

Cicero Argues with Himself: Animal Imagery in *De Amicitia*

1) Great Chain of Being Metaphor (Lakoff and Turner, 160-213)

HUMANS: higher-order attributes (e.g., thought, character) lead to higher-order behavior

ANIMALS: instinctual attributes lead to instinctual behavior

PLANTS: biological attributes lead to biological behavior

COMPLEX OBJECTS: structural attributes lead to functional behavior

NATURAL PHYSICAL THINGS: nat. phys. attributes lead to nat. phys. behavior

2) *De Legibus* 1.29-30:

Itaque quaecumque est hominis definitio, una in omnis ualet.

... Etenim ratio, qua una praestamus beluis, per quam coniectura ualemus, argumentamur, refellimus, disserimus, conficimus aliquid, cunctis hominibus certe est communis....

And so, however we define man, a single definition will apply to all.... And indeed reason, which alone raises us above the level of the beasts and enables us to draw inferences, to prove and disprove, to discuss and solve problems, and to come to conclusions, is certainly common to us all..¹

3) *Fin.* 2.45:

(*optimi viri*) permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. homines enim, etsi aliis multis, tamen hoc uno plurimum a bestiis differunt, quod rationem habent a natura datam mentemque acrem et vigentem celerrimeque multa simul agitantem et, ut ita dicam, sagacem, quae et causas rerum et consecutiones videat et similitudines transferat et disiuncta coniungat et cum praesentibus futura copulet omnemque complectatur vitae consequentis statum. eademque ratio fecit hominem hominum adpetentem cumque iis natura et sermone et usu congruentem, ut profectus a caritate domesticorum ac suorum serpat longius et se implicet primum civium, deinde omnium mortalium societate....

Good men do a great many things from which they anticipate no advantage, solely from the motive of propriety, morality and right. For among the many points of difference between man and the lower animals, the greatest difference is that Nature has bestowed on man the gift of Reason, of an active, vigorous intelligence, able to carry on several operations at the same time with extreme speed, and having so to speak, a keen scent to discern the causes and effects of things, to draw analogies, combine things separate, connect the future with the present, and survey the entire field of the subsequent course of life. It is Reason moreover which has inspired man with a relish for his kind; she has produced a natural conformity both of language and of habit; she has prompted the individual, starting from friendship and from family affection, to expand his interests, forming social ties first with his fellow-citizens and later with all mankind....

4) *Off.* 1.11-12. Cf. *Fin.* 2.45.

¹ All translations come from Loeb editions.

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5) *Acad.* 2.139:

revocat virtus vel potius reppendit manu, pecudum illos motos (*voluptatis*) esse dicit, hominem iungit deo.

Virtue calls me back, or rather plucks me back with her hand; she declares that those are the feelings (namely, feelings of pleasure) of beasts of the field, and she links the human being with god.

6) *Acad* 1.6:

Haec ipsa de vita et moribus et de expetendis fugiendisque rebus illi (*Epicurei*) simpliciter, pecudis enim et hominis idem bonum esse consent.

Even this department of ethics and the subject of moral choice and avoidance that school handles quite simply, for it frankly identifies the good of man with the good of cattle....

7) *Nat. Deor.* 1.122:

(*Amicitiam*) si ad fructum nostrum referemus, non ad illius commoda, quem diligemus, non erit ista amicitia, sed mercatura quaedam utilitatum suarum. Prata et arva et pecudum greges diliguntur isto modo, quod fructus ex is capiuntur...

If we base friendship on its profit to ourselves, and not on its advantage to those whom we love, it will not be friendship at all, but a mere bartering of selfish interests. That is our standard of value for meadows and fields and herds of cattle: we esteem them for the profits we derive from them....

8) *Fin.* 1.30 (cf. *Fin.* 2.31-33, 2.109):

Idque (*Epicurus*) instituit docere sic: Omne animal, simul atque natum sit, voluptatem appetere eaque gaudere ut summo bono, dolorem aspernari ut summum malum.... itaque negat opus esse ratione neque disputatione, quam ob rem voluptas expetenda, fugiendus dolor sit.

This Epicurus sets out to prove as follows: Every animal, as soon as it is born, seeks for pleasure, and delights in it as the Chief Good, while it recoils from pain as the Chief Evil.... Hence Epicurus refuses to admit any necessity for argument or discussion to *prove* that pleasure is desirable and pain to be avoided.

9) Horace *Ep.* 1.4.15-16:

Me pinguem et nitidum bene curata cute uises,
cum ridere uoles, Epicuri de grege porcum.

As for me, when you want a laugh, you will find me in fine fettle, fat and sleek, a hog from Epicurus' herd.

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10) *Amic.* 20:

Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio; qua quidem haud scio an excepta sapientia nihil melius homini sit a dis immortalibus datum. Divitias alii praeponunt, bonam alii valetudinem, alii potentiam, alii honores, multi etiam voluptates. Beluarum hoc quidem extremum...

For friendship is nothing else than an accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual goodwill and affection, and I am inclined to think that, with the exception of wisdom, no better thing has been given to man by the immortal gods. Some prefer riches, some good health, some power, some public honours, and many even prefer sensual pleasures. This last is the highest aim of brutes....

11) *Amic.* 32:

Ab his qui pecudum ritu ad voluptatem omnia referunt longe dissentiunt.

From this view (i.e., that friendship is sought for love's sake) those men who, after the manner of cattle, judge everything by the standard of pleasure, vigorously dissent.

12) *Amic.* 69:

Sed maximum est in amicitia parem esse inferiori. Saepe enim excellentiae quaedam sunt, qualis erat Scipionis in nostro, ut ita dicam, **grege**. Numquam se ille Philo, numquam Rupilio, numquam Mummio anteposuit, numquam inferioris ordinis amicis.

But it is of the utmost importance in friendship that superior and inferior should stand on an equality. For oftentimes a certain pre-eminence does exist, as was that of Scipio in what I may call "our set." But he never affected any superiority over Philus, or Rupilius, or Mummius, or over his other friends of a lower rank.

13) *Fin.* 1.65:

nec vero hoc oratione solum, sed multo magis vita et factis et moribus comprobavit. quod quam magnum sit fictae veterum fabulae declarant, in quibus tam multis tamque variis ab ultima antiquitate repetitis tria vix amicorum paria reperiuntur, ut ad Orestem pervenias profectus a Theseo. at vero Epicurus una in domo, et ea quidem angusta, quam magnos quantaque amoris conspiratione consentientis tenuit amicorum greges!

Nor did he only commend this doctrine by his eloquence, but far more by the example of his life and conduct. How great a thing such friendship is, is shown by the mythical stories of antiquity. Review the legends from the remotest ages, and, copious and varied as they are, you will barely find in them three pairs of friends, beginning with Theseus and ending with Orestes. Yet Epicurus in a single house and that a small one maintained a whole company of friends, united by the closest sympathy and affection!

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14) *Amic.* 63, 68:

Est igitur prudentis sustinere ut cursum, sic impetum benevolentiae, quo utamur quasi equis temptatis, sic amicitia, aliqua parte periclitatis moribus amicorum.

Hence it is the part of wisdom to check the headlong rush of goodwill as we would that of a chariot, and thereby so manage friendship that we may in some degree put the dispositions of friends, as we do those of horses, to a preliminary test.

Quin in ipso equo, cuius modo feci mentionem, si nulla res impediatur, nemo est, quin eo, quo consuevit, libentius utatur quam intractato et novo.

Nay, even in the case of the horse just now referred to, everybody, nothing preventing, would rather use one to which he has grown accustomed than one that is untrained and new.

15) *Amic.* 81 (cf. 27):

Quod si hoc apparet in bestiis, volucris, nantibus, agrestibus, cicuribus, feris, primum ut se ipsae diligant (id enim pariter cum omni animante nascitur), deinde ut requirant atque appetant ad quas se applicent eiusdem generis animantis, idque faciunt cum desiderio et cum quadam similitudine amoris humani, quanto id magis in homine fit natural! qui et se ipse diligit et alterum anquirit, cuius animum ita cum suo misceat ut efficiat paene unum ex duobus.

Now if it is evident of animals, whether of the air, the water, or the land, and whether tame or wild, first, that they love themselves—for this feeling is born alike in every living creature—and, secondly, that they require and eagerly search for other animals of their own kind to which they may attach themselves—and this they do with a longing in some degree resembling human love—then how much more, by the law of his nature, is this the case with man who both loves himself and uses his reason to seek out another whose soul he may so mingle with his own as almost to make one out of two!

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