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**The Notion of Love in Epicurus' Theory of Friendship**

Although in formulating his own theory or ideas on friendship, Epicurus borrowed certain elements from Aristotle, his theory is different from Aristotle's. Epicurus' ideas seem to be the result and reflection of his own lifestyle: a serene, calm, spiritual lifestyle of an almost mystical nature. But if this is the case, then how did Epicurus earn a reputation for strong realism? For example, it is interesting to note that his notion of love in friendship and the ideas on the basis of which love is born in-between friends include some Platonic and Neoplatonic elements. These (formal) elements are the same ones that constitute the notion of beauty in Plato (Philebus) whose intellectual contemplation is achieved through concepts such as harmony and rhythm. These concepts, for Epicurus, lead to ataraxia and result in happiness. A person in the state of ataraxia is a "doctor of the spirit."

In view of the above, this paper examines the nature of love in Epicurus' notion of friendship. Is it different from Aristotle's? Is it of a mystical nature? Does this kind of love have anything in common with the Christian notion of love?