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The economics of friendship : changing conceptions of reciprocity in classical Athens

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CHAPTER ONE

Grace under Pressure.

The anatomy of χάρις

Aziz: "If you are right, there is no point in any friendship; it all comes down to give and take, or give and return, which is disgusting."

E.M. FORSTER (1924), 254

To experience a thing as beautiful means: to experience it necessarily wrongly.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1967 [1901]), 804

IN 5th- and 4th-century Greece, the term that most markedly evokes ideals of reciprocity was probably χάρις: a many-sided concept that is commonly translated as "grace", "gratitude" or "generosity" and that is typically associated with long-term relations and the long-term order, be it social, political or metaphysical, and that is predominantly positively connoted.¹ χάρις "always invokes the ideals of reciprocity".²

The term χάρις operates in all realms of human life. It is inextricably bound up with φιλία,³ i.e. with all types of long-term reciprocal relations, ranging from the parent-child relationship⁴ to political alliances.⁵ In religious communication,

¹ Parts of this chapter have been presented at the OIKOS Masterclass Workshop "The Emotions in the Classical World" with David Konstan at the Royal Dutch Institute in Rome (June 2008). Gratitude is due to David Konstan, Anna Ntinti, Irene Conradie, Maarten van Houte and Albert Jooose for their feedback and stimulating discussion.

² GOLDHILL (1998), 115.

³ BLUNDELL (1989), 33.

⁴ See below in Section 3.1; Cf. Chapters Two Section 5, Chapter Three Section 2.

χάρις characterized the relation between humans and deities and their exchanges in prayer and sacrifice as a reciprocal endeavor.⁶ In an erotic context, χάρις characterized the relation between lover (ἐραστής) and beloved (ἐρώμενος) as a legitimate and morally unproblematic long-term relation in which gifts and favors of all sorts are exchanged.⁷ Similarly, in political contexts, the χάρις between community and benefactor may be seen as legitimizing differences in wealth and their political repercussions in the context of the Athenian democracy,⁸ whereas in a non-egalitarian context political χάρις serves to create, amplify and legitimize asymmetries and imbalances in power.⁹ In all these contexts, the effect of using χάρις-vocabulary is to imply long-term repercussions in long-term relationships and in the long-term order of society or the cosmos at large.¹⁰ In the Greek world of the Archaic and Classical period, the term χάρις, even when referring to the reciprocity between two individuals, always contains potential references to a larger order, representing exchanges as anything but isolated events.

A proper dealing with χάρις belongs to the core skills of living together with other humans. It is a competence that every Greek is supposed to possess and it makes the difference between a well-socialized person and a social misfit. Such competences are typically practical knowledge, i.e. tacit knowledge: everybody knows how to do it, but only a few persons can express this tacit knowledge in a piece of theoretical knowledge, a knowing *that*, in a propositional form.¹¹ Moreover, most of the time there is no need to talk about the norms that we live by, as the very functioning of social norms is premised on their self-evident appeal: what goes without saying need not be said.

⁵ See Epilogue. Cf. Chapter Two Section 3.

⁶ On the use of χάρις-terminology in dedications, prayers and votive offerings, see DAY (2010), 232-80 (esp. 232-45), BREMER (1998), VERSNEL (1981), 42-62, VAN STRATEN (1981), 65-7, FESTUGIÈRE (1976).

⁷ DAVIDSON (2007), 38-67. See Chapter Five. This representation of the pederastic relationship is by no means uncontested in Classical Athens.

⁸ OBER (1989), 192-247.

⁹ On political χάρις, see Chapter Two Section 4.1, 6.1-3, Chapter Three Section 5.

¹⁰ E.g. LEVINE (1985), 190-3 for the importance of χάρις for the polis in Theognis' poetry.

¹¹ On the notion of practical knowledge: GERRANS (2005); BOURDIEU (1977), 27.

In late-Archaic and Classical Greece, however, there is a perceived need to formulate explicit norms about the proper way of understanding *χάρις*. We find normative statements about what proper *χάρις* should be like. We also find contestations of *χάρις*, claiming that *χάρις* is merely politeness, a euphemism, hypocrisy, a five-letter word. The norms of *χάρις* are felt to be less self-evident. As we shall see in this chapter, part of the reason lies in the fact that in all domains *χάρις*-exchanges have become potentially isomorphous with commercial transactions, i.e. the potentially one-off transactions of equivalent goods that (perhaps ideally) do not necessarily yield a lasting relationship between the people involved.¹²

In this chapter, we shall take a look at some examples of this isomorphism. In every one of these cases, there are contextual indications that although it is possible to say that isomorphous exchanges are effectively identical, it is not the socially acceptable response to do so (Section 1). To understand why, we need to get a grip on the functioning of *χάρις* in contexts where isomorphism does not pose a threat to social functioning. We will see how the social functioning of *χάρις* and the use of *χάρις*-vocabulary involve matters of point of view (focalization) and temporal perspective (Section 2). These perspective requirements of *χάρις* are at odds with the logic of the market, as market rationality understands exchanges as closed events where goods are valued irrespective of the relationship in which they figure.¹³ Hence, seeing a situation in terms of *χάρις* means also choosing *not* to see other aspects of a situation (Section 3 and 4).

1. THREE CASES OF ISOMORPHISM

Consider the following three cases of isomorphism: one will deal with the similarity between pederastic encounters and prostitution in erotic exchange,

¹² On the ideology of “business”: DAVIS (1992), 7-8, 56-8.

¹³ The primary and immediate purpose of discrete transactions is to obtain the counterpart value; in contrast, “partial transactions” take place in the context of a larger long-term chain of favors and obligations and contain reference to the relationship between the exchange partners. The terminology of “discrete” and “partial” transactions is taken from KOPYTOFF (1986), 69.

the second with that between religious communication and commerce in religious exchange, and the third with between friendly aid and credit. In all three cases a character proclaims the truth about the Emperor's new clothes: that χάρις is an illusion. Whereas every onlooker is aware of this "truth" (as every onlooker knew that the king was naked), it is clear that it is not socially acceptable to say that all these χάρις exchanges are basically the same as market transactions.

1.1. Case 1: χάρις in erotics, the verbal icing on the cake of vice?

When Chremylus in Aristophanes' *Wealth* is arguing that anything splendid, noble and graceful (τι χαριέν) happens because of Plutus, the personification of wealth, one case in point are the Corinthian courtesans who only give attention to rich suitors. According to the slave Carion, something analogous goes for boys, who do "the same thing" (i.e. submit to anal penetration):¹⁴

(1) Aristophanes, *Plutus* 153-154¹⁵

Κα. καὶ τοὺς γε παῖδάς φασι ταῦτὸ τοῦτο δοῦν,
οὐ τῶν ἐραστῶν, ἀλλὰ τὰργυρίου χάριν.

There is a pun here that revolves around the term χάρις. In one sentence, Carion uses the term χάρις both as a noun (used predicatively "as a grace for", "as a favour") and as a preposition ("for the sake of")—a pun that effectively contrasts the long-term ideals of pederastic encounters and the boys' (real) commercial motivation underlying these ideals.¹⁶ Chremylus objects against this generalisation by insisting that "decent boys" do not ask for money as prostitutes do, but for expensive posh gifts instead:¹⁷

¹⁴ SOMMERSTEIN (2001), *ad loc.*

¹⁵ "Carion: And people say that when the young lads do the same thing, it's not for the sake of their lovers but for the sake of money." (*transl.* SOMMERSTEIN)

¹⁶ Cf. MACLACHLAN (1993), 161-4 for an argument for semantic continuity between the nominal and prepositional use of χάρις in Archaic and early-Classical poetry.

¹⁷ For the distinction drawn between prostitution and honorable sexual encounters, see Chapter Five.

(2) Aristophanes, *Plutus* 155-159¹⁸

Χρ. οὐ τοὺς γε χρηστούς, ἀλλὰ τοὺς πόρνους· ἐπεὶ (155)
αἰτοῦσιν οὐκ ἀργύριον οἱ χρηστοί.

Κα. τί δαί;

Χρ. ὁ μὲν ἵππον ἀγαθόν, ὁ δὲ κύνας θηρευτικούς. (157)

Κα. αἰσχυρόμενοι γὰρ ἀργύριον αἰτεῖν ἴσως
ὀνόματι περιπέττουσι τὴν μοχθηρίαν.

To Carion the difference between prostitutes and decent boys comes down to a lexical difference: decent boys simply “put a verbal crust” (ὀνόματι περιπέττουσι) around their immorality (μοχθηρία). The expensive gifts given to decent boys amount to the same as the fees paid to prostitutes and talk about “gifts” is merely giving a different name to the shame of prostitution.¹⁹ Here, in a passage where Chremylus and Carion are reducing all human conduct to behavior motivated by wealth and money, erotic χάρις is reduced to commercial sex with a touch of moral icing.

1.2. Case 2: χάρις in religious communication, a mere name for commerce?

When Socrates and Euthyphro are examining the nature of the pious (τὸ ὅσιον), Euthyphro comes up with a tentative definition:

(3) Pl. *Euth.* 14b2-4²⁰

τόδε μέντοι σοι ἀπλῶς λέγω, ὅτι ἐὰν μὲν κεχαρισμένα τις ἐπίσθηται
τοῖς θεοῖς λέγειν τε καὶ πράττειν εὐχόμενός τε καὶ θύων, ταῦτ' ἔστι

¹⁸ “Chremylus: The young *gentlemen* don’t do that, it’s only the young *professionals*. Decent lads don’t ask for *money*. Carion: Oh, what *do* they ask for? Chremylus: One wants a top-class horse, another wants some hunting dogs... Carion: I suppose they’re ashamed to ask for money, so they cover up their immorality by a verbal trick.” (*transl.* SOMMERSTEIN).

¹⁹ Although animal gifts are common in depictions of pederastic scenes on vase-paintings, the top-class horses and hunting dogs mentioned here are extremely expensive presents that represent an extreme (and perhaps purely hypothetical) example to imply that extremely decent boys are actually extremely expensive boys. A modern parallel can be found in a comment by hip-hop-artist 50 Cent on Lindsey Lohan’s million dollar Playboy shoot: “\$1 million to pose nude is the same thing strippers do almost every day for way less. If they give you a million dollars, does that change the status of what you’ve done?” (*Hollyscoop*, December 12, 2011).

²⁰ “I’ll simply tell you this: If anyone knows how to say and do what brings χάρις to the gods through praying and sacrificing, these are the pious things (...).”

τὰ ὅσια (...).

According to Euthyphro, the pious is simply (ἀπλῶς) knowing how to say and do gratifying things (κεχαρισμένα λέγειν τε καὶ πράττειν) in praying and sacrificing (εὐχόμενός τε καὶ θύων)—i.e. saying and doing things that have and bring χάρις.²¹ Socrates paraphrases this working hypothesis of τὸ ὅσιον as “the science of sacrificing and praying”,²² and rephrases “sacrificing” as giving gifts (δωρεῖσθαι) to gods, and “praying” as making requests (αἰτεῖν) to the gods.²³ Hence, piety turns out to be the science of giving and asking, i.e. asking for what one needs from the gods and giving what the gods need from us.²⁴ Socrates paraphrases once again:

(4) Pl. Euth. 14e6-10²⁵

ΣΩ. Ἐμπορικὴ ἄρα τις ἂν εἴη, ὧ Εὐθύφρων, τέχνη ἢ ὁσιότης θεοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις παρ’ ἀλλήλων.

ΕΥΘ. Ἐμπορικὴ, εἰ οὕτως ἦδιόν σοι ὀνομάζειν.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν ἦδιον ἔμοιγε, εἰ μὴ τυγχάνει ἀληθὲς ὄν.

From the preceding discussion it can be inferred (ἄρα) that piety should be an art of commerce, of traffic, (τις ἐμπορικὴ τέχνη)—a reformulation that Euthyphro only grudgingly assents to (“Well, fine Socrates, if that is what you prefer to call it”), acknowledging that it *is* a way to “name” it (ὀνομάζειν)—though not a pleasant one. The implications are even more unsettling, as in the exchange that follows Socrates wonders what advantage this traffic possibly yields for the gods. The traffic-definition will turn out to be untenable for the absurd implications it yields:²⁶ not only the paradoxical contention that the gods

²¹ That the nominalized participle perfect κεχαρισμένα evokes the concept of χάρις seems to be corroborated by 15a9-b2 where the κεχαρισμένα are rephrased as “ὅπερ ἐγὼ ἄρτι ἔλεγον, χάρις”. κεχαρισμένα is a regular religious term. DAY (2010). E.g. Hom. *Il.* 20.298 (κεχαρισμένα δῶρα θεοῖσι δίδωσι); An. fr. 2,7 (κεχαρισμένης εὐχολῆς ἐπακούειν).

²² Pl. *Euth.* 14c5-6.

²³ Pl. *Euth.* 14c7-9.

²⁴ Pl. *Euth.* 14d8-e5.

²⁵ “Socrates: So, the craft of piety is a kind of commercial skill that men and gods engage in with each other. Euthyphro: A commercial business, if you prefer calling it that. Socrates: I don’t prefer calling it that unless it is true.”

²⁶ Pl. *Euth.* 14e9-15c9.

should need anything at all, but also a relapse to an earlier (dismissed) definition of τὸ ὄσιον.²⁷

Here, Socrates is capable of reducing piety to commodity trading with gods with χάρις as a middle term: the implication of conceptualizing sacrifice and prayer in terms of gift-giving and making requests is that piety is exchange, and “hence” (ἄρα) traffic and trade. Equally revealing is the way Euthyphro, starting out from conventional premises,²⁸ is forced to assent to an inference that he resents. What Euthyphro objects to is not so much Socrates’ analysis of sacrifice in terms of exchange (to which he subscribes), but to his verbalization: whereas Socrates supposes that he might have found the *true* (ἀληθές) name of piety, the very naming (ὀνομάζειν) of sacrifice as the art of commerce (ἐμπορικὴ τέχνη) is what goes against the grain with Euthyphro—as if the name omits something essential, as if the name itself makes the encounter less ἥδιον.²⁹

1.3. Case 3: χάρις in lending and borrowing, an “as if”?

Theophrastus’ Compulsive Grumbler (μεμψίμοιρος) is a man who only sees the downside of things and is hence the quintessentially ungrateful man.³⁰ he reproaches a friend who sends him a present from his table for begrudging him

²⁷ I.e. the definition of τὸ ὄσιον as τὸ τοῖς θεοῖς φίλον (Pl. *Euth.* 7a ff.).

²⁸ On the function of χάρις-terminology in religious exchange (from a popular morality point of view), see VAN STRATEN (1981), 65-151, VERSNEL (1981), 1-64, BREMER (1998), 127-38. On the underlying conception of reciprocity in religious prayer and dedication, see FESTUGIÈRE (1976), on the formula “ἀνθ’ ὧν”, esp. 369 and 413-8, PULLEYN (1997), esp. 16-38 and 39-55. See MACPHERAN (2002) for an account of Socrates’ reformation of popular religion: in rejecting “the age-old model of prayer as barter”, Plato’s Socrates reinforces the virtue-guiding capacity of religion. Euthyphro’s objection against the monetary frame presumably lies in the fact that once long-term relationships with deity are formulated in terms of one-off trades, the long-term asymmetry between god and men disappears from the picture, as if debts to gods are redeemable and relationships of dependence can be dissolved. The underlying notion is not that no human χάρις can be a sufficient return for the good done by the gods (e.g. Xen., *Mem.* IV.iii.15). On the obscuring capacities of χάρις-vocabulary in relationships where permanent asymmetries are covered with the cloak of charity, see Chapter Two Section 6 and Chapter Five.

²⁹ This seems to be a pun on the affective property of χάρις (“pleasing”). See next section.

³⁰ μεμψιμοιρία is defined as “unsuitable criticism (ἐπιτίμησις παρὰ τὸ προσήκον) of what you have been given (τῶν δεδομένων)” (Theophr. *Char.* 17.1). There is consensus that the introductory definitions of the *Characters* are later interpolations (added before the time of Philodemus) and must be deleted. STEIN (1992).

soup and wine, i.e. he reproaches the friend for not inviting him to dinner; he is annoyed with Zeus, not for not raining, but for raining too late; he grumbles at finding a purse on the street for he has never found a treasure. The Grumbler cannot even rejoice at the birth of his son for to him it represents a heavy financial setback:

(5) Theoph. Char. 17.7³¹

καὶ πρὸς τὸν εὐαγγελιζόμενον, ὅτι Υἱός σοι γέγονεν, εἰπεῖν, ὅτι Ἄν προσθῆς· καὶ τῆς οὐσίας τὸ ἥμισυ ἄπεστιν, ἀληθῆ ἐρεῖς.

The Grumbler is incapable of seeing the birth of a son simply as good news, for he immediately sees the downside: gaining a son is losing half of your property. That is the *whole* truth.

Similarly, the Grumbler cannot react cheerfully (ἰλαρός) to a kindness of his friends:

(6) Theoph. Char. 17.9³²

καὶ ἐράνου εἰσενεχθέντος παρὰ τῶν φίλων καὶ φήσαντός τινος· Ἰλαρὸς ἴσθι, Καὶ πῶς; εἰπεῖν, Ὅτε δεῖ τὰργύριον ἀποδοῦναι ἐκάστῳ καὶ χωρὶς τούτων χάριν ὀφείλειν ὡς εὐεργετημένον;

As PAUL MILLETT has demonstrated,³³ this alludes to the phenomenon of *eranos* loans:³⁴ interest-free contributions collected by a plurality of friends and acquaintances in time of need on terms markedly in contrast with commercial loans,³⁵ as they are typically interest-free, rarely contractual, and based on personal trust and the understanding that the receiver of the loan will pay back

³¹ "To the person who brings him the good news 'You have a son' he says 'If you add 'And you have lost half your fortune' you will not be far wrong.'" (transl. DIGGLE).

³² "When his friends have got together an ἐράνος loan and someone says 'Cheer up', he answers 'How do you mean? When I have to refund everyone and on top of that owe χάρις as if I am done a favor?'" STEINMETZ (1962) II, 211 for an argument for retaining ὅτι (the MSS. reading) instead of CASAUBONS emendation ὅτε (adopted by DIGGLE 2004).

³³ MILLETT (1991), 153-9; (2007), 96-8. The word *eranos* could refer to either an individual contribution or the contributors collectively. But see COHEN (1992), 207-15 for the view that *eranos* loans did bear interest.

³⁴ The *eranos* loan recurs in other character descriptions: 1.5, 15.7, 22.9, 23.6. Cf. MILLETT (1991), 154-6.

³⁵ Cf. Chapter Two Section 4 and Chapter Three Sections 2 and 3.

as soon as he is in funds again. An *eranos* loan is a collective *favor* that is deliberately informal and that is commonly seen to strengthen the social ties within a community.

To the Grumbler, the contrast with commercial credit is irrelevant as it comes down to the same thing in the end. Hence, the Grumbler fails to rejoice over a *χάρις* as he fails to recognize a favor as a favor. The only thing he sees is the downside: the obligation to give back the money (*ἀργύριον ἀποδοῦναι*) to his creditors while owing gratitude (*χάρις ὀφείλειν*) on top of it, *as if* (*ὡς*) his creditors have done him well.³⁶ The “as if” (*ὡς*) qualifies the rationale behind owing someone gratitude (*χάρις*) as based on a disputable interpretation of events: the Grumbler disagrees that his friends have done him well, for he will have to pay them back anyway.

1.4. The ban on reductionism

The three cases of isomorphism above are revealing for several reasons. First of all, they are examples of a **reductionist** response to the isomorphism of *χάρις*-exchanges and commercial exchanges: they indicate that it is a culturally available option to think of *χάρις* in erotic encounters as *nothing but* commercial sex (decent boys are just expensive prostitutes), to conceive of religious communication as commerce with the gods, and to regard friendly favors as financial credit. Reductionism involves the claim that one point of view is more fundamentally valid than the other: according to Carion, “gift” is a name that veils an underlying more valid commercial reality; to Socrates, “the art of commerce” may be a more truthful name for what Euthyphro prefers to name piety; the Grumbler dismisses talk of benefaction as “as if”-talk—a social illusion.

At the same time, they indicate that such reductionism is “not done”, socially unacceptable: Carion’s identification of *erōmenoi* with prostitutes is part of a larger reductionist and absurd argument that all human behavior is motivated by money; Euthyphro does consent to Socrates’ identification of religious piety

³⁶ Cf. BAEHRE (2007) for the notion of “reluctant solidarity” in neighborly assistance in South-Africa.

with the art of commerce, but thinks this somewhat inappropriate; Theophrastus' audience will probably have grasped that the Grumbler does have a point in equating a friendly favor with a bank transaction but will still have dismissed his cynicism as anti-social behavior. Carion, Socrates and the Grumbler are comical because they say the things that everybody is capable of *thinking*, but that are simply not socially acceptable things to *say*.

Improper behavior, as a transgression of “the limits of the thinkable and unthinkable”,³⁷ is informative for popular morality because it marks the boundary between what individuals may “really” think and feel and what may be openly negotiated and commonly thought and “felt”.³⁸ In the Euthyphro-case, as has been noted by several commentators,³⁹ Socrates' analysis of τὸ ὄσιον in terms of commerce amounts to omitting all χάρις-terminology.⁴⁰ In the analysis of Carion and the Grumbler too, their interpretation of events eventually removes χάρις from the exchange. As we shall see in the next section, ideally, χάρις-terminology involves a particular point of view and temporal perspective that is at odds with the detached objectifying vision on human behavior maintained by Carion, Socrates and the Grumbler.

2. ΧΑΡΙΣ AND SUCCESSFUL INTERACTION

The lexeme χάρις is notorious for its semantic complexity. Partly this is because the ΧΑΡ- word field, comprising verbs such as χαίρειν, χαρίζεσθαι as well as the adjective χαρίεις, seems to bring together domains that we tend to think of as separate: aesthetic appreciation as well as ethical valuation. Beautiful objects and persons are χαρίεις, full of charm, in the sense that they are attractive, but also in that they intend to evoke ethically valued responses: χαρίεις behaviour or a χαρίεις gift calls for a response full of χάρις.

³⁷ BOURDIEU (1990 [1980]), 108.

³⁸ Once implicit individual knowledge is made public and explicit, it has implications for the actions of the conversation partners and their relation.

³⁹ YUNIS (1988), 101-2; DAY (2010), 240n.29.

⁴⁰ Socrates systematically substitutes Euthyphro's formulation with terminology of advantage (ὠφέλιμον) and need (δέομαι).

Secondly, a large part of the difficulty in providing a systematic description of the noun *χάρις* lies in the fact that the noun *χάρις* challenges the very **categories** that we use as lexicographical tools when we distinguish between “objective” and “subjective”, “active and passive”, “concrete” and “internalized”:⁴¹

- Objective vs. subjective:⁴² *χάρις* may simultaneously refer to a quality of a beautiful **object** (a person or thing) and to the effect of beauty on the perceiving **subject** who experiences pleasure or delight (*χαίρειν*);⁴³
- Active vs. passive:⁴⁴ *χάρις* and *χαρίζεσθαι* may refer to intentions and dispositions of an **active participant** in an exchange, i.e. the kindness or goodwill of a giver, but may also refer to experiences and dispositions of the **passive participant**, i.e. the gratitude of the recipient (mostly in collocation with the verbs *ἔχειν* or *εἰδέναι*).⁴⁵

⁴¹ E.g. the categories used in LSJ or by GIANOTTI (1975: 75-6). The prepositional use of accusative *χάριν* (+ gen.), “for the sake of”, is here excluded from analysis. But see n.16 above.

⁴² Categories used in LSJ *ad loc.* as I and II.

⁴³ A person’s beauty: e.g. *Od.* 2.12; Hes. *W&D* 65; A. *Ag.* 417; a thing’s beauty: e.g. *Il.* 14.183, *Od.* 8.175, 15.320; Hes. *W&D* 720. The response experienced by the perceiving subject: e.g. *Od.* 6.232f., *Il.* 14.183; Hes. *W&D* 73-4, *Th.* 247; Thgn. 1320; Solon B.13.40; Sappho 368 L&P; P.*Ol.* 6.76, *Pyth.* 1.33-4, 8.85-6, *Isthm.* 6.50. As these uses of *χάρις* in the aesthetic realm seem to be largely confined to poetic texts, they seem to be a case of metonymia between the adjective *χαρίεις* (“having *χάρις*”) and the noun *χάρις*. One of the possible exceptions is the “delight of words” (ἡ τῶν λόγων *χάρις*) in Dem. 4.38 (and the very similar *Ex.* 1.3.9) contrasted with the truths that are not pleasing to hear (οὐχ ἡδέα ἀκούειν); the *χάρις* of words is imagined to cause an immediate effect on the perceiving subject who experiences “pleasure”. For the overlap between the semantic field of *ἡδύς/ἡδονή* and *χάρις*, cf. Eur. *Supp.* 413-4, Isoc. 12.271, Pl. *Leg.* 667b, *Soph.* 222e, *Gorg.* 426c-d. As has often been noted, metonymic uses of vocabulary of perception is common in early Greek poetry (e.g. *ὄψις*) which in Archaic Greek idiom frequently denotes both the object of perception (thing seen, appearance, face) as well as the act of perception (power of seeing, vision, view, cf. English “sight” in “this is a pretty sight” vs. “coming into one’s sight”). Alternatively formulated, words such as *ὄψις* assimilate action with object. An analogy can be found in the English attribute “good-looking”, where “the looking subject has merged with its object.” On the object/effect-ambiguity in *χάρις*, see MACLACHLAN (1993), 11; VERDENIUS (1979), 14. Cf. SNELL (1953), ch.1. Alternatively, LATACZ (1966), 78ff. takes the causative sense as prior to the responsive state (see n.47 below).

⁴⁴ Categories used in LSJ *ad loc.* as II.1. and II.2.

⁴⁵ Kindness or favor on the part of the giver: e.g. *Il.* 5.873-4, 9.612-3, 21.458, *Od.* 5.307; Hes. *W&D* 190; S. *Aj.* 808; Lys. 14.40; gratitude on the part of the receiver: with *ἔχειν*, first occurrence probably in Theognis, e.g. Theogn. 1319, 1.957 (Cf. HEWITT (1927), 149); with *εἰδέναι*, e.g. *Il.* 14.235; Hdt. 3.21, Lys. 2.23, Isoc. 4.175; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.6.11. KONSTAN (2006) attempts to distinguish two senses of *χάρις*: the emotion of gratitude vs. the favor. See Section 3.2 below.

- Concrete vs. immaterial: χάρις sometimes refers to **internalized** intentions, experiences, dispositions and responses in encounters (kindness, delight, goodwill, gratitude), but sometimes also has a **concrete** referent, when it materially denotes a favor done or returned, a gift given, received or returned (frequently in collocation with the verbs φέρειν, τίθεσθαι, δίδοναι, and ἀπο- or ἀντι-compounds or ἀμείβεσθαι).⁴⁶

The attempts that have been made to reduce these uses to one core meaning differ largely over the question whether it is χάρις as a **property/quality** or χάρις as an **effect** that has semantic priority.⁴⁷ What most approaches agree

⁴⁶ Concrete favor done: with φέρειν, e.g. *Il.* 5.211, *E. IT* 14, *And.* 2.24, τίθεσθαι, e.g. *Hdt.* 9.60.107, *A. Pro.* 782, δίδοναι, e.g. *S. OC* 1489; ἀποδίδοναι, e.g. *Lys.* 12.60, 28.17, *X. Ag.* 2.29, *Isoc.* 4.56, ἀπαιτεῖν, e.g. *E. Hec.* 276; *Lys.* 18.23; *D.* 20.156, with ἀμείβεσθαι, e.g. *A. Ag.* 728ff.; *S. El.* 134; *Democr. fr.* 92 (Diels) (noun ἀμοιβὰς ἀποδοῦναι for χάριτας); *Xen. Mem.* 3.11.12.

⁴⁷ Primacy of the quality: LÖW (1908), drawing on the etymological connection of χάρις with χαρά (joy) and χαίρειν (to rejoice), assigns a *factum* or *res laetificans*, a “pleasing property” or a “joyful thing”, as the primary significance of χάρις, from which develops, a notion of pleasure, grace, favor, and subsequently, the return for a favor, a counter-favor; he distinguishes between: 1. *factum, quo quis laetitiam parat*, 2. *condicio, qua quis alium laetitia afficit (virtus sive animi sive corporis sive utriusque; amabilitas, venustas, Anmut)* 3. *pulchritudinis vis laetificatrix insuper accedens atque consummatrix*. On the etymological connection with χαρά, see also STENZEL (1934), 92; for the connection with χαίρω, see *Hipp. Aer.* 22.9 (central to LÖW’s argumentation). LÖW is followed by VERSNEL (1981), 48-9, PHILIPP (1978) (plural χάριτες as *facta laetificantia*), and MACLACHLAN (1993) (“charm” as the core meaning of χάρις applicable to physical appearance of persons or things as well as to social behavior). LATA CZ (1966), 80 criticizes LÖW’s description as eclectic and based on an unsystematically diachronical interpretation of passages.

Primacy of the effect: LATA CZ (1966), 78ff. argues for the semantic priority of the verb χαίρω over the noun χάρις and takes the causative sense (“Lustbereitung”, i.e. rousing desire) as prior to the responsive state (“Anziehung, Reiz”, attraction, desire); χάρις in the sense of a quality is secondary (82: “Indem die χάρις etwas Verschönendes ist, ist sie natürlich zugleich selbst schön.”) Similarly BURKERT (1977), 409, who translates χάρις as “Gnade” (mercy, grace) and MOUSSY (1966), 411-2 who reconstructs the “signification première” of χάρις as “ce qui provoque de la joie”, “ce qui procure du plaisir”. SCOTT (1983) (who curiously omits any reference to LÖW, LATA CZ and MOUSSY) takes the sense “source of pleasure” as primary, but adds that in Homeric Greece an articulate distinction between (1) emotion, (2) that which rouses the emotion in experiencers, and (3) the appearance of the experiencers, was not conceptually and lexically available. VERDENIUS (1979), 14 points out that not only is it questionable to posit a causative sense as the original one, but also that the basis meaning of χαίρω is wider than “to lust”. The most fundamental difference between those scholars who postulate a primary sense of χάρις from which all others by logical extension and metonymy derive and those who take the subject-object underdetermination as point of departure seems chiefly methodological in nature and goes at the heart of semantic theory. (As PORZIG (1942), 53 already noted). In this subject/object-ambiguity, χάρις also has analogies with some other Greek concepts: e.g. with

upon is that for a proper understanding of the cultural functioning of *χάρις*, it is crucial to see the organic coherence between the distinct uses.⁴⁸ When we move from semantics to functional analysis, we can see how, despite the fact that *χάρις* challenges our lexicographical categories and distinctions, there is a functional unity underlying the concept, along the following principles:

- i. *χάρις*-terminology typically presents a situation (whether current or prospective/hypothetical) as a **successful interaction**, for instance between perceiver and object of perception or between giver and recipient.
- ii. *χάρις*-terminology tends to describe such successful interaction from the point of view of participants who are involved in the interaction and who experience the interaction as successful: *χάρις* presupposes a **participants' focalization of events**, including the subjective experiences and valuation involved.⁴⁹
- iii. *χάρις*-terminology tends to approach situations as an ongoing process as opposed to discrete events. Presenting situations in terms of *χάρις* implies seeing the world in terms of long-term structures.

Without committing oneself to semantic essentialism, one can bring out the anatomy of *χάρις* by carving the concept closely at its joints and to become aware of the ways in which a concept such as *χάρις* challenges the very categories and distinctions that are used as lexicographical tools. In the following I do not intend to provide a semantic description of the noun *χάρις*;⁵⁰

αἰδώς which may similarly refer to an awe-inspiring source as well as to the feeling of reverence or awe itself. Cf. CAIRNS (1993).

⁴⁷ LATACZ (1966), 82.

⁴⁸ On the danger of "dividing the inseparable" in semantics, see CAIRNS (1993), 1.

⁴⁹ For the narratological distinction between focalizers (the vision through which the elements are presented) and narrators (the identity of the voice that is verbalizing this vision), see BAL (1985), 142-161, on embedded focalization BAL & TAVOR (1981), 43-53. Focalization is the relationship between the "vision", the agent that sees, and that which is seen. For applications on ancient (especially oral) literature, see DE JONG (1987a), (1991), (2001); for the value of the focalization-concept for semantic studies, see DE JONG (1987b) on *κέροδος* in Homer.

⁵⁰ It is not my aim to make any semantic claim here, but by way of hypothesis, I expect that a semantic description of the lexeme *χάρις* has a lot to gain from a prototype theory of semantics. See LANGACKER (1991) and ROSCH (1975) for theoretical outlines. For applications on ancient value terminology, see SLUITER-ROSEN IN ROSEN-SLUITER (2003) on *ἀνδρεία*, RADEMAKER (2005) on *σωφροσύνη*, PEELS (in prep.) on *ὄσιος*.

rather I aim to offer a functional analysis of *χάρις* that makes it somewhat easier to grasp what it means for one and the same noun to have an “objective” and a “subjective” sense, an “active” and a “passive” sense, a “concrete” and an “internalized” sense.

2.1. Successful interaction between beauty and beholder

When *χάρις*-vocabulary is used in contexts of aesthetic beauty, it serves to represent beauty and looking at beauty as a reciprocal endeavour. As the noun *χάρις* is related to the verb *χαίρω* (“to rejoice”),⁵¹ the noun often not only refers to a quality (beauty) inherent in some object or person, but also to the charming effect on and the delighted response of a subject perceiving the object.⁵²

- i. A perceives B who/that “is *χαρίεις*”, “has *χάρις*” (has pleasant qualities): e.g. a beautiful boy, good wine.
- ii. B’s *χάρις* is a quality that affects A, i.e. “charm”, “attractiveness”.
- iii. A experiences *χάρις* in perceiving B (object of perception): e.g. the pleasure of seeing a beautiful boy, the delight of tasting excellent wine

As the same *χάρις* is at work in all three steps, *χάρις* is often conceived of as a force emanating, “breathing” or “radiating” from something or someone beautiful, i.e. something or someone that “has *χάρις*” or “is *χαρίεις*”,⁵³ and that,

⁵¹ There is some discussion about the formation of the noun *χάρις* in relation to the verb *χαίρω*. RISCH (1937) §60 and LATACZ (1966) 78 classify the noun as a *nomen actionis*, deverbative of *χαίρω*; PORZIG (1942) 353 goes as far as supposing that *χάρις* may originally have been a *nomen agentis* denoting “Ergreifer”. BEEKES (2009) II.1606 argues for a status independent of the verb on grounds of the antiquity of the substantive.

⁵² LATACZ (1966), 82. Cf. SCOTT (1983), 4 ff. E.g. Hes. *W&D* 65, *Theog.* 247, 260, 583; *Theognis* 1320, *Tyrt.* 12.5 (Bergk), *Solon* 13.40 (Bergk). Hence, the noun *χάρις* displays a distinct articulation of subjectivity and suggests a less clear-cut divide between subject and object. Cf. MACLACHLAN (1993), 11. This integration of quality, effect and response is distinctive for the noun *χάρις* and its adjective *χαρίεις* when compared to the semantic field of *κάλλος* and *καλός*: *καλός* rarely in itself implies an affective or aesthetic response of the perceiver. Cf. LATACZ (1966), 99.

⁵³ *Hom. Il.* 14.183 (*ἀπολάμπομαι* “Glittering”), *Hom. Od.* 6.31 (*στίλβω*, “glittering”), *Sapph. fr.* 138 (*ἀναπετάννυμι* “spreading out”), *P. fr.* 123.2-3 (*μαρμαρούζω*, “flashing, sparkling”). Hes. *Theog.* 583 (*ἄημι* “breathing”; reading *χάρις* instead of *πολλή*, cf. WEST (1966), *ad loc.*). However, the verb *ἄημι* is also used in collocation with *εἶδος* (Hes. *Cat. fr.* 43.74 WEST & MERKELBACH) and with *κάλλος* (*h.H.Dem.* 276-80). LÖW (1908), 83-6 on the notion of light in the Indo-European *χαρ*-root.

in turn, brings delight (χάρις) to people.⁵⁴ It need not surprise us that χάρις is regularly used in collocation with πειθώ, persuasion.⁵⁵

This “glittering” of χάρις can for instance be found in “beautification” scenes in the *Odyssey*,⁵⁶ e.g. when Odysseus is bathing and oiling himself on the shores of Scheria. Here, Athena helps him to overcome the initial aversion of the Phaeacian girls by making him look taller and mightier and curling his locks like a hyacinth flower⁵⁷—the effect of which is described in terms of χάρις (“poured over” the object):⁵⁸

(7) Hom. *Od.* 6.231-37⁵⁹

ὡς δ' ὅτε τις χρυσὸν περιχεύεται ἀργύρῳ ἀνήρ
ἰδὼς, ὃν Ἥφαιστος δέδαεν καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
τέχνην παντοίην, χαρίεντα δὲ ἔργα τελείει,
ὡς ἄρα τῷ κατέχευε χάριν κεφαλῇ τε καὶ ὤμοις. (235)
ἔζετ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε κιῶν ἐπὶ θῖνα θαλάσσης,
κάλλει καὶ χάρισι στίλβων· θηεῖτο δὲ κούρη.

The χάρις Athena pours (κατέχευε) over Odysseus' head and shoulders is compared to “gold on silver” applied by a skilful craftsman who makes “works full of grace” (χαρίεντα ἔργα); similarly, Odysseus' beauty (Athena's work of grace) is gilded by divine grace,⁶⁰ a glittering beauty and lure that makes

⁵⁴ E.g. the delight, χάρις, of wine (E. *Ba.* 535, Aristoph. *Nub.* 311).

⁵⁵ E.g. Hes. *W&D* 74 (Χάριτες and πότνια Πειθώ), P. fr. 123.10-15. See Chapter Five.

⁵⁶ DE JONG (2001), 163ff. on “beautification” as a typical scene in the *Od.*, consisting of a couple of recurring elements: the presence of a beautifying god (mostly Athena), its function as a prelude to an important performance, the reaction of the onlookers described from embedded focalization (192-3).

⁵⁷ Hom. *Od.* 6.229-31.

⁵⁸ Cf. Hes. *W&D* 65-6 (Aphrodite pours χάρις over Pandora's head) and Theognis 2.1319-1322 (Kypris has given arousing χάρις to the boy). Both passages will be discussed in Chapter Five.

⁵⁹ “And as when a man overlays silver with gold, a cunning workman whom Hephaestus and Pallas Athena have taught all manner of craft, and full of χάρις is the work he produces, even so the goddess shed χάρις upon his head and shoulders. Then he went apart and sat down on the shore of the sea, gleaming with beauty and χάριτες; and the damsel marvelled at him (...)” (*transl.* MURRAY *adapted*). If the text is correct, 6.237 is the only (not personified) instance of plural χάρις in Homer. LATACZ (1966) reads χάριτι (following Ap. Lex. 94,26 and codd. K. and H³ (Allen)).

⁶⁰ The climactic nature of the description of Odysseus' “makeover” (the first two changes in one single verse (230), next one whole verse on the hair (231), four verses on a comparison) suggests that χάρις is the central feature of the renewed Odysseus, making him golden instead of silver.

Nausicaa, the focalizer from whose point of view we subsequently see the *χάρις*, respond: she marvels at him (θηεῖτο).⁶¹

This *χάρις* has aesthetic as well as social implications: the grace that perfects his beautification is a gift (a *χάρις*) from Athena;⁶² moreover, his *χάρις* purports to have a persuasive effect on the people of Scheria.⁶³

(8) Hom. Od. 8.17-23⁶⁴

πολλοὶ δ' ἄρα θηήσαντο ἰδόντες
 υἷον Λαέρταο δαΐφρονα. τῷ δ' ἄρ' Ἀθήνη
 θεσπεσίην κατέχευε χάριν κεφαλῇ τε καὶ ὤμοις
 καί μιν μακρότερον καὶ πάσσονα θῆκεν ἰδέσθαι,
 ὥς κεν Φαιήκεσσι φίλος πάντεσσι γένοιτο
 δεινός τ' αἰδοῖός τε καὶ ἐκτελέσειεν ἀέθλους
 πολλούς, τοὺς Φαίηκες ἐπειρήσαντ' Ὀδυσῆος.

Again, *χάρις* implies a beholder, as we focalize through the eyes of the admiring Phaeacians:⁶⁵ people are looking at Odysseus (*ιδόντες*) who is made taller and sturdier “to look at” (*ιδέσθαι*), and the spectators are said to marvel (*θηήσαντο*). Moreover, Odysseus’ “makeover” is intended to produce *social* effects: that he may become welcome to and welcomed by (*φίλος*) the Phaeacians and win awe and reverence (become *δεινός τ' αἰδοῖός τε*). “The

LATACZ (1966), 81-2: “*χάρις* bedeutet eine Steigerung über *κάλλος* hinaus.” Cf. MACLACHLAN (1993), 31-2: “*Charis* is more than ordinary beauty; *charis* is gold over silver.”

⁶¹ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 2.12 (=17.63), the beautification of Telemachus, for a similar collocation of effective feature (*χάρις*) and response (*θηεῖν*). LATACZ (1966), 81-3 infers from these occurrences (and the use of ἄρα in τὸν δ' ἄρα πάντες λαοὶ ἐπερχόμενον *θηεῖν*) a “Zusammengehörigkeit von *χάρις* und *θηεῖσθαι* im Ursache-Wirkung-Verhältnis”. Although the causal connection between *χάρις* and *θηεῖν* is plausible, it seems to me somewhat problematic and unnecessary to infer this from ἄρα (“natürlich”), as the collocation δ' ἄρα is often used as a metrical variant interchangeable with δέ, δ' ἔπειτα, δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα. Cf. VISSER (1987). For *θηεῖσθαι* as gazing at something in wonder, see METTE (1960).

⁶² On the motif of special abilities as a “gift of the gods” in the *Iliad*, see VAN DER MIJJE (1987), 251-4.

⁶³ LATACZ (1966), 81: “*χάρις* ist also hier al seine Art Überzug vorgestellt.”

⁶⁴ “And many marvelled at the sight of the wise son of Laertes, for wondrous was the *χάρις* that Athena shed upon his head and shoulders; and she made him taller and sturdier to behold, that he might be welcomed by all the Phaeacians, and win awe and reverence, and might accomplish the many feats wherein the Phaeacians made trial of Odysseus.” (*transl.* MURRAY).

⁶⁵ The narrator intrudes upon the embedded focalization by referring to Odysseus as “the wise son of Laertes”. DE JONG (2001), 192-3.

power of *charis* resides in its unerring ability to provoke a response.”⁶⁶

In erotic poetry, we frequently find *χάρις* in the sense of erotic attractiveness,⁶⁷ i.e. a quality of an object of perception that has an immediate effect on the onlooking subject. In the example here, *χάρις* is presented as an utterly subjective experience:

(9) Theognis 2.1337-40⁶⁸

Οὐκέτ' ἐρῶ παιδός, χαλεπὰς δ' ἀπελάκτισ' ἀνίας
 μόχθους τ' ἀργαλέους ἄσμενος ἐξέφυγον,
 ἐκλέλυμαι δὲ πόθου πρὸς ἔυστεφάνου Κυθερείης·
 σοὶ δ', ὦ παῖ, χάρις ἔστ' οὐδεμία πρὸς ἐμοῦ.

χάρις is discussed from a retrospective point of view (*vision par derrière*), from the point of view of unsuccessful interaction, of *χάρις* gone bad. As the thrill is gone and the speaker no longer desires (οὐκέτ' ἐρῶ) the boy (or boys in general), the speaker only sees the downside of his encounters with the boy: pain, hardships and painful longing. His falling out of love is the result of a process of rejection, escape and release: he has kicked off (ἀπελάκτισα) sorrows, escaped (ἐξέφυγον) from the troubles of courtship and is released (ἐκλέλυμαι) from his longing (πόθος). This process amounts to the result: a change of attitude in the subject and an increase of distance between subject and the object of desire. The boy's beauty does not have any effect on him anymore; the boy has no charm (*χάρις*) anymore “from the side of the speaker” (πρὸς ἐμοῦ). Here, *χάρις* refers to a quality of the boy (his physical beauty) as well as the subjective effect it has on the perceiver (πρὸς ἐμοῦ), for whom the boy has lost his attractiveness. *Both* are required for *χάρις*: attraction and charm

⁶⁶ MACLACHLAN (1993), 37. LÖW (1908), 23: “*χάρις hac in re aliquid est quod ad ceteram rei cuiusdam naturam accedens hanc rem laetificantem reddit.*” Along the same lines, the phrase *χάριον φέρειν τινί* typically refers to a situation in which a person “confers a favor on someone”, but may be taken more literally as “brings something to enjoy” or “brings enjoyment to” this person and makes this person rejoice. VERDENIUS (1979), 14.

⁶⁷ On the importance of *χάρις*-vocabulary in the context of erotic seduction, see Chapter Five.

⁶⁸ “I am no longer in love with a boy, I have kicked aside harsh pain, I have gladly escaped from grievous hardships, and the fair-crowned Cytherean has released me from longing. And as for your *χάρις*, boy, it does not exist in my eyes.” (transl. GERBER adapt.).

are a reciprocal endeavor.⁶⁹ When things go sour, *χάρις* ceases to be *χάρις* and turns out, in retrospect, to be troubles and hardship.

χάρις is imagined to have direct effect (“attraction”) on the onlooking subject, like the earrings “glittering with *χάρις*” that Hera is wearing when she is about to seduce Zeus.⁷⁰ Correspondingly, the subject’s *experience* of this effect is also referred to as *χάρις*:⁷¹ sleep,⁷² wine,⁷³ victory⁷⁴ and *ἔρω*⁷⁵ bring *χάρις*, the experience of pleasure and delight. Hence, *χάρις* is sometimes used in opposition to subjective or emotional responses such as *λύπη*⁷⁶ and *πόνος*:⁷⁷

⁶⁹ Here we also see how the poet suggests a continuity between the boy’s attractiveness and the social dimension of the relationship: the boy will not *receive* any *χάρις* from the speaker anymore.

⁷⁰ Hom. *Il.* 14.183.

⁷¹ This use of *χάρις* seems to occur predominantly in poetic texts, with the exception of Plato who uses the noun occasionally in juxtaposition with *ἡδονή*. See n.50 above.

⁷² Eur. *Or.* 159.

⁷³ Eur. *Bacch.* 535, Aristoph.. *Nub.* 311.

⁷⁴ P. *O.7.5*, 10.78.

⁷⁵ See Chapter Five.

⁷⁶ E.g. Eur. *Hel.* 654-55: ἐμὰ δὲ χαρμονᾶι δάκρυα· πλέον ἔχει | χάριτος ἢ λύπας. (adopting the causal dative *χαρμονᾶι* conjectured by HERMANN for *χαρμονᾶ* of L.). The speaker disambiguates his/her tears as tears of joy (*χαρμονή*), containing more delight (*χάρις*) than sorrow (*λύπη*). The opposition of *χάρις* to *λύπη* indicates that *χάρις* refers to a subjective, emotional, response, a response moreover caused by *χαρμονή*, a thing of joy. *χαρμονή* is probably a metrical alternative for *χάρμα*. *χάρμα* is directly derived from the verb *χαίρω*; the –μα suffix indicates that *χάρμα* refers to a concrete object of joy (sometimes antonym of *πῆμα*, “a calamity”), although in *Od.* 19.451 it may be used as a *nomen actionis*. LATACZ (1966), 122. Cf. PORZIG (1942), 146, 241-2, 278, F. However, BEEKES (2009), II.1606 suggests that *χαρμονή* is formed after an analogy with *ἡδονή*.

⁷⁷ E.g. Soph. *OC* 229-236: Χ: οὐδενὶ μοιριδία τίσις ἔρχεται | ὧν προπάθη τὸ τίνειν· ἀπάτα δ’ ἀπά- | ταις ἐτέραις ἐτέρα παραβαλλομέ- | να πόνον, οὐ χάριν, ἀντιδίδωσιν ἔ- | χειν.
χάρις is contrasted with distress or pain (*πόνος*), indicating that a subjective effect or experience may be implied by *χάρις* (pleasure or delight). This example represents a perverted case of reciprocity: it thematizes vengeance (*τίσις*), an exchange (cf. ἀντιδίδωσιν) of deceit matching deceit (*ἀπάτα ἀπάταις ἐτέραις ἐτέρα*), that does involve a return, but not a return of favor (*χάρις*), but of trouble (*πόνος*)—i.e. a type of reciprocity that does not breed gratitude (*χάρις*) but pain (*πόνος*).

(10) Soph. *El.* 820-22⁷⁸

Η: πρὸς ταῦτα καινέτω τις, εἰ βαρύνεται,
 τῶν ἔνδον ὄντων· ὡς χάρις μὲν, ἦν κτάνη,
λύπη δ', ἐὰν ζῶ· τοῦ βίου δ' οὐδεὶς πόθος.

Here, *χάρις* is contrasted with grief (*λύπη*), indicating that a subjective effect or experience may be implied by *χάρις* (pleasure or delight). However, the meaning of *χάρις* is not restricted to the subjective experience of pleasure; it also characterizes and orchestrates relationships. The situation is deliberately formulated as a paradox: it does not represent a successful interaction, as Electra's potential killer may not *intend* to do her a favor (he may do so out of resentment (*βαρύνεται*)), but given the quality of her life, she will *experience* it as a favor (a *χάρις*) if someone killed her.

χάρις implies successful interaction, between what we would call a subject and an object, between object and viewer, between source of pleasure and experience of pleasure, between giver and recipient. The term *χάρις* invites us to view a situation from within, from the point of view of the characters.

2.2. Successful interaction between giver and recipient

The object/effect-indeterminacy of *χάρις* that we have seen in the aesthetic realm also manifests itself in the social dimension: acts of *χάρις* (favors or gifts) arouse *χάρις* (enjoyment, gratitude) in the receiver.⁷⁹ The Greek expressions for

⁷⁸ "Electra: In face of that let any of those inside kill me, if he resents me; for if he kills me, it will be a *χάρις*; to survive will be a pain. I have no desire for life." For ὡς χάρις μὲν, ἦν κτάνη, LLOYD-JONES translates "to die will be a pleasure"; JEBB translates "It is a favor if I die." Both translation express different aspects of *χάρις* (subjective experience vs. favor); however, the fact that both have chosen to convert the third-person κτάνη ("if he kills") into a first person correlate ("if I die") also reflects some of the challenges that the "relationality" of the term *χάρις* poses to our modern lexicon.

⁷⁹ NAGY (1985), 27: "[K]haris conveys simultaneously the social aspect of *reciprocity* as well as the personal aspect of *pleasure*." Cf. the phrase *χαρίεσσαν ἀμοιβήν* that frequently occurs in prayers (combined with the imperative *δίδου*), e.g. Hom. *Od.* 3.58-9, CEG 359, 360, 326. Cf. BREMER (1998), VERSNEL (1981), 43 ff., VAN STRATEN (1981), 72 ff., DAY (2010), 232 ff.. A well-known example of this use of the adjective *χαρίεις* is Chryses' prayer to Apollo in Hom. *Il.* 1.37-41 where the temple that Chryses had roofed for Apollo is characterized as *χαρίεις*, qualifying the temple as beautiful (quality of the object), but also as a gift that intends to provoke a response in the recipient, i.e. that Apollo may rejoice (*χαίρειν*) in the dedication and make this

being grateful, *χάριον εἰδέναι* and *χάριον ἔχειν*, literally mean “to know the favor” and “to have the favor”: to acknowledge a favor and to accept the obligations that go with it—i.e. to respond to a favor properly by reciprocating the favor with a favor.⁸⁰ If we take a look at the social script underlying long-term reciprocity, we may distinguish the following events:

- (i) A does B a favor (*χάριον φέρειν/τίθεισθαι/διδόναι*), thereby signifying that he (A) recognizes B as a potential partner to cooperate with;
- (ia) B receives (*δέχεσθαι*) or accepts (*λαμβάνειν*) the favor and recognizes A’s action as a favor (*χάριον εἰδέναι*) and, hence, acknowledges A’s action as “friendly”, as initiating or sustaining a long-term relationship, and acknowledges A as a potential partner to cooperate with, by:
 - (iib) expressing to be morally indebted to A (*χάριον ἔχειν*); recognition of which finds its expression properly in:
 - (iic) the reciprocation of *χάρις*, i.e. B “gives back” (*ἀποδιδόναι*) *χάριον* in due course.

Characteristically, events (i) and (iic) are concrete manifestations of a long-term relationship, i.e. favors being done and returned, whereas event (ia) can be understood as an internalization of the social expectations attached to such long-term relationships. In these cases, rendering *χάρις* as “gratitude” may serve purposes of translation, but essentially hides from our view that we are still talking about the *same* *χάρις* as in step (i) of the script: it is the *χάρις* that A bestowed on B, that B is said to “know” or to “have”. In this approach, “gratitude” or “kindness” are not distinct “meanings” of *χάρις*; the idea of *χάρις* that is “due” or “needs to be repaid” derives from other contextual indications, such as the verbs *ὀφείλειν*, *τίνειν*, or *ἀπο-*compounds, or the collocation of noun phrases with the preposition *ἀντί* for manifest behavior and

rejoicing manifest in a *χάρις*, a return of favor. LATA CZ (2000), *ad loc.*: „*χαρίεντ(α)* (...) steht “proleptisch” (LEAF) mit resultativer Funktion (...): „wenn ich dir jemals deine Wohnstatt so reizvoll überdacht habe, dass du deine Freude/Lust daran hattest.“ E.g. Pind. P. 8.85-6 (*ὄρσεν χάριον*).

⁸⁰ On *χάριον εἰδέναι* see LÖW (1908), 6, 10; SCOTT (1983), 11.

with verbs such as οἶδα or ἔχειν for internalized manifestations of χάρις.⁸¹

This makes sense when one realizes that χάρις is a term operative in long-term reciprocal relationships that are perceived to be healthy, orderly and, in the long-run, balanced.⁸² This means that in the long-term scope in which χάρις operates, there is no meaningful difference between givers and receivers: if a relationship is healthy, there is no need to semantically distinguish between the χάρις that is bestowed as a favor, the χάρις that is recognized and acknowledged by the receiver (who may sense an emotion of gratitude) and the χάρις that is reciprocated to the original giver.⁸³

Hence, the proverbial expression that χάρις begets χάρις:⁸⁴

(11) Sophocles, *Ajax* 520-4⁸⁵

Τ. ἀλλ' ἴσχε κάμου̅ μνηστίν· ἀνδρί τοι χρεῶν

⁸¹ A small adjustment of PARKER (1998), 108-9 who says “The χαρίεσσα ἀμοιβή which mortals pray for should probably therefore be rendered as “a delightful” rather than “grateful” return (the idea of repayment being explicitly present only in the noun).” I chiefly agree with the parenthesis; the crucial point seems to me that a “delightful” return is socially (not lexically) defined as a manifestation of gratitude, i.e. that one “knows the χάρις”. Cf. PHILIPP (1978), 157-159; VERSNEL (1981), 49. Moreover, it should be noted that expressions such as χάριν εἰδέναί, ἔχειν, φέρειν are *descriptive*: they are rarely used in Greek conversation. QUINCEY (1966), 133. Cf. VERSNEL (1981), 49. Neither the expression appropriate for grateful acceptance (αἰνῶ) nor the formulae for grateful refusal (αἰνῶ, ἐπαινῶ, καλῶς, κάλλιστα ἔχει μοι) contain the noun χάρις. Here, it is relevant to distinguish between narrative voice (first person vs. third person) and focalization/point of view (first person vs. third person), as the term χάρις does rarely occur in Greek *expressions* of thanks, i.e. in a first-person *voice* (“I thank you”). See BAL (1985), 142-61 and DE JONG (1987a) for the voice/perspective-distinction in narratology. The difference between conferring a favor (χάριν φέρειν) and being grateful (χάριν εἰδέναί or ἔχειν) resembles a distinction made in Classical Latin between *gratiam agere* and *gratiam habere*; however, expressions such as *gratias tibi ago* are used responsively (and in first person reports) in Latin idiom. Cf. HICKSON HAHN (2004).

⁸² “Balanced” need not imply “equal”.

⁸³ Cf. HEWITT (1927), 149: “In many phrases, χάριν as the object of a verb is ambiguous, for it may denote either favor or gratitude.” PARKER (1998), 108: “*Kharis* words are in fact applied to both sides of the relationship. Mortals seek to bring gifts or sacrifices which are *kharienta* or *kekharismena* to the gods, and request a return which is itself *khariessa* (...).” Cf. DAVIDSON (2007), 38 ff; KURKE (1991), 104; ROCCHI (1979), 5-7.

⁸⁴ Cf. Soph. OC 779 (ἡ χάρις χάριν φέρου), Eur. *Hel.* 1234 (χάρις ἀντί χάριτος ἐλθέτω), Ar. *Rhet.* 1385a16.

⁸⁵ “Tecmessa: Think of me also; a man should remember, should some pleasure come his way; for it is always one χάρις that begets another, and if a man allows the memory of a kindness to slip away, he can no longer be accounted noble.” (*transl.* LLOYD-JONES *adapt.*)

μνήμην προσεῖναι, τεροννὸν εἰ τί που πάθοι.
Χάρις χάριν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἢ τίκτους ἀεὶ
 ὅτου δ' ἀπορρεῖ μνήστις εὖ πεπονθότος,
 οὐκ ἂν γένοιτ' ἔθ' οὗτος εὐγενῆς ἀνὴρ.

A favor “breeds” χάρις in the sense that the proper response to receiving a favor (a χάρις), i.e. being done well (εὖ πάσχειν), is to remember it (cf. μνήστις twice, μνήμην) and to display gratitude by conferring a favor in turn.⁸⁶ The polyptoton χάρις χάριν underscores the fact that within a successful chain of reciprocities, there is no meaningful distinction between favors and counter-favors: they are all “acts of grace”. In the long run, givers *are* receivers and vice versa. In properly functioning long-term reciprocal relationships, it is hardly possible to discern between favors and counter-favors, gifts and counter-gifts, because the notion of an “original favor” in need of “compensation” has weakened in favor of an awareness of a long-term relationship in which each partner is well-disposed towards the other.⁸⁷

The emphatic repetition of the importance of *remembering* (μνήστις, μνήμη) a favor reflects the fact that the economy of χάρις is premised on a mutual recognition of the history of a relationship. When reciprocity has not yet materialized, a friend needs to know that the other still “knows” the favor.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ The procreative metaphor of τίκτειν, “breeding”, not only anticipates the notion of birth and breeding in 524, but may also contain a pun on τόκος in the technical sense of “interest” on loans.

⁸⁷ Drawing an analogy with the noun ξένος may be illuminating: ξένος may refer to “guest” as well as “host”—displaying a similar active/passive-ambiguity, which may appear paradoxical at first sight; on second thought, however, this ambiguity makes perfect sense in light of the institution of ξενία, where there is an expectation of balance in the long run. Conceptually speaking, the reciprocal relationship bears a primacy over the alternating roles of the partners: today’s host may be a guest tomorrow. In a similar vein, the noun χάρις embodies the bilaterality of reciprocity in its very meaning. Cf. BOLKESTEIN (1967) for this analogy with ξένος.

⁸⁸ E.g. Hera promises Hypnos (who will do her the favor of inducing sleep in Zeus) that she will keep the χάρις alive in her memory ἡματα πάντα, “for all days” (Il. 14.235); for the collocation of χάρις and words expressive of mnemonic activity, Hom. 23.647-50, Theogn. 503-5 (ἀπεμνήσαντο), Soph. Aj. 1267-9 (ὅτου δ' ἀπορρεῖ μνήστις εὖ πεπονθότος with its suggestive parallel χάρις διαρρεῖ), Aristoph. Eq. 268 (μνημεῖον... ἀνδρείας χάριν (pregnant use of χάριν + gen.), Soph. fr. 920 (RADT) ((ἀμνήμονος ἀνδρός with χάρις), Lys. 30.27. Similarly, in Pindaric poetry, vulnerable reciprocity (e.g. between descendants and their deceased ancestors) is

(12) Theognis 1,101-112⁸⁹

Μηδεὶς σ' ἀνθρώπων πείσῃ κακὸν ἄνδρα φιλῆσαι,
 Κύρνε· τί δ' ἔστ' ὄφελος δειλὸς ἀνὴρ φίλος ὦν;
 οὐτ' ἂν σ' ἐκ χαλεποῖο πόνου ῥύσαιτο καὶ ἄτης,
 οὔτε κεν ἐσθλὸν ἔχων τοῦ μεταδοῦν ἐθέλοι.
 Δειλοὺς εὖ ἔρδοντι ματαιοτάτη χάρις ἐστίν· (105)
 ἴσον καὶ σπείρειν πόντον ἄλὸς πολιῆς.
 οὔτε γὰρ ἂν πόντον σπείρων βαθὺ λήιον ἀμῶις,
 οὔτε κακοὺς εὖ δρῶν εὖ πάλιν ἀντιλάβοις·
 ἄπληστον γὰρ ἔχουσι κακοὶ νόον· ἦν δ' ἐν ἀμάρτηις,
 τῶν πρόσθεν πάντων ἐκκέχυται φιλότης· (110)
 οἱ δ' ἀγαθοὶ τὸ μέγιστον ἐπαυρίσκουσι παθόντες,
μνήμα δ' ἔχουσ' ἀγαθῶν καὶ χάριν ἐξοπίσω.

The *χάρις* in line 105 characterizes the conduct of someone who does good (εὖ ἔρδειν). This conduct is said to be utterly “in vain” (*ματαιοτάτη*) when directed towards *deiloi* or *kakoi* people, meaning that such acts of *χάρις* will remain unanswered: such people will not help you when you are in need, nor will they share their successes. In short, while you do them good (εὖ δρῶν), the good will not be returned: *lit.* “you will not receive back (ἀντιλάβοις) the good.”; moreover, while they fail to reciprocate good treatment, they are resentful too, for they refuse to forgive one single mistake. Conversely, the *agathoi* are mindful of (i.e. have *μνήμα* of) the *agatha* they have received; hence, they “have *χάρις*” thereafter (ἐξοπίσω).⁹⁰ The time-frame suggested by ἐξοπίσω indicates that in

repeatedly thematized in terms of ancient *χάρις* that “sleeps” (εὐδει) *O. 8., P.9, I.4, I.7.16-24*—until it is awakened by new song. Cf. the theme of “undying grace” (*χάριν ἀθάνατον*, e.g. *Hdt. 7.178*), an expression of the importance of keeping the memory of *χάρις* alive.

⁸⁹ “Let no one persuade you, Cynus, to make a base man your friend. Of what use is a base man as a friend? He would not rescue you from hard toil or from ruin nor if he has any success would he be willing to give you a share of this. Doing a good turn to the base is an utterly useless act of *χάρις*; it is the same as sowing the expanse of the white-capped sea. You cannot reap a tall crop by sowing the sea and you cannot get anything good in return by doing good to the base. For the base have an insatiable *νοῦς*; if you make one mistake, the friendship shown by all former acts is wasted. But the noble enjoy to the highest degree the treatment they have received, they remember the good things, and they have *χάρις* thereafter.” (*transl.* GERBER).

⁹⁰ The contrast between the *deiloi* and the *agathoi* is even stronger on AHRENS’ reading, who conjectures ἀμαυρίσκουσι (“blot out, hide”) for ἐπαυρίσκουσι (“enjoy”): the *agathoi* “dim” even the greatest of mistakes but are mindful of the good things and have *χάρις* thereafter. Cf. HUDSON-WILLIAMS (1910). For more on vv. 109-102, in See Section 4.1 below.

line 111,⁹¹ χάρις characterizes a disposition, or the conduct, of the *recipients* of well-doing: the *agathoi* have χάρις, i.e. they *will* reciprocate χάρις. At the same time, “having χάρις” means that these *agathoi* have “class”—they are chic people who behave in style—as opposed to the δειλοί who “have no χάρις”.⁹²

Labeling actions as χάρις is tantamount to recognizing them as taking place within a long-term relationship, recognizing the obligations implied by them, voicing expectations that go along with them, signifying that one accepts the obligations imposed, and acknowledging the other as a partner in such a long-term relationship. Within this constellation, the phrases χάρις ἔχειν⁹³ and χάρις εἰδέναι denote the introspective, or internalized, moments in these relationships, and, in situations in which reciprocation has not taken place yet, these phrases refer to the recipient’s understanding of the relationship in which he partakes and to his ability to live up to the standards the relationship imposes on him. The vital point is that the χάρις in the phrases χάρις ἔχειν and χάρις εἰδέναι is, essentially, the same χάρις as the one bestowed.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Cf. HEWITT (1927), 149 on ἐξοπίσω in Theognis 1319. On the recurring theme of friends and enemies and the Theognidea, see SELLE (2008), 258-262 (who explains the poems in terms of competition between *hetaireiai*), DONLAN (1985), 223-44.

⁹² E.g. in Ar. *EN* (1095a18, b22, 1127b31, 1128a31, b1; 1162b10, 1102a22, 1127b23, 1128a15) and *Pol.* (1267a1-40, 1297b9, 1320b7), the substantival participial forms χαρίεις, χαριέντες and χαριέστεροι are used to denote upper-class persons, directly contrasted with οἱ πολλοί. Cf. PAKALUK (1998).

⁹³ HEWITT (1927), 149 makes the observation that the expression χάρις ἔχειν “lay dormant for a century after Theognis and blossoms out almost simultaneously in Euripides and Thucydides.” A diachronical study of the semantics of χάρις is a desideratum.

⁹⁴ In approaching the “active” χάρις as essentially the same χάρις as the one experienced and returned by the “passive” receiver, I differ from DAVID KONSTAN’s account of χάρις. KONSTAN (2006), 157-168. KONSTAN seeks to draw a fundamental distinction between χάρις in reciprocity (my steps i and iii) on the one hand, and the phrases χάρις ἔχειν or εἰδέναι on the other hand (my step ii); the latter, which he takes to refer to the emotion gratitude, Konstan claims to be fundamentally “distinct from the act of reciprocation”, which is “felt, not due as compensation.” (167, see T 15 below). Whereas I do believe that Konstan’s insistence on the distinct nature of the phrases χάρις ἔχειν and χάρις εἰδέναι may offer some clues for understanding the *Aristotelian* definition of χάρις, to an understanding of popular morality isolating the emotion of gratitude from the lexeme χάρις is obscuring and question-begging: to what extent did the Greeks recognize “gratitude” as a distinct emotion, and to what extent did they understand χάρις in its more “active”, “objective” and “concrete” senses to be devoid of emotion? My analysis aims to bring out that something can be gained by approaching χάρις as an integrated experience in the Archaic and Classical Greek world.

2.3. The embodiment of χάρις: knowing vs. showing

In the previous sections we have seen that the noun χάρις cuts across our lexical distinctions of subject/object and active/passive. A third distinction that is somewhat problematic is between internalized experience (gratitude and favor *felt*) and the concrete gesture that goes with it: the material favor done or returned.⁹⁵

However, here too we should realize that χάρις-terminology goes best with internal focalization by participants in a successful interaction: it is a way of seeing objects, a perception of objects and acts *as* gifts and favors. Kindness and gratitude are commonly referred to by their concrete manifestation:⁹⁶ kindness is shown only by *doing* someone a favor (offering help, rendering a service, supplying material needs), gratitude is shown by returning such favor in due time—which dispels the necessity to postulate a distinct “concrete” sense of the noun χάρις. Conversely, when concrete services and material objects are referred to as χάρις or χάριτες, the term signals that we should view these services and objects from within a long-term relationship, i.e. as items circulating within a pre-existing or presupposed relationship of long-term reciprocity. For instance, when orators ask jurors for a χάρις in return for antecedent χάριτες, they at once refer to very concrete past services (liturgies) and a very concrete return (a favorable verdict), while at the same time

⁹⁵ The plural χάριτες presupposes countability and discrete units and hence a more “concrete” contents than an uncountable use of singular χάρις. Analogous to τιμή (referring to the more abstract notion of “social value”) vs. τιμαί (countable concrete manifestations of social value), χάρις may evoke more abstract qualities of pleasant interaction whereas the plural χάριτες refers to concrete boons, i.e. concrete objects or favors that are conferred as favors or tokens of gratitude. However, χάριτες may be less tangible than δῶρα. MITCHELL (1997), 20. LÖW (1908), 34-5 for χάριτες as *facta laetificanda*; cf. PHILLIPS (1978), 157-159. The plural of χάρις is rare (or non-existent, depending on whether one reads χάριτι or χάρισι in *Il.* 6.237 (T 9 above)) in Homer, except as personifications, and seems a relatively recent development. LATACZ (1996), 81n.73.

⁹⁶ LATACZ (1966), 93. Cf. HEWITT (1927) for the argument that in the period until 400 B.C.E. the Greeks did not distinguish between the feeling of gratitude and the result of this feeling, i.e. a concrete act, a gesture of kindness in return. Similarly, MACLACHLAN (1993, p.5 n.2) contends that χάρις εἰδέναι in early Greek literature denotes “an active response as well as a (passive) state of mind. (...) [I]n the early Greek world the expression would take concrete form. The whole experience is a continuum and identified by one word, *charis*.”

embedding their claims in a (supposedly) pre-existing relationship of mutual favors in which the audience owes the speaker a favor.⁹⁷

Such a pre-existing relationship may even be only potential. When faced with the threat of the Persian armies pursuing the Greeks, the Spartan king Pausanias sends for the Athenians with an urgent plea for solidarity:

(13) Hdt. 9.60⁹⁸

Νῦν ὧν δέδοκται τὸ ἐνθεῦτεν τὸ ποιητέον ἡμῖν, ἀμυνομένους γὰρ τῇ δυνάμεθα ἄριστα περιστέλλειν ἀλλήλους. Εἰ μὲν νυν ἐς ὑμέας ὄρμησε ἀρχὴν ἢ ἵππος, χρῆν δὴ ἡμέας τε καὶ τοὺς μετ' ἡμέων τὴν Ἑλλάδα οὐ προδιδόντας Τεγεήτας βοηθέειν ὑμῖν· νῦν δέ, ἐς ἡμέας γὰρ ἅπασα κεχώρηκε, δίκαιοί ἐστε ὑμεῖς πρὸς τὴν πιεζομένην μάλιστα τῶν μοιρέων ἀμυνέοντες ἵεναι. Εἰ δ' ἄρα αὐτοὺς ὑμέας καταλελάβηκε ἀδύνατόν τι βοηθέειν, ὑμεῖς δ' ἡμῖν τοὺς <γε> τοξότας ἀποπέμψαντες χάριν θέσθε.

Urging for solidarity (περιστέλλειν ἀλλήλους), Pausanias first elaborates on the hypothetical situation that the Athenian cavalry had been attacked first by the Persians; in that case, the Spartans and the Tegeans would have come to help them. The present situation is that the Spartans are under attack by the Persians; hence, the Athenians are requested “to send their archers and confer a χάρις”. The construction, a conjunct participle clause (ἡμῖν τοὺς τοξότας ἀποπέμψαντες) followed by the main clause χάριν θέσθε, underscores that sending the archers and doing the favor are conceived of as one and the same action: the Athenians are asked to do the favor *of* sending the archers. Whereas translation as “service” or “favor” may give the impression that the request is a

⁹⁷ This strategy is by no means uncontested. E.g. in Lyc. 1.139 the χάρις-topos in court is dismissed by Lycurgus who criticizes logographers’ for claiming χάριτες *for their clients* on grounds of *their own* liturgies; Lycurgus observes that this strategy as a confusion of public and private domains. See Section 3 of Chapter Two and Chapter Six on the public service theme. On the (in)transitivity of χάρις, see CHRIST (1990), 155, OBER (1989), 241-2.

⁹⁸ “It is clear what we have to do from now on, then: we must fight back and defend each other to the best of our abilities. If the Persian cavalry had started out by attacking you, it would of course have been our duty, along with the Tegeans (who are still with us and have not betrayed Greece), to come and help you. In fact, though, they have come in full force against us, so you should come and support us, since we are the ones who are particularly hard pressed. If for some reason you can’t come yourselves, please do us the χάρις of sending us your archers.” (transl. WATERFIELD *adapt.*).

call for gratuitous or spontaneous charity in times of need, the term *χάρις* actually serves to appeal to the solidarity between the Spartans and the Athenians: the speech is constructed to represent the solidarity as mutual support that might easily have gone the other way, if the Athenians had been the party in trouble. Here we see how the term *χάρις*, however concrete the content may be, still *also* serves to evoke ideals of reciprocity—even in a situation where the reciprocity in point is not yet established (although it is an explicit proposal), the term *χάρις* can be used persuasively to force the addressee to adopt the perspective of the speaker and to perceive the situation in terms of mutual solidarity.

In a worldview in which reciprocity of favors needs to be manifest, a “subjective” sense of *χάρις* can be subsumed under the alleged “concrete” sense. A gift may be said to have *χάρις*, not only because it concerns a beautifully made object, but also because it embodies the *χάρις* of its giver towards the receiver and because it, subsequently, provokes *χάρις* in the receiver. Conversely, in a worldview that revolves around the *perception* of *χάρις*, the concrete sense *is* subjective: concrete favors and gifts need to be perceived as *χάρις*, as deriving their meaning from the relationship in which they are embedded.

3. PERCEPTION AND *MÉCONNAISSANCE*

3.1. The puzzle of obligation

One of the odd things about human communication is that social norms and guidelines nowhere become more articulated and explicit as in unsuccessful interactions, e.g. when a friend’s failure to reciprocate leads to disappearance of *χάρις*: such a friend is *ἀχάριστος*. Whereas *χάρις* is a markedly subjective term, the adjective *ἀχάριστος* (“graceless”, “ungrateful”) refers not so much to a failure to experience the morally proper emotion of gratitude, but to an overtly observable (and hence “objective”) failure to reciprocate *χάρις*: when the *χάρις* is gone, interaction ceases to be successful and hence the situation is no longer focalized from the point of view of participants who share a relation,

but from a detached external observer's point of view. ἀχάριστος is an adjective that turns a behavior you dislike into an objective breach of an objectified moral code.

In the second book of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, the first of a series of Socratic dialogues on φιλία (II.ii), Socrates is reproaching his own son Lamprocles for his lack of χάρις towards his mother, thereby setting the standard for subsequent discussions of φιλία-relationships within, as well as beyond, the οἶκος.⁹⁹ From the outset the workings of χάρις are discussed from the vantage point of its violation: ἀχαριστία. The dialogue opens with the exchange of observations based on popular morality on this phenomenon of ἀχαριστία, failure to reciprocate:

(14) Xen. Mem. II.ii.1-2¹⁰⁰

ΣΩ. Εἰπέ μοι, ἔφη, ὦ παῖ, οἷσθά τινας ἀνθρώπους ἀχαρίστους καλουμένους;

ΛΑ. Καὶ μάλα, ἔφη ὁ νεανίσκος.

ΣΩ. Καταμεμάθηκας οὖν τοὺς τί ποιοῦντας τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο ἀποκαλοῦσιν;

ΛΑ. Ἐγώγ', ἔφη· τοὺς γὰρ εὖ παθόντας, ὅταν δυνάμενοι χάριν ἀποδοῦναι μὴ ἀποδῶσιν, ἀχαρίστους καλοῦσιν.

As Lamprocles states, ἀχάριστος is a label for people who fail to return a favor (ὅταν (...) χάριν ἀποδοῦναι μὴ ἀποδῶσιν), in spite of being capable of doing so (δυνάμενοι... ἀποδοῦναι), after having received benefits (εὖ παθόντας).¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ This "vignette" in the *Memorabilia* can be read as a reaction to the accusation that Socrates taught his companions to treat their parents and other relatives with contempt (I.ii.49-50). Cf. Aristoph. *Clouds* 1312, where Socratic education has led Pheidippides to beat his father and claim that he was right to do so.

¹⁰⁰ "Look here, my boy, you know that there are some people who are called ἀχάριστος? — Yes, of course, said the boy. — Are you clear about what it is that people do to earn this name? — Yes, I am, he said. People are called ungrateful when they have been well treated and could show χάρις in return, but don't." (transl. TREDENNICK & WATERFIELD adapt.).

¹⁰¹ The addition that these people refrain from reciprocating *in spite of* their being δυνάμενος is a necessary condition for a qualification as ἀχάριστος. It is this notion of capacity that allows for a conceptualization of *all* φιλία-relationships in terms of reciprocity including those relationships that may be regarded asymmetrical in terms of power and wealth. Elsewhere, Xenophon introduces the notion of reciprocating κατὰ δύναμιν, "according to one's capacity", as a guiding principle in social and religious exchange (*Mem.* I.iii.3). See Chapters Three and Six for the implications of reciprocating according to desert.

The standard that is presupposed here is, of course, that one should respond to good treatment by “giving back” χάρις—a straightforward definition and apparently unproblematic.

However, if we think back of our three cases of isomorphism we may wonder what was wrong with the Grumbler who complained about the fact that his loan meant that he had to give back the money and owed χάρις on top. If “giving back χάρις” is precisely what a person needs to do if he is not to be called an ἀχάριστος, the Grumbler seems to be adhering to the rule. Apparently there is some tension between the moral imperative of reciprocating χάρις and the idea that χάρις cannot be reduced to returning a good—a tension that not only is manifest in our ancient sources, but that also puzzles modern commentators. DAVID KONSTAN, for instance, argues for semantically separating χάρις in the sense of the emotion “gratitude” (in collocation with εἰδέναι or ἔχειν) and χάρις in the sense of “favor” that needs to be returned:¹⁰²

(15) KONSTAN (2006), 167

Whereas Greeks of the classical period demanded and repaid *kharis* (or a *kharis*) in the sense of the good turn deserved by another (...), the terms for asking or paying back are never found in connection with *kharin ekhein* or *eidenai*. The emotion of gratitude is distinct from the act of reciprocation: it is felt, not due as compensation. The sentiment of course sustains the social system of reciprocity, but has its own grammar and role. Gratitude is never owed.

As we have seen in Section 2.2 above, such separation is unnecessary, for it obscures that the χάρις felt (“gratitude”) is *the same* as the χάρις due and the χάρις returned. χάρις *is* owed, by gods, by humans, by members of a community, by friends. The solution is not cutting up χάρις into, on the one hand, an isolated emotion of gratitude which supposedly is the foundation of friendship and on the other hand a principle of reciprocation that amounts to sordid business. Rather, we should see the problem for what it is: a problem of

¹⁰² Cf. KONSTAN (2000), 3-4, where a contradiction is assumed between “reciprocity and obligation” on the one hand and the Aristotelian requirement that *philia* and *kharis* ought to be motivated by a desire to benefit the other. KONSTAN (1998): “The question of reciprocity exhibits a paradox at the core of the notion of friendship.”

isomorphism. *χάρις*-reciprocity resembles market reciprocity without being completely reducible to it. The socially crucial difference lies in the nature of obligation. It is in this aspect, the paradoxical nature of obligation, that the concept of *χάρις* is not only challenged by the availability of alternative models of reciprocal obligation such as commercial or contractual exchange, but also articulated in distinction from or opposition to these alternative models. The “social system of reciprocity” adheres to its own grammar, i.e. grammar in the sense of tacit knowledge, social competence or implicit know-how.¹⁰³ To see how this is possible, let us first elaborate somewhat on two distinct conceptualizations of obligation.

3.2. To see and not to see: *méconnaissance*

In a polemic on the nature of *φιλία* in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, DAVID KONSTAN and PAUL MILLETT appear to choose two opposing positions.¹⁰⁴ Both scholars insist on the importance of reciprocity in *φιλία*, but operate with different interpretations of the concept:

(16) MILLETT (1991a), 118

But beneath the surface politeness was the calculating attitude that comes across in the scenes from the *Memorabilia* summarized above. In choosing friends, primary considerations were willingness and ability to repay services in full.

(17) KONSTAN (1997), 81

(...) the generosity of friends is imagined as uncoerced and spontaneous; instead of being motivated by a sense of debt, *philoï* are presumed to act out of an altruistic desire to be of benefit to each other.

Whereas MILLETT adduces Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* as evidence for his thesis that *φιλία* is equivalent to an exchange relationship based on balanced or generalized reciprocity, KONSTAN attempts to eliminate every element of instrumentality from Xenophontic *φιλία*-relationships, claiming that friendly

¹⁰³ On the notion of tacit knowledge and rule following, see GERRANS (2005); BOURDIEU (1977).

¹⁰⁴ KONSTAN (1997) devotes a section Friends and finance (78-82) to a reaction to MILLETT (1991a). Moreover, MILLETT (1996) also serves as a point of departure for KONSTAN (1996).

acts are primarily motivated by the altruistic desire to benefit the other.¹⁰⁵ However, on closer inspection, these quotations reveal two interpretations that need not exclude one another. Both implicitly assume different levels of analysis and different coexisting perspectives on the nature of friendship and the obligations involved. MILLETT focalizes from outside and distinguishes between a “surface politeness” of friends and an underlying “calculating attitude”; KONSTAN’s formulation is cautious in leaving room for a level of reality beyond the other-regarding behavior *on the level of perception* (“are presumed to act out of an altruistic desire”).¹⁰⁶ The two approaches diverge over the question which level or perspective has more reality: MILLETT dismisses other-regarding behavior as “surface politeness”, on the level of presentation, assuming that the “calculating attitude” has more reality; KONSTAN leaves aside whether friendship may *also* involve calculation and instrumentality, but insists that friends themselves believe in the sincerity of each other’s altruistic motivation, lending more reality to the altruistic quality of motivation.

These diverging estimates of the nature of ancient *φιλία* revolve around the nature of reciprocity and reciprocal obligation. Just like Euthyphro who was uncomfortable with the idea of reductionism, modern and ancient authors alike struggle with the nature of reciprocity in friendships and gift-giving. Aristotle’s definition of *χάρις* in the *Rhetoric*, for instance, is careful not to collapse *χάρις* into a blatant *quid pro quo*-exchange.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ KONSTAN (1997), 12: “Friendship is commonly assumed, both today and in antiquity (...), to be an expression of uncoerced love or altruism.” p.82: “Friendship in the classical city was not embedded in relations of economic exchange (however informal in comparison to the modern market) any more than it was entangled in political alliances. It constituted in principle, like modern friendship, a space of personal intimacy and unselfish affection distinct from the norms regulating public and commercial life.” KONSTAN (2000), 3-4 on the Aristotelian definitions of *kharis* and *philia* in terms of benefiting the other: “a description that should give pause to those who interpret *kharis* and indeed *philia* itself as based exclusively on reciprocity and obligation.” However, in KONSTAN (2006), 170-1, Konstan notes that the affective side of friendship in the Greek classical polis remains controversial (in spite of his earlier work).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. KONSTAN (2000), 2 for a more acute formulation: “It is important to recognize that altruism is not, in the first instance, a question about behavior but rather about the interpretation of behavior.”

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter Three for more on *χάρις* and conceptions of reciprocity in Aristotle.

(18) Ar. Rhet. II.vii¹⁰⁸

ἔστω δὴ χάρις, καθ' ἣν ὁ ἔχων λέγεται χάριν ὑπουργεῖν δεομένῳ μὴ ἀντί τινος, μὴδ' ἵνα τι αὐτῷ ὑπουργοῦντι, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἐκείνῳ τι

Aristotle emphatically defines *χάρις* in terms of other-regarding behavior: to qualify as an act of *χάρις*, a favor should be neither merely a reaction to a preceding favor (*ἀντί τινος*), nor intended (*ἵνα*) to obtain a return.¹⁰⁹ Still, as Aristotle is more than ready to recognize elsewhere,¹¹⁰ there always *is* an expectation of return, as if someone “has not given a gift but made a loan” — implying that an expectation of return cancels the spirit of the gift—a well-known paradox:

(19) DERRIDA (1997), 128

For there to be a gift, there must be no reciprocity, return, exchange, counter-gift, debt. If the other *gives* me *back* or *owes* me or has to give me back what I give him or her, there will not have been a gift. (...) [The] conditions of possibility of the gift... designate simultaneously the conditions of the impossibility of the gift.

If friendship is all about reciprocity, good turns cancel each other out and the friendship itself becomes inexplicable. The only way of resolving this paradox is allowing two co-existing perspectives on reciprocity: on the one hand the perspective of the external observer for whom giving and lending are materially identical, and on the other hand the perspective of the participants in a successful interaction who experience “uncoerced and spontaneous” behavior and who may even perceive altruistic motives in the other’s behavior.

¹⁰⁸ “Let *χάρις*, in the sense that one is said to “have *χάρις*,” be [defined as] a service to one in need, not in return for anything nor that the one rendering the service may get anything but as something for the recipient.” (*transl.* KENNEDY).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Democritus DK 68b 96: *χαριστικός* οὐχ ὁ βλέπων πρὸς τὴν ἀμοιβήν, ἀλλ' ὁ εὖ δοῶν προσηρημένος. “The generous person is not he who looks to a return, but rather he who treats another well by choice.” *βλέπων* (*χάρις* requires perception!), “looking at” or “*aiming* at”, defines being *χαριστικός* in terms of motivation, *προσηρημένος* in terms of choice. Cf. fr. 229. KONSTAN (2000), 6.

¹¹⁰ See Chapter Three.

To see how this works, let us briefly go back to the anthropological definitions of “generalized reciprocity”.¹¹¹ Generalized reciprocity:

(20) WILK & CLIGGETT (2007), 162

(...) includes a system of giving things without taking account of how much was given, with the assumption that at some time in the undefined future something will be given back.

This definition contains at least four “vague” components: the value of the initial gift or favor is not precisely recorded; the assumption of a return is not formalized into a contractual or otherwise objective obligation; the time-span between prestation and counter-prestation is left undefined; and the nature of the counter-prestation is undetermined.

What is the status of these indeterminacies? An external observer, e.g. an anthropologist, who only has access to the material manifestations of reciprocity, may observe that within the time span of, say, a couple of years, the favors (help in moving house, drives to the airport, baby-sitting, assistance with filling in tax forms) between a group of adult friends amount to a net result close to neutral: within a stable group of friends, each friend’s prestations approximately counterbalance the favors he has received from others. But there is a discrepancy between this perception from an external viewpoint and the experience of the participants, the friends, who refuse to see matters this way. They feel that this “reckoning of debts” somehow wipes out the fact that they are doing these things “for free”, “for the sake of the other” and “because they are friends”—they may even believe that these acts are “altruistic”, because they do not demand immediate returns and leave it to the initiative of the other to decide if and when they are willing to reciprocate their kindness.

However, after a while, these friends become aware of the fact that one of them *never* offers any favors, whereas in the course of years they have all helped him move house, helped him paint his house, stood by him during the painful break-up with his girlfriend and repeatedly invited him to dinner. Now his life seems fairly stabilized and his problems are solved—and he still does not do

¹¹¹ See Introduction.

anything for his friends. His friends feel that he is a sponger, who has “taken advantage of them”, and, under these circumstances, finally concede that the external observer does have a point: of course, they do expect *something* in return for their kind favors. The same friends who fiercely objected against the anthropologist’s blind spot for their altruistic motives, now all of a sudden feel that their sponger-friend has violated an objective Law of Friendship.

Are these friends incoherent? That is one way of qualifying their social norms. But the anthropologist, who turns out to be MARSHALL SAHLINS, the architect of the threefold typology of reciprocity,¹¹² would say that they are being social. SAHLINS formulates a definition similar to T 20, while also explaining the social function of indeterminacies:

(21) SAHLINS (1972), 193

“Generalized reciprocity” refers to transactions that are putatively altruistic, transactions on the line of assistance given and, if possible and necessary, assistance returned. (...)—the expectation of direct material return is unseemly. At best it is implicit. The material side of the transaction is repressed by the social: reckoning of debts outstanding cannot be overt and is typically left out of account. This is not to say that handing over things in such forms, even to “loved ones,” generates no counter-obligation.

The function of vaguenesses, the indeterminacies of time, quantity and quality, is precisely to sustain the participant’s experience of “the social” or of “altruism” in defiance of the material truth accessible to the external observer who is capable of registering the fact that prestations within generalized reciprocity do generate counter-obligations. This participant’s experience involves an entire system of social meaning that to an external observer can only be accounted for in terms of “vagueness” and “indeterminacy”.

In essence, this revolves around the fundamental discrepancy between internal focalization, i.e. the perception of participants, and the perspective of the external observer¹¹³—in PIERRE BOURDIEU’S terms, the discrepancy between

¹¹² See Introduction.

¹¹³ BOURDIEU (1990 [1980]), 105: “[E]ven if reciprocity is the ‘objective’ truth of the discrete acts that ordinary experience knows in discrete form and associates with the idea of a gift, it is perhaps

agents on the one hand who construct reciprocity in time, and the omniscient, omnipresent spectator on the other hand who attempts to “objectify” the phenomenon of reciprocity by detemporalizing its mechanics and turning reciprocity into a cycle of reversible practices.¹¹⁴ Assuming the position of an external observer means excluding the element of time from the workings of reciprocity and to neglect the elements of improvisation and uncertainty that make the “social efficacy” of the little gifts and gestures of ordinary life.¹¹⁵

Explanations of social behavior that fail to take improvisation and uncertainty, i.e. the effects of time, into account will not be capable of explaining the strategic and interpretative moments in social interaction. Assuming “objective” rules of reciprocity is tantamount to collapsing the difference between a gift, a loan and a swap. They all amount to the same when the unfolding of time is denied its meaning,¹¹⁶ for it is time that prevents the reduction of the participants’ experience to the “objective” truth constructed by the external observer that from a material point of view gift exchange, swapping and lending amount to the same net effect. Interval serves as “an instrument of denial”¹¹⁷ for agents who must “refuse to know” the objective truth of their exchanges:

(22) BOURDIEU (1977), 6

If the system is to work, the agents must not be entirely unaware of the truth of their exchanges, which is made explicit in the anthropologist’s model, while at the same time they must refuse to know it and above all to recognize it.

not the whole truth of a practice that could not exist if its subjective truth coincided perfectly with its “objective” truth.” (my emphasis).

¹¹⁴ BOURDIEU (1990 [1980]), 105.

¹¹⁵ BOURDIEU (1990 [1980]), 99.

¹¹⁶ BOURDIEU (1990 [1980]), 105: “In every society it may be observed that, if it is not to constitute an insult, the counter-gift must be deferred and different, because the immediate return of an exactly identical object clearly amounts to a refusal. Thus gift exchange is opposed to swapping, which, like the theoretical model of the cycle of reciprocity, telescopes gift and counter-gift into the same instant. It is also opposed to lending, in which the return of the loan, explicitly guaranteed by a legal act, is in a sense already performed at the very moment when a contract is drawn up ensuring the predictability and calculability of the acts it prescribes.”

¹¹⁷ BOURDIEU (1990 [1980]), 107. DAVIDSON (2007), 41 paraphrases *méconnaissance* as “a functional hypocrisy”.

It is this element of misrecognition, *méconnaissance*, that enables the partners of a long-term relationship to maintain that a gift is a gift, a favor a favor, and generosity is uncoerced.¹¹⁸ Therefore, acts of reciprocation, i.e. returning *χάρις*, are not to be confused with compensation in a commercial sense of obligation. Whereas objectively, i.e. in terms of the material manifestations, “debts” may resemble the obligations incurred by gifts or favors received, from the point of view of the participants in such long-term relationships they are distinct:¹¹⁹ debts are burdensome, and paying them off a relief; by contrast, within the framework and expectations of a long-term relationship, the same acts are not perceived as inflicting and settling debts, but as a mutual conferring of favors, manifestations of gracefulness and expressions of gratification.

Let us for a moment go back to the social script underlying an ideal long-term relationship and see at what points perception comes in:

- (1) *A brings B a χάρις*, a “favor”. A favor should be seen as distinct from a commercial allocation, e.g. because it is “uncoerced”, “gratuitous”, “without expecting a return”, “because of B *himself* and not in order to gain something.” A “misrecognizes” his expectation of return and, perhaps, of the fact that he felt obliged to do the favor.
- (2) *B accepts and recognizes A’s action as χάρις*, by ostensibly *not* experiencing *χάρις* as a debt (misrecognition, e.g. by reacting cheerfully and by postponing mentioning the return), by ostensibly *not* taking account of quantities (misrecognition, e.g. by stressing the unique quality of the *χάρις*).
- (3) *B reciprocates A’s χάρις*, not by *compensation* or *retribution*, but by bringing a *χάρις* himself, a favor that should be seen as distinct from redeeming debts, e.g. because it is “uncoerced”, “gratuitous”, “without expecting a return”, “because of A *himself* and not in order to redeem debts”, “because he appreciates A”, “because he rejoices in his bond with A”, B misrecognizes that his *χάρις* is a reaction to A’s antecedent *χάρις*.

¹¹⁸ BOURDIEU’s analysis applies not only to gift exchange in the sense of exchange of material concrete gifts, but to every transaction that involves a generalization of reciprocity over a longer time span: the generalized exchange of care, help and sustenance work along the same lines.

¹¹⁹ BRANDT (1974) draws a similar distinction between two types of obligations.

The entire script is premised upon framing: *χάρις* can only circulate when it is, time and again, perceived and acknowledged—at the expense of the perception of other elements that are present in the exchange. Without internal focalization there is no charm, attraction or pleasure in the exchange; focalized from the point of view of successful interaction one misrecognizes the burden of indebtedness. Without internal focalization there are no gifts or favors, only objects and services; from the point of view of successful interaction things cease to have a price. To “know” *χάρις* means to not-know something else.

χάρις-talk is performative language. In order to see *χάρις*, we must adopt the participant’s focalization and be ready to approach things from the vantage point of successful interaction, for *χάρις* is in the eye of the beholder and everyone involved needs to participate for *χάρις* to work: making an effort to see the beautiful may eventually be the same as making an effort *not* to see another truth, the inconvenient truth expressed by Carion, Socrates and the Grumbler who, by adopting an detached external point of view to *χάρις*-exchanges, made *χάρις* disappear from the analysis.

To the Greeks of the Classical period, the inconvenient truth, the “objective truth” that needs to be misrecognized in order to preserve the *χάρις* in the exchange, is the truth of the market, i.e. the view that it all comes down to traffic, trade and credit. This is not to say that this is a universally inconvenient truth,¹²⁰ nor a scientifically established “objective” truth behind exchange

¹²⁰ Although BOURDIEU in n.115 does think this goes for “every society”. To my view the opposition of gift giving and swapping/lending only gains meaning under the culturally contingent circumstances that (i) lending with legal backing is an option at all (which presupposes the existence of judicial institutions) and (ii) swapping is an available phenomenon in the socio-economic realm. Neither can be taken for granted, in “every society”, let alone in Classical Athens, where both are relatively recent developments, premised on the rise of the polis as a political entity, and on the monetization of the ancient world. Gift exchange, and its manipulation of time, can be defined by its oppositions to lending and swapping *if and only if* these exchange modes are simultaneously available and perceived of as bearing similarities and, hence, being in need of disambiguation. This is not to say that before monetization, there was no *méconnaissance* involved in gift exchange, but only that *méconnaissance* had a somewhat different meaning as there were other truths to be misrecognized before the development of market economy. On the “creation-myth of money”, i.e. the misunderstanding that barter was a precursor of monetary exchange, see Introduction. Instantaneous exchange between neutral strangers only became a current and everyday model of exchange with the monetization of the

according to our own moderns standards (supported by, say, economists, anthropologists or evolutionary biologists). It simply means that these Greeks have the experience that *χάρις*-exchanges sometimes resemble market-exchanges, that they feel awkward about this isomorphism and that they choose to make *χάρις*-exchanges somehow “immune” against the market model that seems to force itself upon the situation because it is easy to think with.¹²¹

The ultimate historical cause of the need to disambiguate between different modes of reciprocity may be a complex interplay of political, judicial and economic factors. To the Greeks, money, credit transactions, paid labor, trade and traffic seem to have represented a cluster of ideas, the realm of the short-term order of disembedded economy, that was in principle morally underdetermined (not good or bad *per se*),¹²² but that in situations of isomorphism formed a threat to the conceptualization of the values and bonds of the long-term order. Hence, monetization may be the cause of the *perceived* need to disambiguate as people come to be actively and explicitly aware of the importance of subjectivity in *χάρις*-exchanges: of good intentions, positive emotions, of *not* knowing the ugly name of the exchange—things that look like vagueness from an external point of view.

Mediterranean world and the rise of markets.

¹²¹ The term *méconnaissance* is potentially misleading in sounding deliberate and intentional, smacking of hypocrisy and insincerity, because it seems to presuppose that agents know the truth they are suppressing. This depends on the conception of “knowledge”. The knowledge possessed by agents in social interaction is “practical knowledge”, i.e. social know-how (analogous to linguistic competence), as opposed to a knowing-that that can be propositionally formulated (analogous to grammatical knowledge). *Méconnaissance* requires a less intentionalist approach of both knowing and not-knowing: an agent that “intentionally” and theoretically “knows” is capable of representing means and ends of the contents of his knowledge; misrecognition is a matter of practical knowledge and agents who “choose” to misrecognize an aspect of a situation without having full access to the reason why they are doing so except from “knowing” that they do the socially appropriate thing. Cf. GERRANS (2005). *Méconnaissance* is deliberate in the sense that it requires effort by the agents: the suppressed material reality is perfectly accessible to the agents of exchange, and it takes effort to suppress it (to remove the price tag from a gift, to *not* compare the value of Christmas gifts etc.).

¹²² See Introduction.

The insistence on keeping things vague is meaningful behavior in a world where precision is an option, when exchanges of low-value products for small sums of money are common, when small change is in circulation on a large scale. The moment one is logistically able to charge one's neighbor a dime for a cup of sugar it becomes meaningful behavior when one refrains from doing so by leaving it somewhat vague and open how the neighbor is to respond. "Having meaning implies choice."¹²³ The exact meaning that the lapse of time generates in a reciprocal endeavor depends on the question which options are culturally available at a given moment in history.

4. CONFLICTS AND CYNICISM

The phenomena of perception and *méconnaissance* have serious implications for the assessment of our sources of classical conceptualizations of χάρις. Imagine an anthropologist in the remote future who is burdened with the mission impossible of reconstructing 20th-century Western European conceptions of marriage, whereas the only sources available are transcripts of divorce papers. On the basis of the available data, this anthropologist may arrive at the conclusion that 20th-century Western European marriage was little more than a legal transaction between two people who decide to start a joint enterprise. The anthropologist may be shocked by the instrumentalist tenor of his sources: there is little sign of generosity and commitment in these papers, let alone of love, and there are no manifestations of other-regarding behavior.

Clearly, it is the nature of the source that makes love, generosity and commitment fall out of the picture. Divorce papers are drawn up the moment the marriage is effectively over. It basically presents us with a *retrospective* analysis of the efforts and the prestations of the partners during their marriage. This is typically a situation in which vaguenesses and indeterminacies are wiped out and the consensual misrecognition of the material reality that has so long sustained the relationship between the partners has collapsed. Because

¹²³ The expression is LYONS' ((1968), 413) used in the context of structural semantics but seems to be applicable to all sorts of meaningful behavior.

there are no prospects of continuing their reciprocity *and* because the situation forces them to talk precisely about the material side of the preceding transactions, the ex-spouses switch into a calculating mode as if they were external observers keeping track of the balance sheets.¹²⁴

Hence, if we are not to fall into the same trap as the future anthropologist, we need to assess our sources carefully and ask ourselves some preliminary questions:

- Who is focalizing?¹²⁵
 - External focalization: an external observer who analyzes the overt/objective mechanisms of reciprocal exchange.
 - Internal focalization: character focalization, from the point of view of the participants who have access to non-overt aspects of reciprocal exchange, such as emotions, attitudes and dispositions.
- What is the temporal perspective?¹²⁶

¹²⁴ An ancient analogue for divorce drama is Euripides' *Medea*, where Jason's use of the language of commerce (his consistent talk about "gain", "profit", "need" and the "better deal") sharply contrasts with Medea who appeals to their pre-existing marriage in terms of χάρις, of good turns (including sexual ones) to and fro. Cf. MUELLER (2001) who offers a beautiful reading of Euripides' *Medea* in terms of the conflicting worldviews of Medea and Jason. As MUELLER notes, Jason's "language of profit and gain directly violates the code of silence regarding the balancing of favors between friends." (476) However, I would argue that this characterization of Jason does not so much serve to stage his shortcomings as an "aristocratic friend"; rather the contrast between Jason's language of commerce and Medea's language of long-term reciprocity serves to dramatize the contrast between the point of view of a man who is making up the balance sheet because his marriage is effectively over and the point of view of a woman who contests the assumption that their marriage can possibly be terminated and whose strategy consists in emphasizing the irredeemable nature of her husband's indebtedness. In fact, both Jason and Medea engage in a "precise reckoning of the balance of favors", precisely because they contest each other's interpretation of the situation: Medea objects to Jason's attempt to write out a final check by rewriting the narrative of their marriage, whereas Jason contests the irredeemability of his indebtedness to her. Hence, *both* engage in a retrospective interpretation of what once was χάρις by making the terms of their relationship explicit, each according to his/her own vision and interests. On the difference between "aristocratic" equal φιλία and unequal φιλία-bonds within the context of the *oikos*, see Chapter Three and Chapter Six.

¹²⁵ It is important to distinguish between narrative voice (first person vs. third person) and focalization/point of view (first person vs. third person). See n.81 above.

¹²⁶ This has implications for the aspectual difference between χαρίζεσθαι (present aspect) and χαρίσασθαι (aorist aspect). See Chapter Five.

- A *vision par derrière*: a temporal point of view that regards χάρις-exchanges as completed events in the past.
- A *vision avec*: a point of view from which χάρις-exchanges are not-completed and χάρις is seen as an ongoing process.

4.1. Temporal perspective: balance sheets

It would be misguided to understand ancient Greek φιλία as an utterly “objective” or “contractual” relationship¹²⁷ on the basis of complaints of disappointed friends who in retrospect see their friendship as a balance sheet with unpaid bills. For instance, the fact that Theognis (T12 above) calls unreciprocated good turns “χάρις in vain” seems to betray a “blatantly pragmatic approach”:¹²⁸ it conceives of χάρις as closed (and hence concrete) events and the frustrated expectations are made explicit—because it is formulated from the *vision par derrière* of a negative experience, voiced moreover by a teacher who intends to expose the mechanisms of reciprocity in terms of “objective rules”. In unsuccessful interactions the difference between χάρις and market reciprocity collapses.

At the same time, contrasting *deiloi* friends with an ideal case of friendship, the text hints at the social norms that do demarcate χάρις-exchange from exchanges that are motivated by profit seeking. The better the friendship, the more charitable the interpreter can be and the less concrete χάρις needs to be, up to the point that even if one of the friends is not yet capable of returning the favor, the bond is not seriously at risk. As long as it is clear that he still “knows the favor” (χάριν εἰδέναι), there still is χάρις. Conversely, *deiloi* are immediately resentful after one single failure on the part of the friend because they approach friendship as a one-off interaction (like commerce!) and reveal themselves to have an insatiable mind (ἄπληστον νόον).

Another instructive example of the effect of temporal perspective can be found in Socrates’ conversation with his friend Aristarchus.¹²⁹ In this context,

¹²⁷ HEATH (1987), 3-4: “[*Philia*] is not, at root, a subjective bond of affection and emotional warmth, but the entirely objective bond of reciprocal obligation.”

¹²⁸ SCOTT (1984), 2.

¹²⁹ Xen. *Mem.* II.vii.

again, the mechanisms of reciprocity that sustain *φιλία*-relationships are discussed from the vantage point of *ἀχαριστία*, i.e. from the point of view of disturbed reciprocity (*vision par derrière*). Due to the upheavals during the Peloponnesian war, an exodus to the Peiraeus has taken place causing a great number of female relatives to seek shelter and sustenance with Aristarchus. As Aristarchus' land has been confiscated by enemies, he has lost his primary source of income, spending his days in utter desperation over his lack of means and the many mouths he has to feed. Socrates' advice is to seek for a different source of income in a speech that reveals an implicit "pathology" of a disturbed reciprocal relationship:

(23) Xen. Mem. II.vii.9¹³⁰

ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν μὲν, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, οὐτε σὺ ἐκείνας φιλεῖς οὐτ' ἐκεῖναι σέ, σὺ μὲν ἡγούμενος αὐτὰς ἐπιζημίους εἶναι σεαυτῶ, ἐκεῖναι δὲ σέ ὀρῶσαι ἀχθόμενον ἐφ' ἑαυταῖς· ἐκ δὲ τούτων κίνδυνος μείζω τε ἀπέχθειαν γίγνεσθαι καὶ τὴν προγεγονυῖαν χάριν μειοῦσθαι.

The diagnosis is lucid: in a situation of poverty and lack of viable prospects, the normal mechanisms of reciprocal well-doing are blocked and *χάρις* disappears—which causes a shift in the way both parties perceive each other: they do not longer *see* the situation in terms of (*ἡγεῖσθαι*) *χάρις*. Aristarchus is no longer able to express commitment (*φιλεῖς*) towards his female relatives, who *see* that (*ὀρῶσαι*); their former *χάρις* makes way for a sense of irritation (*ἀπέχθεια*). Socrates predicts that in the face of poverty, where there is no prospect of return of favors, exchanges will be reframed into less favorable terminology: favors (*χάρις*) and commitment (*φιλία*) turn into material loss or damage (*ἐπιζημίους*), whereas gratitude turns into a sense of indebtedness that breeds annoyance (*ἀπέχθεια*).

As long as the turn-taking structure is not seriously disrupted, participants are capable of viewing *χάρις* as an ongoing process that calls for continuous reinterpretation of mutual exchange acts. As long as exchanges are regarded as

¹³⁰ "As things are, I suppose, there is no *φιλία* lost between you: you feel that they are imposing upon you; they can see that you are annoyed with them; and consequently there is a danger that the ill-feeling will grow and the former *χάρις* decline." (*transl.* TREDENNICK & WATERFIELD).

not-completed, participants are capable of upholding *méconnaissance*: there is no balance sheet. However, in the absence of viable prospects, the temporal dynamics of exchange is put to a stop and the carefully sustained *méconnaissance* collapses. Previous exchanges are viewed as closed events and the calculating begins: obligations and expectations that hitherto remained implicit become, retrospectively, objectified—whereas in a healthy relationship, there is no such thing as a *final* bill, and partners silently agree on concealing the balance sheets.

The remedy Socrates has to offer is equally lucid: Aristarchus should force a breakthrough in the situation by creating means of generating income. Aristarchus should borrow capital to make a start with a little wool-manufacturing workplace:

(24) Xen. Mem. II.vii.9.5¹³¹

ἐὰν δὲ προστατήσης ὅπως ἐνεργοὶ ᾧσι, σὺ μὲν ἐκείνας φιλήσεις, ὀρῶν ὠφελίμους σεαυτῶ οὔσας, ἐκείναι δὲ σὲ ἀγαπήσουσιν, αἰσθόμεναι χαίροντά σε αὐταῖς, τῶν δὲ προγεγονυῖων εὐεργεσιῶν ἥδιον μεμνημένοι τὴν ἀπ' ἐκείνων χάριν ἀυξήσετε, καὶ ἐκ τούτων φιλικώτερον τε καὶ οἰκειότερον ἀλλήλοις ἔξετε.

Once everyone is back to work relationships can be restored: *because* Aristarchus is back in a position in which he can benefit his relatives, and *because* these relatives finally have the opportunity to do something in return, there is an increase of overall *χάρις*: *because* the women are reciprocating with benefits, Aristarchus is able to φιλεῖν them again. On the whole, commitment and the mutual sense of relatedness will be strengthened (καὶ ἐκ τούτων φιλικώτερον τε καὶ οἰκειότερον ἀλλήλοις ἔξετε) and sustained by positive emotions (ἀγαπήσουσιν, χαίροντά), because the change in situation allows for a more favorable perception—hence the emphatic use of verbs of perception (ὀρῶσι, ὀρῶν, αἰσθόμεναι) as well as words referring to pleasant experiences:

¹³¹ “But if you encourage them to work, you will φιλεῖν them, when you see that they are doing something for you, and they will like you when they realize that you are pleased with them; and as you both remember former acts of kindness with greater pleasure, you will increase the χάρις aroused by these acts with the result that the relations between you will become cordial and intimate.” (transl. TREDENNICK & WATERFIELD).

when being reminded of one's obligation to the other is a pleasant experience (ἡδίων μεμνημένοι) there is χάρις in the exchange (χαίροντα).

The Aristarchus episode demonstrates not only the vital importance of the mechanism of reciprocal benefit for the continuation of φιλία-relationships; it also demonstrates that framing an exchange in terms of χάρις entails *not* seeing things: concealing balance sheets and suspending the final bill—a feature that demarcates φιλία-reciprocity from seemingly isomorphous more ephemeral *quid pro quo*-exchanges in which every single time the accounts need to be balanced.¹³²

4.2. Focalization: cynicism

An example of the effects of external focalization are the great number of texts that, as KONSTAN has noted,¹³³ do in fact explicitly propagate the obligation to make “restitution”: one “demands back” χάρις for services performed,¹³⁴ “repays”¹³⁵ or “owes it”,¹³⁶ sometimes even in a “payment”.¹³⁷ Here, χάρις is framed in a Debtor Paradigm of Obligation,¹³⁸ where obligations are reduced to debts, givers to creditors, recipients to debtors—formulations that leave little room for vagueness and misrecognition.¹³⁹

In these situations, the concept of χάρις itself is subjected to analysis and, hence, is focalized not from within a successful interaction, but from an **external point of view**. External focalization is applied either in didactic contexts where a detached observer (an anthropologist, philosopher, didactic poet) attempts to offer an objective analysis of overt behavior, or in contexts of problematic interactions, i.e. disagreements and conflict situations, where participants attempt to maneuver themselves in the position of an external observer and to

¹³² On the potentially ironic ending of the dialogue, see Chapter Six.

¹³³ KONSTAN (2006), 166.

¹³⁴ ἀπαιτεῖν, e.g. *Lys.* 18.23, 18.27, 21.25.

¹³⁵ ἀποδιδόναι, e.g. *Lys.* 18.27.

¹³⁶ ὀφείλειν, e.g. *Soph., Ant.* 331, *Is.* 18.67, *Xen. Cyr.* 3.2.30, *Dem.* 4.4.

¹³⁷ τιμή, e.g. *Lys.* 25.6; ἀποστίνειν, *Aesch. Ep.* 4.6.7; τίνειν, *Lycophron, Al.* 1092, *Hipp. Ep.* 27.260.

¹³⁸ For more on the Debtor Paradigm of Obligation, see Chapter Three.

¹³⁹ Cf. BLUNDELL (1989), 29: “The language of debt and repayment is pervasive in Greek discussion of both revenge and friendship.”

objectify the situation in terms of concrete observable outstanding debts. The resulting descriptions of reciprocal relationships strike us as cynical:

(25) Thuc. II.40.4¹⁴⁰

οὐ γὰρ πάσχοντες εὖ, ἀλλὰ δρῶντες κτώμεθα τοὺς φίλους. βεβαιότερος δὲ ὁ δράσας τὴν χάριν ὥστε ὀφειλομένην δι' εὐνοίας ᾧ δέδωκε σῶζειν· ὁ δὲ ἀντοφείλων ἀμβλύτερος, εἰδὼς οὐκ ἐς χάριν, ἀλλ' ἐς ὀφείλημα τὴν ἀρετὴν ἀποδώσων.

(26) Ar. NE 1167b16-24¹⁴¹

Οἱ δ' εὐεργέται τοὺς εὐεργετηθέντας δοκοῦσι μᾶλλον φιλεῖν ἢ οἱ εὖ παθόντες τοὺς δράσαντας, καὶ ὡς παρὰ λόγον γινόμενον ἐπιζητεῖται. τοῖς μὲν οὖν πλείστοις φαίνεται ὅτι οἱ μὲν ὀφείλουσι τοῖς δὲ ὀφείλεται. καθάπερ οὖν ἐπὶ τῶν δανείων οἱ μὲν ὀφείλοντες βούλονται μὴ εἶναι οἷς ὀφείλουσιν, οἱ δὲ δανείσαντες καὶ ἐπιμελοῦνται τῆς τῶν ὀφειλόντων σωτηρίας, οὕτω καὶ τοὺς εὐεργετήσαντας βούλεσθαι εἶναι τοὺς παθόντας ὡς κομιουμένους τὰς χάριτας, τοῖς δ' οὐκ εἶναι ἐπιμελὲς τὸ ἀνταποδοῦναι.

Texts such as these do display an instrumentalist and calculating attitude in interpersonal affairs. But again, they should not without qualification be taken as evidence for the general contention that ancient friendship had no affective character at all, but was entirely reducible to objective duties and claims.¹⁴² What we see here is the result of objectification: the very purpose of these texts is to offer an objectified analysis of the mechanisms of reciprocity from a third

¹⁴⁰ "(...) for we acquire φίλοι not in consequence of what others do for us, but by doing it for them. He who confers χάρις is in a stronger position... whereas he who owes it is slower to act, since he knows he returns the *aretê* not as a χάρις, but as a debt."

¹⁴¹ "Benefactors seem to love beneficiaries more than receivers love bestowers of benefits; and this is made a problem for investigation, as if it were an unreasonable thing to happen. Now to most people it appears that one party are debtors, the other creditors; as in the case of a loan, then, where debtors wish creditors not to exist, while those who made the loan even take care to ensure the safety of their debtors, so the view is that benefactors too wish the recipients to exist so that they can recoup the χάρις they have bestowed, while recipients do not give the same care to repaying them." (*transl.* BROADIE & ROWE)

¹⁴² HEATH (1987), 3-4; DONLAN (1980), 14. For a reconciliation between the formalist ("instrumentalist") approach of ancient friendship with a position that recognizes affective elements, see GOLDHILL (1986), 82 who speaks about "complex obligations, duties and claims." Cf. RACCANELLI (1998), 20. Both MILLETT (1991) and KONSTAN (1997), but esp. (2006), seem to be proponents of a "layered" approach of φιλία (KONSTAN (1997) uses the term "overdetermination").

person point of view.

Pericles' rhetoric reveals how the ideology of *χάρις* serves to create and perpetuate debt-relationships from an external perspective for he is speaking to the Athenian citizens about how to oblige allies (who are not part of the audience).¹⁴³ Here, the entire citizenry is a collective entity involved in an exchange with other groups (the allies), and Pericles' speech is part of a larger deliberative process that in the case of individuals would have remained internalized. Aristotle, in an attempt to explain the dynamics between benefactor and beneficiary, expounds the popular vision (from which he dissociates himself) that the relation resembles the creditor/debtor-relationship, conflating the *χάριτες* owed by the beneficiary with a debt—only to dismiss this analogy later on.¹⁴⁴ In third-person perspectives and hindsight analysis, *χάρις* is said to be “owed” as a debt when it is due. Hence, these texts *are* cynical:¹⁴⁵ they are disenchanting in reducing *χάρις* entirely to debt, denying the reality of uncoerced generosity, favors and gifts free from expectations.¹⁴⁶

This “objective reality” that manifests itself in third person analysis or hindsight narrative requires qualification, for, as we have seen, it is precisely the *χάρις*-dimension that gets lost in such contexts. Ancient social theory, be it implicit (e.g. in the orators, drama) or explicit (e.g. didactic poetry, Xenophon, Aristotle), that attempts to formulate a consistent analysis of phenomena such as *χάρις* and *φιλία* inevitably runs into problems of perspective, for it is difficult to accommodate the dynamics of time and subjectivity in a detemporalized objective description.¹⁴⁷ The two coexisting truths of exchange,

¹⁴³ See also Chapter Two Section 6 on *χάρις* in asymmetrical relations, and on the significance of the compound *ἀντοφείλων* (“owing in return”) in this passage.

¹⁴⁴ On Aristotle's approach to *χάρις* and issues of perspective, see Chapter Three.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. BOURDIEU (1998), 95 on the sociologist' task to unveil the material truth of social action: “(...) a truth of their action, a truth which the sociologist unveils, but at the risk of describing as cynical calculation an act which claims to be disinterested and which must be taken as such, in its lived truth, which the theoretical model must also consider and explain.”

¹⁴⁶ It is no coincidence that the majority of the places that call for a “restitutive” interpretation of *χάρις* is to be found in the corpus of the orators—i.e. in judicial contexts, moments at which the relationship in question is already problematic.

¹⁴⁷ BOURDIEU (1998), 95: “Here we touch on a very difficult problem: sociology, if it limits itself to an objectivist description, reduces the exchange of gifts to swapping and can no longer establish the difference between an exchange of gifts and an act of credit.” See Chapter Three for the

the one expressible in theoretical description and the other subsisting as tacit knowledge and lived truth, cannot be reconciled in a monolithic model.¹⁴⁸

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The case of *χάρις* is illustrative for some of the mechanisms that are operative in long-term reciprocal relations such as *φιλία*. Moreover, the case of *χάρις* confronts us with the distorting effects of language: we have seen how the linguistic representation of the “grammar” of exchange and social interaction is distorted in important respects depending on factors of focalization and temporal perspective.

Detached analysis (external focalization) and spiteful retrospection (*vision par derrière*) involve a perception of exchange in terms of completed events that can be objectified and impose a framing on a situation that is at odds with *χάρις* in a functional relation when it is an ongoing process (*vision avec*) that is charitably interpreted by internally focalizing participants (internal focalization). From an internal point of view, Carion and the Grumbler, in reducing honorable sex and friendly aid to prostitution and credit, *see* things the wrong way; from the socially detached point of view of Carion and the Grumbler, people give concealing *names* (“euphemisms”) to the inconvenient truth that it all comes down to the same thing. Euthyphro, hesitant to concede that “traffic” is the more truthful name for “piety”, in any case thinks it an “ugly” name—but is dragged towards an external perspective by Socrates to analyze the “true” grammar of religious relations.

problems of perspective encountered by Aristotle.

¹⁴⁸ As BOURDIEU has repeatedly pointed out, the fallacy of objectivism is to reduce strategy to rules and to reduce the subjective experience of the gift to the objective detemporalized truth that each gift calls for a counter-gift. On the fallacy of the rule, see e.g. BOURDIEU (1977), 22-30. On the notion of “tacit knowledge”, knowledge not consciously possessed by a subject but practically expressed in discourse by an agent, see BOURDIEU (1986), 41ff., (1990), 100-103 (“practical knowledge (...) does not contain knowledge of its own principles”). The distinction between theoretically expressible knowledge and tacit knowledge resembles RYLE’s distinction between “knowing that” and “knowing how” (1949). For a critical assessment of BOURDIEU’S notion of “tacit knowledge”, see GERRANS (2005).

The literary sources of the Classical period offer us several examples of such a tension between the notion of *χάρις* and the powerful conceptual model of monetary obligations. In situations where there is a risk of isomorphism, i.e. in contexts where both *χάρις* and the notions of money or market exchange are activated, we find articulated how people feel that these two models are related to each other: they turn their tacit know-how, their implicit social competence, into social grammar rules. Implicitly, most Athenians “know” that Carion, Socrates and the Grumbler are socially incompetent: the extreme position that *χάρις* can be entirely reduced to debt is a taboo. However, within the bounds of the socially acceptable, there is room for negotiation of the grammar rules and we find our sources explore several strategies of demarcating *χάρις* and the paradigm of finance and banking. In the next chapter we shall take a look at some common recurring strategies of demarcating different modes of reciprocities and of immunizing long-term reciprocity from incorporation in a market model. In Chapter Three, we shall address the question to what extent the first person experience has any reality in detached philosophical analysis by singling out one particular analysis: Aristotle’s analysis of obligation that tends to favor a third person perspective but that also shows awareness of the importance of subjectivity and first person experience.