scholars, for example, Julia Annas maintains that, on the Epicurean view, 'living virtuously … is something we seek for its own sake', and so is friendship.[67] In her opinion, 'we achieve it [pleasure] precisely by having non-instrumental concern for

[59] See especially Y. Benferhat, Ciues Epicurei*: les épicuriens et l'idée de la monarchie à Rome et en Italie de Sylla à Octave* (Brussels, 2005).

[60] *Fin.* 1.13 *plerisque notissima*.

[61] See H. Adam, *Plutarchs Schrift non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* (Amsterdam, 1974); Warren (n. 40), 79–103.

[62] *Non posse* 1087B ὅτι μηδὲ ζῆν ἡδέως ἐστὶν κατ' αὐτούς. The work is a sequel to Plutarch's *Against Colotes*, which argues that it is impossible to live a good life (in the philosophical sense) in accordance with Epicurean teaching.

[63] *Non posse* 1088E, 1090F–1091A.

[64] Given the similarities in argument, it is possible that Plutarch drew on Cicero or that both were inspired by a Hellenistic anti-Epicurean source; cf. Adam (n. 61), 39.

[65] These two propositions do not have to be combined, but often are: as we will see, interpreters both ancient and modern often assume that putative goods (i) are also pleasurable as per (ii).

[66] *Fin.* 1.69 *si amicitiam propter nostram uoluptatem expetendam putemus, tota amicitia quasi claudicare uideatur.* This is one of three different contemporary Epicurean takes on friendship that Torquatus reports, which shows how hotly debated the topic was.

[67] J. Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York, 1993), 239.

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virtuous action and the interests of others.'[68] Similarly, Dorothea Frede takes a view of friendship reminiscent of that of Cicero's 'timid' Epicureans, claiming that, according to Epicurus, 'friendship consists in the love of the others for their own sake.'[69]

As for the second, we have already seen the doubts of Long and Sedley as to whether all mental pleasures can really be derivative of bodily ones. Cicero himself tells us that it is a common misunderstanding among contemporary Epicureans to believe that 'that which is morally right itself causes joy, that is, pleasure.'[70] This mistaken belief makes Epicureanism attractive to the masses, but it is unorthodox, 'for Epicurus or Metrodorus never made this kind of argument, nor any other Epicurean who had any sense or had studied these matters'.[71] Torquatus concurs (*Fin.* 1.55):

itaque concedo quod modo dicebas, cadere causa si qui e nostris aliter existimant, quos quidem uideo esse multos, sed imperitos.

I admit what you just said: that if some of us think differently [viz. that there are pleasures beyond bodily pleasure and the mental pleasure derived from it], they can't make their case—and I see that there are many of those, but they are uninformed.

In this context, it is interesting that, as David Armstrong has shown, Cicero's contemporary Philodemus apparently promoted a view of friendship as not purely instrumental but explicitly a pleasure in itself.[72]

While certainty on Epicurus' own views is impossible to ascertain (and it is, of course, perfectly possible that the founder himself was not entirely consistent on these matters), it seems to me most likely that the minimalist reading of Epicurean hedonism of Cicero, Plutarch and many modern scholars is in fact correct. That both in antiquity and today more expansive views (involving a larger number of goods and/or pleasures) have been promoted attests both to the radicalism of Epicurus' vision and to the discontent this radicalism has caused.[73] However, even if Cicero's understanding of Epicurean hedonism is wrong on this point, it still explains his use of language in *De amicitia*. Which, finally, brings us back to the pleasures of friendship.

[68] Annas (n. 67), 240.

[69] Frede (n. 32), 107. See also Cooper (n. 52), 509–10 and the *historia quaestionis* in Mitsis (n. 33) for similar views. The cited scholars all appear to operate—correctly, in my view—within a framework that opposes what is intrinsically good to what is instrumental in procuring a good. In theory, one could maintain that something that is intrinsically good (e.g. virtue) might at the same time be instrumental in achieving another good (e.g. pleasure), and that the distinction 'extrinsic–intrinsic' does not map onto the binary 'instrumental–final' (see C.M. Korsgaard, 'Two distinctions in goodness', *Philosophical Review* 92 [1983], 169–95, operating in a Kantian framework). However, in the eudaimonistic Hellenistic philosophies, a good is specifically an end in itself; if it is intrinsically good, it must also be choiceworthy in its own right.

[70] *Fin.* 1.25 *recta et honesta quae sint, ea facere per se laetitiam, id est uoluptatem*. The idea here appears to be of a kind of psychological hedonism by which humans are by their natures drawn to virtuous action as something that as such (*per se*) causes pleasure. On the reading of Cicero and others, this is not an orthodox Epicurean view. What is possible for virtuous persons is to feel mental pleasure in knowing that their conduct contributes to a state of affairs conducive to an absence of physical pain and mental disturbance; this pleasure would thus still be derivative of bodily pleasure.

[71] *Fin.* 1.25 *numquam hoc ita defendit Epicurus neque Metrodorus aut quisquam eorum qui aut saperet aliquid aut ista didicisset*.

[72] D. Armstrong, 'Epicurean virtues, Epicurean friendship: Cicero vs. the Herculaneum papyri', in J. Fish and K.R. Sanders (edd.), *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition* (Cambridge, 2011), 105–28, at 126: '*having* friends is a pleasure'. See also n. 79 below.

[73] See P. Mitsis, *Epicurus' Ethical Theory: The Pleasures of Invulnerability* (Ithaca, NY, 1988), 113, who writes specifically about *De finibus*: 'Cicero rather neatly captures the unresolved philosophical tensions that surface in Epicurus' writings.'

What exactly is it about friendship that Cicero considers so 'sweet' and 'enjoyable' (and that a less scrupulous language-user would probably call 'pleasurable')? First, it is the character of our friends, their virtuous nature that initially induced us to love them, the love they in turn feel for us and, more generally, their delightful talk and manners.[74] Second, there is an inherent delight in socializing with other people and simply having someone with whom one can share experiences.[75] With a close friend, this leads to a pleasurable exchange not only of the most intimate thoughts[76] but also of mutual good will and kind services.[77] Ideally, friends will spend as much time together as they can, something Laelius fondly remembers he did with Scipio: together, the two friends enjoyed all aspects of life from politics, warfare and travel to study and leisurely pastimes (*Amic.* 103–4).[78]

From a minimalist Epicurean point of view, this list of putative pleasures does not look promising: as Epicureans, we cannot consider our friends and their characters pleasurable in their own right, and it is not clear how the joys of a good heart-to-heart conversation could be made to fit the narrow compass of Epicurean pleasure.[79] How pleasurable in the Epicurean sense it is to hang out with our friends will depend on our activities: good food, drink or sex would of course provide bodily pleasures, but, unless our friends are instrumental in obtaining them, it is hard to see what friendship would add to the experience; by contrast, politics, warfare and study, whether with friends or alone, would never clear the Epicurean hedonistic bar. This leaves only the mutual good will and exchange of services, which does indeed have the potential to contribute to our ἀταραξία in giving us the knowledge that out friends are there to help ensure our freedom from bodily pain now and in the future. Even there, though, what Cicero finds especially delightful is not the advantages one gains from a friend (which throughout *De amicitia* he considers simply a by-product of friendship; see above) but the friend's affection that becomes apparent in bestowing them (*Amic.* 51):

non enim tam utilitas parta per amicum quam amici amor ipse delectat; tumque illud fit quod ab amico est profectum iucundum, si cum studio est profectum.

For it's not so much the advantage bestowed by a friend as the friend's affection itself that is delightful. What we receive from a friend is a cause of joy exactly then when it arises from true concern.

Epicureans, one could argue, might also take pleasure in recognizing their friends' genuine affection since it adds even more to their confidence in future support—but they could not very well take pleasure in such affection in its own right (*amor ipse*).

To conclude, even though Cicero never says so, his virtue friendship—just like that of Aristotle—also by definition provides not only utility but also pleasure. Unlike with the

[74] *Amic*. 49, 51, 66, 90.

[75] *Amic.* 55, 88, 101, 102.

[76] *Amic.* 22 *quid dulcius quam habere quicum omnia audeas sic loqui ut tecum?*

[77] *Amic.* 49 *nihil est enim remuneratione beneuolentiae, nihil uicissitudine studiorum officiorumque iucundius*.

[78] Cicero's pleasures of friendship are similar to those found in Aristotle, who especially stresses the importance of spending time together and observes that, whatever our way of life and favourite activities, we wish to share them with our friends (*Eth. Nic.* 9, 1172a1–8).

[79] As Armstrong (n. 72), 127–8 shows, Philodemus (who, as we have seen, on occasion holds less minimalist views of pleasure than Epicurus himself) appears to find conversation pleasurable in itself (*On the Gods* 3, col. 14.4–7 D.: 'for good men, the sharing of discourse with men like them showers down on them indescribable pleasure', Armstrong's translation; see also *On Free Speech* fr. 28).

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first, Cicero never makes an explicit argument as to the second and in fact avoids the term *uoluptas*, reserving it for references to Epicurean doctrine and instead (availing himself of a quirk of the Latin vocabulary of pleasure) describing the joys of friendship as sweet and delightful. As a comparison with the discussion of Epicurean hedonism in *De finibus* has shown, Cicero's avoidance of the Epicurean term *uoluptas* goes hand in hand with his critique of the minimalism of Epicurean ethics, which restricts the good to pleasure, and pleasure itself to bodily pleasures and the mental pleasures derived from them. On Cicero's reading (which is also found in Plutarch), many things in which people ordinarily take pleasure do therefore not qualify as pleasures in the Epicurean sense. This includes the pleasures of friendship celebrated in *De amicitia*: they are not Epicurean *uoluptates*, but nevertheless remain the sweetest things the gods have bestowed on us.

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