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

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Citation

Berkel, T. A. van. (2012, November 27). *The economics of friendship : changing conceptions of reciprocity in classical Athens*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/20181>

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Date: 2012-11-27

CHAPTER FOUR

Pricing the Invaluable: Socrates and the Value of Friendship

The more I buy, the more I'm bought.

JOE PUG, "Hymn #101", (2008)

Nowadays people know the price of everything and the
value of nothing.

OSCAR WILDE (1890), Chapter IV

FRIENDS are wealth and more properly so than money.¹ This statement, that recurs several times in Xenophon's oeuvre, is provocative for the pun it contains: friends are more properly called *χρήματα* than money (*χρήματα*) can be called *χρήματα*. Moreover, in a series of Socratic conversations, friends are conceived of as commodities having a precise cash equivalent, and as possessions that are objects of purchase.

Xenophon's Socrates appears to be just as reductionist and boorish as his Platonic twin whose analysis of religion made Euthyphro feel awkward.² In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, however, Socrates' conversation partners do not seem to be shocked or puzzled in the least; they cheerfully accept Socrates' application of commercial models to all sorts of *φιλία*-relations. This seems odd, given that this seemed to be a socially unacceptable behavior and since we

¹ A considerable part of this chapter is published in ROSEN & SLUITER (2010). I would like to thank the anonymous referee and the editors for their invaluable feedback.

² Chapter One Section 1.3.

have also seen Xenophon avoiding commercial discourse,³ or indicating that *χάρις* involves a different perception of family solidarity than commerce does.⁴

In this chapter it will be argued that Xenophon's Socrates is in fact careful to demarcate *φιλία*-reciprocity from commercial mechanisms. Some episodes dramatize the isomorphism between *φιλία* and commerce, as for instance the Theodote episode (to be discussed in the next chapter). Another example, the Antiphon-episode, effectively shows how one and the same event, i.e. Socratic conversation, is liable to conflicting interpretations, depending on the moral world-view of the interpreter (Section 1). Socrates turns out to be very keen on controlling the boundaries between different forms of exchange, displaying an acute awareness of the ethical implications of framing knowledge and virtue in the paradigm of commerce. However, in his conversations on *φιλία* elsewhere in the *Memorabilia*, the discourse of commerce, tightly governed by clear rules and expectations, presents a suitable didactic paradigm for describing the otherwise more fuzzy mechanisms of friendly exchange (Section 2). To demonstrate how Socrates' account of *φιλία* is still consistent, his use of commercial terminology will be subjected to further scrutiny (Section 3). It will turn out that the ideological issue at stake is not so much an egoism/altruism opposition, but rather a propagation of long-term investments at the expense of short-term gratification (Section 4).

1. FRAMING SOCRATIC CONVERSATION

1.1. Socrates versus Antiphon

One example of Xenophon staging conflicting interpretations of the same exchange event is his report of an encounter between Socrates and the sophist Antiphon. In this conversation, the topic of charging fees for lessons in wisdom effectively dramatizes two conflicting moral worldviews. Antiphon opens the conversation by disqualifying Socrates' refusal of fees as irrational behavior:

³ Chapter Two Section 1.

⁴ Chapter One Section 4.1. Cf. Chapter Five.

(1) Xen. Mem. I.vi.11-12⁵

Πάλιν δέ ποτε ὁ Ἀντιφῶν διαλεγόμενος τῷ Σωκράτει εἶπεν· Ὡ Σώκρατες, ἐγὼ τοί σε δίκαιον μὲν νομίζω, σοφὸν δὲ οὐδ' ὅπωςιοῦν· δοκεῖς δέ μοι καὶ αὐτὸς τοῦτο γινώσκειν· οὐδένα γοῦν τῆς συνουσίας ἀργύριον πρῶττη. καίτοι τό γε ἰμάτιον ἢ τὴν οἰκίαν ἢ ἄλλο τι ὧν κέκτησαι νομίζων ἀργυρίου ἄξιον εἶναι οὐδενὶ ἂν μὴ ὅτι προῖκα δοίης, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἔλαττον τῆς ἀξίας λαβών. δῆλον δὲ ὅτι εἰ καὶ τὴν συνουσίαν ᾧ τινὸς ἀξίαν εἶναι, καὶ ταύτης ἂν οὐκ ἔλαττον τῆς ἀξίας ἀργύριον ἐπρῶττου. δίκαιος μὲν οὖν ἂν εἴης, ὅτι οὐκ ἐξαπατᾷς ἐπὶ πλεονεξία, σοφὸς δὲ οὐκ ἂν, μηδενός γε ἄξια ἐπιστάμενος.

Antiphon interprets Socrates' refusal of fees as giving away commodities for free, indicating the seller's own low valuation of the goods he supplies:⁶ after all, not charging a fee is tantamount to pricing the goods on offer (in this case Socratic conversation) as worthless—that is: if and only if one accepts Antiphon's framing of the exchange in question: in his dismissal of Socrates' conduct, Antiphon is clearly applying the paradigm of commerce to Socratic practice, a paradigm evoked in Antiphon's use of commercial language:

- (i) his **value monism**: in Antiphon's world view, there is only one single standard of value to which everything can be reduced; the value of Socratic conversation can and should be expressed in terms of monetary currency;⁷

⁵ "On another occasion when Antiphon was talking to Socrates, he said, 'You know, Socrates, I think that you are an honest man, but not at all a wise one. And it seems to me that you realize this yourself; at any rate, you don't charge anyone for your company. But if you thought that your cloak or your house or any other item of your property was worth money, so far from giving it away, you wouldn't even accept a price lower than its value. So obviously, if you thought that your company was worth anything, you would charge a fee for it no less than its value. Therefore, honest you may be, since you don't deceive with a view to your own advantage; but wise you cannot be, if your knowledge is worthless.'" (*Unless otherwise indicated all translations of the Memorabilia are by: H. TREDENNICK & R. WATERFIELD, London 1990*).

⁶ *Soph.* 234a may be read as Plato's answer to a similar sophistic challenge. Socrates points out to Theaetetus that the sophists are selling great things (knowledge of everything) for comparatively low fees. Xenophon and Plato effectively apply the same strategy in disqualifying the sophistic practice of charging fees for lessons in wisdom: they both attempt to immunize virtue and wisdom against commodification, either by showing the moral consequences (Xenophon) or by revealing the logical absurdities inherent in the commodification of wisdom (Plato).

⁷ I use the term "value-monism" to refer to ethical systems which recognize only one thing as having value in itself and which, consequently, contend that the good is fundamentally unitary. Other entities only have value by reference to this single measure of value. E.g. utilitarianism

- (ii) his **commodification**⁸ of education: Socrates' company is characterized as a possession, something one acquires (κτάομαι), comparable to a cloak or a house; moreover, the very saleability of wisdom and virtue presupposed by Antiphon, serves as an indicator of commodity status;⁹
- (iii) his **business ideology**: in simply assuming that *not* charging a fee is tantamount to giving away services for free,¹⁰ Antiphon resembles Syloson who, at first, thought of his gift as a loss (ἀπολωλέναι).¹¹

It is from this commercial point of view, that Socrates is said to lack in σοφία— which yields a very particular understanding of σοφία as some kind of mercantile cleverness. The term συνουσία (company, intercourse), with its obvious sexual connotations, paves the way for Socrates' reaction.¹²

only recognizes happiness as intrinsically valuable; other "goods" in our lives are only good in as far as they contribute to happiness. Cf. CRAIG (1998), ANDERSON (1993), 117 ff..

- ⁸ Commodities are commonly defined as entities that have use value and that can be exchanged in a discrete transaction for a counterpart that has, in the immediate context, an equivalent value. Cf. KOPYTOFF (1986), 68. Cf. APPADURAI (1986), 3-16, for the argument that the distinction between gift and commodity lies in a distinction in modes of exchange. This model allows for the same thing to be both gift and commodity, its meaning shifting with the ideology attached to the situation of exchange. For a similar point, see KOPYTOFF (1986), 64.
- ⁹ Cf. KOPYTOFF (1986), 69: "(...) in the West, as a matter of cultural shorthand, we usually take saleability to be the unmistakable indicator of commodity status, while non-saleability imparts to a thing a special aura of apartness from the mundane and the common."
- ¹⁰ Cf. anecdotes about Protagoras who allowed pupils less than the standard fee if they were prepared to state on oath that they did not think his teaching worth so much. E.g. Pl. *Prot.* 328bc. Cf. Ar. *NE* 1164a24-6, DL 9.56. Cf. DEMONT (1993), 41-44, who relates this anecdote to the χρήματα in Protagoras' Man/Measure-fragment. I agree that the anecdotal tradition reflects a particular interpretation of the Man/Measure fragment (χρήματα in its narrow and specific sense as "money"), but am inclined to think that this *ad hominem* interpretation is a product of negative spin and hostile reception by post-platonic authors. Cf. VAN BERKEL (forthcoming).
- ¹¹ Chapter Two Section 2. On the ideology of "business" that propagates norms to seek "value for money" and ridicule the "sucker" who pays over or undercharges, see DAVIS (1992), 7-8, 56-8. Cf. POLANYI (1968), 69, VAN WEES (1998), 19-20.
- ¹² See TARRANT (2005) on the use of the term συνουσία and cognates (σύνειμι, συγγίγνεσθαι) in Plato's Socratic works; in Plato's authentic dialogues the terminology, although referring to Socratic conversation, is non-technical and under-specific, mostly used for its sexual overtones.

(2) Xen. Mem. I.vi.13¹³

ὁ δὲ Σωκράτης πρὸς ταῦτα εἶπεν· Ὁ Ἀντιφῶν, παρ' ἡμῖν νομίζεται τὴν ὥραν καὶ τὴν σοφίαν ὁμοίως μὲν καλόν, ὁμοίως δὲ αἰσχρὸν διατίθεσθαι εἶναι. τὴν τε γὰρ ὥραν ἔαν μὲν τις ἀργυρίου πωλῆ τῷ βουλομένῳ, πόρνον αὐτὸν ἀποκαλοῦσιν, ἔαν δέ τις, ὃν ἂν γνῶ καλόν τε καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐραστήν ὄντα, τοῦτον φίλον ἑαυτῷ ποιῆται, σώφρονα νομίζομεν· καὶ τὴν σοφίαν ὡσαύτως τοὺς μὲν ἀργυρίου τῷ βουλομένῳ πωλοῦντας σοφιστὰς ἀποκαλοῦσιν, ὅστις δὲ ὃν ἂν γνῶ εὐφυᾶ ὄντα διδάσκων ὃ τι ἂν ἔχη ἀγαθὸν φίλον ποιεῖται, τοῦτον νομίζομεν, ἃ τῷ καλῷ καὶ ἀγαθῷ πολίτη προσήκει, ταῦτα ποιεῖν.

Socrates points out that Antiphon's commercial discourse is not the right framework for interpreting his conversations with friends, which means that Socrates' conception of σοφία deviates from the outset from Antiphon's mercantile cleverness. Antiphon's commercial discourse is contrasted with an alternative understanding of Socratic practice, by means of an analogy with physical beauty and its exploitation. According to Socrates' analogy, there are two ways of dealing with beauty and wisdom:

- (i) The shameful way, meaning "the commercial way", i.e. selling it irrespectively to anybody (τῷ βουλομένῳ), thereby rendering oneself a prostitute (πόρνος) in case of beauty and a sophist in case of wisdom.¹⁴
- (ii) The right way, meaning, in case of beauty: acquiring a reputation for self-restraint by bestowing this beauty on a gentleman-lover and making him one's friend; in case of wisdom: befriending someone selected on basis of his moral qualities by teaching him all the good one can, thereby acquiring the reputation of a gentleman-citizen.

In analogy with the ideologically loaded opposition between prostitution and

¹³ "To this Socrates replied, 'In our society, Antiphon, the same rules with regard to what is creditable and what is not are thought to apply equally to the disposal of physical attractions and of wisdom. A man who sells his favours for a price to anyone who wants them is called a catamite; but if anyone forms a love-attachment with someone whom he knows to be truly good, we regard him as perfectly respectable. In just the same way, those who sell wisdom at a price to anyone who wants it are called sophists; but if anyone, by imparting any edifying knowledge that he possesses, makes a friend of one whom he knows to be naturally gifted, we consider that he is behaving as a truly good citizen should behave.'"

¹⁴ Xenophon is obviously drawing on the etymological derivation of πόρνος/πόρνη from πέρνημι, to sell. Cf. CHANTRAINE (1977).

the ἐραστής—ἐρώμενος-relationship,¹⁵ Socrates constructs an opposition between Socratic practice, modeled as φιλία, and the discourse of commerce inherent in sophistic mercantilism. The analogy effectively opposes erotic and didactic transactions on a commercial basis to the type of erotic and didactic exchange embedded in a long-term relationship.¹⁶ This long-term relationship is in turn characterized in terms of sharing:

(3) Xen. Mem. I.vi.14¹⁷

ἐγὼ δ' οὖν καὶ αὐτός, ὡς Ἀντιφῶν, ὡσπερ ἄλλος τις ἢ ἵππῳ ἀγαθῷ ἢ κυνὶ ἢ ὄρνιθι ἤδεται, οὕτω καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον ἡῶμαι φίλοις ἀγαθοῖς, καὶ ἐάν τι ἔχω ἀγαθόν, διδάσκω, καὶ ἄλλοις συνίστημι παρ' ὧν ἂν ἡῶμαι ὠφελήσεσθαι τι αὐτοὺς εἰς ἀρετήν· καὶ τοὺς θησαυροὺς τῶν πάλαι σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν, οὓς ἐκεῖνοι κατέλιπον ἐν βιβλίῳ γράψαντες, ἀνελίπτων κοινῇ σὺν τοῖς φίλοις διέρχομαι, καὶ ἂν τι ὀρῶμεν ἀγαθὸν ἐκλεγόμεθα· καὶ μέγα νομίζομεν κέρδος, ἐὰν ἀλλήλοις φίλοι γινώμεθα.

Whenever Socrates has something good to teach his friends, he does so;¹⁸ and when he expects a friend to profit from others who may help him, he introduces the friend to them too. Socratic “teaching” turns out to be: reading collectively (κοινῇ), exploring the treasures (τοὺς θησαυρούς)¹⁹ of the wise men of old, and

¹⁵ Cf. Pausanias’ two Erotes (Pl. *Symp.* 180c1-185c3); Aesch. I; Lys. III. DOVER (1978); HALPERIN (1997); WINKLER (1990); FISHER (2001), 36-52, DAVIDSON (2007), 38 ff.

¹⁶ The opposition between φιλία and prostitution recurs in Xen. *Symp.* VIII.21 where Socrates asks the rhetorical question how there can be any more commitment (στέργειν) between a prostitute and customer than between a buyer and a seller: ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὁ χρημάτων γε ἀπεμπολῶν τὴν ὥραν τί μᾶλλον στέρξει τὸν πριάμενον ἢ ὁ ἐν ἀγορᾷ πωλῶν καὶ ἀποδιδόμενος; οὐ μὴν ὅτι γε ὠραῖος ἄωρον, οὐδὲ ὅτι γε καλὸς οὐκέτι καλῷ καὶ ἐρῶντι οὐκ ἐρῶν ὀμιλεῖ, φιλήσει αὐτόν.

¹⁷ “As for myself, Antiphon, I take as much pleasure in good friends as other people take in a good horse or dog or bird—in fact, I take more; and if I have anything good to teach them, I teach it, and I introduce them to any others from whom I think they will get help in the quest for goodness. And in company with my friends, I open and read from beginning to end the books in which the wise men of past times have written down and bequeathed to us their treasures; and when we see anything good, we take it for ourselves; and we regard our mutual friendship as great gain.”

¹⁸ The image of the horse, dog and bird refer to gifts given to *erōmenoi*. Cf. Pl. *Lys.* 211D and the horses that are exorbitantly expensive gifts to the Corinthian boys in Aristoph. *Pl.* 157 (see Chapter One Section I).

¹⁹ Although the use of θησαυρός for treasuries of metaphorical, non-material, “wealth” such as wisdom and learning is quite common in Attic literature (e.g. S. *Ant.* 30, Pl. *Phlb.* 15e), in this

extracting the good things out of them.²⁰

Here we see Socrates dismissing Antiphon's commercial framework by contrasting it with an alternative model in a series of oppositions. First, Socrates brings in the element of **selection**:²¹ selling means delivering to anyone, whereas within the friendship-model one elects the receiver on basis of his moral qualities.

Secondly, in contrast to Antiphon's value monism, his propensity to value everything in monetary currency, Socrates propagates the **sharing** (i.e. reading κοινῆ) of wisdom and virtue of the "treasures" of wise men (who, by implication, are sharing *their* wisdom too). This propagation of sharing reveals that the economy of intrinsic valuables is not a zero-sum game.²² In Antiphon's

context the term also underscores Socrates' attempt to redefine wealth, making wisdom, not money, the *real* treasure. Further on in the *Memorabilia* (IV.ii.9), this line of thought is made explicit: Νῆ τὴν Ἥραν, ἔφη ὁ Σωκράτης, ἀγαμαί γέ σου, διότι οὐκ ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσοῦ προεἶλου θησαυροὺς κεκτήσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ σοφίας· δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι νομίζεις ἀργύριον καὶ χρυσοῦ οὐδὲν βελτίους ποεῖν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, τὰς δὲ τῶν σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν γνώμας ἀρετῆ πλουτίζειν τοὺς κεκτημένους. ("By Hera," retorted Socrates, 'I do admire you for valuing the treasures of wisdom above gold and silver. For you are evidently of opinion that, while gold and silver cannot make men better, the thoughts of the wise enrich their possessors with virtue.'").

²⁰ In the last sentence (καὶ μέγα νομιζομεν κέρδος, ἐὰν ἀλλήλοις φίλοι γιγνώμεθα) Socrates' application of the term κέρδος to a process of joint realization, yielding benefit to both parties, is deliberately paradoxical. κέρδος ("gain") should not be mistaken for the morally neutral modern notion of gain or profit; the term κέρδος implies that the exchange at hand is not committed to a long-term relationship, but is a satisfaction of immediate needs. MORRIS (2002); GOTTESMAN (2000); COZZO (1998). On κέρδος in political thought, BALOT (2001). On the use of the root *κερδ-, see ROISMAN (1987), 66; on the association between the adjective κέρδιον and trickery in the *Iliad*, see ROISMAN (1990). DE JONG (1987b) on the difference between κέρδος (advantage for oneself) and ὄφελος (advantage for some else). κέρδος is suitable for derogatory use when a person's behavior is characterized as anti-social: "profit *at the expense* of the other" — evoking a seesaw, or zero-sum, conception of wealth. On this notion of wealth, see: MILLETT (1984).

²¹ Interestingly, Xenophon elsewhere (I.ii.60-61) apparently feels the urge to exonerate Socrates from the charge of being too 'elitist'. In reply to the complaint that Socrates was elitist, Xenophon claims that Socrates was φιλόανθρωπος, someone committed to (φιλεῖν) everyone — as opposed to those teachers of virtue who demand pay and therefore do not cater to the less wealthy.

²² In classical game theory, a "zero-sum game", or a "strictly competitive game", describes a situation in which a participant's gain or loss is exactly balanced by the losses or gains of the other participant(s). At first sight, the zero-sum concept may appear to be the basic metaphor underlying modern market economy and politics, as was initially assumed by the founding fathers of game theory NEUMANN AND MORGENSTERN. (NEUMANN (1928) and NEUMANN & MORGENSTERN (1944)). In reality, zero-sum situations are rarely encountered in economic and

monistic universe, valuing something implies reducing it to a mere means, setting a price on it so as to sell it and to part from it. To Socrates beauty, wisdom and virtue, as well as good friends, have an intrinsic value: they are ends in themselves and, once obtained, not for sale. But their value structure does promote sharing without diminishing.

Moreover, in Socrates' model, sharing leads to the establishment and the endurance of a **relationship**; in Antiphon's world view, there are only short-term exchange relationships, immediately dissolved after transaction has taken place.

Finally, the opposition between being a prostitute and practicing self-restraint (being *σώφρων*) suggests an analogous opposition between being a sophist and being a gentleman-citizen. Although the example of prostitution is obviously chosen for its moral charge,²³ the analogy is salient for what it presupposes: an understanding of prostitution and sophistry as incompatible with self-restraint—this I shall elaborate on in Section 3.

In this dialogue, one and the same exchange event, Socrates conversing with young Athenians, exchanging wisdom, is framed in two radically opposed ways, presenting us with a neat confrontation of two different world-views. To Antiphon, Socrates is doing the same thing as he and many other contemporaries: teaching for pay with a price-range including zero. Within his commercial framework, which only allows for short-lived discrete transactions, goods are valued irrespective of the relationship in which they figure: sophistic education is a commodity. By contrast, Socrates' notion of value is dynamic, always containing reference to relationships: wisdom and virtue are not commodities for sale, but goods that arise out of a process of friends sharing virtues and sharing friends becoming virtuous.

political applications. Much more common are situations in which the participants' interests are only in partial conflict. See BICCHIERI (1998).

²³ For philosophers' dismissive attitudes and proposed constraints on sex, see e.g. *Pl. Rep.* 458d-61b, *Leg.* 840d-41e, *Ar. Pol.* 1334b29-35b37, 1335b38-36a2. See COHEN (2006) and (2000) on the unrepresentative nature of these sources for Athenian attitudes towards prostitution.

1.2. Some notes on the commodification of wisdom and virtue

In this context, we may not only endorse EDWARD COHEN's observation that "Athenian morality (...) focused on the structure of work relationships, and not on the actual nature of the labor undertaken";²⁴ we may even say, more fundamentally, that in Athenian morality the "actual nature" of labor, or any other exchange "object", is a derivative of the way we construct the exchange relationship in question, being liable to discursive negotiation. By contemporary Athenian standards, Antiphon is actually "right" in his framing, for Socratic practice does resemble sophistic teaching in many respects.²⁵ It is Socrates who challenges the expectations by applying an alternative frame to the same situation. But the point is, there is nothing in the entire situation that intrinsically favors one interpretation over the other. The socio-cultural circumstances in Classical Athens allow sufficient space for negotiation in this matter.

On the other hand, Socrates touches a nerve of a monetizing society. The commodification of both education and sexuality raises important ethical questions: *what* exactly is being sold?²⁶ Can it be detached from the person selling it or is it embodied?²⁷ Within every society there are more and less

²⁴ COHEN (2006), 101.

²⁵ The ambiguous or paradoxical character of Socrates' relations with his pupils/friends was probably evident to many Athenians, as it is played on in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, where Socrates confuses Strepsiades by not showing interest in his offer of a fee (244-5). Note moreover that Strepsiades' unspecified gift (1146-7), that is not contracted and sarcastically offered as a sign of admiration or gratitude, appears to be disregarded by Socrates. See VANDERWAERDT (1994), 59 and DOVER (1968) *ad loc.* on these passages.

²⁶ The etymology of πόρνος/πόρνη, prostitute, from πέρνειμι, to sell, is suggestive. The verb πέρνειμι originally did not so much refer to a commercial transaction but to the act of transferring or export, and may originally have been restricted to the transfer of prisoners and captives (as opposed to commodities for purchase and sale), just as the verb ὠνέομαι ("to buy") that applies only to persons in Homer. BENVENISTE (1973), 112. In the Classical Period the nouns πόρνος and πόρνη seem to refer predominantly to unfree brothel workers. COHEN (2002). Cf. CITTI (1997) who points out that in Classical Greek the terms πόρνη and δούλη form *una coppia nominale* ("a verbal coupling") (92). Female brothel workers were often represented as depersonalized and reified, bearing cash names such as Dicrachmon or Obole. DAVIDSON (1997), 188-9.

²⁷ The political discourse about δωροδοκία, bribery (literally "accepting gifts") cashes in on this slippage. E.g. Dem. 18.46-7 where bribed politicians are described as *thinking* that they are selling (πωλεῖν) everything except themselves, but turning out to have sold themselves (ἐαυτοὺς πεπρακόσιν).

typical manners in which things (objects, acts) can be exchanged or commodified, certain socially regulated “paths” that one needs to know to be a well-socialized participant.²⁸ However, existing paths can be renegotiated and diverted: for instance new objects can be made a “commodity for sale in an open market economy” as opposed to a gift “given and reciprocated within a restricted (elite) gift economy”.²⁹

Socrates’ reaction is conservative: by decommodifying wisdom and virtue he attempts to take it off the open market and to control its distribution by marginalizing the sophists. In the previous chapter we have seen how Aristotle attempts to immunize philosophy from commodification: to Aristotle, philosophy is not an exchange object, but something one can “share in” (κοινωνέω). Xenophon’s Socrates too engages in a struggle to control the distribution of virtue and wisdom. Whereas Aristotle’s strategy is to insist on the embodied state of wisdom and virtue (they are activities, not κτήματα that can be exchanged and alienated), his precursor Socrates emphasizes the distinct nature of the **economies** of wisdom and virtue: they are to be shared, for it is in the sharing that virtue can be developed.

2. FRIENDSHIP AND THE DISCOURSE OF COMMERCE

In the Antiphon-episode, Socratic practice is defined in opposition to sophistic mercantilism, by a Socrates who displays a negative attitude towards Antiphon’s discourse of commerce. This opposition between commercial teaching and Socratic friendship is significant in view of the ubiquitousness of commercial terminology in the second book of the *Memorabilia* where Socrates discusses the topic of φιλία, long-term reciprocal relationships. In this series of Socratic conversations, friends are conceived of as commodities,³⁰ possessions,³¹

²⁸ FREDAL (2008) for an application of the notion of “path” to the sophist’s practice; Fredal argues that the sophists were economic innovators who demystified the exchange of wisdom along the same lines as they demystified religion and (other) social conventions. The notion of “path” is first explored by GOULDNER (1960), 226-59. Cfr. APPADURAI (1986), 15.

²⁹ FREDAL (2008), 158. Cf. Socrates’ framing of the “open market” as prostitution; the selling “to whomever wants” (τῷ βουλομένῳ) has democratic overtones as ὁ βουλόμενος is an ideological buzzword in Attic oratory.

³⁰ *Mem.* II.iii (φίλοι as χρήματα).

having a precise cash equivalent,³² and being objects of purchase.³³

For example, when urging his friend Diodorus to take steps to befriend the impoverished Hermogenes, Socrates draws a comparison with the trouble good estate managers invest in their treatment of their servants and says:

(4) Xen. Mem. II.x.2-5³⁴ (cf. T 10)

Εἰ δέ τις σοι τῶν γνωρίμων, ἔφη, πολὺ τῶν οἰκετῶν χρησιμώτερος ὢν κινδυνεύει δι' ἔνδειαν ἀπολέσθαι, οὐκ οἶει σοι ἄξιον εἶναι ἐπιμεληθῆναι ὅπως διασωθῆ; καὶ μὴν οἶσθά γε ὅτι οὐκ ἀγνώμων ἐστὶν Ἑρμογένης, αἰσχύνοιτο δ' ἄν, εἰ ὠφελούμενος ὑπὸ σοῦ μὴ ἀντωφελοῖ σε· καίτοι τὸ ὑπηρετήν ἐκόντα τε καὶ εὖνουν καὶ παραμόνιμον καὶ τὸ κελευόμενον ἱκανὸν ποιεῖν ἔχειν, καὶ μὴ μόνον τὸ κελευόμενον ἱκανὸν ὄντα ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ δυνάμενον καὶ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ χρήσιμον εἶναι καὶ προνοεῖν καὶ προβουλεύεσθαι πολλῶν οἰκετῶν οἶμαι ἀντάξιον εἶναι. οἱ μέντοι ἀγαθοὶ οἰκονόμοι, ὅταν τὸ πολλοῦ ἄξιον μικροῦ ἐξῆ πρίασθαι, τότε φασὶ δεῖν ὠνεῖσθαι. νῦν δὲ διὰ τὰ πράγματα εὐωνοτάτους ἔστι φίλους ἀγαθοὺς κτήσασθαι.

In view of the Antiphon episode this dialogue may strike us for the outspoken way in which Socrates frames his discussion of friendship in the discourse of commerce. The topic is the acquisition (κτήσασθαι) of Hermogenes as friend, who is said to be “useful” (χρήσιμος), even “more useful (χρησιμώτερος) than servants”. The process of “befriending” him is described by means of the practical accounting metaphor of buying a commodity when it is cheap, implying a notion of a discrepancy between the friend’s real value (πολλοῦ ἄξιον) and his market price at the moment (him being εὐωνότατος).

Here we find Socrates exploiting the isomorphism between friendship and market transactions: he uses a commercial metaphor to make the point that a

³¹ Mem. II.iv (φίλοι as κτήματα).

³² Mem. II.v.

³³ Mem. II.x.

³⁴ “‘And if one of your acquaintances who is much more useful to you than your house-slaves is in danger of dying of want, don’t you think that you should see to it that he is saved? You must surely know that Hermogenes is not insensitive, and that he would feel ashamed if he didn’t return your kindness. Also, to have an assistant who is willing, loyal, reliable and able to carry out instructions—and not only that, but capable of independent action, foresight and planning—this is surely worth a good many house-slaves. Now, good estate-managers say that when you can purchase something valuable at a low price, you ought to buy it; and at the present time, owing to circumstances, it is possible to acquire good friends very reasonably.’”

good friend reciprocates benefits (summarized in the negative in the phrase εἰ ὠφελούμενος ὑπὸ σοῦ μὴ ἀντωφελοῖή σε).³⁵ In this dialogue, Socrates motivates his conversation partner to strike up φιλία with Hermogenes, by holding out the prospect of return of benefit: Hermogenes is someone who is very likely to reciprocate in a valuable manner; moreover, he is in need, which makes it easy to benefit him—in this sense, he is cheap while rewarding: a good bargain. Socrates' didactic strategy thus consists in presenting this friendship as a rationally justified investment, imposing a “debtor's paradigm of obligation” on gratitude, making generosity an investment out of enlightened self-interest, and reducing the good of friendship to the fruit of rational investment.

In another conversation (II.v) with Antisthenes (later to become the founder of the Cynics' school), Socrates even raises the question of a friend's cash value: he interrogates his conversation partner whether one can set a price on friends along the same lines as one does with house servants (εἰσὶ τινες ἀξία φίλων ὄσπερ οἰκετῶν), who are sometimes worth two mina, sometimes a half, five, ten, sometimes even a talent.³⁶ Antisthenes gives the question a thought:

(5) *Xen. Mem. II.v.3*³⁷

Ναὶ μὰ Δί', ἔφη ὁ Ἀντισθένης· ἐγὼ γοῦν βουλοίμην ἂν τὸν μὲν τινα φίλον μοι εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ δύο μνᾶς, τὸν δ' οὐδ' ἂν ἡμιμναίου προτιμησαίμην, τὸν δὲ καὶ πρὸ δέκα μνῶν ἐλοίμην ἂν, τὸν δὲ πρὸ πάντων χρημάτων καὶ πόνων πρῆταίμην ἂν φίλον μοι εἶναι.

Just like it is common practice to set a price on slaves, particular friends are given a cash equivalent. Desirable friends are worth all the wealth and labor in the world (πρὸ πάντων χρημάτων) to purchase them (πρῆταίμην); others run the risk of being sold (II.v.4.5-5: τοῦ δ' ὅτι μνᾶν ἀνθ' ἑαυτοῦ μᾶλλον εἴλετο ἀνήρ). Friends are commodities, fungible for money.

These episodes go to the heart of the question what it means to “value the other”. It is passages such as these that have provoked an understanding of Xenophon's Socrates as thoroughly instrumentalist, as an adherent to a type of

³⁵ E.g. *Mem.* II.ii.1-2; IV.iv.24 ff.. Cf. Chapter One.

³⁶ *Mem.* II.v.2-3.

³⁷ “‘Yes, indeed,’ replied Antisthenes. ‘At any rate, I would rather have A as my friend than two minae, while I wouldn’t rate B higher than half a mina; and I would choose C in preference to ten minae, and I would spend any amount of money and effort to obtain the friendship of D.’”

utilitarianism *avant la lettre* that frames friendship in rational economic cost-benefit analysis—which may strike us as problematic, for we may prefer to understand friendship as something that resists means/ends-reasoning. In contemporary Western thought, there is a conceptual polarity of individualized persons and commoditized things,³⁸ and we prefer to adhere to an axiomatic distinction between the use of natural resources and the use of other people.³⁹ Friends are not supposed to be chosen on grounds of selfish motives alone nor to be interchangeable.

Moreover, this episode poses an additional problem for the interpretation of Xenophon: is Socrates' account of *φιλία* intrinsically coherent? There appears to be a serious tension between Socrates' dismissal of Antiphon's commercial paradigm as unfit to characterize Socratic conversations with friends and Socrates' own rational economic model of friendship. Why should Socrates take the trouble to disambiguate the friendship model of sharing intrinsic goods from the commercial model in which everything has a monetary price, when at the same time he urges his companions to buy friends when they are cheap?

3. REDEFINING VALUE AND UTILITY

3.1 Utility and use: ancient and modern conceptualizations

To alleviate this tension, we should take a closer look at Socrates' use of commercial terminology. To start with Socrates' characterization of Hermogenes as a useful (*χρήσιμος*) friend: we need to be aware that our understanding of the terminology of "use", "utility" and "usefulness" is essentially informed by modern market economic conceptualizations.

Within such a framework, "useful" applies to something that is a means to our independently defined end⁴⁰ (the realm of value)⁴¹ as opposed to an "end in

³⁸ It is remarkable how easily any suggestion that persons (or, e.g., their organs) can be incorporated in a commodified universe elicits charges of "slavery" in public debate—which is apparently "the readiest metaphor when commoditization threatens to invade the human sphere". KOPYTOFF (1986), 84.

³⁹ VON REDEN (1995a), 218. Cf. WEBER (1972) [1922], p.32

⁴⁰ ANDERSON (1993), 144-5.

itself" (the realm of values). Hence, in post-Enlightenment thinking, there is a strong moral impediment against framing friendship in terminology of use. We prefer to think⁴² that our fellow-humans should be valued as ends in themselves as opposed to means to our own ulterior ends.⁴³

This dichotomy between "useful as means to an end" and "valuable as an end in itself" may not be the best key for understanding classical applications of use-terminology to the realm of friendship (although it may be equally difficult to do altogether without this distinction). There is hardly any philosophical discussion of friendship conceivable that does not take Aristotle's typology of friendship in terms of their motivational structure as a point of departure. Often Aristotle's three-way distinction is simplified into a dichotomy, to fit the post-Enlightenment means/ends-polarity; the "friendship based on pleasure" being left out of account or assimilated with utility-friendship, the salient opposition is that between utility-based friendship and friendship for the sake of the other.

However, this opposition between self-serving utility and altruism may not be our best tool for understanding Socrates' account of friendship. As we have already gathered in the previous chapter, modern conceptualizations of "use" and "utility" do not perfectly correspond with Greek notions. As has often been noted, the verb χρῆσθαι displays a semantic pluriformity, denoting states of affairs ranging from "being in want of", to "having", "using", "experiencing" and "dealing with" something; applied to persons the verb may denote "to treat X as", "to be intimate" or "to have intercourse with" X.⁴⁴ This semantic range

⁴¹ GRAEBER (2005).

⁴² KANT (1797), 4.429, with KAULBACH (1988).

⁴³ E.g. ANDERSON (1993), 144 regarding use a "lower, impersonal, and exclusive mode of valuation" that sees things as fungible and capable of being "traded with equanimity for any other commodity at some price." Cf. BADHWAR (1993): "(...) Many philosophers still seek to accommodate friendship within the framework of Kantian or consequentialist theories." Or, conversely: HELM (2005): "Often, the appeal to friendship is intended to bypass traditional disputes among major types of moral theories (consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics) (...)."

⁴⁴ RÉDARD (1953); COHEN 1992, 65–66 on χρῆσθαι in the context of credit operations: "Clients are said to "use" (χρῆσθαι) bankers ... But "use" implied not only a business relationship but also a social intimacy". See *LSJ*, s.v. "χράομαι": "The Greek term does not carry the negative connotation sometimes present in colloquial English "use" of someone". For the broader, not exclusively exploitative meaning of "use", cf. German *Nutz* ("usefulness") and *genießen* ("to enjoy", also in the sense of receiving X or having the advantage of X, as in "to enjoy benefits")

suggests a sense of “usage” that is broader than purely pragmatic and that implies an order of things that is not solely dependent on what subjects unilaterally decide to do with objects: χρῆσθαι implies an adaptation or accommodation of *both* subject and object to the requirements of a given context. XPH-terminology is underdetermined in comparison with modern conceptions of utility and we may expect this terminology to display a degree of semantic openness, being susceptible to manipulation.

3.2 The Socratic conception of utility and use

One example of XPH-terminology being subjected to such manipulation can be found in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, the Socratic dialogue on estate management (οἰκονομία or οἰκονομική τέχνη). In the course of demarcating the scope of οἰκονομία, Socrates and Critoboulus attempt to give a definition of οἶκος. Critoboulus first defines one’s οἶκος as encompassing everything a man possesses,⁴⁵ but then modifies this claim, because possession (κτῆματα)⁴⁶ may contain wealth (χρήματα) as well as liabilities (ζημία),⁴⁷ which begs the question how wealth (χρήματα) is to be defined.⁴⁸ Socrates redefines χρήματα so as to cover anything beneficial,⁴⁹ provided that the user in view knows how

that are formed from the same root. See MOURELATOS (1970), 652 and SCHEIN (1998), 295 for the notion that XPH-terminology refer to “subjective, internally based needs, requirements, and constraints” as opposed to δεῖ and cognates that tend to refer to external, objective constraint or causal necessity; ROBBIANO (2006), 74-9 (following JONKERS (1981 unpublished)) for the notion that control is a central semantic feature of XPH-terminology. BUNDY (1962), 57-9 for the notion that in Archaic poetry χρέος typically does not designate contractual obligation and occurs in contexts where references to payment are suppressed. Cf. KURKE (1991), 85-107. For the semantic connection between χρεία (need) and χρῆσις (use), see RÉDARD (1953), 80-2, 93-98; a striking analogy can be found in the German verbs *brauchen* (to need) and *gebrauchen* (to use) that are formed from the same root. See also Chapter Three Section 1.2 and 3.1 (esp. n.84).

⁴⁵ *Oec.* I.5: πάντα τοῦ οἴκου εἶναι, ὅσα τις κέκτηται.

⁴⁶ GERNET (1981) for the argument that the term κτῆμα, in contrast to the noun χρήμα, always contains reference to the object’s mode of acquisition. Cf. GOTTESMAN (2010).

⁴⁷ *Oec.* I.6-7.

⁴⁸ Apparently, Socrates did have conceptual cultural space for such redefinition of “χρήματα”. Cf. VON REDEN (2003 [1995]), p.174: “In classical Athens the term *chrēmata* could still be used for a variety of things; these included money, but also other valuables for exchange. (...) *Chrēma* (...) was not the term for any specific valuable, nor did it have precise moral connotations. Its meaning shifted according to the context in which it was used and the ends to which it was applied.”

⁴⁹ *Oec.* I.9: τὰ ἀφελούοντα χρήματα ἡγή.

to use it (χρησθαι).⁵⁰ This redefinition leads to the paradoxical observation that even money (ἀργύριον) is not wealth (χρήματα) to one who does not know how to use (χρησθαι) it—obviously drawing on the polyvalence of χρήματα (also used for money).

(6) Xen. Oec. I.12⁵¹

Λέγειν ἔοικας, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι οὐδὲ τὸ ἀργύριόν ἐστι χρήματα, εἰ μὴ τις ἐπίσταιτο χρησθαι αὐτῷ.

Here it is that we find Socrates' infamous statement that friends are wealth, as the same notion is applicable to friends:

(7) Xen. Oec. I.14⁵²

Τὸ μὲν δὴ ἀργύριον, εἰ μὴ τις ἐπίσταιτο αὐτῷ χρησθαι, οὕτω πόρρω ἀπωθείσθω, ὦ Κριτόβουλε, ὥστε μηδὲ χρήματα εἶναι. οἱ δὲ φίλοι, ἅν τις ἐπίσταιται αὐτοῖς χρησθαι ὥστε ὠφελεῖσθαι ἀπ' αὐτῶν, τί φήσομεν αὐτοὺς εἶναι; — Χρήματα νῆ Δί', ἔφη ὁ Κριτόβουλος, καὶ πολὺ γε μᾶλλον ἢ τοὺς βοῦς, ἂν ὠφελιμώτεροί γε ᾧσι τῶν βοῶν.

If one knows how to deal with (χρησθαι) friends so as to benefit from them, friends may be called wealth (χρήματα) too. Both the insight that money is not always the same as wealth and that friends can be wealth too are clearly premised on Socrates' redefinition of χρήματα.⁵³ Therefore, the

⁵⁰ Oec. I.10-11.

⁵¹ "“You seem to be implying, Socrates, that not even money is an asset, unless one knows how to make use of it.”"

⁵² "“So if one doesn't know how to make use of it, Critobulus, then money must be kept at such a distance that it isn't even included among one's assets. Now, what about friends: if one knows how to make use of them, so as to derive benefit from them, then how should they be described? ‘Most emphatically as assets,’ said Critobulus, ‘They deserve the description far more than cattle, provided they are more beneficial than cattle.’”"

⁵³ This redefinition also explains Socrates' equally paradoxical claim in the second book of *Oeconomicus* that he himself, though one hundred times poorer, is in fact wealthier than Critoboulus (Oec. II.1-9): Socrates' property (χρήματα) is sufficient to satisfy his wants (II.4); moreover, if he lacks something (προσδεηθείην), he abounds in friends to contribute to the small needs he has (II.8); Critoboulus' lifestyle, on the other hand, renders his capital insufficient no matter how rich he is (II.5), whereas his friends (though much richer than Socrates') expect to be benefited by him rather than having any obligation to support him (II.8). Cf. GOLDSCHMIDT (1947) and KAHN (1996), 88-94 on the classical Socratic moves in the so-called “what is X?”-dialogues: definitions of X by opponents are shown to encompass non-X or fail to accommodate instances of X.

conceptualization of friends as χρήματα should not be understood as incorporating the phenomenon of friendship in a commercial discourse; rather, both friends and material wealth are redefined and framed in Socrates' ideal of estate management based on knowledge—an ideal grounded in a long-term conception of benefit and virtue.

Along the same lines, Socrates, in the second book of the *Memorabilia*, appeals to Chaerecrates to make his brother Chaerephon an asset instead of a liability. Socrates opens his conversation with the rhetorical question that surely Chaerecrates does not consider wealth (χρήματα) to be more useful (χρησιμώτερον) than brothers:

(8) Xen. Mem. II.iii.1-3⁵⁴

Εἰπέ μοι, ἔφη, ὦ Χαιρέκρατες, οὐ δήπου καὶ σὺ εἶ τῶν τοιούτων ἀνθρώπων, οἱ χρησιμώτερον νομίζουσι χρήματα ἢ ἀδελφούς; καὶ ταῦτα τῶν μὲν ἀφρόνων ὄντων, τοῦ δὲ φρονίμου, καὶ τῶν μὲν βοηθείας δεομένων, τοῦ δὲ βοηθεῖν δυναμένου, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις τῶν μὲν πλειόνων ὑπαρχόντων, τοῦ δὲ ἑνός. θαυμαστὸν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο, εἴ τις τοὺς μὲν ἀδελφούς ζημίαν ἡγεῖται, ὅτι οὐ καὶ τὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν κέκτηται, τοὺς δὲ πολίτας οὐχ ἡγεῖται ζημίαν, ὅτι οὐ καὶ τὰ τῶν πολιτῶν ἔχει, ἀλλ' ἐνταῦθα μὲν δύνανται λογίζεσθαι ὅτι κρεῖττον σὺν πολλοῖς οἰκοῦντα ἀσφαλῶς τὰρκοῦντα ἔχειν ἢ μόνον διαιτώμενον τὰ τῶν πολιτῶν ἐπικινδύνως πάντα κεκτῆσθαι, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἀγνοοῦσι·

Socrates points out that in the case of fellow citizens people tend to make the rational calculation (λογίζεσθαι) that it is better to have secure sufficiency by living in a group than to possess everything but living alone: limiting one's desire for property is the best deal. In the course of the conversation, Socrates urges Chaerecrates to turn his brother, a liability (ζημία) at present, into an asset, someone he can benefit from. To this end, he introduces the notion of

⁵⁴ “‘Tell me, Chaerecrates, surely you aren’t one of those who think that possessions are more useful than a brother, although they are not endowed with sense and he is, and they need protection whereas he can give it, and, what is more, they are many while he is only one? It is extraordinary, too, that anyone should regard brothers as a liability because he doesn’t possess their property as well as his own, and not regard his fellow citizens as a liability on the same ground. Since in the one case people can reason that it is better to have a secure sufficiency and live in a group than to have precarious possession of all their fellow citizens’ property and live alone, it is curious that they fail to realize the same fact in the case of their brothers.’”

“knowing how to deal with someone”:

(9) Xen. Mem. II.iii.7⁵⁵

Ἄρ' οὖν, ἔφη ὁ Σωκράτης, ὡσπερ ἵππος τῷ ἀνεπιστήμονι μὲν, ἐγχειροῦντι δὲ χρῆσθαι ζημία ἐστίν, οὕτω καὶ ἀδελφός, ὅταν τις αὐτῷ μὴ ἐπιστάμενος ἐγχειρῇ χρῆσθαι, ζημία ἐστί;

This passage emphatically underscores the indispensability of knowledge in valuing the other; if one does not know how to deal with X, X is a liability, no matter how useful X may be in other situations. Socrates explains to Chaerecrates that knowing how to deal with a brother may at times require that one take the lead in treating the other well. The conversation closes with an analogy between the synergy of limbs and the relationship between brothers: they are designed for mutual benefit (ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ ἀλλήλοιν).⁵⁶

Hence, just as one has to know how to use something (χρῆσθαι) in order to turn it into wealth (χρήματα), one has to know how to deal (χρῆσθαι) with some person in order to make him more useful (χρησιμώτερος). This being useful is, in turn, paraphrased in terms of being mutually beneficial, an interpretation that essentially excludes the possibility of “using the other as a means to your own ends at his expense”. If your dealing with the other is grounded in genuine knowledge there is no such thing as conflicting interests.

To wrap up, Socrates' rehabilitation of XPH-terminology consists in three distinct steps. First of all, Socrates articulates what he regards as the commonly acknowledged “real” meaning of χρῆσθαι and χρήματα: he makes his conversation partners accept as self-evident the observation that the correct use of XPH-terminology should take into account that we are talking about *genuinely useful* things and *real utility*. Although it can be questioned to what extent the etymological connection between χρήματα and χρῆσθαι is really active in the mind of the Athenian language user, it is uncontroversial that the etymological connection *can* be activated and recognized by native speakers of

⁵⁵ “‘Well,’ said Socrates, ‘a horse is a liability to a person who tries to manage it without having enough knowledge. Perhaps in the same way a brother is a liability when one tries to manage him without knowledge.’”

⁵⁶ Mem. II.iii.18.

Greek such as Socrates' conversation partners: they are supposed to be susceptible to Socrates' semantic essentialism.

The second step is distinctly Socratic: in redefining "usefulness" and "correct use" Socrates emphasizes the indispensability of knowledge. Use, that is: *correct use*, implies knowledge, the know-how of using X. The third step applies exclusively to cases in which X is a *person*: the only correct way of "using" a person is treating him well and being beneficial to him. In case of persons, "correct use" becomes a bilateral engagement. This reshaping of the notion of utility and use makes Socratic friendship incompatible with a zero-sum conception of the good. Socrates' use of XPH-terminology does not reflect an "empty" valuation of persons or assets as merely means to independently defined ends; he carefully redefines XPH-terms so as to invest them with intrinsic meaning and direct them towards what is genuinely good.

4. COMMERCE VS. ESTATE MANAGEMENT

4.1. Beyond the egoism/altruism debate

On a small scale, this manipulation of terminology demonstrates Socrates' reform of a commercial paradigm towards a positive model for understanding interpersonal relationships: the central component of this model is real and thorough knowledge of how to deal with the other—the other being a person as opposed to a mere instrument.

On a grander scale, the *Memorabilia* display a similar sentiment, which may be instructive for us for it allows us to break out of the *cul-de-sac* of the egoism/altruism dilemma. The egoism/altruism dilemma, at least in its philosophically challenging form, generally presupposes a zero-sum notion of the good: since HOBBS,⁵⁷ modern philosophical discourse has a tendency to

⁵⁷ HOBBS (1650). Since HOBBS (1650), most of the philosophical definitions of altruism require an element of self-negation, to the extent that "the interests of another person can be a reason for acting, without any reference to one's own interests." E.g. MONROE (2001), ANNAS (1977). Combined with the Hobbesian doctrine that most instances of altruism are a disguise of a substitute for self-seeking, altruistic behavior has come to be an unexplained, and possibly unexplainable, property in human nature. (MACINTYRE (1972)). But see BUTLER (1726) for an

privilege one special type of the human situation as paradigmatic for the whole of moral life, i.e. “the situation in which I and someone else have incompatible aims and my aims are connected only with my own well-being”.⁵⁸ Hence, in modern philosophical discourse that is moreover influenced by rudimentary notions of Darwinism,⁵⁹ the burden of proof lies with the proponents of altruism: universal egoism seems to be taken for granted;⁶⁰ the possibility of altruism can only be proven in a persuasive manner when we find an action that not only is performed for the sake of the other, but that also meets the condition that it is *at the expense of ourselves*—for these are the only cases when altruism appears to be salient enough to justify belief in it (and not to regard it as a mere disguise or substitute for self-seeking behavior). This, of course, presupposes a zero-sum notion of happiness (or survival) and of distribution of the good. Socratic philosophy beforehand undercuts this conception of happiness and the good from the outset. It propagates an ethical individualism⁶¹ that is directed towards a univocal notion and ideal of the good grounded in reality—a model that allows for no happiness and virtue that goes at the expense of the other.

4.2. Estate management

To make matters more palpable, let us look back to the final sentence of the Diodorus episode:

(10) Xen. Mem. II.x.4 (= T 4)

οἱ μέντοι ἀγαθοὶ οἰκονόμοι, ὅταν τὸ πολλοῦ ἄξιον μικροῦ ἐξῆ

early and influential rejection of the view that altruism is rooted in self-negation.

⁵⁸ MACINTYRE (1972), 466.

⁵⁹ Recent developments in social darwinism persuasively demonstrate that the egoism/altruism-dilemma is only relevant on the level of conscious individual motivation. The social processes studied by social darwinism move on a different level of analysis, to which the dilemma is not applicable at all. E.g. SOBER & WILSON (1998).

⁶⁰ Conceptually speaking, the origins of this “universal egoism” is to be found in what MACINTYRE (1972) labels the “genetic fallacy”, i.e. the confusion of the question what motives there are in some original state (of human kind according to Hobbes or in early childhood according to Freud) with the question of what the fundamental character is of motives for action in our present/adult state.

⁶¹ In this context it is highly confusing that the philosophical eudaemonism of Greek philosophy is often labeled “ethical egoism” in scholarship. E.g. HUGHES (2001). Cf. Chapter Three n.40.

πρίασθαι τότε φασὶ δεῖν ὠνεῖσθαι. νῦν δὲ διὰ τὰ πράγματα εὐωνοτάτους ἔστι φίλους ἀγαθοὺς κτήσασθαι.

Does this piece of Socratic wisdom, that strikes us as calculating, indeed imply a commercial framing of the acquisition of Hermogenes as a friend? Remarkably, this line of reasoning in the Hermogenes episode is the exact opposite of the so-called Banker's Paradox according to which people who need money most desperately are the least likely to receive a loan, because they are the poorest credit risks:

(11) Tooby & Cosmides (1996), 131

Bankers have a limited amount of money, and must choose who to invest it in. Each choice is a gamble: taken together, they must ultimately yield a net profit, or the banker will go out of business. This set of incentives leads to a common complaint about the banking system: that bankers will only loan money to individuals who do not need it. The harsh irony of the Banker's Paradox is this: just when individuals need money most desperately, they are also the poorest credit risks and, therefore, the least likely to be selected to receive a loan.

The diametrical opposition between the two texts above is symptomatic for the fundamental incommensurability between the market economic model and Socratic economics: modern economics attempts to describe relations between persons and things, with individuals only as allocating forces. Socratic economics pertains to relationships between *persons*. In such an economy, the risk of an investment is not measured in terms of a person's material wealth, but in terms of the person's moral quality. The point Socrates is making is that one should not dismiss potential friends for their short-term "value", but rather should attempt to envision long-term interests. The metaphor that illustrates this point does not evoke a commercial discourse, but rather the paradigm of estate management (οἰκονομία), which is distinct from the paradigm of the market.

4.3. Unfit friends

To see how these two are distinct, let us for the moment turn to the pathology of bad friends that Socrates sketches in his conversation with Critoboulus (*Mem.* II.vi) on testing friends. In the first section of this dialogue, Socrates dismisses a number of character types as inherently unfit for engaging in long-term relationships such as *φιλία*:⁶²

- (i) someone overpowered by his appetites, for not being able to do what he should either for himself or for a friend;⁶³
- (ii) the spendthrift who is not self-sufficient, because he will always be in need, getting favors from others without ever being *capable* of returning them, whereas getting resentful of the one who does not give;⁶⁴
- (iii) the businessman (who does have wealth), whose desire for money makes him drive a hard bargain and causes him to be *unwilling* to return favors;⁶⁵
- (iv) the fanatical businessman who only has leisure for the pursuit of gain;⁶⁶
- (v) the quarrelsome person who brings a host of enemies along for his friends;⁶⁷
- (vi) someone who receives good treatment while *not considering* return.⁶⁸

The first feature that may strike us is that three of these six caricatures (ii, iii, vi) contain explicit reference to the rule of reciprocating favors received (*λαμβάνων ἀποδιδόναι*), in picturing a type of defective reciprocity: the bad friend being *unwilling*, incapable or unthoughtful of returning a favor. Nos. (i) and (iv) too can be understood as addressing the issue of discharging reciprocal obligations. In case of the first character type, the underlying idea seems to be that someone dominated by his appetites will not be able to meet obligation (τὰ

⁶² Cf. *Mem.* II.vi.19 for a comparable list of vices pertaining to *φιλία*: πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἢ ἀχάριστοι ἢ ἀμελεῖς ἢ πλεονέκται ἢ ἄπιστοι ἢ ἀκρατεῖς ἄνθρωποι δύναιντο φίλοι γενέσθαι;

⁶³ *Mem.* II.vi.1.

⁶⁴ *Mem.* II.vi.2.

⁶⁵ *Mem.* II.vi.3.

⁶⁶ *Mem.* II.vi.4.

⁶⁷ *Mem.* II.vi.4.

⁶⁸ *Mem.* II.vi.4-5.

δέοντα πράττειν), because a sense of obligation requires the ability to suspend the immediate fulfilment of appetites and to overrule one's desires. This presupposes an understanding of these obligations as going beyond immediate fulfilment of appetites, which is at least coherent with imperatives of benefiting someone and returning benefits received. Similarly, the fanatical businessman of (iv), whose priorities are only with pursuit of gain (κερδανεῖ), is not likely to be concerned about returning goods received. The crucial point seems to be that friendship is too time-consuming to seem rewarding to someone ruled by the short-sightedness of short-term gain.

Remarkably, these personalities unfit for φιλία are typically inhabitants of a world ruled by short-term transactions. These character types are incapable of envisioning the long-term perspective needed to be able or willing to perform the reciprocal exchanges that constitute friendship. In a world ruled by appetites directed at short-term "goods", only immediate gain is conceived of as yielding any good. Gratitude, generosity, favors and gifts cannot exist in such world, because of the time span they presuppose. In contrast, the good friend is characterized by virtues that somehow pertain to the suspension of immediate gratification of short-term needs, such as being continent (ἐγκρατής).⁶⁹

4.4. ἐγκράτεια

The key concept in this dialectics of the long-term is ἐγκράτεια, self-mastery, controlling the impulses of appetites that demand satisfaction in the short run but that pose a threat to the realization of long-term goods.⁷⁰ Together with the concepts of καρτερία (physical endurance) and αὐτάρκεια (self-sufficiency), ἐγκράτεια forms the core of Socratic ethics in the *Memorabilia*,⁷¹ being the precondition for the development of virtue in an individual,⁷² as virtue is the result of practice (ἄσκησις)⁷³ requiring a complete mastery of body and soul.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ *Mem.* II.vi.5.

⁷⁰ *Mem.* I.ii.14, I.iii.5-14, I.v.1, I.v.6, I.vi.8, II.i, III.xiv, IV.v.9, IV.viii.11.

⁷¹ DORION (2006).

⁷² *Mem.* I.v.4-5.

⁷³ *Mem.* I.ii.19-23, II.i.20, II.i.28, II.vi.39, III.iii.6, III.v.14, III.ix.1-3.

⁷⁴ See DORION (2006) for an overview of the functions of ἐγκράτεια in Socrates' moral philosophy

As such, ἐγκράτεια is the prerequisite for anyone who aspires to become successful, virtuous and beneficent in life: in productive life as an estate manager, in politics as a citizen qualified to rule for the common good and capable of serving public interest, in personal life as a member of an οἶκος and as a friend. ἐγκράτεια is the first precondition to initiating and cultivating relationships that are genuinely beneficial to both partners—long-term relationships that are impossible in a world that revolves around short-term needs and appetites.⁷⁵

Our Antiphon (*Mem.* I.vi.11-12) is characterized as an inhabitant of *this* morally problematic world of commerce, guided by the short-sightedness of blind appetites and short-term needs, with no clear view of long-term interests, because his understanding of value is not grounded in knowledge.⁷⁶ Socrates typically associates this moral short-sightedness with the phenomenon of “money”; a telling example can be found in a passage that bears many similarities to the Antiphon episode:

(12) Xen. Mem. I.ii.5-7⁷⁷

οὐ μὴν οὐδ' ἐρασιχρημάτων⁷⁸ γε τοὺς συνόντας ἐποίει. τῶν μὲν γὰρ ἄλλων ἐπιθυμιῶν ἔπαυε, τοὺς δ' ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιθυμοῦντας οὐκ

in the *Memorabilia*.

⁷⁵ The intricate connection between ἐγκράτεια and φιλία is most evident in *Mem.* II.vi.1-6. Cf. Pl. *Gorgias* where φιλία is a natural limit to πλεονεξία: friendship contains in itself a tendency to limit appetite. Cf. DUNCAN (1974).

⁷⁶ In *Mem.* I.vi.3 Antiphon proclaims that the mere possession of money is a pleasure in itself. This of course contrasts with Socrates' approach that it all depends on how we use money.

⁷⁷ “Nor again did he make his associates money-lovers: he rid them of all other desires except for his company, and for that he charged no fee. In eschewing fees, he considered that he was protecting his own independence; those who accepted a fee in return for their services he nicknamed ‘self-enslavers’, because they were obliged to converse with all from whom they could take a fee. He expressed surprise that a man who offered to teach goodness should demand to be paid for it and, instead of anticipating the greatest possible gain through obtaining a good friend, should be afraid that the person who has become truly good will feel less than the deepest gratitude to his supreme benefactor. Socrates never made any such offer to anyone, but he believed that those of his associates who accepted the principles which he himself approved would be good friends all their life long to himself and to one another.” (*transl. adapted*).

Cf. Pl. *Grg.* 519c for the similar observation, that the sophists' practice, supposedly so intelligent in everything else, is irrational and self-contradictory, when it comes to charging fees for lessons: although they claim to teach virtue, they complain about their students' ungratefulness.

⁷⁸ This adjective is a neologism of Xenophon, coined by analogy with φιλαργυρία, probably intended to highlight the compulsory aspects of money-driven behavior.

ἐπράττετο χρήματα. τούτου δ' ἀπεχόμενος ἐνόμιζεν ἐλευθερίας ἐπιμελεῖσθαι· τοὺς δὲ λαμβάνοντας τῆς ὀμιλίας μισθὸν ἀνδραποδιστὰς ἑαυτῶν ἀπεκάλει διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον αὐτοῖς εἶναι διαλέγεσθαι παρ' ὧν ἄν⁷⁹ λάβοιεν τὸν μισθόν. ἐθαύμαζε δ' εἶ τις ἀρετὴν ἐπαγγελλόμενος ἀργύριον πρᾶττειτο καὶ μὴ νομίζοι τὸ μέγιστον κέρδος ἔξειν φίλον ἀγαθὸν κτησάμενος, ἀλλὰ φοβοῖτο μὴ ὁ γενόμενος καλὸς κἀγαθὸς τῷ τὰ μέγιστα εὐεργετήσαντι μὴ τὴν μεγίστην χάριν ἔξει. Σωκράτης δὲ ἐπηγγείλατο μὲν οὐδενὶ πάποτε τοιοῦτον οὐδέν, ἐπίστευε δὲ τῶν συνόντων ἑαυτῷ τοὺς ἀποδεξαμένους ἄπερ αὐτὸς ἐδοκίμαζεν εἰς τὸν πάντα βίον ἑαυτῷ τε καὶ ἀλλήλοις φίλους ἀγαθοὺς ἔσεσθαι.

Fee-taking is condemned by means of the “leading” imagery of being an “enslaver of oneself” (ἀνδραποδιστής ἑαυτῶν)—an image that evokes the same morally biased universe as the πόρονος from the Antiphon episode, although supported by an alternative explanation. In this case, the trouble with taking fees is not so much the impossibility of discriminating on the basis of the moral quality of one’s conversation partner;⁸⁰ the trouble is that fee-taking yields a dynamics of its own. Accepting payment not only puts one under the legal obligation to deliver;⁸¹ it is even suggested that the very mediation of money makes one cultivate the wrong ἐπιθυμίας and hence causes compulsory behavior: one is under compulsion to διαλέγεσθαι with whomever one *can* get money from.⁸² Socratic economics strikingly stands out from this sophistic discourse ruled by compulsion and fear (φοβοῖτο): for Socrates, the greatest

⁷⁹ ‘ἄν’ is deleted by DINDORF (1910). See n.82.

⁸⁰ Pace COREY (2002), 196-7: “Taking pay places constraints upon the free discretion that any conscientious teacher will want to exercise.”

⁸¹ BLANK (1985). This is an objection expressed by Socrates in *Mem.* I.vi.5.

⁸² This reading diverges from current interpretations of this passage. The disagreement hinges upon the interpretation of the optative ἄν λάβοιεν. The standard translation “because they were obliged to converse with those from whom they took pay” presupposes that ὧν ἄν λάβοιεν is an optative of secondary sequence replacing a subjunctive construction: ὧν ἄν λάβωσιν, λάβωσιν being a distributive-iterative subjunctive. However, it is extremely uncommon that “ἄν” is retained in indirect discourse after a past tense when the verb has been changed to the optative. Among the few alleged “exceptions” of this rule mention is made of precisely this particular case (*Xen. Mem.* I.ii.6). See GOODWIN (1897), section 702. KÜHNER-GERTH (1890) do not postulate such exceptions to the rule. I do not see a necessity to do so either. The optative ἄν λάβοιεν should be read as a potential optative. Cf. KÜHNER (1882) who paraphrases this sentence as: *quia necessitas iis imposita esset cum iis colloquendi, a quibus mercedem accipere possent*.

gain is making friends and making one's friends morally excellent; in light of this objective fear turns into trust (ἐπίστυε), and obsession with gain (κέροδος) is replaced by a belief in χάρις, of generosity and gratitude. This switch of discourse enables Socrates to recognize the paradox of sophistic teaching and formulate what may be seen as a clever inversion of Antiphon's paradox: the practice of fee-raising flies into the face of the sophist's claim of teaching virtue, for fee-raising is a symptom of distrusting one's pupil—of which there is no need if one has succeeded in making the pupil virtuous!⁸³ The bottom line is that χάρις, virtue and trust presuppose a time-frame that surpasses the short-term world of the businessman, sophist and prostitute.

Along similar lines, in the Antiphon episode (*Mem.* I.vi.11-12), prostitution and sophistry are constructed as incompatible with self-restraint, which implies a framing of "money" as something that poses a threat to one's efforts to master short-term needs;⁸⁴ by contrast, friendship, as we have seen, is conceptualized in terms of self-restraint, i.e. the suspension of short-term needs of gratification in favor of long-term goods. In a nutshell, we may say that Socrates' problem with demanding and accepting pay for his conversations is twofold. The formal objection is that accepting pay presupposes a wrong interpretation of the teacher-student relationship, confusing friendly reciprocity premised on trust, generosity and gratitude with a commercial notion of reciprocity. The substantial problem is that demanding pay is in itself incompatible with the contents of Socratic moral-philosophical teaching that takes as its point of departure the principle of ἐγκράτεια.

4.5. Heracles' choice

Hence, Socrates' use of market terminology in the Diodorus-episode may initially appear to evoke a commercial model of friendship, but turns out to be drawing on the discourse of estate management, a discourse more suitable for encapsulating the long-term perspective. The proper care of an estate always

⁸³ This paradox recurs on several occasions in Socratic literature and other manifestations of criticism against the sophists. E.g. *Pl. Gorg.* 519C, 460E; *Is. Soph.* 5-6.

⁸⁴ E.g. Socrates' first conversation with Antiphon (I.vi.1-10) shows Socrates redefining notions of poverty, happiness and the ends of wisdom.

takes into account the long-term perspective, the paradigm-case being land cultivation: taking care of land that eventually yields fruit. This explains Socrates' frequent use of agricultural metaphors in describing *φιλία*, such as the notion of the *καρπός*, the fruit, of friendship;⁸⁵ this also explains what the conflict between Virtue and Vice in Prodicus' myth of Heracles, narrated by Socrates in *Mem. II.i*, is really conveying: a rhetoric of *πόνος*, of toil and effort, of investment in long-term goods. Against Vice's promise of a life without toil,⁸⁶ stands the truth of Virtue that the gods give nothing without toil and effort.⁸⁷

(13) Xen. Mem. II.i.28⁸⁸

τῶν γὰρ ὄντων ἀγαθῶν καὶ καλῶν οὐδὲν ἄνευ πόνου καὶ ἐπιμελείας θεοὶ διδῶσιν ἀνθρώποις, ἀλλ' εἴτε τοὺς θεοὺς ἴλεως εἶναί σοι βούλει, θεραπευτέον τοὺς θεοὺς, εἴτε ὑπὸ φίλων ἐθέλεις ἀγαπᾶσθαι, τοὺς φίλους εὐεργετητέον, εἴτε ὑπό τινος πόλεως ἐπιθυμῆς τιμᾶσθαι, τὴν πόλιν ὠφελητέον, εἴτε ὑπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος πάσης ἀξιοῖς ἐπ' ἀρετῇ θαυμάζεσθαι, τὴν Ἑλλάδα πειρατέον εὖ ποιεῖν, εἴτε γῆν βούλει σοι καρποὺς ἀφθόνοους φέρειν, τὴν γῆν θεραπευτέον, εἴτε ἀπὸ βοσκημάτων οἶει δεῖν πλουτίζεσθαι, τῶν βοσκημάτων ἐπιμελητέον, εἴτε διὰ πολέμου ὀρμᾶς αὐξέσθαι καὶ βούλει δύνασθαι τοὺς τε φίλους ἐλευθεροῦν καὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς χειροῦσθαι, τὰς πολεμικὰς τέχνας αὐτάς τε παρὰ τῶν ἐπισταμένων μαθητέον καὶ ὅπως αὐταῖς δεῖ χρῆσθαι ἀσκητέον· εἰ δὲ καὶ τῷ σώματι βούλει δυνατὸς εἶναι, τῇ γνῶμῃ ὑπηρετεῖν ἐθιστέον τὸ σῶμα καὶ γυμναστέον σὺν πόνοις καὶ ἰδρωτί.

⁸⁵ Xen. *Mem.* II.iv.7; *Symp.* VIII.25. Cf. STEVENS (1994).

⁸⁶ Xen. *Mem.* II.1.25.

⁸⁷ Virtue lives up to Socrates' prescriptions of *φιλία*, as she emphatically tells Heracles that she has been observing his qualities for a long time. Where Vice prostitutes herself, Virtue carefully embeds her promises to Heracles in a long-term relationship: she knows his parents and his qualities. *Mem.* II.i.27.

⁸⁸ "Nothing that is really good and admirable is granted by the gods to men without some effort and application. If you want the gods to be gracious to you, you must worship the gods; if you wish to be appreciated by your friends, you must be kind to your friends; if you desire to be honored by a State, you must help that State; if you expect to be admired for your fine qualities by the whole of Greece, you must try to benefit Greece; if you want your land to produce abundant crops, you must look after your land; if you expect to make money from your livestock, you must take care of your livestock; if you have an impulse to extend your influence by war, and want to be able to free your friends and subdue your enemies, you must both learn the actual arts of war from those who understand them, and practice the proper way of applying them; and if you want to be physically efficient, you must train your body to be subject to your reason, and develop it with hard work and sweat." (transl. adapt.)

Here we clearly see the value of ἐγκράτεια and καρτερία as the foundational principles of all virtues. Instead of making appealing promises of short-term gratification, Virtue tells Heracles the truth that the gods give nothing without toil (πόνος) and effort (ἐπιμελεία). If you want to be appreciated by your friends, you need to benefit them; if you want your land to yield a bounty of fruit, you should cultivate it. Real happiness and self-fulfilment consist in ἀντάρκεια that results from self-restraint and endurance.⁸⁹ Virtue’s “rhetoric of πόνος”⁹⁰ is part of Socrates’ moral-philosophical ideology that runs through the whole of the *Memorabilia*. It is an ideology of voluntary endurance of deprivations and self-imposed toil—an ideology that defines genuine benefit as grounded in an understanding of and investment in long-term goods and a cultivation of the self, and that opposes the appeals of short-term self-indulging gratification that in the long run corrupts body, soul and one’s interpersonal relationships.

To Socrates, the salient opposition is therefore not so much between friendship and commerce, nor between other-regarding behavior and the instrumental pursuit of self-interest, but rather between acting from a thorough knowledge of long-term interests, i.e. of one’s *genuine* interest (the model of which is the οἰκονομικός, the estate manager), and the anti-social behavior displayed by people who are incapable of taking in the long-term perspective (the caricature of which is the businessman).

⁸⁹ Cf. O’CONNOR (1994), 159-163. Socrates’ re-telling of Prodicus’ myth is aimed at a distorted understanding of Socratic self-sufficiency on Aristippus’ part: Aristippus professes to be a hedonist, who refrains from taking part in public life and being part of a community, i.e. investing in interpersonal relationships. See O’CONNOR (1994) for Socratic self-sufficiency and its distorted versions of Socrates’ followers.

⁹⁰ JOHNSTONE (1994). Cf. a fragment scribed to the followers of Annicerus (fr. 234 MANNEBACH = DL II.97): τόν τε φίλον μη̄ διᾱ τὰς χρείας μόνον ἀποδέχεσθαι ὧν ὑπολειπουσῶν μη̄ ἐπιστρέφεισθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τὴν γεγνουῖαν εὐνοίαν, ἧς ἔνεκα καὶ πόνους ὑπομενεῖν. καίτοι τιθέμενον ἡδονὴν τέλος καὶ ἀχθόμενον ἐπὶ τῷ στέρεσθαι αὐτῆς ὁμῶς ἔκουσίως ὑπομενεῖν διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν φίλον στοργήν.

“A friend should be cherished not merely for his utility—for, if that fails, we should then no longer associate with him—but for the good feeling for the sake of which we shall even endure hardships. Nay, though we make pleasure the end and are annoyed when deprived of it, we shall nevertheless cheerfully endure this because of our love to our friend.” (*transl.* HICKS).

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Xenophon's *Memorabilia* provide us with an instructive alternative to post-Enlightenment notions of utility, use and the good. Socrates' chief concern, as we have seen in the Diodorus episode, is to enable his companions to look beyond the appeal of short-term gratification and to envision the long-term perspective; without such perspective it is impossible to understand long-term bonds such as *φιλία*. Occasionally, as we have seen in the Antiphon episode, Socrates' conception of *φιλία* gains meaning from its opposition with exchange events informed by short-term conceptions of the good: commercial transactions embedded in a pursuit of gain.

Socrates' understanding of the long-term interests in real friendship transcends the opposition between egoism and altruism in favor of a notion of mutual benefit, as he points out to Chaerecrates: the ideal of the long-term care of the self automatically entails the care of one's *φίλοι*. After all, they are part of one's *χρήματα*, wealth. Socratic economics, therefore, is never a zero-sum game: there is no such thing as conflict of interests between two genuine *φίλοι*, two people who treat each other well, because their dealings are grounded in genuine knowledge and virtue.

The opposition of the conception of *φιλία* as long-term reciprocity on the one hand and the short-term cycle of gratification characteristic of commerce on the other, resembles PARRY & BLOCH'S "two transactional orders".⁹¹ The long-term transactional order, occupied with the reproduction of the larger social and cosmic order, is always positively valued. Phenomena such as agriculture, religion and the Greek *οἶκος* with its generation-transcending continuity, are typically part of such a long-term order. The short-term order of individual acquisition is morally underdetermined. Moral problems typically arise when these two basic transactional orders get confused. The distinct feature of Socratic economics is that it redefines notions of wealth, value and usefulness, that originate in the short-term order, to be grounded in virtue, to be incorporated in the long-term transactional order: Socratic *οἰκονομία*. Whereas in modern economic theory, consumption is the only area in which people are

⁹¹ PARRY & BLOCH (1989), 23-30. See Introduction.

not supposed to be acting rationally,⁹² Socrates' understanding of οἰκονομία with its ethics of self-sufficiency, self-restraint and endurance makes consumption the locus of virtue.⁹³

⁹² GRAEBER (2005).

⁹³ A similar ethical attempt to make demand or consumption a rationally controllable element we find in the Parable of the Leaky Jars (Pl. *Gorg.* 493c), where the concept of unlimited demand is exploited: the rational individual can minimize losses through leakage by desiring less rather than more. LOWRY (1987), 113 and (1998), 22.