

Interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Fall 2021

Volume 48 Issue 1

3	<i>Iraj Azarfaza</i>	Overcoming the Powerful Prejudice against Xenophon: A Debate between Leo Strauss and Friedrich Schleiermacher
27	<i>John F. Cornell</i>	<i>Sanza Mezzo</i> : A Reading of Dante's <i>Paradiso</i> Cantos 5–7
51	<i>Thomas L. Pangle</i>	The Unfolding Plan of “Maxims and Arrows” in Nietzsche's <i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
		Book Reviews
71	<i>Francis J. Beckwith</i>	<i>Crisis of the Two Constitutions</i> by Charles R. Kesler
77	<i>Shilo Brooks</i>	<i>Warspeak: Nietzsche's Victory over Nihilism</i> by Lise van Boxel
85	<i>Steven H. Frankel</i>	<i>Founding God's Nation: Reading Exodus</i> by Leon R. Kass
97	<i>Eli Friedland</i>	<i>De Anima (On Soul)</i> by Aristotle, Translated by David Bolotin
103	<i>Christopher Kelly</i>	<i>Hypocrisy and the Philosophical Intentions of Rousseau</i> by Matthew D. Mendham
109	<i>Marco Menon</i>	<i>Una filosofia in esilio</i> by Carlo Altini
115	<i>Miguel Morgado</i>	<i>A Political Philosophy of Conservatism</i> by Ferenc Hörcher
121	<i>Travis Mulroy</i>	<i>The Music of Reason</i> by Michael Davis
127	<i>April Dawn Olsen</i>	<i>Reason and Character</i> by Lorraine Smith Pangle
133	<i>Joshua Parens</i>	<i>Nature, Law, and the Sacred</i> by Evanthia Speliotis
137	<i>Oliver Precht</i>	<i>Theory and Practice</i> by Jacques Derrida
143	<i>Charles T. Rubin</i>	<i>Learning One's Native Tongue</i> by Tracy B. Strong
151	<i>David Lewis Schaefer</i>	<i>Montaigne and the Tolerance of Politics</i> by Douglas I. Thompson
159	<i>Thomas E. Schneider</i>	<i>Property and the Pursuit of Happiness</i> by Edward J. Erler and <i>An Anti-Federalist Constitution</i> by Michael J. Faber
165	<i>Lee Ward</i>	<i>America's Revolutionary Mind</i> by C. Bradley Thompson
171	<i>Jacob C. J. Wolf</i>	<i>Recovering the Liberal Spirit</i> by Steven F. Pittz

Interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

- Editor-in-Chief* Timothy W. Burns, Baylor University
- General Editors* Charles E. Butterworth • Timothy W. Burns
- General Editors (Late)* Howard B. White (d. 1974) • Robert Horwitz (d. 1987)
Seth G. Benardete (d. 2001) • Leonard Grey (d. 2009) •
Hilail Gildin (d. 2015)
- Consulting Editors* David Lowenthal • Harvey C. Mansfield • Thomas L.
Pangle • Ellis Sandoz • Kenneth W. Thompson
- Consulting Editors (Late)* Leo Strauss (d. 1973) • Arnaldo Momigliano (d. 1987) •
Michael Oakeshott (d. 1990) • John Hallowell (d. 1992)
• Ernest L. Fortin (d. 2002) • Muhsin Mahdi (d. 2007) •
Joseph Cropsey (d. 2012) • Harry V. Jaffa (d. 2015)
- International Editors* Terence E. Marshall • Heinrich Meier
- Editors* Peter Ahrens Dorf • Wayne Ambler • Marco Andreacchio •
Maurice Auerbach • Robert Bartlett • Fred Baumann • Eric
Buzzetti • Susan Collins • Patrick Coby • Erik Dempsey •
Elizabeth C'de Baca Eastman • Edward J. Erler • Maureen
Feder-Marcus • Robert Goldberg • L. Joseph Hebert •
Pamela K. Jensen • Hannes Kerber • Mark J. Lutz • Daniel
Ian Mark • Ken Masugi • Carol L. McNamara • Will
Morrisey • Amy Nendza • Lorraine Pangle • Charles T.
Rubin • Leslie G. Rubin • Thomas Schneider • Susan Meld
Shell • Geoffrey T. Sigalet • Nicholas Starr • Devin Stauffer
• Bradford P. Wilson • Cameron Wybrow • Martin D. Yaffe
• Catherine H. Zuckert • Michael P. Zuckert
- Copy Editor* Les Harris
- Designer* Sarah Teutschel
- Inquiries* ***Interpretation, A Journal of Political Philosophy***
Department of Political Science
Baylor University
1 Bear Place, 97276
Waco, TX 76798
- email* interpretation@baylor.edu

Overcoming the Powerful Prejudice against Xenophon: A Debate between Leo Strauss and Friedrich Schleiermacher*

IRAJ AZARFAZA

SIEMENS STIFTUNG, MUNICH

iraj.azarfaza@gmx.de

Xenophon ist mein spezieller Liebling, weil er den Mut gehabt hat, sich als Idioten zu verkleiden und so durch die Jahrtausende zu gehen—er ist der größte Gauner, den ich kenne—ich glaube, dass er in seinen Schriften genau das tut, was Sokrates in seinem Leben getan hat.

—Leo Strauss to Jacob Klein, Feb. 16, 1939 (GS 3:567)

Leo Strauss's rediscovery of Xenophon as a philosopher is one of his significant contributions to the history of philosophy.¹ The last stage of that rediscovery is found in his long-standing attempt to raise “the problem of Socrates,” which led to his interpretations of Xenophon's Socratic writings.² In the introduction to his *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse*, Strauss claims that

*This essay was made possible in part by a scholarship from the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Foundation, which I used during a research stay at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München between December 2020 and June 2021. It has also benefited from the careful attention of some friends and colleagues: Peter Minowitz, Hannes Kerber, Laurenz Denker, Majid Moradi-Sedeh, and a friend of Strauss and Xenophon who prefers to remain anonymous, who generously took upon themselves the tasks of critic and editor. I also sincerely thank Heinrich Meier for inviting me to attend his seminars at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and the lectures at the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Foundation in Munich.

¹ The first Strauss scholar to mention that rediscovery is Seth Benardete. In his “Memorial Speech for Leo Strauss” in 1974 (published in *Archeology of the Soul*, ed. Ronna Burger and Michael Davis [South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's, 2012], 375–77), Benardete says that Strauss “approached the ancients without the blinkers of modern classical scholarship—a sign of this was his rediscovery of Xenophon the philosopher—for he knew that such scholarship had taken from the start the side of the moderns” (375).

² After finishing his book *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, Strauss delivered six public lectures between October 27 and November 7, 1958, at the University of Chicago, entitled “The Origins of Political Science and The Problem of Socrates: Six Public Lectures” (posthumously published in *Interpretation* 23, no 2. [Winter 1996]: 17–85), in which he raises “the problem of Socrates” for the first time. In

of the sources handed down Xenophon's Socratic writings are "the primary source for our knowledge of Socrates."³ He knows, if not better than, at least equally as well as any contemporary classicist how disputable that claim is. In fact, he admits that Xenophon as the primary source "is rendered powerless by *the powerful prejudice* which emerged in the course of the nineteenth century and is today firmly established" (XSD 83, emphasis added). Even after almost fifty years after Strauss's last studies on Xenophon, that prejudice is still, if not to say firmly, established. This is one reason why those earlier studies dedicated to Strauss's Xenophon, and more recent studies that were made possible by Strauss's opening of the horizon, have not been studied, let alone understood, sufficiently.⁴ Thus it is necessary to encounter that prejudice as a prolegomenon to Strauss's rediscovery of Xenophon.

In the first part of the following essay, I will give a brief genealogy of the prejudice. Since in the final analysis it is rooted in Friedrich Schleiermacher's epoch-making lecture titled "Über den Werth des Sokrates als Philosophen"

these lectures, Strauss justifies his return to the problem of Socrates after Nietzsche, who had attacked the worth of Socrates as the founder of rationalism, in the following way: "The problem of Socrates is ultimately the question of the worth of the Socratic position. But it is primarily a more technical question, a merely historical question. Socrates never wrote a line" (138–39). Thus, Strauss dedicated his lectures to the three primary sources of our knowledge of Socrates to answer that "technical" or "historical" question: Aristophanes, Xenophon, and Plato. Years later, he expanded the part on Aristophanes in his book *Socrates and Aristophanes* (New York: Basic Books, 1966; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) and the part on Xenophon in his two books *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse: An Interpretation of the Oeconomicus* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970; repr., South Bend: St. Augustine's, 1998) and *Xenophon's Socrates* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972). In 1970, Strauss delivered another lecture under the name of "The Problem of Socrates" (published as "The Problem of Socrates" in *Interpretation* 22, no. 3 [Spring 1995]: 321–38). In this lecture, he attempts to reveal how understanding the "historical" aspect of the problem of Socrates contributes to understanding its "philosophical" aspect. The absence of the part on Plato in Strauss's publications is partially alleviated by the central chapter "On Plato's Republic" in his book *The City and Man* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964; repr., University of Chicago Press, 1978), his *The Argument and the Action of Plato's "Laws"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), and finally his "On Plato's Apology of Socrates and Crito" and "On the Euthydemus," the second and third chapters of *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, ed. Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

³ Strauss, *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse*, 83. This work will henceforward be cited parenthetically in text as XSD.

⁴ Of studies on Strauss's Xenophon, I should mention Christopher Bruell's "Strauss on Xenophon's Socrates," *Political Science Reviewer*, no. 14 (1984): 263–318, and the third and the fourth chapters of Laurence Lampert's *The Enduring Importance of Leo Strauss* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). Among those studies that Strauss's opening of the horizon made possible, I should refer to Eric Buzzetti's *Xenophon the Socratic Prince: The Argument of the "Anabasis of Cyrus"* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Thomas L. Pangle's *The Socratic Way of Life: Xenophon's "Memorabilia"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), and his *Socrates Founding Political Philosophy in Xenophon's "Economist," "Symposium," and "Apology"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020). I should also mention Dustin Sebell's recent book *Xenophon's Socratic Education: Reason, Religion and the Limits of Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021).

(On the worth of Socrates as philosopher) (1818), in the second part I will closely reread that lecture in order to expose how the prejudice took form. In the third and last part I will attempt to retrieve Strauss's response to the prejudice and thereby to its originator, Schleiermacher.

1. A BRIEF GENEALOGY OF THE POWERFUL PREJUDICE AGAINST XENOPHON

The prejudice against Xenophon cannot be sufficiently understood unless one turns to the problem to which Xenophon is expected to give a solution, that is, "the Socratic problem."⁵ Most twentieth-century classicists concur that neither Aristophanes's *Clouds* nor Xenophon's Socratic writings but rather Plato's dialogues are the only source that counts for both our historical and philosophical knowledge of Socrates. In the case of Aristophanes's *Clouds*, it seems clear to them that it is an irrelevant representation of Socrates. Aristophanes capitalizes on Socrates's character in order to attack his contemporary sophists. One can easily see the seemingly unbridgeable gap between Aristophanes's Socrates and Plato's or even Xenophon's. By identifying Socrates with the sophists or the pre-Socratic philosophers who were notorious in Athens, Aristophanes seems to be an enemy of Socrates.⁶ Only a casuist of exceptional gifts would take sides with Aristophanes over Plato or Xenophon to solve the Socratic problem. Nonetheless, in his *Socrates and Aristophanes*, Strauss assessed this understanding of Aristophanes and his Socrates as uncritical and viewed Aristophanes's caricature of Socrates as not too unrealistic. For according to Plato and Xenophon, Socrates underwent "a conversion from youthful contempt for the political or moral things...to a mature concern with them." Aristophanes's *Clouds* caricatures the young or pre-Socratic Socrates, who is totally unaware of the danger of his thought or teachings for the city and his own precarious situation in the city.⁷ Responding to those who put aside the *Clouds* as an attack from an enemy, Strauss claims that "an attack may be justified and an enemy may be fair." To vindicate that claim, Strauss brings up the "friendly conversation" between Socrates and Aristophanes along with Agathon at the end of Plato's *Symposium*, which

⁵ The "Socratic problem" or the "Socratic question" is a term designating the difficulty of distinguishing between the historical Socrates and the accounts of Socrates in texts written by Socrates's contemporaries. That difficulty arises from two facts: first, that Socrates never wrote; second, that the remaining sources that speak about Socrates are not in agreement.

⁶ In his defense before the trial, Plato's Socrates traces all accusations against himself back to Aristophanes's *Clouds* (*Apology of Socrates* 18d; cf. 19c).

⁷ Strauss, *Socrates and Aristophanes*, 314. Cited henceforward in text as SA.

supposedly took place “seven years after the first performance of the *Clouds*.” Also, analyzing the genre of comedy, Strauss indicates that the portrayal in *Clouds*, far from being a distortion, is a thought-provoking image of Socrates the philosopher. For “the philosopher is necessarily ridiculous in the eyes of the multitude and therefore a natural subject for comedy” (SA 4–5).

In the case of Xenophon, one faces both an easy and a difficult problem. It is easy because no one can overlook his Socratic writings as irrelevant or simply distorted. Indeed, as Strauss asserts, “He is the only historian among Socrates’ contemporaries...who vouches for the authenticity of at least some of his Socratic conversations” (SA 4). Still, it seems that he has been short on credibility as a historian. One might say that if Xenophon the historian were approved, there would be no need to find the historical Socrates in Plato, a search that ultimately led to an external division of Platonic dialogues. However that may be, for the contemporary classicists Xenophon’s Socrates is superficial, unlearned, very conservative, and commonsensical, and lacks the Platonic Socrates’s ironic delicacies. More importantly, they do not find in Xenophon’s Socrates the philosophical complexity or depth of Plato’s Socrates. Naturally, they believe that the difference is rooted in the capabilities of Plato and Xenophon themselves: Xenophon’s Socrates is what the simplistic, uneducated, unphilosophical Xenophon remembers of Socrates. Even W. K. C. Guthrie, who rates Xenophon to be a classic example of “a gentleman in the old-fashioned sense of the term” and admires his “clear, easy, straightforward Attic prose,” points out that “on the debit side we must put a certain literal-mindedness and tendency to prosiness, a pedestrian outlook which is sometimes frankly dull, and little sign of any capacity for profound philosophical thought.”⁸ Bertrand Russell describes Xenophon with much less reservation: Xenophon was “a military man, not very liberally endowed with brains, and on the whole conventional in his outlook.” In Russell’s view, Xenophon’s ideas of Socrates, “far from being subversive, were rather dull and commonplace.” He thinks that Xenophon’s defense of Socrates “goes too far, since it leaves the hostility to Socrates unexplained.” He ridicules those who simply accept whatever Xenophon says of Socrates on the grounds that Xenophon “had not the wits to think of anything untrue”: “A stupid man’s report of what a clever man says is never accurate, because he unconsciously translates what he hears into something that he can understand.”⁹ Guthrie’s,

⁸ W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 3, *Socrates*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 14–15.

⁹ Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), 82–83.

Russell's, and many other English classicists' interpretations of Xenophon were in turn under the influence of those of John Burnet and A. E. Taylor. For the sake of brevity and clarity, I will focus on the case of Burnet. Burnet reminds us of two important facts about Xenophon: first, "that he was very young, and Sokrates already an old man, when he knew him, and that he left Athens never to return about three years before Sokrates was put to death." This apparently means that Xenophon's Socratic writings must have been based on other reports of Sokrates rather than Xenophon's own acquaintance. Second, Burnet maintains that Xenophon's most important Socratic writing, the *Memorabilia*, "is an apologia, and must be judged by the canons of criticism applicable to such writings." With respect to the first matter, with corroboration from some evidence from Plato's dialogues, Burnet comes to the conclusion that "Xenophon got the greater part of his information about Sokrates from the dialogues of Plato." With respect to the second, Burnet explains that Xenophon's portrayal of Sokrates must have been historically distorted, "for apologetic reasons."¹⁰

However, what lies behind Burnet's observations on Xenophon is that he prefers Plato to Xenophon not because Xenophon was very young and did not have enough time to know Sokrates since he left Athens forever three years before Sokrates's execution—for Plato was about three years younger than Xenophon and therefore about the same age when he heard Sokrates for the last time. Thus, if the young Plato was capable of knowing Sokrates well, why not Xenophon? Burnet, too, must have had second thoughts on Xenophon's capability to understand Sokrates in comparison to Plato's. Moreover, even Burnet observed that Xenophon sometimes violates canons of apologetic writing and betrays some of Sokrates's features that explain the city's hostility toward Sokrates. For example, despite his denial of Sokrates's practicing natural philosophy at the beginning of the *Memorabilia*, Xenophon reveals at the end of the *Memorabilia* that Sokrates was not uninstructed in at least two branches of natural philosophy: geometry and astronomy (*Mem.* 4.7.3–5). Besides, Xenophon alludes to Sokrates's notorious *phrontistērion* ("think tank") while reporting what Sokrates says to Antiphon the sophist: "I spend my time with them [my friends] unrolling the treasures of the men of old, which they have written down in books and left behind them" (*Mem.* 1.6.14). According to Burnet, Xenophon's literary discrepancies have no other reason than that "he feels at once that he has gone too far" in defense of Sokrates. Xenophon is too stupid to deliberately hide the heterodox Sokrates in his text.

¹⁰ J. Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1, *Thales to Plato* (London: Macmillan, 1914), 119–21.

Behind the unanimity evident in the scholarly consensus depreciating Xenophon's Socrates there lies in fact a single document that proved historically decisive: Friedrich Schleiermacher's lecture "The Worth of Socrates as Philosopher," published in 1818.¹¹ Here, Schleiermacher put forward for the first time two arguments that speak against Xenophon. First, Xenophon was a statesman not a philosopher. Hence, he was not able to gain access to Socrates's core of thoughts as a philosopher. Second, his apologetic approach did not allow for a comprehensive account of Socrates's life. He was restricted to those features of Socrates's life that justified his innocence in the trial. In order to help uproot the powerful prejudice against Xenophon that dominated later scholarship, we should therefore turn to Schleiermacher's lecture and consider his arguments in the context.

2. THE ORIGIN OF THE POWERFUL PREJUDICE AGAINST XENOPHON: SCHLEIERMACHER'S "THE WORTH OF SOCRATES AS PHILOSOPHER"¹²

It is not the philosophical worth of Xenophon but the philosophical worth of Socrates that is the subject matter of Schleiermacher's lecture. In this lecture, Schleiermacher asks the central question of "wherein Socrates' philosophical merit consists." In order to answer that question, he raises "the Socratic problem" (without using the term) and thereby assesses Xenophon as one of the sources of our knowledge of Socrates. On one hand, following most of his contemporaries, Schleiermacher admits that Socrates begins a new chapter in the history of Greek philosophy. On the other hand, he takes issue with the traditional explanation of that beginning, which is reflected in Cicero's remark about Socrates in his *Tusculanae disputationes*: "If we would confine ourselves to the well-known statement, that Socrates called philosophy down

¹¹ "Nearly a century after Schleiermacher's seminal article and in the space of only a few years, scholars in France (Robin 1910); England (Taylor 1911; Burnet 1911 and 1914); and Germany (Maier 1913) published in rapid succession and completely independently from one another studies that were so critical of Xenophon's Socratic writings that it was no longer clear what merit could possibly be attributed to the author of the *Memorabilia*. The consensus that emerged during this period is neither accidental nor a coincidence, and in fact represents the end result of the movement launched by Schleiermacher a century earlier." Louis-André Dorion, "The Rise and Fall of the Socratic Problem," in *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, ed. Donald R. Morrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5. Cf. *Xenophon: Memorabilia*, vol. 1, *Introduction générale et Livre I*, ed. L.-A. Dorion and M. Bandini (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2000), XIII n. 2.

¹² F. Schleiermacher, "Über den Werth des Sokrates als Philosophen," in *Abhandlung der philosophischen Klasse der königlich preussischen Akademie aus den Jahren 1814–1815* (Berlin, 1818), 50–68; English trans., "The Worth of Socrates as Philosopher," in *Platon: The "Apology of Socrates," the "Crito" and part of the "Phaedo,"* ed. W. Smith (London, 1879), cxxx– clx. In this essay I refer to the English translation, abbreviated WSP.

from heaven to earth, that is, to houses and market places, that he proposed social life as the object of research in the room of nature: still the influence thus ascribed to him is far from salutary in itself, for philosophy consists not in a partial cultivation either of morals or physics, but in the co-existence and intercommunion of both, and there is moreover no historical evidence that he really exerted it" (*WSP* cxxxix; *Tusculanae disputationes* 5.10). In fact, Schleiermacher believes that it was Pythagoras who laid the foundation of ethical philosophy before Socrates. Hence, Socrates's philosophical merit, which makes a *Haupteinschnitt* (incisive break) in the history of Greek philosophy and separates the earlier schools and philosophers from the later ones, should not be restricted to ethics: "we must also ascribe to him some element of a more strictly philosophical kind than most writers do, though as a mere beginning it needs not to have been carried very far toward maturity" (*WSP* cxxxvii). To do so, Schleiermacher dedicates the bulk of his lecture to "the new revision" of the case of Socrates. He hopes to prove that both posterity (such as Cicero) and Socrates's contemporaries did Socrates injustice, the former by denying his truly philosophical worth and reducing his philosophical merit to morality in place of nature, and the latter by denying his political worth and imputing to him imaginary offenses against the city. In other words, Schleiermacher already believes that the philosophical and the political worth of Socrates coincide, not to say that the former justifies the latter: there is no essential tension between philosophy and the city.

In the first step, Schleiermacher has to confront the question of who the historical Socrates was or, as it was to be called a few decades later, "the Socratic problem." To answer the question, he wonders whose accounts of Socrates one should believe: Xenophon's or Plato's. He admits that since Plato never introduces himself as a historian of Socrates, albeit with a few exceptions, one should turn to "a work of mere narrative...such as Xenophon's conversations really present." Nonetheless, Schleiermacher seems to take for granted and confidently expects his audience to accept the fact that "Xenophon was a statesman but no philosopher...[whereas Socrates] may have possessed some really philosophical elements which Xenophon was unable to appropriate to himself, and which he suffered to pass unnoticed." In addition, he gives another justification for discrediting Xenophon's portrayal of Socrates: "Xenophon was an apologetic narrator, and had no doubt selected this form for the very purpose, that his readers might not expect him to exhibit Socrates entire[ly]" (*WSP* cxviii). Schleiermacher believes that if Socrates's contemporaries had only heard of Socrates through Xenophon's unphilosophical narrations, one could not have understood how politically

ambitious men like Critias and Alcibiades, on one hand, and those who were prepared for the theoretical studies such as Plato and Euclides, on the other, held their conversations with Socrates in so high esteem. Schleiermacher sensed that there is something more to be found in the historical Socrates that is not reflected in Xenophon's narratives. One might justifiably ask, however, whether Xenophon does not conceal the true Socrates. Could he not have practiced esotericism? Schleiermacher finds this possibility absurd: "Nor can it be supposed, that Socrates held discourses in public such as Xenophon puts into his mouth, but that he delivered lessons of a different kind elsewhere, and in private; for this, considering the apologetic form of Xenophon's book, to which he rigidly confines himself, he would probably not have passed over in silence." Thus, when Schleiermacher raised the possibility that Xenophon may have portrayed "the forenoon" or exoteric Socrates, while Plato may have imitated the "the afternoon" or esoteric Socrates, he had already found it too absurd to be rejected. Similarly, the possibility that both Xenophon's and Plato's accounts, despite all their differences, present the exoteric and conceal the esoteric Socrates also seems even too absurd to be raised, let alone to be rejected by Schleiermacher. What solution does Schleiermacher then commit himself to? How does he understand Xenophon's portrayal of Socrates? Schleiermacher gives an interesting example that exposes his position on Xenophon more clearly. Imagine a person who has converted a lofty poem to prose and destroyed its spirit such that even the greatest poets cannot restore that lost poetry. *That* was the deed of Xenophon: he "translated [philosophical matters] into the unphilosophical style of the common understanding, an operation in which the philosophical base is lost." Just as one can find a sign of the spirit of the lost poem in some passages where the decomposer's hand gets tired of decomposing the poem to prose, one can likewise see a sign of the philosophical base of Socrates in those passages where Xenophon's hand got tired of translating the philosophical into the unphilosophical. Schleiermacher thinks that this is the case in Xenophon's writings, albeit that "the scarcity of these passages shows that Xenophon understood his business" (WSP cxl–cxli). With that gentlemanly lampoon Schleiermacher alludes to the defect or "the blank" that Xenophon has left in his Socratic writings: since Xenophon's Socratic writings are unphilosophically almost perfect, they are philosophically imperfect and of "the blank." In order to fill up the blank, he suggests, we need to turn to Plato's dialogues methodologically. The safest method that we should employ, Schleiermacher continues, is to follow the question: "What may Socrates have been, over and above what Xenophon has described, without however

contradicting the strokes of character, and the practical maxims, which Xenophon distinctly delivers as those of Socrates?" (WSP cxlii).

To answer this question, Schleiermacher finds himself obliged to go beyond not only Xenophon but also Plato. He puts Socrates in the historical context:

In the former of these cases [that is, pre-Socratic philosophies] it must be confessed, that the idea of science as such is not yet matured, perhaps has not even become the subject of consciousness, for science as such can be conceived only as a whole, in which every division is merely subordinate, just as the real world to which it ought to correspond. In the latter case [that is, post-Socratic philosophy], on the contrary, this idea has become a subject of consciousness; for it can have been only by its force that the particular inclinations which confine each thinker to a certain object, and split science into insulated parts, have been mastered. (WSP cxliv)

Accordingly, Schleiermacher explains how in pre-Socratic philosophies three branches of knowledge (dialectics, physics, and ethics) are either studied separately or combined indistinguishably: dialectics and physics in the Eleatics and ethics in the Pythagorean school. In post-Socratic philosophy, by contrast, all three branches are united under "the idea of science." Awareness of the idea of science paves the way for post-Socratic philosophies to distinguish knowledge from opinion, specify the language of science, and give dialectics predominance. In this way, Schleiermacher sets the scene to present Socrates as the turning point with whom the idea of science is awakened, and which simultaneously separates and connects pre- and post-Socratic philosophies. Schleiermacher supposes that if Socrates claims that owing to the services to god, to justify the celebrated oracle, he reveals that what others believe they know is in fact not knowledge, then it was impossible that he himself would simply stop at the same level, that is, at the awareness of ignorance. For, Schleiermacher adds, "there was a step beyond this which he must have taken, that of knowing what knowledge was." For this reason, when Socrates explains "the nature of non-science" (*anepistēmosunē*), he begins with two assumptions: first, that "science is the same in all true thoughts"; second, that "all science forms one whole." According to Schleiermacher, in this, "the central point in the character of Socrates, we may reconcile Plato and Xenophon, and can understand the historical position of Socrates" (WSP cxlv–cxlvii). But Schleiermacher's attempt to establish Socrates as the first epistemologist is faced with (at least) two interrelated difficulties in Xenophon's Socratic writings, as he himself recognized. First, Xenophon strongly affirms that

Socrates's subject of studies is "the human things" or, in Schleiermacher's term, "ethics," and not the idea of science (*Mem.* 1.1.16). Second, he explicitly denies that Socrates practiced "physiology," which apparently means that Socrates's drive for knowledge did not include one of the important branches of knowledge (*Mem.* 1.1.11)

Responding to the first difficulty, Schleiermacher tries to determine the connection between ethics and dialectics in Xenophon's Socrates. He refers to the passage in the *Memorabilia* where Xenophon states that Socrates did not merely keep to refuting others' opinions but attempted to demonstrate his own position through ethical or commonly agreed-upon statements by the many (*Mem.* 4.6.15). From this passage, Schleiermacher deduces that in Socratic dialectics ethical statements are essentially justifiable only as means and not as ends. To put it precisely, in Socratic dialectics ethics is secondary and accidental:

And propositions, if there were such, which all held to be certain, must have appeared to him the most eligible, in order that he might show in their case, that the conviction with which they were embraced was not knowledge; since this would render men more keenly sensible of the necessity of getting at the foundation of knowledge.... Hence too, we may explain the preponderance of the subjects connected with civil and domestic life in most of these conversations. For this was the field that supplied the most generally admitted conceptions and propositions, the fate of which interested all men alike. But this mode of proceeding becomes inexplicable, if it is supposed that Socrates attached the chief importance to the subject of these conversations. (WSP cxvlii)

Thus, Socrates's use of propositions connected to human life (civil or domestic) in his dialectics is only *pedagogic*. Since these propositions are "held to be certain," Socrates finds them useful means for his dialectics in order to prove "the necessity of getting at the foundation of knowledge" for his interlocutors. Still, Schleiermacher believes that the Xenophontic Socrates's dialectics were nevertheless imperfect and in need of a Platonic addition to become a "method." Schleiermacher therefore introduces the two principles of collection (*sunagōgē*) and division (*diairesis*) from Plato's *Phaedrus* (266b): "to first know how correctly to combine multiplicity in unity, and again to divide a complex unity according to its nature into a multiplicity, and next to know what notions may or may not be connected together" (WSP cxlix). Schleiermacher emphasizes that "the construction of all Socratic dialogues" whether reported by Plato or by other contemporary companions of Socrates,

including Xenophon in the *Memorabilia*, “hinges without exception on this point,” on the art or method of dialectic. Finally, Schleiermacher refers to Aristotle’s statement on Socrates as the ultimate evidence: “For two things may be fairly ascribed to Socrates—inductive arguments [*epaktikous logous*] and universal definition [*horizesthai katholou*], both of which are concerned with the starting point of science [*archēn epistēmēs*]” (*Metaph.* 1078b27–30). In Schleiermacher’s view, Socratic dialectics is a kind of inductive argument which, by applying the two principles of collection and division, achieves universal definitions as the starting points of science. To sum up, by separating Socratic dialectics from “ethics” and revealing the idea of science as its main subject, Schleiermacher seems to overcome the first difficulty.

The second difficulty is more serious. For how could Socrates be considered an epistemologist despite excluding the most important branch of knowledge, that is to say, *phusiologia* or natural philosophy? Xenophon declares that the mature Socrates not only put natural philosophy aside, but he also made fun of his predecessors, pre-Socratic philosophers and the sophists, who studied the cosmos, by calling them “madmen.” Socrates believed that they were inquiring into the realm belonging to the gods and disregarding the realm that belongs to human beings, “the human things.” Schleiermacher’s response to the more serious difficulty is surprisingly simple and easy:

But this statement must manifestly be taken in a sense much *less general*, and quite different from that which is usually given to it. This is clearly evinced by the reasons which Socrates alleges. For how could he have said so generally, that the things which depend on God ought not to be made the subject of inquiry, before those which depend on man have been dispatched, since not only are the latter connected in a variety of ways with the former, but even among things human there must be some of greater moment, others of less, some of nearer, others of more remote concern, and the proposition would lead to the conclusion that before one was brought to its completion, not even the investigation of another ought to be begun. (*WSP cli*, emphasis added)

According to Schleiermacher, then, one should not take Socrates’s denial of natural philosophy here *too generally*. Still, even Schleiermacher does not deny that apparently Socrates was not so interested in the particular sciences including natural philosophy. How, then, should one understand Socrates’s lack of interest in the particular sciences? In response, Schleiermacher says that in the first place Socrates should not be identified with the case of “a merely metaphysical thinker” who is “attracted toward all sciences, as was the case with Kant”; because “this [case] happens under different

circumstances, and a different mental constitution from that of Socrates.” Schleiermacher means that if Socrates is identified with someone like Kant, that lack of interest will result in the denial of Socrates’s philosophical merit; however, if Socrates’s different circumstances and different mental constitution are considered, his philosophical merit will appear: Socrates “made no excursions to points remote from his center, but devoted his whole life to the task of exciting his leading idea [of science] as extensively and as vividly as possible in others; his whole aim was that...this foundation might be securely laid, before he proceeded further” (*WSP* cli–clii). It goes without saying that Schleiermacher’s whole argument is based on considering the “different circumstances and different mental constitution” of Socrates: in the beginning of the history of philosophy, which means in the more primitive circumstances and thereby with a more primitive mental constitution, Socrates dedicated himself to founding the idea of science; later metaphysical thinkers such as Kant, who arise under more advanced circumstances and with a more advanced mental constitution, could develop Socrates’s task into the multiplicity of sciences. In fact, by putting Socrates in the context of the history of philosophy viewed as a progressive and perfective process, Schleiermacher simultaneously put Socrates at a lower level than Kant and secured his philosophical merit as the awakener and founder of the idea of science. Despite the fact that Plato did descend into the particular sciences, he still, in Schleiermacher’s view, dealt more with the principles of the idea of science; for “the law of progress” demands that prior to any blind progress full attention must be paid to “the establishment of principles.” It is Aristotle who, after Socrates and Plato, that is, after the founding of the idea of science, “first revels in [the particular sciences’] multiplicity” (*WSP* cliii). To sum up Schleiermacher’s response, Socrates’s denial of natural philosophy means, in fact, to prioritize the more primitive studies required for founding the idea of science through the art of dialectics. Socrates rejected natural philosophy for *temporal* reasons: he occupied a primitive historical situation; he did not reject science in principle.

At the end of his lecture, instead of ascribing some isolated ethical theses to Socrates as historians of philosophy frequently did at that time, Schleiermacher goes in search of that teaching that has a “speculative” significance, that systemizes all studies of Socrates as the founder of the idea of science and dialectics. To do so, he turns to the Platonic dialogues as his source and at the same time takes into consideration the above-mentioned remark of Aristotle, “who confines Socrates’ philosophical speculations to principles.” Accordingly, he states,

the first point therefore to examine would be, whether some profound speculative teachings may not have originally belonged to Socrates, which are generally considered as most foreign to him, for instance, the thought which is unfolded by Plato in his peculiar manner, but is exhibited in the germ by Xenophon himself (Mem. I. 4. 8.), and is intimately connected with the great dialectic question as to the agreement between thought and being: that of the general diffusion of intelligence throughout the whole of nature. With this one might connect the assertion of Aristocles (Euseb. Prsep. XI. 3.), that Socrates began the investigation of the doctrine of ideas. (WSP cliv)

Schleiermacher admits that one cannot simply presuppose that the doctrine of ideas and other doctrines which are put forward by Plato's Socrates belonged to the historical Socrates. Nevertheless, the fact that Plato easily put these doctrines in the mouth of Socrates shows that they could well be the necessary conclusions of the speculative teaching or thought of Socrates himself—namely, “the general diffusion of intelligence throughout the whole of nature.” And Schleiermacher's reference to Xenophon's *Memorabilia* as additional evidence apparently confirms again that even in Xenophon's unphilosophical writings one can find “the germ” of Socrates's philosophical base. Schleiermacher's argument to revive the philosophical merit of Socrates not only challenged the traditional understanding of Socrates as the founder of political philosophy, but, more importantly, opened a new horizon in which Xenophon is established merely as a *corroborative* source of the Socrates who should be approached from Plato or even Aristotle. From the more advanced Plato and Aristotle one could more easily locate scarce passages where Xenophon's hand tires of translating the philosophical into the unphilosophical and find thereby the philosophical base of Socrates that is lost in the “blank” Xenophon left.

We are now in a better position to understand both how the powerful prejudice against Xenophon was originally formed at the beginning of the nineteenth century and how disputable Strauss's claim is when he finds Xenophon as the *primary* source of our knowledge of Socrates. The question now is this: Did Strauss respond to it and thereby to its originator, either directly or indirectly? If so, what was that response?

3. RETRIEVING STRAUSS'S RESPONSE TO THE POWERFUL PREJUDICE AGAINST XENOPHON: A DEBATE WITH SCHLEIERMACHER

Strauss never directly responded to the prejudice against Xenophon that originated from Schleiermacher's lecture published in 1818. Even so, it is not impossible to retrieve his response from his extensive studies on Xenophon's Socratic and non-Socratic writings.¹³

Schleiermacher's interpretation of the case of Socrates is a classic instance of the kind of interpretation that Strauss placed under the name of "historicism." Beginning in the late 1930s, Strauss dealt with historicism, its assumptions, its roots, and its genesis in modern philosophy, first in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (1936), then in *On Tyranny*, dedicated to the interpretation of Xenophon's *Hiero* (1948), then in *Natural Right and History* (1950), and finally in *What Is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies* (1959).¹⁴ Historicism begins with the assumption that "all human thought is 'historical.'"¹⁵ Its thesis, as Strauss formulates it, is that "all understanding, all knowledge, however limited and 'scientific,' presupposes a frame of reference; it presupposes a horizon, a comprehensive view within which understanding and knowing take place." In the final analysis, that horizon, from a historicist's perspective, is nothing but History, "history divorced from all dubious or metaphysical assumptions."¹⁶ Regardless of the question whether History itself is considered comprehensible, whoever interprets a historical text in terms of the historicist thesis puts the text within the horizon of which he supposes that the author himself was not aware. Schleiermacher thus put Xenophon's and Plato's texts within the context of the "history of philosophy" in order to *understand their thoughts better than they themselves could*. The claim that "the idea of science" had not

¹³ Strauss's studies on Xenophon: "The Spirit of Sparta and the Taste of Xenophon," *Social Research* 6 (1939): 502–36; *On Tyranny: An Interpretation of Xenophon's "Hiero,"* rev. ed., ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth (New York: Free Press, 1991); *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse: An Interpretation of the Oeconomicus* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970); *Xenophon's Socrates* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972); "Xenophon's *Anabasis*," *Interpretation* 4, no. 3 (1975): 117–47.

¹⁴ In the sixth chapter of *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, titled "History," Strauss articulates how "historicizing philosophy itself" is rooted in the politicization of philosophy in Hobbes's political philosophy. In the "Introduction" to *On Tyranny*, he briefly mentions "the problematic character of historicism," its fundamental assumption, and its peculiar way of interpretation (25). Then, in the first chapter of *Natural Right and History*, "Natural Right and the Historical Approach," Strauss presents a comprehensive study of historicism, its assumption, and its genesis. Finally, in the first two chapters of *What Is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies*, Strauss turns to historicism as "the serious antagonist of political philosophy" (26).

¹⁵ Strauss, *On Tyranny*, 25.

¹⁶ Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 12, 26, 17.

become the subject of consciousness before Socrates in the early history of ancient philosophy and did become the subject of consciousness after Socrates in the late history of ancient philosophy led Schleiermacher to reread, reinterpret, and “reconcile” Plato’s and Xenophon’s Socrates as the true Socrates: Socrates was the founder of the idea of science in the history of philosophy. For Schleiermacher, that is “the worth of Socrates as philosopher.” This allowed Schleiermacher to take a bird’s-eye view from which he found Xenophon’s text imperfect or, as he says, “blank”: Schleiermacher fills up the blank first with Plato, then with Aristotle, and finally with the history of philosophy. Accordingly, he believes that he is able to give a possibly comprehensive and systematic interpretation of the case of Socrates. However, one may wonder whether he does not give a systematically comprehensive interpretation of his own view about Socrates. Does his understanding of the history of philosophy as a systematically comprehensive frame of reference not lead to his systematically comprehensive interpretation of Plato’s, Xenophon’s and even Aristotle’s thought about Socrates? Does he not reduce the historical Socrates to his understanding of the “history of philosophy”?

Strauss, in contrast, makes a clear distinction between historicism and his position as a historian of thought: “Yet there is a fatal disproportion between historicism and true historical understanding. The goal of the historian of thought is to understand the thought of the past ‘as it really has been,’ i.e., to understand it as exactly as possible as it was actually understood by its authors.” Strauss attempts, therefore, to understand Xenophon in the first place in the light of “what he himself says, directly or indirectly, and as little as possible on extraneous information, to say nothing of modern hypotheses.”¹⁷ Hence, when Strauss turns to Xenophon’s Socratic writings to raise and answer the problem of Socrates, he rereads the text in terms of Xenophon’s *intention* and not as a text which is expected to confirm the interpreter’s assumptions. To clarify Strauss’s hermeneutics, it is necessary to add that by “rereading the text in terms of Xenophon’s intention” I do not mean that Strauss ascends from Xenophon’s text to his “mental process” while composing the text: this is Schleiermacher’s approach, to reconstruct “the intention of the will of the author” imaginatively, as he did in the case of Xenophon by comparing him with a decomposer of a lofty poem. In contrast, Strauss turns to Xenophon’s text in order to find the devised indications that betray Xenophon’s deliberate intention in composing the text. What makes Strauss emphasize “the true historical understanding” even more in the case of Xenophon is his rediscovery

¹⁷ Strauss, *On Tyranny*, 25.

of Xenophon's particular way of writing after at least two hundred years of misunderstanding.¹⁸ First in "The Spirit of Sparta and the Taste of Xenophon," Strauss reveals that Xenophon is one of those who practice the art of writing between the lines. This means that Xenophon deliberately composes his texts on the exoteric and esoteric levels for two different addressees. Thus, readers such as Schleiermacher who reject the possibility of esotericism, or more precisely "exotericism," close, in advance, the doors of initiation into the texts written by the authors such as Xenophon.¹⁹

For instance, one of the two difficulties Schleiermacher had with Xenophon was his denial that Socrates practiced natural philosophy. At the beginning of the first book of the *Memorabilia*, Xenophon declares that Socrates "did not converse about the nature of all things in the way most of the others did—examining what the sophists call the *cosmos*." Socrates, he adds, criticized those who worried about the things of this sort and called them "madmen." Why? Because they got stuck in a dilemma without knowing it: "some are of the opinion that being is one thing only, and others that it is an infinite multitude; and some that everything is always moving, and others that nothing ever moves; and some that everything comes to be and perishes, and others that nothing ever comes to be or perishes" (*Mem.* 1.1.11–14). Schleiermacher's "historical sense" prevents him from accepting the denial in that *general* sense. He does so without producing even one piece of evidence from Xenophon's works—after all, why should he bother giving evidence

¹⁸ Among those who still appreciated Xenophon's way of writing before the nineteenth century, Strauss names J. J. Winkelmann (1717–1768) and Machiavelli (1469–1527). Winkelmann praised "the noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" of the writings of "the unadorned great Xenophon" and who found grace, i.e., that which reasonably pleases, in Xenophon as distinguished from Thucydides and therefore compared Xenophon to Raphael while comparing Thucydides to Michelangelo." As to Machiavelli, Strauss just mentions his "silent judgement" in favor of Xenophon (*XSD* 83–84). However, in his *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, he delicately reveals how Machiavelli's "silent judgment" is, in fact, an appreciation of Xenophon. For Machiavelli, "the representative par excellence of classical political philosophy is Xenophon, whose writings he mentions more frequently than those of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero taken together or those of any other writer with the exception of Livy. Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus* is for him the classic presentation of the imagined prince. At the same time Xenophon is that writer who for Machiavelli has come closest to preparing his questioning of the imagined prince" (Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958], 291).

¹⁹ The epigraph to my article cites the definitive source for Strauss's rediscovery of the art of exoteric writing: two years of detailed letters to his friend Jacob Klein that record Strauss's discoveries in exotericism as he was making them. For more studies see Lampert's close reading of those letters in the first chapter of his *The Enduring Importance of Leo Strauss*, entitled "Exotericism Exposed: Letters to Jacob Klein." As to the art of exoteric writing, its basis, its purpose, and its features, see "Leo Strauss: Exoteric Teaching (1939)," ed. Hannes Kerber, in *Reorientation: Leo Strauss in the 1930s*, ed. Martin D. Yaffe and Richard S. Ruderman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 275–91; cf. Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 24–27, 36–37. As to Strauss's preference for the term "exotericism" instead of "esotericism," see *Persecution*, 139, 190, 198.

from Xenophon's text if Xenophon is known to be a naive, unphilosophical author? Schleiermacher claims that Xenophon's denial should be understood to be "much less general." Schleiermacher's bird's-eye view misses the fact that Socrates's dichotomy is a false dilemma. For the contradictory concept of "one" is "multitude" and not "an infinite multitude." Therefore, there is an implicit but logically valid third option: finite or numerable multitude. Strauss found that option between the lines: "This would seem to imply that according to the sane Socrates the beings are numerable or surveyable; those beings are unchangeable while the other things change, and those beings do not come into being or perish while the other things come into being and perish" (XS 7; see also XSD 150). In other words, being is not one, but many. However, that many is not "infinite" but finite or numerable, unchangeable, nongenerative and noncorruptive. When Xenophon writes that Socrates "did not converse about the nature of all things *in the way* [*hēiper*] most of the others did," he really means it: from the pre-Socratic perspective, the whole is a collection of homogeneous parts which are reducible to one *archē* (water, *apeiron*, air, or fire) or many *archai* (four elements, or atoms) which in turn could be movable or not, generative and corruptive or not. Yet, it seems that the sane Socrates starts from "common sense": the whole is a collection of heterogeneous parts—common sense finds heterogeneous parts first on the aesthetic (sensible) level: this cat is other than that dog; this horse is other than that man. Through his "what is" questions, however, Socrates ascends from the heterogeneity on the aesthetic level to the heterogeneity on the noetic (intelligible) level. "What is" questions point to the "essence" of each part which forms different kinds of beings. These kinds or "ideas," as the Platonic Socrates calls them, are those true beings which are many but not infinite, which are immovable and nongenerative and noncorruptive. Since individuals are innumerable, movable, and generative and corruptive, they are not truly "beings" at all. This is the way Xenophon's Socrates's new physiology comes close to the Platonic Socrates's "theory of ideas": Socrates as the founder of idea of science is accessible even in Xenophon. Hence, there is no fundamental difference between Plato's and Xenophon's Socrates on that point. The difference is that Xenophon "points" to what Plato "articulates" (XSD 161). From this perspective, Xenophon's Socrates seems *more exoteric*, that is, more belonging to the outer circle of philosophers, more political, than Plato's. Or Plato's Socrates seems *more esoteric*, that is, more belonging to the inner circle of philosophers, more philosophical than Xenophon's. Still, even Plato is extremely cautious about calling Socrates a physiologist; the Platonic dialogues never present Socrates as a physiologist. In Plato's

Apology of Socrates, Socrates denies being in possession of the divine wisdom of physiologists and sophists (18b–c). In the *Phaedo*, Socrates confirms that as a young man he used to be “wonderfully keen on that wisdom which people call *the inquiry regarding nature* [*peri phuseōs historian*].” However, propounding his turn, or more precisely his “second sailing” (*deuteron ploun*), Socrates announces that he ceased practicing physiology a long time ago (*Phaedo* 96a6–8, 99d). Moreover, Socrates is silent for the bulk of the *Timaeus* listening to the non-Athenian physiologist Timaeus deliver a long speech on the origin of the cosmos. Therefore, in spite of being more esoteric than Xenophon’s Socrates, even Plato’s Socrates is still exoteric. Taking Strauss’s point of view, the seemingly absurd possibility of understanding Plato’s and Xenophon’s thoughts about Socrates, which Schleiermacher simply put aside, appears the most serious and profound one: both Plato’s dialogues and Xenophon’s Socratic writings are exoteric.²⁰ This is the reason why neither Plato nor Xenophon presented their *philosophical* conversations with Socrates.²¹ Having disclosed Socrates the physiologist, Strauss concludes that “Socrates did worry about the nature of all things and to that extent he too was mad; but his madness was at the same time sobriety: he did not separate wisdom from moderation ([*Mem.*] III.9.4)” (XS 7). According to Strauss’s reading, Xenophon denies that Socrates is a physiologist on the surface of the text because *phusiologia* is the example of impiety par excellence—the supreme example of encroachment upon the realm belonging only to the gods. Yet he “points” to Socrates’s physiology between the lines.²² This way of writing is itself the best

²⁰ Schleiermacher, in contrast to his successors, was well aware of the tradition of exotericism. Indeed, his “unusually able argument” against that tradition set the stage for his successors to overlook it altogether (*Persecution*, 28). In “Exoteric Teaching,” Strauss discusses Schleiermacher’s refusal to interpret Plato as an exoteric writer. Having admired Schleiermacher for his “five or six extremely important and true remarks about Plato’s literary device,” Strauss highlights the stumbling-block on which Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics falls. Schleiermacher recognizes “only one Platonic teaching” with “an infinite number of levels of understanding of that teaching.” He assumes that the way leading from the inattentive reader of Plato to his attentive reader is a “continuous” one. Referring to Plato, however, Strauss shows that that way is noncontinuous or “presupposes a real conversion,” to put it Platonically, a *periagōgē*. Moreover, the multiplicity Schleiermacher sees in Plato is in fact a duplicity, addressing two different kinds of audience: philosophers and nonphilosophers. This duplicity explains why the process of understanding Platonic dialogues is in need of a turn or a conversion (279–81; see Hannes Kerber, “Strauss and Schleiermacher on How to Read Plato: An Introduction to ‘Exoteric Teaching,’” in Yaffe and Ruderman, *Reorientation*, 203–14).

²¹ Nonetheless, Xenophon narrates a short conversation between Socrates and a certain Xenophon about kissing beautiful boys, in which Socrates treats him in the way Aristophanes’s Socrates treats Strepsiades in the *Clouds* (*Mem.* 1.3.8–13; cf. *Clouds* 655, 688, and Strauss, “Origins of Political Science,” 161).

²² Xenophon’s denial that Socrates was a natural philosopher comes in the second and central of three arguments against Socrates’s impiety (*Mem.* 1.2–19). As to the special importance of the “center” in the Xenophontic exotericism, Strauss writes: “We have noted more than once in the *Memorabilia* and

example of linking wisdom to moderation. What is dismissed by Schleiermacher and considered a kind of literary discrepancy in Burnet's view is in fact Xenophon's art of exoteric-esoteric writing—writing between the lines.

Schleiermacher's other difficulty was that Xenophon restricts the subject matters of Socrates's studies to the human things, presenting Socratic dialectics merely in connection with the ethical or political things, whereas, in Schleiermacher's view, the subject matter of Socratic dialectics is the idea of science while the connection between his dialectics and ethics or politics is at bottom secondary and accidental. As we saw in the previous section, Schleiermacher offers a passage from the *Memorabilia* to substantiate his claim (*WSP* clvii; *Mem.* 4.6.15). However, Strauss's close reading of that passage reveals how arbitrarily Schleiermacher reads the text. In the context of that passage, Xenophon makes a distinction between two types of interlocutors of Socrates: those who can contradict him, and those who cannot. To the first group, Socrates leads the discussion up to "the hypotheses" (or ideas) to expose "the truth" about which they disagree with him. To the second group, Socrates himself initiates the discussion and proceeds via "what is most agreed upon," thereby producing by far the most agreement among his interlocutors. For the second group he takes Odysseus, "the safe orator," as his model, since Homer describes Odysseus as successfully establishing his argument through the opinions of human beings. Strauss divides Socratic dialectics into non-Odyssean and Odyssean: the former based on "hypothesis" leads to "the truth," the latter based on "generally accepted opinion" leads to the most "agreement." Schleiermacher simply disregards the *doubleness* of the Socratic dialectics, taking the second type to prove that the connection between dialectics and generally accepted opinions is only pedagogic: through the generally accepted opinions, Schleiermacher observes, Socrates can better prove that his interlocutors' convictions are not "knowledge," because "this would render men more keenly sensible of the necessity of getting at the foundation of knowledge." That reading is in notable contrast to Xenophon's *intention*, as Strauss discloses it: the second type of the Socratic dialectics, the Odyssean, uses generally accepted opinions to persuade most interlocutors and produces the most "agreement" among them, not to refute

elsewhere that the item which is literally in the center is of special importance. It was a rule of forensic rhetoric to discuss the strong points of the defense in the first part and in the last part and the weak points in the center, i.e., when the attention of the listeners is flagging. The weakest points are the most important in a speech or book that presents an unpopular or forbidden view in the guise of a perfectly innocent or 'orthodox' view; in such a book the innocent things come to sight first and last; such books are to some extent products of forensic rhetoric" (*XS* 58).

their opinions and provoke them to search for “the foundation of knowledge.” This is the reason why Strauss calls the Odyssean dialectics “rhetoric” (XS 122–23). Schleiermacher is not sufficiently aware of Socrates the rhetor.²³ Still, the question remains: What exactly is the connection between Socratic dialectics and his study of the human things? After Socrates’s turn or return to common sense, Strauss responds, Socrates finds that “the things which are ‘first in themselves’ are somehow ‘first for us’; the things which are ‘first in themselves’ are in a manner, but necessarily, revealed in men’s opinions.”²⁴ When Xenophon says that Socrates’s subject matter is the human things, or Plato’s Socrates says that after his “second sailing” he takes refuge in “logos,” both mention the starting point of Socratic dialectics: Socratic dialectics starts from that part of the whole in which the whole partially appears: “the things which are first for us,” or human opinions. Hence, the connection between Socratic dialectics and the human things is primary and essential. Socratic studies of the human things is not a branch of knowledge next to *phusiologia* but the foundation of any kind of *phusiologia*, *cosmologia*, and even *ontologia*. Neither Pythagoreans nor any other pre-Socratic appreciated such an ontological significance for the human things: for Socrates “human things are the clue to the whole.”²⁵

While Schleiermacher wonders whether he should believe Plato’s or rather Xenophon’s Socrates, he totally overlooks Aristophanes’s Socrates in regard to the Socratic problem. The main reason why he disregards Aristophanes is his insufficient awareness of Socrates’s turn: both Plato and Xenophon cautiously admit that Socrates underwent a conversion from a youthful passion for natural philosophy to a mature concern for political philosophy (*Oeconomicus* 6.12–13, 11.3; *Phaedo* 96a6–8, 99d–e; cf. SA 4, 314). The only source of the young or pre-Socratic Socrates is Aristophanes’s *Clouds*, whereas the Platonic dialogues and Xenophon’s Socratic writings commonly portray the mature Socrates. Once one considers Aristophanes’s portrayal of the young Socrates as a teacher of rhetoric and physiology, all the differences between Plato’s and Xenophon’s Socrates become secondary. Both present Socrates in sharp contrast to Aristophanes: their Socrates denies being a teacher of rhetoric (or a sophist) and of physiology (as a pre-Socratic); he deals mostly with the human things. Therefore, the root of Schleiermacher’s two difficulties with

²³ Xenophon admits that one of the accusations against Socrates was that he recited a notorious passage of the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus treats outstanding men and ordinary ones in two different ways (*Mem.* 1. 2.58).

²⁴ Strauss, *City and Man*, 19.

²⁵ Strauss, “Origins of Political Science,” 163, 164, 177.

Xenophon's Socrates, in the final analysis, should be found in the profound change in Socrates himself, *Socrates's turn*. Instead of criticizing Xenophon for denying that Socrates was a physiologist and for claiming that Socrates's studies are restricted to the human things, Schleiermacher should have observed "the circumstances or the reasons" that caused Socrates to undergo a turn from natural philosophy to political philosophy. Besides, since it is the mature Socrates who brings philosophy down from heaven, Schleiermacher's overlooking the turn in Socrates prevents him from taking seriously the traditional understanding of Socrates as the founder of political philosophy. Strauss, on the other hand, in his *Socrates and Aristophanes*, considers Socrates the founder of political philosophy and therefore looks for the circumstances or the reasons that paved the way for founding political philosophy: Aristophanes's attack on pre-Socratic Socrates reveals that there is an essential tension between philosophy and the city. Philosophy will be unable to protect itself against its enemies unless it becomes political philosophy. Besides, in the central chapters of his *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse*, Strauss delicately describes how political philosophy was actually founded (XSD 153–66).

Even if we could prove that Schleiermacher's interpretation of Xenophon is insufficient, we cannot simply claim that we have overcome his prejudice against Xenophon. His prejudice is revealed in two of his claims: first, that Xenophon is not a philosopher; second, that he is only an "apologetic narrator" of Socrates. A response to the first should be postponed as it requires rereading and reinterpreting all of Xenophon's Socratic (and non-Socratic) writings. Nevertheless, we can already be sure that Strauss's rediscovery of Xenophon's exotericism has rendered questionable the basis of the first claim by reinterpreting Xenophon's way of writing. As to the second, we respond as follows: Schleiermacher would perhaps be right if Xenophon had written only the *Memorabilia* to describe Socrates. Even Strauss admits that Xenophon's *Memorabilia* is an apology of Socrates's justice.²⁶ However, Strauss adds that Xenophon composed three other Socratic writings, which are not devoted to Socrates's justice but "to Socrates *tout court* or to Socrates even if he transcends justice": Socrates's speeches in the *Oeconomicus*, Socrates's (playful) deeds in *Symposium*, and Socrates's (silent) deliberation in the *Apology of Socrates to*

²⁶ By refuting two main accusations against Socrates, the first part of the *Memorabilia* (1.1–2) proves that Socrates had never committed crimes or acted against the law. The second part (1.3ff.) shows how Socrates was "benefiting his companions." Since the habit of benefiting people is identified by Xenophon with justice in the broad sense of the term, Strauss concludes that the "*Memorabilia* as a whole is devoted to proving Socrates' justice," in the narrow and the broad senses of the term. Therefore, the *Memorabilia* does not portray Socrates *tout court* but only his justice.

the Jury (XSD 85–86). By disregarding those three writings, Schleiermacher overlooks “Socrates *tout court*.” Conversely, Strauss devotes two books to the interpretations of those three writings along with the *Memorabilia* in order to retrieve the entirety of Socrates as Xenophon intended him to be understood.

Despite the fact that Schleiermacher does not take notice of Socrates as the founder of political philosophy, of the Socratic turn, of the Socratic Odyssean dialectics or his rhetoric, and of his new physiology, one cannot ignore the significance and the seriousness of his interpretation of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* (usually rendered “history of effects” or “reception history”) of Socrates. Schleiermacher is right in finding that the idea of science “becomes the subject of consciousness” for Socrates. As we showed above, Strauss also implies that Socrates is the founder of the idea of science. But the question is: How does that idea exactly become the subject of *Socrates’s* consciousness? How does *Socrates* come to that idea? Schleiermacher does not need to raise, let alone to answer, these questions because he understands Socrates only within the horizon of the “history of philosophy.” In Schleiermacher’s view, the “worth” of Socrates as a philosopher is rooted in his most significant *effects on* or *reception in* the history of philosophy. Therefore, he loses sight of Socrates as an individual philosopher outside of that history. However, Strauss can explain the circumstances or the reasons that made the individual Socrates turn to the idea of science: Aristophanes’s attack caused Socrates to undergo a change or turn from philosophy to political philosophy; this turn led to Socrates’s discovery of the heterogeneity of the whole and ultimately to founding the idea of science. To put it more clearly, it is not the so-called historical self-consciousness that makes the idea of science the subject of Socrates’s studies. It is rather Socrates’s “self-knowledge,” a knowledge that is indebted to Aristophanes’s attack.

Moreover, Schleiermacher is right to search for a “speculative” teaching of Socrates, that is, “the general diffusion of intelligence throughout the whole of nature.” Not only does Strauss consider Schleiermacher to be on the right track in that respect, but he also comes to his aid in the middle of his interpretation of the *Oeconomicus*: “Socrates’ most comprehensive teaching, his teaching which transcends the human things, deals with the order of the whole cosmos, the order that serves the benefit of men and is due to the god’s *oikonomein*,” which Strauss calls “teleotheology” (XSD 148). According to that teaching, god as the manager of (the house of) the cosmos brings order to beings, putting them in the right place, in order that human beings benefit from them (XSD 148n5). Strauss does not leave it at that. Again, he

goes beyond the historical effect of Socrates. Having counteracted “the amazing neglect of the *Oeconomicus* on the part of those who are concerned with ‘the Socratic problem’”—on the part of those, like Schleiermacher, who could not see how the “speculative” teaching of Socrates is originally formed in the conversation between Socrates and the perfect gentleman (Ischomachus)—Strauss enumerates three theological difficulties with that teaching, extracted from Xenophon’s text, and the first of them suggests that Socrates himself was aware that his teleotheology was not theoretically (or “speculatively”) tenable.²⁷ Strauss tempts us to wonder “whether the Xenophontic Socrates was not, like the Platonic Socrates, dissatisfied with the simple teleology—anthropocentric or not—which at first glance seems to supply the most rational solution to all difficulties, and turned for this reason to the ‘What is. . .’ questions or to ‘the separating of beings according to kinds’” (XSD 148–49). In other words, is it not true that Socrates, whether Platonic or Xenophontic, does not make any kind of teleological assumptions in his quest of separating things according to kinds or ideas? Is it not true that Socrates’s ontology does not presume any kind of cosmology? And is it not true that Socratic rationalism, which is revealed in his teaching, is nothing but his “philosophic politics” to embellish philosophy with the perfect gentleman’s principles, that is, with the highest theological-political standards of the political community? Strauss’s account of Socrates’s turn in the *Oeconomicus* discloses just how Socrates deduces his teaching from the way of life of the perfect gentleman, and how he learns from the art of *cosmetics* of the perfect gentleman’s wife to dress up his thought in that teaching. Indeed, Strauss makes us distinguish between what Socrates *thought* and what he *taught*: the former is the result of his non-Odysean dialectics being addressed to the few, the philosophers of the future; the latter is the result of his Odysean dialectics being addressed to many or to those potential gentlemen of the future who can form the many. From this perspective, Xenophon’s exotericism is nothing but a *repetition* of Socrates’s way of philosophizing, his double dialectics, in writing.

²⁷ The first difficulty is rooted in the disagreement between Socrates’s natural theology and his teaching of teleotheology: “In the *Memorabilia*, Socrates says that the divine has no needs; can there be ‘economy’ if there are no needs?” In other words, how is it possible that the god as the perfect being, who has no need, may *oikonomein* cosmos, whereas *oikonomia* as Socrates defines it in the beginning of the *Oeconomicus* is the art of “increasing one’s household,” and “to need the art of increasing one’s household bespeaks a defect” (*Oec.* 2.2–4; cf. XSD 101–2)?