

# i nterpretation

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# Xenophon and his Socrates

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This paper has a simple thesis: that Xenophon's account of Socrates deserves more respectful attention from those interested in Socrates than it generally receives today. The paper consists mostly of a brief summary of the longest of the four Xenophonic writings devoted more or less explicitly to Socrates, the *Memorabilia*. But I want to begin by considering in a very general way what might be responsible for the current neglect of these works.

Far more obviously than Plato, Xenophon calls attention in his writings to his own relationship with Socrates. He claims frequently, Plato only once, to have been present at the Socratic conversations he reports. He often comments, in his own name, on Socrates' words and deeds, and on his life as a whole, something Plato never does; and he sometimes talks of the impression they made on *him* in particular. In accord with this, he calls his longest Socratic work "Memorabilia," that is, "Recollections," *his* recollections of Socrates; there is no parallel to this in the Platonic dialogues. One might add that whereas the dialogues, with the possible exception of the *Laws*, are devoted entirely to Socrates—Plato himself being mentioned only three times, almost in passing—Xenophon's works include not only the *Education of Cyrus*, devoted to the founder of the Persian empire, but also the *Anabasis of Cyrus*, whose real hero, the rescuer of almost ten thousand Greeks from extreme peril in the heart of the Persian empire, is Xenophon himself.

All of this would seem to justify an expectation on our part of finding in Xenophon's works an account of his association with Socrates. But this expectation, if not entirely disappointed, is fulfilled in a surprising way. Xenophon recounts only two episodes in what must have been a complex friendship of some duration. The first was a conversation which took place in the presence of Crito's son, Critoboulos, a lazy, fun-loving and spendthrift youth, whom Socrates, despite or perhaps in part because of these qualities, liked to spend time with:

Tell me, Xenophon, Socrates began, didn't you consider Critoboulos to belong to the moderate human beings rather than the bold, to those with forethought rather than the thoughtless and reckless?

Certainly, Xenophon replied.

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Well, consider him now to be hot-headed and heedless in the extreme: this fellow would tumble head-first into daggers and leap into fire.

And what did you see him doing, Xenophon said, that you think such things of him?

Didn't this fellow dare to kiss the most fair and blooming son of Alcibiades?

But if that is the reckless deed, Xenophon said, I think I myself would submit to the risk.

Wretch! Socrates said. And what do you think you would suffer from kissing someone beautiful? Would you not at once be a slave rather than a free person, spend a lot for harmful pleasures, be deprived of the leisure to care for anything noble and good, and be forced to take seriously what not even a madman would take seriously?

Heracles! Xenophon said. What terrible power you ascribe to the kiss.

And are you surprised at this? Socrates said. Don't you know that spiders, which aren't a half-obol in size, crush human beings with pain, through a touch of the mouth alone, and drive from them the capacity to think?

Yes, by Zeus! Xenophon said, for spiders inject something through the bite.

Moron! Socrates said. You think that the beautiful *don't* inject something when they kiss, just because you don't *see* it? Don't you know that this beast they call a beauty in his bloom is so much more terrible than spiders that spiders must touch, while this one, without even touching but if one only *sees* it, injects something, though quite far away, sufficient to drive one mad? ... But I advise you, Xenophon, whenever you see someone beautiful, to flee with all possible speed.

Xenophon often comments favorably on the effectiveness of Socratic exhortations. For some reason, he refrained from doing so in this case.

The second episode is recounted not in the Socratic writings proper, but in the *Anabasis*. Xenophon had received a letter from a friend inviting him to accompany the friend on an expedition being organized by Cyrus, the younger brother of the then Persian king. Xenophon took the letter to Socrates and consulted with him about the trip. Socrates was worried that association with Cyrus might get Xenophon in trouble with Athens, since Cyrus was thought to have given enthusiastic assistance to Sparta in its recent war with Athens. So Socrates advised Xenophon to go to Delphi to consult with the god about the trip. Xenophon went to Delphi and he put a question to Apollo: to which of the gods should he sacrifice and pray in order to make the journey he intended to make in the noblest and best manner and to come back safely having acted in a noble manner. When Xenophon returned to Athens with Apollo's answer, Socrates blamed him for not having asked *first* whether it was better for him to make the trip or not; instead, Xenophon had made the chief decision himself and had asked the god only about the means. As a result, Socrates was compelled to advise Xenophon to proceed with the trip in accordance with the god's instructions.

The account of his association with Socrates that Xenophon conveys through these stories is somewhat surprising in any case. It is all the more surprising for

its apparent inconsistency with the impression conveyed by the features of his Socratic works we have mentioned: the stories seem to indicate that Xenophon did *not* place very great weight on his relationship with Socrates, even that he took it lightly. But perhaps that impression was in need of qualification or correction. More precisely, what the stories indicate is that Xenophon was not entirely receptive to Socrates' advice. Beyond that, as his life as a whole also serves to suggest, Xenophon did not regard the Socratic life—the philosophic life pure and simple—as a model for *him* to follow in every respect. It is safe to assume that he expected the same to be true of many of his readers as well.

This consideration may help to explain another feature of Xenophon's Socratic works: the almost total absence from them of philosophic protreptic, exhortations to philosophize of the sort found in abundance in the Platonic dialogues. In their place, we find—in Xenophon's *Symposium*—a witty and light-hearted but no less telling critique of the Socratic circle, or at least of some of its most conspicuous members. (The very terms “philosophy,” “philosophers,” “philosophize” occur infrequently in the Socratic writings.) Xenophon had a precise understanding of what the absence of philosophic protreptic entails. In the fourth book of his *Memorabilia*, he presents a caricature of such a protreptic. It is a caricature because its object, the boy to be converted to philosophy, is about as unfit for philosophy as a nature can be. Nevertheless, the presentation of this defective case provides some basis for figuring out what a nondefective protreptic might require. An appeal to the potential convert's concern for justice, followed by a thorough-going critique of his conscious or unconscious conviction that he knows what justice is, would appear to play a very large role here. Now Xenophon refers rather frequently in his Socratic works to the Socratic examination of justice; but he gives us relatively few examples of it. More generally, he does little to bring the Socratic treatment of justice to life before our eyes and ears: there is no Xenophontic counterpart to Plato's *Republic* or *Gorgias*.

Perhaps with such differences in mind, an admirer of Xenophon from former times distinguished between the sublimity of Plato and the “natural and simple genius” of Xenophon, “comprehended by so few and so little relished by the vulgar.” (Shaftesbury, *Characteristics* 1:167) It is tempting to understand this comment in the light of a somewhat mischievous remark of Montesquieu: “Human beings, rogues individually, are en masse very decent people: they love morality; and . . . I would say that this is seen admirably well in the theater. One is certain to please the people with the sentiments that morality avows, and one is certain to shock them by those it reproves.” (*De l'esprit des lois* xxv 2) But one must think of the higher, the more sublime, rather than the low manifestations of the disposition described by Montesquieu—of Glaucon and Adeimantus rather than Babbit. If philosophy itself is the true opposite to vulgarity, then prior to falling in love with philosophy in the proper way, the future philosophers themselves can't be entirely free of vulgar concerns and tastes; a

philosophic protreptic would therefore have to appeal to those concerns, if only for the sake of leading its addressees beyond them; and in doing so, it would inevitably partake of the vulgarity it seeks to cure. Xenophon's abstaining, or his having his Socrates abstain, from any serious protreptic effort thus has the perhaps incidental advantage of enabling him to present a Socrates remarkably free of vulgarity of this sort. To put this another way, Xenophon doesn't bend very much to make the better part of his readers like the Socrates he presents—and, for this very reason, they may, if they come to like him at all, like him all the more.

But Xenophon does make accommodations to a different version of vulgarity, going much further in this respect than Plato does. In seeking to convince not only the better part but also the vast majority of his readers that Socrates' conviction on a capital charge was absurd, Xenophon uses arguments of a sort that any sufficiently clever lawyer might use if confronted with such a jury. In particular, he goes as far as he can to present Socrates as an ordinary fellow who neither thinks nor does anything out of the ordinary, and as a lover of the demos and his fellow man and a great benefactor of those who associated with him. That is, Xenophon bids his readers—or accepts the predisposition of many of them—to judge Socrates according to a standard he elsewhere identifies as a vulgar one: “The majority, as it seems, define as good men those who are their benefactors.” (*Hellenica* VII 3.12) He goes even further by having his Socrates, in his ordinariness, profess a number of kindred opinions, for example the view that certain mercenary relations deserve the name of friendship. Xenophon's Socrates says to an acquaintance on a certain occasion, “On account of the present bad state of affairs, good friends can now be purchased quite cheaply.” Xenophon's better readers can't help noticing such vulgarity; and, remote as we believe we are today from the needs which dictated its use, they can't help being offended by it. Too refined to tolerate Xenophon's obvious vulgarity, they are not refined enough to observe the quiet evidence of his delicacy and good taste.

The *Memorabilia* is divided into forty-four chapters, which fall into a number of parts or sections (cf. Strauss, *Xenophon's Socrates*). I'll go through these sections more or less in order, feeling free however to skip around from time to time. In the first two chapters, Xenophon takes up directly, and refutes, the two-fold charge on which Socrates was convicted and put to death. The refutation of the impiety charge requires, in Xenophon's view, at least the apparent denial that Socrates was concerned with natural philosophy—that is, with the investigation of the nature of all things: in particular the state of the cosmos and the necessities by which each of the heavenly things comes into being. And while Xenophon gives a number of indications, both in the *Memorabilia* itself and in his other Socratic writings, that Socrates was indeed engaged in natural philosophy, together with information regarding the manner of his philosophic activity, the bulk of the *Memorabilia* is silent on this subject. It shows us

Socrates not in his philosophic activity proper, but in his relations with students, relatives, companions of various sorts, fellow citizens and others, expressing views on personal as well as economic and political matters. Or it shows us something of what it means to be a philosopher by showing how philosophy affects a number of matters and relations with which we too are concerned. And it was perhaps Xenophon's interest in the question of philosophy as a way of life—as well as his cautious reluctance to say very much about Socrates' philosophic activity proper—that gave his recollections or *Memorabilia* this form.

The refutation of the corruption charge requires Xenophon to take up not only Socrates' own undoubted law-abidingness, but his effect on his young companions. Socrates himself was of the opinion that those of his companions who accepted what he himself approved of would be good friends to him and to each other throughout their lives. Xenophon gives us some evidence, in the *Symposium* especially, for doubting whether this was always the case—at least as far as some of those most *eager* to accept what Socrates approved of were concerned. On the other hand, some partial nonaccepters, if the example of Xenophon himself represents this class, might have been quite good friends to Socrates. This question reminds us of Xenophon's other great hero, Cyrus. After conquering all of Western Asia and elevating his friends almost to the peak of power, wealth and honor, Cyrus paused to reflect on his own situation. He thus came to the realization that he had no enemies so dangerous to him as those very friends; and he took precautions commensurate with the danger. But even if Socrates' expectation was always borne out, were those who were good friends to him and to each other always good friends to the city as well? Xenophon admits that Socrates made his companions more attached to him than to their nearest and dearest: would this not have held true also with regard to their attachment to the city? According to another suggestion which Xenophon conveys through his *Education of Cyrus*, Socrates was put to death for alienating the affections of the young.

Leaving even this question aside, a problem would still be caused by the facts that the Socratic circle could not have been limited to those fully willing and able to accept what Socrates approved of, and that not every nonaccepter or partial accepter could be expected to be a Xenophon. At the minimum, Socrates' companions must have included, at most if not all times, a number of youths who were still only potential philosophers and who, therefore, could not yet fully accept what they didn't yet fully understand. Beyond that, could even Socrates know in advance which among the gifted and well-disposed youths had all that the philosophic life requires? Do the proper disposition and the necessary intellectual gifts always coincide? Could Socrates always avoid associating even with clearly unpromising cases? Did he always wish to avoid this?

The troubles which these questions point to, both individually and taken together, were bound to crop up and *did* crop up—most conspicuously in the

cases of Critias and Alcibiades, notorious political criminals who were, at one time or another, closely associated with Socrates. In his treatment of these cases, Xenophon dutifully tries to follow the line laid down by his Socrates: Critias and Alcibiades became bad only after *leaving* Socrates' company and even, partially at least, as a result of leaving it; their criminality is bound up entirely with their rejection of Socrates' teaching and example—it is certainly not due to any quasi-acceptance of that teaching. Xenophon goes so far as to divide Socrates' companions into two classes: the bad ones like Alcibiades and Critias (only those two names are given in this context) and the good ones like Crito and Hermogenes (seven of these names are given), men who did not abandon Socrates and who, throughout their lives, never did or were even accused of doing anything bad. But this line of argument succeeds a little too well. It makes us wonder why Socrates would ever have wanted to associate with the “baddies” to begin with. That is, it leads us toward raising the questions we have already raised. Xenophon gives, in his *Symposium*, a beautiful illustration of the problem by contrasting Hermogenes, one of the aforementioned “goodies,” with a man named Charmides, who must be classed with the “baddies,” since he was later to become a quasi-partner in crime of Critias. Both Hermogenes and Charmides were guests at the banquet which is described in the *Symposium*, along with Socrates, Critoboulos, and others. It will suffice to mention one episode of a more fully drawn characterization and comparison. Sometime after the drinking had commenced, Critoboulos was flaunting his extreme infatuation or love for the boy Socrates had criticized him for kissing, in the conversation recounted earlier. Hermogenes took offense and took Socrates to task regarding Critoboulos' disgraceful condition: “I think it is out of character, Socrates, for you to overlook the fact that Critoboulos has been made so senseless by love.” Socrates defended himself by saying that Critoboulos' condition predated his own association with him. In fact, Critoboulos was already far gone in love when his father, Socrates' companion Crito, turned him over to Socrates to see whether Socrates could help. “And he is already much better: hitherto he stared at the boy stone-like, like those who look at Gorgons, and, stone-like, he never left him. But now I have already seen him blink!” Charmides had been listening to this exchange, which concluded with some Socratic remarks about the dangers of kissing. “Why is it Socrates, he asked, that you scare us, your friends, away from the beautiful, while you yourself I saw in the grammar school—yes, by Zeus—when you were both searching for something in the same book, head against head, bare shoulder against the bare shoulder of Critoboulos?” To which Socrates replied, “So that is why I have felt pain in that shoulder for more than five days and seem to have some sting in my heart, as if bitten by a beast. But now, Critoboulos, I declare publicly, before these many witnesses, that you are not to touch me before your beard is as full as the hair on your head.” To come back to the *Memorabilia*, Xenophon indicates there that Socrates had a very high regard for Charmides. The wish to associate

with natures like his would, by itself, account for Socrates' willingness to teach politics, as Xenophon grants, even in the course of his response to the corruption charge, that he did.

The six chapters of the *Memorabilia* which follow the first two suggest a reason for the apparent inconsistency noted by Charmides between Socrates' words and his deeds: Socrates was exceptionally continent and could therefore safely permit himself temptations others could not. These six chapters are devoted to showing how Socrates, through conversation and example, benefited his companions especially with regard to their becoming pious and continent. They include a number of exhortations to continence with respect to bodily pleasures—including the one addressed to Xenophon himself—and, as Xenophon tells us, Socrates showed himself still more continent in his deeds than in his speeches. So impressive, not to say oppressive, is this continence that we are led increasingly to wonder what it is *for*; or, as one of the exhortations admits, continence is the *foundation* of virtue: it isn't virtue itself. To return for a minute to Xenophon's *Symposium*, one of the ways in which the guests at that elegant banquet entertained themselves was by stating, each in turn, what he was most proud of and then defending his boast or claim. The occasion, needless to say, did not require that those boasts be entirely serious. Socrates, for example, claimed to be proud of his skill as a pimp. But Antisthenes, one of Socrates' most ardent admirers and an extremely poor man, claimed to be proud of his wealth. When his turn came to defend this apparently absurd boast, he explained that he meant the wealth he possessed in his soul, wealth he had acquired from Socrates. As his longish statement makes clear, he understood by this "wealth" nothing so much as the extreme Socratic continence. Later in the evening, Socrates found an occasion to playfully chastise Antisthenes. He accused Antisthenes, who claimed to love him, of loving his beautiful body rather than his soul. In the same context, the fact emerged that Socrates did his best, by the use of one pretext or another, to avoid conversing with Antisthenes. In the *Memorabilia*, Xenophon stresses what Socrates, in the *Symposium*, called his bodily beauty: his continence and kindred qualities. Nevertheless, in various ways, he lets us see glimpses of other things.

For example, Socrates had a number of conversations with a sophist named Antiphon which Xenophon includes in the section we are discussing. "Do you think," Socrates asked on one of these occasions, "anything is more responsible for my not being a slave to my stomach, or to sleep or sex, than that I have other things more pleasant than these, which delight not only in the use but by furnishing hopes that they will be beneficial always?" And on another he said, "For myself, Antiphon, as another takes pleasure in a good horse or a dog or a bird, so even more do I take pleasure in good friends. And if I possess something good, I teach it, and I bring them together with others by whom I think they will be in some way benefited toward virtue; and I go through the treasures of the wise men of old, which they left written in books, reading in com-

mon with my friends; and, if we see something good, we take it out and we hold it to be a great gain if we become beneficial (or friends) to one another.” Hearing this, Xenophon says, he thought Socrates to be blessed.

In the two chapters which follow this section, Socrates gives advice to individuals who have difficult relatives to deal with. In each case, Socrates has a connection with the parties concerned and thus a personal stake in the good behavior he urges. One of the addressees is Socrates’ eldest son, Lamprocles, who is angry with his mother and is therefore acting, or in danger of acting, improperly towards her. In order to put his wife’s harshness in some perspective, Socrates asks Lamprocles, “Which do you think is harder to bear, the savagery of a beast or of a mother?” “A mother’s, I think, at least if she is like that!” “Did she ever yet do you any harm biting you or kicking you, such harms as many have suffered from beasts?” “But, by Zeus, she *says* things which one wouldn’t for all one’s life want to listen to.” “Do you think it is more difficult for you to listen to what she says than for actors when they say to each other in the tragedies the most extreme things?” Lamprocles responded that the actors easily bear the harsh words they have to listen to since they know they are spoken with no ill-will. “And you, knowing full well that your mother speaks not only without ill-will but wishing you, as she wishes nobody else, well—knowing this you get angry?” The conversation of which these exchanges are a part is the only example given by Xenophon (or Plato) of an attempt on Socrates’ part to educate his own children. In presenting the two chapters containing Socrates’ conversations about relatives, Xenophon abstains from any introductory comments and thus avoids speaking of Socrates’ deeds generally as distinguished from his speech.

The next seven chapters concern friendship. According to Xenophon, the Socratic conversations or speeches reported in this section were useful with regard to the acquisition and use of friends, encouraged self-examination as to the amount of one’s worth to one’s friends, and gave instruction as to what sort of friends are worth acquiring. Socrates also attempted to bring relief to those of his friends who were in some difficulty or other. Where the difficulty was caused by ignorance, he attempted to cure it using his judgment; when it was caused by want, by teaching his friends to assist one another. To give one of the examples Xenophon furnishes of these efforts, a friend of Socrates was being eaten out of house and home because the wars, both foreign and civil, which had severely curtailed his income, had also added to his burdens a large number of female relatives to support. Socrates’ advice was simple: why don’t you put them to work making something that can be sold? But in order to get that advice accepted, he had to relieve his friend of the foolish scruple or notion that free women (society ladies, one can say) ought not to engage in commercial activity. Once Socrates had succeeded in enlightening him, the advice was accepted and acted upon with great success. The ensuing harmony in the friend’s home was, as he later reported to Socrates, disturbed only by the la-

dies' complaint that now the man was the only idle member of the household. Here, too, Socrates was able to be of help: "Why don't you tell them, then, the story of the dog? For they say that when the animals could speak, the sheep said to the master: it is an amazing thing that you do in giving to *us*, who furnish you with wool and lambs and cheese, nothing but what we can take from the ground, while to the dog, who furnishes you with nothing of the sort, you give a share of your own food. When the dog heard this, he said, Yes, by Zeus! For I am the one who preserves you from being stolen away by men or carried off by wolves; if I weren't guarding you, you wouldn't even be able to graze, from fear of perishing." Thus, according to Socrates, even the sheep acquiesced in the more honorable treatment for the dog. As this chapter reminds us, Xenophon and his Socrates were willing to use the term "friend" rather loosely. It could thus be applied to a number of different sorts of people with whom Socrates had relationships of various kinds. This fact, together with the attention given in the section on friendship to the question what sort of friends are worth acquiring, makes us wonder what sort of friends Socrates himself thought most worth acquiring. An answer has already been indicated in Socrates' remarks to the sophist Antiphon and elsewhere. A more explicit statement comes later on in the *Memorabilia* when Xenophon explains what Socrates meant when he said, as he often did, that he was in love with someone: manifestly, he was not longing for those whose bodies were in bloom but those whose souls were naturally fit for acquiring virtue, that is, those who were quick at learning whatever they turned their minds to and remembered what they learned and desired all the sorts of learning relevant to the noble management of household and city and, in general, the good use of human beings and human affairs.

The emphasis in the friendship section as a whole on utilitarian considerations makes us wonder, in turn, about the possible elements of Socratic friendship other than utility, even utility of the sort pointed to in the remarks to Antiphon. Now the answer to this question is not without its relevance to the answer to the other one: what sort of friends Socrates thought worth acquiring. In this connection, we might note that after explaining as he does what Socrates meant when he said he was in love with someone, Xenophon seems to go out of his way to show how much time Socrates spent with a certain brainless beauty. (We can also recall here his liking for Critoboulos.) In one of the friendship chapters, Socrates distinguishes between friendships acquired through the use of "love-charms" and those acquired through conferring benefits. Later on in the *Memorabilia*, he admits to being a master in the use of such charms. Or, as he says in the chapter in which they are first mentioned, he is erotic and therefore strives mightily, with his whole being, to be loved by those he loves, longed for by those he longs for, and to have those *he* desires to be with, desire to be with him.

Xenophon gives four examples in the friendship section of Socrates' at-

tempts to relieve the difficulties of his friends. There are indications, as we have to some extent already seen, that some or all of these efforts took place against the background of the awful suffering brought to Athens, to the vast majority of Socrates' fellow citizens, by the latter part of the Peloponnesian war and its aftermath. Xenophon gives us no report of a Socratic attempt to relieve the distress of his city, unless one or more of the conversations reported in the seven chapters he places next constitute such an attempt. Socrates speaks in these conversations to actual or potential or aspiring military and political leaders of the city—in one case giving advice with regard to the current distress, in another urging a capable man not to shrink from playing a (greater) public role. In his general introduction to the conversations in question, however, Xenophon claims no more for them than that they benefited the individuals addressed—individuals whom he characterizes as “those longing for the noble things,” i.e., for public honors— by making them take the care or make the effort appropriate to such longing. These conversations explore, in an extremely thorough way, what political or military leadership calls for and therefore, in particular, whether what it calls for is of benefit to the leader himself. Socrates seems to indicate that some doubts are in order on that score; surely, he himself never sought political leadership. Yet in a conversation that took place in an earlier section, he had chastised a companion of his who wished to live an entirely unpolitical life—the life of one who is a foreigner in every land—so as to avoid the burdens which come with sharing political responsibility. The companion believed that he was following a path that led to happiness precisely because it avoided both ruling on the one hand and slavery on the other. Socrates said on that occasion, “if the path avoids human beings as well, just as it avoids both ruling and slavery, you might have a point,” and he pointed out the dangers to which the weak in general and foreigners in particular are exposed. The only real choices are ruling or being ruled or voluntarily serving the rulers. Or, as Socrates put it when asked on another occasion why he had married the most difficult of all women past, present and future, “I have acquired her because I want to make use of and associate with human beings, knowing well that if I can endure her, I will keep company with all other human beings with ease.”

The seven chapters which follow the section on politics do not seem to belong to a single group. The most significant of them are probably the first two, where we are told what Socrates said about a number of characteristic themes. For example, Socrates called kings and rulers not those who possess the scepter or those chosen by any chance group or by the lot or those who have gotten where they are by force or fraud but those who know how to rule. This remark admits of a number of different interpretations. Left to his own devices, Socrates would enlarge on it in the most innocent way. But if someone objected that it is possible for a tyrant not to obey the knowers, those who speak correctly, Socrates said, “How would it be possible not to obey when a penalty is

laid down if someone doesn't obey the one who speaks well; for in whatever matter one doesn't obey the one who speaks well, he will err and, erring, be penalized." If someone persisted in the objection, saying that it is possible for the tyrant to kill the one who thinks well, Socrates said, "Do you think the killer of the best of his allies would go without penalty or meet merely with some chance penalty? Do you think the one who did this would be preserved or rather, in this way, most speedily perish?" And, in general, as Xenophon tells us later on, Socrates treated those who objected to what he said differently from those who listened in silence. "If someone contradicted him on some subject . . . he led the whole argument back to its hypothesis . . . Thus the truth became manifest to the objectors themselves. But whenever he went through an argument on some subject by himself, he kept to the path of the opinions most generally agreed upon, considering that manner of argument to be the safe one."

Seven of the last eight chapters of the *Memorabilia* are devoted to Socratic education. They show first how Socrates attracted the attention of certain types of potential students and then how he led one student in particular through the successive stages of Socratic instruction. While the demonstration of Socratic instruction undoubtedly tells us much about Socrates as an educator, as well as about his views on various matters, in reading it, one must take into account the fact that the individual chosen by Xenophon to be the model student in this demonstration is Euthydemus, the brainless beauty referred to earlier. Xenophon begins his treatment of Socratic education by telling us that Socrates did not approach everyone, i.e., every type of person, in the same way. And he distinguishes for us a certain number of types. At the top are the good natures, whose characteristics we have already mentioned. In the next place come those of some natural gifts who, on account of these, think they have no need of education and look down on it. Skipping to last place, we find those who believe that they have already received the best education and pride themselves on their wisdom. Euthydemus belongs to this class. To use the distinction mentioned earlier but introduced in the text in the context of the demonstration of Socratic instruction, Euthydemus is the nonobjector par excellence. In one of the chapters of this section, he is replaced as Socrates' interlocutor by the world-famous sophist, Hippias. Hippias had come upon Socrates when the latter was pointing out to some people how difficult it is to find a teacher of justice, while teachers of shoemaking, carpentry, smithing or horsemanship are so ready to hand. Their conversation began in this way. Hippias said, "You are still saying the same things, Socrates, that I heard you saying long ago." And Socrates replied, "What is more terrible than this, Hippias, not only do I always say the same things, but I say them about the same subjects. You, perhaps, on account of your great learning, never say the same things about the same subjects." "Of course, I try always to say something new." "Even about what you know? For example, if someone asks you how to spell Socrates—how many letters and

which ones—do you try to say different things at different times? Or with numbers, don't you give the same answer now to those asking whether twice five is ten that you gave formerly?" As Xenophon shows in this way, the change of interlocutors did not affect significantly the quality of discussion.

The last chapter of the *Memorabilia* returns to the theme of Socrates' condemnation and death and reports some of Socrates' reflections as those events approached. He was clearly attached to life, which he felt he had lived to the fullest; but, given especially his age, he seemed to feel that it was not a bad time for him to die. We might be disturbed by the manner of his death—by its injustice, which it was after all part of the intention of the *Memorabilia* to establish. In his *Apology of Socrates*, where he takes up again some of the parts of the last chapter of the *Memorabilia* from a somewhat different point of view, Xenophon shows what he and his Socrates would have thought of such a reaction. Among those present at the trial was Apollodoros, whom Xenophon characterizes as "an ardent lover of Socrates and otherwise a naive fellow." After Socrates' condemnation, Apollodoros said to him, "But for me, Socrates, the hardest thing to bear is that I see you dying unjustly." Socrates, stroking Apollodoros' head, said, "Dearest Apollodoros, would you have preferred to see me dying justly?" And, for only the second time in Xenophon's Socratic writings, where he has caused us to laugh more than a few times, Socrates laughed.