

THE ANNICEREAN CYRENAICS ON FRIENDSHIP AND HABITUAL GOOD WILL

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ABSTRACT: Unlike mainstream Cyrenaics, the Annicereans deny that friendship is chosen only because of its usefulness. Instead, the wise person cares for her friend and endures pains for him because of her goodwill and love. Nonetheless, the Annicereans maintain that your own pleasure is the *telos* and that a friend's happiness isn't intrinsically choiceworthy. Their position appears internally inconsistent or to attribute doublethink to the wise person. But we can avoid these problems. We have good textual grounds to attribute to the Annicereans a doctrine of "non-hedonic habits," which allows them to abandon psychological hedonism while still maintaining hedonism regarding well-being.

KEYWORDS: Hedonism; Friendship; Habituation; Cyrenaics; Annicereans

1. Introduction

The Cyrenaics are hedonists about well-being, maintaining that only pleasure is intrinsically good and only pain intrinsically bad. In fact, alone among ancient ethicists, the Cyrenaics explicitly deny that happiness (*eudaimonia*) is the end. Happiness, they say, is just a collection of particular pleasures across time, and we do not choose happiness for its own sake, but only for the sake of the pleasures that constitute it.¹ (*DL* 2.87-88) Consistently with this hedonism, they think that anything other than pleasure has at most instrumental value. This includes friendship. The mainstream Cyrenaics² say that "a friend is for the sake of use, for

¹ It's disputed how to understand the relationship between pleasure and happiness for the Cyrenaics, and how radically they dissent from Greek eudaimonism. Some discussions include Irwin (1991), chapter 5 of Lampe (2014) 92-100, O'Keefe (2002), and Tsouna (2001). The Annicereans in particular are notable for denying that life as a whole has any definite end—instead, each action has as its own end the pleasure it produces. (Clement, *Strom.* 2 21 130.7) Lampe (2014) 88-91 argues that this is a significant departure from the mainstream Cyrenaic position, whereas O'Keefe (2002) 407 thinks that the Annicereans are merely drawing out more explicitly what is already contained in other reports about the Cyrenaics in general.

² I borrow this terminology from Lampe (2014) 18-20. The "mainstream" Cyrenaics are those philosophers inspired by the sayings and way of life of Socrates' follower Aristippus to develop a distinctive set of epistemological and ethical doctrines, the most prominent of whom is Aristippus' grandson Aristippus, the "mother-taught." Excluded are later Cyrenaics who are reported by Diogenes Laertius and others to have introduced deviations from or innovations to the mainstream doctrines. These later Cyrenaics are Hegesias, Anniceris, Theodorus, and their followers.

we also cherish a body part for as long as it's there," i.e., as long as it's useful to us.³
(DL 2.91)

The Annicerean Cyrenaics strongly dissent from this picture of how we should regard our friends. The wise person doesn't embrace her friend just for his usefulness and then fails to care for him once he's no longer useful. Instead, she'll continue to care for him, and even endure pains for her friend, because of her good will and love. At the same time, the Annicereans still affirm the Cyrenaic doctrine that your own pleasure is the *telos*, and they deny that a friend's happiness is choiceworthy for its own sake. (DL 2.96-97) While the Annicereans' view about the sort of care we should have for our friends may appear more plausible and humane than the mainstream Cyrenaic doctrine, it also appears to be inconsistent with their strongly-affirmed egoistic hedonism.

Our main source on the Annicereans is their brief doxography in Diogenes Laertius 2.96-97. Since I will be examining it in detail, I reproduce all of it here and number the claims I will be discussing. As Kurt Lampe notes, its main focus is on "friendship, gratitude, and relationships with parents and polis." (Lampe (2014) 115)

In other respects the Annicereans agreed with these [i.e., the Hegesian Cyrenaics]. (1)
But they left friendship in life and gratitude and honor toward parents and taking action on behalf of the fatherland. Hence through these things, even if the wise person experiences disturbances, nonetheless he'll be happy, even if few pleasant things

³ Translations here and elsewhere are from Lampe (2014). References to ancient texts will be made according to the following conventions: Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* = *EE*, *Nicomachean Ethics* = *NE*; Cicero, *De Finibus* (On Goals) = *Fin.*; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* = *DL*; Epicurus, *Kuriai Doxai* (Principle Doctrines) = *KD*, *Sententiae Vaticanae* (Vatican Sayings) = *SV*; Plutarch, *Against Colotes* = *Col.*; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* = *M*, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* = *PH*.

happen to him. (2) A friend's happiness isn't choiceworthy for itself, since it isn't perceptible to his neighbor. (3) And reason [*logos*] isn't self-sufficient for feeling confident and rising above common opinion. It's necessary to habituate ourselves [*anethizomai*] because of the bad disposition [*diathesis*] that's been nurtured in us for a long time. (4) <The wise person> doesn't embrace his friend only because of his uses, and if these run out, fail to care for him. Rather, he <embraces and cares for him> in accord with his established good will [*eunoia*], and for the sake of this will even endure pains. (5) Even though he posits pleasure as his end and is annoyed to be deprived of it, still he'll willingly endure for the love [*storgê*] of his friend.

This passage immediately follows the doxography on the Cyrenaic school of Hegesias. (*DL* 2.93-96) The Hegesians put forward two distinctive claims that the Annicereans oppose.⁴ The first is that gratitude, friendship, and beneficence (*euergesia*) do not exist, because these things aren't chosen for their own sakes, only for the sake of their usefulness. The mainstream Cyrenaics would agree that friendship is chosen only for the sake of its usefulness but deny that it follows that friendship does not exist. The Annicereans, however, disagree with the premise that we value our friends only for the sake of their usefulness. The second is that it is impossible to attain happiness, because the body is full of suffering, and the mind shares in the body's suffering. The Annicereans reply that friendship, child-parent relationships, and citizen-polis relationships—areas which are conventionally

⁴ I am assuming that the text as we have it is placed correctly within the Cyrenaic doxography. Mannebach (1961) 44, 94 proposes that the text has been misordered, and the doxography on the Annicereans should instead be immediately before the section on the Hegesians. See Zilioli (2012) 198-9 n. 3 for further discussion and references. I agree with Zilioli that Mannebach's suggestion has little merit: the distinctive doctrines of the Annicereans are in explicit disagreement with the Hegesians, but not as obviously with the mainstream Cyrenaics.

thought to involve some sort of other-concern—allow the wise person to attain happiness even when he is disturbed and has few pleasures.

The apparent contradiction in the Annicereans' position is stark. They do not just say that the wise person will display good will and love towards her friend and endure pains on his behalf. After all, an egoistic hedonist could claim that such a concern is motivated and justified entirely in terms of how treating your friend well will bring you pleasure in the long run.⁵ Instead, they emphasize that the wise person doesn't embrace her friend merely because of his uses: for if she did, she would stop caring for her friend once he ceases being useful. Instead, she continues to care for her friend when he is no longer useful, and endures pains on his behalf, because of her good will and love for her friend.

This description of the wise person comports with Aristotle's discussions of *eunoia* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics*. Good will is not the same as friendship, but it is an essential precursor and a component of friendships of virtue. Friendship is a mutual, and mutually aware, wishing of the friend's good. (*NE* 8.2) But if your motive for helping somebody is just that you expect to receive some advantage in return, then the object of your good will isn't so much the other person as yourself, and so genuine good will is not present in friendships of usefulness or pleasure, in which people don't care about their friend's interests.⁶ (*NE* 9.5 1067a10-18, *EE* 7.7 1241a1-7) And *storgê*, as Lampe notes, is the sort of love

⁵ See O'Keefe (2001) and Evans (2004) for arguments that this is the mainstream Epicurean position, although this interpretation is controversial.

⁶ The Stoics also include *eunoia* as one species of the "good emotions" (*eupatheiai*) that the wise person feels (*DL* 7.116)

“tutelary gods feel for their favorites, dogs for their masters, and parents and children for one another.” (Lampe (2014) 177)

But the Annicereans also assert that the end of the wise person is her own pleasure (5), and that the happiness of your friend isn’t worth choosing for its own sake (2). And so, it looks like the wise person both has good will and love for her friend for the friend’s own sake, even when the friend isn’t useful for her, *and* that the wise person’s end—i.e., that for the sake of which everything else is done—is the sage’s own pleasure, and that the happiness of your friend isn’t worth choosing for its own sake.

2. *Lampe’s Proposal—Tender-Minded Hedonists*

Lampe attempts to defuse this contradiction by attributing to the Annicereans a developmental psychological account akin to the “tender-minded” theory of friendship, as described in Cicero’s *De Finibus*, put forward by later Epicureans.⁷ According to this account, we initially enter into friendship because of entirely self-interested motives, because by faithfully helping your friend you ensure that they will help you. But then love and good will towards your friend, plus a pleasure in their pleasure and pain in their pain, grow up over time as you associate with them. Once these attitudes and habits have developed, they give you a motive to help your friend even when the friend can no longer reciprocate and is not “useful” in a straightforward instrumental sense. That is, your incapacitated friend may be unable to repay your present help by doing things like bringing you food

⁷ *Fin.* 69. See Tsouna (2007) 27-31 for a description of this theory and an argument that it is an innovation of later Epicureans, quite possibly Philodemus.

when you are ill in the future—the sort of usefulness considered by other Cyrenaics—but helping them will still bring you significant pleasure.

This account has two advantages, according Lampe. First, because the feelings of love and good-will are grounded in a person’s pursuit of pleasure—as this pursuit is what motivated entering into friendship in the first place—these feelings are still subordinated to “the unique motivational force of the sage’s own experiences of pleasure and pain,” preserving the fundamental roles of pleasure and pain in Cyrenaic psychology. (Lampe (2014) 118) (Despite the prominent psychological role pleasure and pain play in Lampe’s account, whether Lampe’s account can be squared with psychological hedonism is nonetheless unclear, as I will explore below.)

Second, it allows the Annicerean wise person to act in a way that is consistent with hedonism regarding well-being. After all, the Annicereans assert (in (1)) that friendship, gratitude, and honoring your parents allow you to be happy, even when few pleasant things happen to you. Rather than thinking that this represents an abandonment of the Cyrenaic thesis that *eudaimonia* is just a collection of past, present, and future pleasures, it’s more plausible to take this as asserting that friendship, and a concern for the happiness of your friend, can themselves be a great source of pleasure even when you have few *other* pleasures in life. Lampe gives a similar reading to the assertion in (5) that the wise person will willingly put up with being deprived of pleasures because of her love of her friend, even though she regards pleasure as her end and finds it annoying to be deprived of pleasures. The sage isn’t repudiating self-interest. Instead, once she has developed a love for her

friend, she would find it even more painful to abandon him when he is in need, and so she has a hedonic motive to endure the pains and help him. ((Lampe (2014) 119) David Hume says something along these lines. He denies that we love our friends for entirely selfish reasons, but our love nonetheless gives us a self-interested reason to help our friend: “we may feel a desire of another’s happiness or good, which, by means of that affection, becomes our own good, and is afterwards pursued, from the combined motives of benevolence and self-enjoyments.”⁸

3. *The Annicereans on Non-Hedonic Habits and the Joy of Friendship*

Lampe’s interpretation is plausible, but as presented it does not have much textual support. Lampe admits that on a straightforward reading of Diogenes’ doxography of the Annicereans, they’re simply inconsistent, and the most he can say regarding textual support is that “while the wording of the doxography does not require [my] interpretation, it does not rule it out.” (Lampe (2014) 118) And so we may wonder whether an appeal to charity on its own is solid grounds for attributing Lampe’s psychological story to the Annicereans. Fortunately, I think that there is in fact ample textual support that Lampe has overlooked, and considering it will help flesh out his proposal considerably.

The main textual support is section (3) in Diogenes’ report above: “And reason [*logos*] isn’t self-sufficient for feeling confident and rising above common opinion. It’s necessary to habituate ourselves [*anethizomai*] because of the bad disposition [*diathesis*] that’s been nurtured in us for a long time.” (Lampe does not

⁸ David Hume (1975) Appendix ii p. 302.

consider these sentences because he thinks they do not concern friendship.)

Another relevant Cyrenaic claim is that some people don't choose pleasure because they've been perverted (*diastrophê*). (This claim occurs in the doxography of the mainstream Cyrenaics at *DL* 2.89, but I see no reason to think that the Annicereans dissent from it.)

Like the Epicureans,⁹ the Cyrenaics believe that from birth, all animals instinctively pursue pleasure and avoid pain, and they use this instinctive pursuit of pleasure as a proof of its goodness. (*DL* 2.88) So when the Cyrenaics say that a person can fail to choose pleasure because he has been perverted, departing from our instinctive pursuit of pleasure, what does this mean?

Here is one reading of their claim that is consistent with both psychological hedonism and intellectualism. Infants and non-human animals lack reason and simply go for whatever appears pleasant to them. But as we develop, we acquire the ability to engage in means-end reasoning, we pick up various beliefs about what will bring us pleasure, and this informs the way in which we choose to pursue pleasure. While this may enable us to obtain pleasure more effectively, it also opens up the possibility of error, as we reason badly or acquire false beliefs. On this reading of the claim, the failure to choose pleasure is understood to be *de re*, i.e., the person fails to choose what *in fact* will bring him pleasure, even though *de dicto* he is choosing what he *believes* will bring him pleasure. His "perversion" will then be diagnosed as a kind of cognitive error about what conduces to his pleasure.

⁹ *Fin.* 1.30, *DL* 10.137, and *PH* 3.194. See Sedley (1998) and Brunschwig (1986) for good discussions of the Epicureans' "cradle argument."

The classic source for this sort of position is Socrates' discussion of hedonism and the "measuring art" of pleasures and pains in the *Protagoras*. All of us desire pleasure for its own sake and likewise hate pain, but we often go wrong in how we live. We have a cognitive bias towards temporally close pleasures; they appear to be more significant than they really are in a way that's analogous to how spatially close objects appear to be larger. This sort of foolish error is the source of vice, and we need a way of accurately calculating the consequences of our actions in order to overcome this vice and acquire salvation. (*Protagoras* 351b-358e)

Similarly, the Epicureans assert that we cannot make mistakes about what is intrinsically good and evil (i.e., pleasure and pain), and that error occur because of ignorance regarding how pleasure and pain are brought about. (*Fin.* 55) And when it comes to the "vain and empty" desires that cause dissatisfaction and turmoil, the Epicureans say they're due to "empty," false opinions. (*KD* 29) For instance, political power is desired as a way of gaining security from others (*KD* 6 and 7), but a quiet life and withdrawal from the many are more effective means for gaining security (*KD* 14), and so we should avoid getting involved in the business of politics. (*DL* 10.119; *SV* 58) Epicurean therapy consists in part in uncovering and correcting these mistakes.¹⁰

But I doubt that this intellectualist reading accurately captures what the Annicereans, at least, are up to. After all, they say (in (3)) that *logos* isn't sufficient for feeling confident and rising above common opinion; we must habituate

¹⁰ It's controversial whether Epicurus is a psychological hedonist, but for the sake of using what the Epicureans say in order to highlight what is distinctive about the Annicerean position I need not resolve this issue. See Cooper (1998) for an argument that Epicurus isn't a psychological hedonist and Woolf (2004) for a detailed rebuttal.

ourselves because of the bad disposition that's been nurtured in us for a long time. I take it that these people with bad dispositions who don't feel confident and don't rise above common opinions are also the people who fail to choose pleasure because they've been perverted. So: we have deep-seated and long-standing bad dispositions that make us choose what isn't pleasant, and these dispositions are not merely a function of our reasoning and the beliefs we have. Reason, or correct arguments, or correct beliefs, or instruction—however exactly we wish to understand *logos*—is not sufficient for uprooting them. Instead, it takes time to habituate ourselves properly.

Let me spell this out with two examples. First, envy. Like the Epicureans, the Cyrenaics think that the wise person won't suffer from envy, as this emotion is based on empty opinion. (*DL* 2.91) They also hold that nothing is noble or shameful by nature, but only by convention. (*DL* 2.93) So we can imagine that, in accordance with the common opinions of my society, I mistakenly believe that honor is a naturally good thing, and so I suffer from envy of my neighbor when I see him getting honors that I don't. This leads to unhappiness and a lack of confidence about the future. Then I come to realize that my opinion is false and that envying others makes me unhappy. Nonetheless, I still have my habitual tendencies to feel envy toward my neighbor. Second—perhaps anachronistically—Angry Birds. Imagine that I occasionally play Angry Birds or some other trivial video game as a way of relieving stress. But over time the Angry Birds habit becomes obsessive and destructive, getting in the way of my doing anything that requires some

concentration. I may realize this, and hate myself as I boot up Angry Birds yet again, but I want to do it anyway.

In both these cases, I have nurtured habits that lead me to act contrary to my beliefs about what is good for me and what will bring me pleasure. So we can call them “non-hedonic habits.” They are “non-hedonic” in the following narrow sense: they provide me motives that are importantly independent of my beliefs about what will bring me pleasure. They’re “non-hedonic” in this sense even though the causal history of how they developed is tightly connected to my experiences of pleasure and pain, and even if I find it pleasurable when I do play Angry Birds or see my envied neighbor finally laid low.

And here is where we come back to friendship, good will, and love. Importantly, the Annicereans do not merely say that we need to eradicate our bad tendencies so that we can then act directly on our beliefs about what will bring us pleasure. Instead, they say that we need to *habituate* ourselves because of the bad dispositions that we have nurtured in ourselves for a long time. This suggests that having habits is inescapable, and what we need to do is cultivate beneficial ones that conduce to our pleasure to replace the pernicious ones. And among these beneficial non-hedonic habits are the love and “established good will” that will motivate the wise person to stick by his friend in hard times, even when the friend is not useful, in a straightforward instrumental sense.¹¹

¹¹ “In accord with his established good will” is Lampe’s translation of *παρὰ τὴν γεγονυῖαν εὐνοίαν*. “Established” may be a bit of an overtranslation, but it does help show in English, without awkwardness, that the good will is the end result of a process of coming-to-be.

This habitual good will is “non-hedonic” because it gives me a motive to help my friend that is independent of my beliefs or calculations regarding what will bring me pleasure or be useful to me. But it is beneficial because, once I have such a hedonically independent habit, I realize that having it makes my life more pleasant than it would be without it. So then, along the lines of David Hume above, once I have such an independent love for my friend, I acquire a self-interested motive in promoting his pleasure.

While Diogenes’ report on the Annicereans doesn’t spell out how the love for our friends brings happiness, other passages help fill in the picture. The Cyrenaics dispute the Epicurean account of pleasure, and one Epicurean doctrine they oppose is that all mental pleasures and pains depend on bodily pleasures and pains, as when (for example) my present mental pain of fear is based upon my anticipation of being viciously beaten an hour hence and suffering great bodily pain. As a counterexample, the Cyrenaics note that we can take joy (*khara*) simply in the well-being of our fatherland, just as we do in our own well-being. (*DL* 2.89) Remember that actions on behalf of your fatherland are one of the things that the Annicereans think allow a wise person to be happy even when he suffers many disturbances. Putting these two reports together: a person can develop a patriotic regard for the well-being of his fatherland. This regard can motivate patriotic actions on the fatherland’s behalf, and it can also be a source of mental pleasure, when the person takes joy in his fatherland’s well-being. Clement of Alexandria’s report on the Annicereans in particular makes a similar point but gives other examples of what may bring us joy. According to Clement, the Annicereans disagree with Epicurus and

think that not all mental pleasures depend on the body, since we feel joy because of companionship (*homilia*) and the love of honor (*philotimia*). (Clement, *Strom.* 2 21 130.8-9)¹²

4. *Good Will and Doublethink*

While we have textual grounds for attributing to the Annicereans the doctrine that we can develop a habitual non-hedonic good will towards our friends which brings us the pleasure of joy, it is not obvious that the overall Annicerean position is consistent in what it says about the wise person. According to Julia Annas, the Annicereans unsuccessfully attempt to accommodate commonsense views about friendship within a hedonistic ethics. Like Lampe, Annas believes both that the Annicereans allow for other-concern towards your friends and that having such a concern for your friends will make your life more pleasant. Nonetheless, she thinks that the Annicerean position contains a fundamental problem: the Annicerean sage will be engaging in doublethink, or (as Annas puts it) she will have a systematic doublemindedness. (Annas (1993) 233-235)

Annas says that we can effectively exploit commonsense modes of thinking about friendship only if “we go along with the commonsense view” of friendships, which is “that they have intrinsic value.” (Annas (1993) 234) But the Annicereans think that this view is mistaken, because “I *can* only value my own pleasure, not that

¹² Lampe (2014) 211-221 notes the parallelism between Clement’s report on the Annicereans in *Strom.* 2 21 130.7-9 and Diogenes’ doxography of the mainstream Cyrenaics in *DL* 2.86-89, and he argues that parts of *DL* 2.86-89 are Annicerean. With regard to taking joy in the well-being of the fatherland, Lampe argues that it fits in well with the Annicereans’ endorsement of patriotic action, whereas the mainstream Cyrenaics probably take their cue from their founder, Aristippus the Elder, who Xenophon reports (*Memorabilia* 2.1.13) decided to be a stranger in every land in order to avoid the enslavement that results from being a member of a *polis*. (Lampe (2014) 215)

of someone else, which I cannot experience.” (Annas (1993) 235) So the sage’s doublemindedness consists of “accept[ing] the commonsense beliefs to put them to work, while discounting them from the viewpoint of the theory.” (Annas (1993) 235) Annas does not deny that people engage in doublethink, but she claims that psychologically it would be difficult to cultivate doublemindedness as the product of rational reflection, because the process of rational reflection tends to undercut doublemindedness. (Annas (1993) 235 fn. 29)

Although it is not inconsistent to attribute to the wise person inconsistent beliefs, I agree with Annas that it would be difficult to self-consciously adopt doublethink as a successful route to happiness. But Annas’ objection presupposes an overly intellectualistic view of the habitual good will of the Annicerean sage towards her friend, and once we reject this view, there is no reason to think that the Annicerean sage is guilty of doublethink. To have a habitual good will and concern for your friend, even one that motivates you to treat him well in cases where doing so is not (narrowly) useful for you, is not the same as having a belief that your friend’s pleasure is intrinsically valuable. The sage can honestly say, “I like my friend, and I enjoy being around him. I want him to be happy; when I see he’s in need, I want to help, and I’m happy to help. When I think about it, I admit that his happiness is not *good for me*, but I’m glad that I love him as I do, because it brings me pleasure too.” I see nothing inconsistent about the psychology of the Annicerean sage in the immediately preceding sentences.

While our evidence is scanty, it does not preclude attributing to the Annicerean Cyrenaics a rather humdrum, non-intellectualistic picture of our

affections and habits, one that allows them to avoid advocating doublethink. And a few textual scraps point toward their accepting such a picture. Unlike almost all other ancient ethicists, the Cyrenaics acknowledge that foolish people can have some of the virtues. They also think that bodily training contributes to acquiring virtue. (*DL* 2.91) While it's possible that all virtues at least partially consist in having correct beliefs, and that (partially-virtuous) foolish people happen to have the relevant correct ethical beliefs in some domains, and that bodily training causally contributes to the acquisition of correct ethical beliefs, that possibility seems rather roundabout. More straightforwardly, the Cyrenaics probably think that at least some virtues are simply a matter of having the correct habits, that bodily training can help you acquire good habits, and that at least some of these good habits need not involve holding correct theoretical ethical beliefs, such as beliefs about what is intrinsically good or bad.

5. *Non-Hedonic Habits and Hedonism*

Another potential inconsistency is not within the wise person's psychology, but with the foundation of the Cyrenaics' ethical hedonism. As noted above, the Cyrenaics think that our instinctive pursuit of pleasure for its own sake establishes that pleasure is the good. But if we can develop desires for things other than our own pleasure, as the Annicereans seem to admit with their doctrine of non-hedonic habits, then why should they think that pleasure alone is the good, as opposed to including among the good the ends of these other desires also? Or, to put it another way: the Cyrenaics ground what is *valuable* for us in what we *value*, and the

Annicereans seem to allow that we come to value things other than our own pleasure, which undercuts their ethics.¹³

If the Annicereans were to think that these later desires are all, in fact, entirely a function of our desire for pleasure and our beliefs about how to obtain it, then these later desires could be criticized instrumentally, as not helping us get what we really desire for its own sake. But this is precisely the psychology that I want to deny the Annicereans accept, and if they do not accept it, it's not clear on what basis the instinctive desires of infants and irrational animals should be considered authoritative regarding what is good for us.

The key to resolving this apparent inconsistency is a passage in Sextus Empiricus about the analogy between Cyrenaic ethics and epistemology:

What [the Cyrenaics] say about ends appears to be analogous to what they say about criteria, since experiences [*pathê*] extend all the way to ends. Some experiences are pleasant, some are painful, and some are in between. They say the painful ones are bad ... the pleasant ones are good ... [and] the ones in between are neither good nor bad ... So experiences are the criteria and ends for all beings, and we live, they say, by submitting and paying attention to self-evidence and satisfaction [*eudokêsis*]*—*self-evidence in the case of other experiences, and satisfaction in the case of pleasure.

(Sextus *M* 7.199-200)

In their epistemology, the Cyrenaics are subjectivists and skeptics. I have an immediate and incorrigible grasp of what my own experiences are like, because what I am presently experiencing is self-evident, but I cannot go beyond what I am

¹³ I advance this sort of argument as a reason not to attribute genuine other-regard for one's friend into the Epicurean account of friendship, despite texts that seem to point in that direction. (O'Keefe (2001) 274-5)

experiencing to gain any knowledge of what its cause in the external world is like.¹⁴ Plutarch says that the Cyrenaics shut themselves up inside their experiences as in a state of siege. (*Col.* 1120d) Likewise, I immediately approve of pleasure within my experience of it and abhor pain, and these are the only things that I immediately approve and disapprove of in this way. (These immediate experiences of approval and disapproval will then explain the instinctive attraction of all animals to pleasure and their aversion to pain.)

This, I take it, would give the Annicereans grounds to distinguish the intrinsic goodness of my pleasure for me from the goodness of the objects of any other desires or behavioral habits I might later develop. In fact, this is precisely what they say in (2): “A friend’s happiness isn’t choiceworthy for itself, since it isn’t perceptible to his neighbor.” I might want my friend to be happy, i.e., to have many pleasures that are extended across time. But I cannot experience his pleasure, I can experience only my own, and therefore *his* pleasure cannot be *my* good.¹⁵

6. Conclusion

The Annicerean doctrines on good will and friendship are not merely a muddle-headed and tender-minded attempt to accommodate common-sense beliefs regarding friendship within an egoistic and hedonistic theory. Instead, their views on the care we have for our friends are plausible in themselves, do not attribute any sort of doublethink to the wise person, and are consistent with their ethical

¹⁴ Tsouna (1998) remains the definitive account of Cyrenaic epistemology.

¹⁵ The Cyrenaics anticipate the problem of other minds. They say that we’re aware only of our private experiences and cannot know what the experiences of other people are like. (*Sextus Empiricus M* 7.195-197) See Tsouna (1998) 89-104 for further discussion.

hedonism. We can develop habits that allow us to act in ways we'd be unable to if our every decision were based upon a calculation of what would be useful to bring us pleasure. And we're better off because we are those sorts of creatures.¹⁶

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¹⁶ He is not a hedonist, but see Gauthier (1986), especially chapter 6, for a broadly similar theme. He argues that, from the point of view of self-interest, it can be better to be a "constrained maximizer" than a "straightforward maximizer." The "straightforward maximizer," such as Hobbes' Fool, is willing to cheat and free ride whenever he rationally calculates that doing so is in his self-interest, whereas the "constrained maximizer" has developed a disposition to do things like uphold his commitments to others even when given the opportunity to cheat.

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