

Friendship discussion (moved from 20th conversation)

Post by “Pacatus” of April 29, 2025 at 6:01 PM

From page 219 of the Nehamas essay: “Although relationships based on benefit or pleasure are not ideal, they would still be friendships as long as they, too, involved mutual affection and, more important, wishing good things for each other’s own sake: that seems the least we should ask of them.”

For Aristotle, only friendship based on mutual appreciation of virtue is perfect or ideal. From page 220: “Aristotle’s conclusion is that only friendship that involves reciprocated love based on the virtues of another is a friendship in the proper sense of the term. He is half-tempted to say that no other relationship should even be called friendship, but, as a concession to ordinary usage, and by way of uncovering what is right about that usage, he concedes that any other relation may be counted as a friendship, to a greater or lesser degree, to the extent that it resembles this ideal.”

It seems to me that Epicurus would accept friendship based on mutual appreciation of virtue – but *not* as the “only friendship ... in the proper sense of the term.” And, after all, such appreciation is itself surely a source of pleasure.

And there is, for example, VS23: “Every friendship is worth choosing for its own sake, though it takes its origin from the benefits.”