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**JUSTICE AND FRIENDSHIP
IN
XENOPHON'S MEMORABILIA**

by

Benjamin K. S. Wong

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Political Science
University of Toronto

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Friendship and Justice in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*
Ph.D. 1997
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Abstract

Part of the purpose of this dissertation is to show that Xenophon's predominantly modern critics are mistaken in dismissing the *Memorabilia* as a work worthy of serious consideration. These critics maintain that Xenophon's formal defense of Socrates in the opening two chapters of the work is so inadequate that it undermines the credibility and significance of his subsequent recollection of Socrates' conversations with the companions. Contrary to the claims of these critics, our examination of Xenophon's defense shows that it is designed to clarify Socrates' complex role as a critical but responsible citizen-philosopher. To further substantiate this reading of the defense, we examine a selection of the Socratic conversations reported in the *Memorabilia*. These conversations show how Socrates accomplished, within the framework of his awareness of the fundamental and unresolved questions of political life, different objectives at the same time: namely, to help his companions improve themselves, to point out practical ways of moderating the democracy, and to advance his private, philosophical interests. By revealing the scope and limits of Socrates' practical wisdom, these conversations point to the various aspects of the problem of perfecting the city and its citizens. In all, they suggest that the *Memorabilia* is intended to convey in a systematic and comprehensive manner those experiences of Socrates' civic life that led Xenophon to reflect on the fundamental problems of politics.

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Chapter One

Introduction

I. Statement of intention

As a title, Xenophon's Memorabilia or "memoirs" seems somewhat misleading.¹ The work does not contain a narrative of Xenophon's significant sayings and doings; instead, it is mainly devoted to the recollection of the civic life of Socrates. The Memorabilia opens with Xenophon's attempt to refute the charges of impiety and corruption brought against Socrates. This is followed by a further attempt to respond to an unnamed accuser who claims, among other things, that Socrates was responsible for the political crimes of Critias and Alcibiades. These accusations form the background against which Xenophon sets down his recollections of how, in speech as well as in deed, Socrates attempted to benefit and to improve his companions.

As a whole, the Memorabilia can be seen as an attempt by Xenophon to vindicate the justice and the goodness of the Socratic way of life. His defense of Socrates rests on the grounds that Socrates showed himself to be useful and helpful to others. Socrates benefitted his companions by freely offering sound and practical advice to them. Above all, he constantly exhorted and counselled them to lead a life of virtue. Socrates was, in this sense, a good friend and teacher to his companions.

Most of his modern critics see Xenophon's defense of Socrates as simple-minded and superficial, and hence unworthy of serious consideration. According to one leading critic, Socrates "would never have been prosecuted" if Xenophon's portrait of him were

true to life.² It is the intention of this dissertation to show that Xenophon presents a serious and legitimate defense of Socrates in the Memorabilia. Far from being naively partisan or incompetent, the Memorabilia offers a complex and thoughtful account of Socrates' practical efforts to reconcile his philosophical way of life with the duties and responsibilities of good citizenship. By vindicating Socrates' justice, the Memorabilia also vindicates Xenophon's understanding of the Socratic way of life.

No modern scholar has done more than Leo Strauss in reviving interest in the study of Xenophon. In fact, this dissertation is heavily indebted to his commentary on the Memorabilia. Strauss, however, concentrates his efforts on elucidating the philosophical teaching underlying Xenophon's presentation of Socrates' justice. Our aim here is more limited and our approach to the text differs from Strauss'. This dissertation will focus mainly on the nature and character of Socrates' interaction with the companions. It is our contention that these encounters with the companions reveal the various practical strategies Socrates adopted to vindicate his way of life as a citizen-philosopher, and that it is through the constant reflection on these strategies that Xenophon came to appreciate Socrates' teaching on justice.

II. An outline of Xenophon's life and works

It is almost customary to preface every serious study of Xenophon with a review of the modern controversy surrounding his relationship with Socrates. Did Xenophon really know Socrates? Was he a competent student of Socrates? Can his reports of Socrates be trusted? Questions such as these have consumed most of Xenophon's

modern critics, many of whom have rendered judgments that continue to have a strong, negative impact on the study of Xenophon.³ But before we undertake a review of this controversy, it would be helpful to acquaint ourselves with the broad features of Xenophon's life and works.⁴

Aside from Plato and Aristophanes, Xenophon is the only direct source of historical information on Socrates. Unlike Aristophanes, Xenophon does not present his portrait of Socrates in the form of a caricature. Although Xenophon took a serious interest in Socrates' teachings, his response to the Socratic experience seems to differ from Plato's. He did not establish a teaching academy or inspire a school of thought, and his writings are singularly free of the metaphysical and abstract formulations prominent in many of Plato's Socratic dialogues.

Even though Xenophon seems to agree with Plato in portraying Socrates as the leading model of the citizen-philosopher, he did not seem to have planned his life in accordance with that model. Xenophon's way of life can perhaps be characterised as one of a political stranger. He left Athens to join the Greek mercenary army -- the Ten Thousand -- employed by Cyrus in the abortive attempt to seize the Persian throne. Xenophon's part in leading the Greek army back to safety brought him to the notice of Agesilaos, the Spartan king. So, for a time, Xenophon found himself serving on the side of the Spartans. For his services to them, he was granted a country estate in Scillus to which he eventually retired. The ancient biographer, Diogenes Laertius, says that when Scillus was captured by the Thebans, Xenophon fled to Corinth where he spent the few remaining years of his life.⁵

Only four of Xenophon's works are explicitly devoted to Socrates.⁶ The Oeconomicus concerns Socrates' attempt to teach Critobulus the art of the household manager. Socrates plays a major role in the Symposium which recounts the playful exchanges among a gathering of gentlemen. The Apology of Socrates seeks to explain Socrates' bold posture in the conduct of his defense at the trial.⁷ Xenophon's longest Socratic work, the Memorabilia, is devoted mainly to Socrates' civic life.⁸

In addition to these works, Xenophon also wrote a number of technical treatises on the art of the cavalry commander, on horsemanship, and on hunting. He also devoted a treatise to each of the constitutions of Athens and Sparta.⁹ The achievements of Agesilaos are commemorated in a eulogy named after the Spartan king. Said to be his last work, the Ways and Means consists of advice to the Athenians on the management of their economy.¹⁰

A great deal of Xenophon's political career can be learned from the Anabasis, a semi-autobiographical work which recounts the events of the retreat of the Ten Thousand. Xenophon's interest in the political and military affairs of his time is further reflected in the Hellenica which is often regarded as the continuation of Thucydides' history of the Greeks. The two historical fictions, the Hiero and the Cyropaedia are perhaps Xenophon's most original works. The Hiero is the only classical dialogue which features a wise man giving advice to a tyrant.¹¹ The Cyropaedia is a dramatisation of Xenophon's thoughts on the nature of political rule. The work traces the life and career of an exceptionally gifted political individual who transforms a national aristocracy into an absolute monarchy ruling over a vast empire.¹²

Although most of Xenophon's literary efforts seem to have been expended on the non-Socratic works, the presence or influence of Socrates can be detected in all his major non-Socratic works. Xenophon's interest in illuminating various aspects of human virtue or moral excellence reflects Socrates' interest in the "human things".¹³ Socrates makes a significant appearance in both the historical works, the Anabasis and the Hellenica.¹⁴ The influence of Socrates is especially evident in the egregious presence of Socratic surrogates in the Hiero and the Cyropaedia.¹⁵ Even the seemingly obscure treatise on hunting concludes with a spirited, Socratic-type criticism of the misplaced optimism of the sophists.¹⁶ These recurring references and allusions to Socrates in the non-Socratic writings suggest that Xenophon's writings on the whole bear the indelible stamp of Socrates' influence.

III. Xenophon: His admirers and critics

In spite of the fact that Xenophon is one of the major sources of historical information on Socrates, there is a dearth of serious scholarship on his Socratic writings. Leo Strauss' Xenophon's Socrates, for instance, remains the only book-length study of the Memorabilia in the English-speaking world. Most of the journal articles tend to be general in their exposition of Xenophon's Socratic writings because they are usually written with a view to revive interest in the study of Xenophon.¹⁷ Consequently, the English literature on Xenophon's Socratic writings does not merit a critical bibliographical review.¹⁸ In place of a literature review, this section will present a general survey of historical attitudes towards Xenophon. In the case of Xenophon, such a survey

is especially significant because it reveals that the attack on Xenophon's reputation is a singularly modern phenomenon.¹⁹

From the classical period to the Eighteenth Century, Xenophon enjoyed the highest reputation as a political philosopher. Writing at the end of pagan antiquity, the biographer Eunapius said that,

Xenophon was the only philosopher among them all to have adorned philosophy in both word and deed. On the one hand, he writes of moral virtues in his discourses, and to some extent in his historical writings also. On the other hand, he excelled in deeds, and begat generals by the force of his example. Alexander the Great, at least, would never have been "Great" but for Xenophon.²⁰

On his accomplishments as commander-in-chief in Cilicia, the statesman and philosopher, Cicero said: "The Cyropaedia which I have well-thumbed in the reading of it, I have exemplified in its entirety during my command here."²¹

H.G. Dakyns, the first major English translator of Xenophon's works, drew the following list of epithets of Xenophon from the various commentaries of Plutarch, Polybius, Longinus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus:

[A] sage and wise man; a sensible and just historian; an original and inventive writer, possessing rare gifts of style; a "beautiful and good" man -- patient, affectionate and god-serving.²²

According to the literary classicist, James Tatum, Xenophon's influence reached its peak in the sixteenth century when his works exercised their power on thinkers as diverse as Machiavelli, Erasmus and More.²³ Leo Strauss has also noted that for Machiavelli, the representative par excellence of classical political philosophy was none other than

Xenophon whose writings he cites more often than those of Plato, Aristotle and Cicero combined.²⁴

The early modern literary scholar and philosopher, Shaftesbury found in Xenophon “the wisest, the usefulest and (to those who can understand the divineness of a just simplicity) the most amiable, and even the most elevating and exalting of all uninspired and merely human authors.”²⁵ Recalling his encounter with the Memorabilia, Benjamin Franklin said: “I was charm’d by it, adopted it, dropt my contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer and doubter.”²⁶

Today Xenophon is still highly regarded in certain quarters as a brilliant innovator and practitioner of the military art; and he is also widely recognised for his novel experimentation with various literary forms.²⁷ In the field of political theory, Leo Strauss is the single most important scholar to have attempted to make Xenophon accessible and relevant to the modern student of politics.²⁸ But these rare contemporary acknowledgements of Xenophon’s importance pale before the relentless onslaught of modern criticisms aimed at the credibility and integrity of both his person and his works.

To many modern scholars, Xenophon has “contributed most to the distortion of the true picture of Socrates.”²⁹ According to Gregory Vlastos, Xenophon’s Socrates is woefully lacking in irony and paradox, and hence empty of serious philosophical content. In Xenophon’s hands, Socrates is reduced to nothing but “a pious reciter of moral commonplaces.”³⁰ The existentialist philosopher Kierkegaard, whose doctoral dissertation concentrated on the examination of Socratic irony, complains that Xenophon’s Socrates is “all too correct, all too stubborn, all too serious” such that if the

portrait were true to life, the Athenians would have wanted Socrates done away with “because he bored them rather than because they feared him.”³¹ Bertrand Russell is even more explicit in his contempt for Xenophon: “A stupid man’s report of what a clever man says is never accurate because he unconsciously translates what he hears into something he can understand.”³²

Even noted scholars of a more generous disposition are quite convinced that Xenophon could not possibly be regarded as a truly philosophic disciple of Socrates. While defending the authenticity of Xenophon’s portrait of Socrates, Schleiermacher maintains nonetheless that Xenophon “was a statesman, but no philosopher.”³³

W.K.C. Guthrie, the Cambridge classicist who admires the virtues of Xenophon as a gentleman and a soldier, claims that the latter’s writings display “little signs of any capacity for profound philosophical thought.”³⁴ In the face of the formidable reputations of many of his most inveterate critics it is little wonder that Xenophon is often dismissed as an uninspired writer incapable of stating anything with convincing rigour and frankly, unsuited to comprehend the genius of Socrates.

Xenophon’s credentials as a historian have also been challenged, and this attack implicitly calls into question his integrity as a biographer and the reliability of his reports of Socrates.³⁵ He is accused of expressing a pro-Spartan prejudice in his reports of the Greeks, and the Anabasis, which recounts his leadership of the retreat of the Ten Thousand, is maligned as an unconscionable act of self-glorification.³⁶ The most serious charge, however, is the one which maintains that Xenophon is the exemplar of the corrupt citizen. Xenophon was, for a long time, an exile from Athens as a result of his

association with the enemies of the city. In the opinion of the nineteenth century historian, B.G. Niebuhr: "no state has expelled a more degenerate son than this Xenophon."³⁷ More recently, A.H. Chroust has claimed that:

Xenophon is probably the perfect type of that ancient Greek who in his complete detachment from his native city was apparently devoid of all sentiments of patriotism and patriotic loyalty.... The cold indifference of Xenophon to his native land is more significant -- and more shocking -- than the many unpatriotic and "treasonable" deeds of partisan ambition.³⁸

The prevailing view of Xenophon as unphilosophic and politically corrupt is diametrically opposed to the traditional opinion of Xenophon as a worthy exponent of political philosophy. More to our purpose here, the prevailing view essentially denies that Xenophon is capable of providing us with a serious and legitimate account of Socrates. It should be apparent, however, that the negative view of Xenophon is a quintessentially modern phenomenon. Unless the entire body of traditional opinion on Xenophon is gravely mistaken, there is really no compelling reason for us not to attempt an independent assessment of Xenophon's merits. Xenophon's Memorabilia, in particular, may offer us a unique perspective on Socrates' justice and, by implication, Socrates' political thought. As the Memorabilia also contains Xenophon's most extensive record of his experiences with Socrates, a close study of the text may also provide us with valuable insights into the nature of his response to the Socratic way of life.

IV. Xenophon's Memorabilia

Memorabilia is the widely accepted Latin name of the original Greek title, Apomnemeumata. The Greek title can be translated literally as “memorable things” or simply as “recollections”. In its literal sense, the title makes no reference to the particular subject matter of the work; the title, however, draws attention to the significance of those things which the author regards as memorable or worthy of recollection. As the text is dedicated entirely to the recollection of Socrates, the title suggests that Xenophon's most significant memories are associated with his experiences of Socrates.

The importance Xenophon attached to his association with Socrates is indicated in the opening statement of the Memorabilia:

Many times (pollakis) I have wondered by what possible speeches those who indicted Socrates persuaded the Athenians that he deserved death from the city. (1:1:1, emphasis added)³⁹

Socrates' trial and execution seem to have provided the initial impetus for Xenophon's defense of Socrates. The word, “pollakis”, attests moreover to the enduring character of Xenophon's reflections on Socrates. The significance of the opening statement can perhaps be further appreciated through the contrast with the opening remark of Xenophon's major-non-Socratic work, the Cyropaedia. There, in a somewhat detached manner, Xenophon introduces the work with the clause “A thought once (pote) occurred to us... .”⁴⁰ This difference is noteworthy since the Cyropaedia has generally attracted greater attention than the Memorabilia. Judging by the opening clauses, Xenophon seems to have accorded greater attention, and greater importance, to Socrates than to Cyrus.

That Xenophon is determined to revive and vindicate the memory of Socrates is evident. To Xenophon, Socrates' death not only symbolised the injustice of the city towards its greatest benefactor, but it also constituted the profound loss of an exceptional friend and teacher:

Of those who knew Socrates -- what sort he was -- all who desired virtue even now still long for him most of all, on the grounds that he was most beneficial with regard to attending to virtue. (4:8:11)

This sentiment recurs in the Apology of Socrates -- the companion piece to the Memorabilia -- where Xenophon says in closing:

And so in contemplating the man's wisdom and nobility of character, I find it beyond my power to forget him or, in remembering him, to refrain from praising him. And if among those who make virtue their aim any one has ever been brought into contact with a person more beneficial than Socrates, I count that man worthy to be called most blessed.⁴¹

Socrates' beneficence, especially his helpfulness as a guide in the quest for virtue, is the abiding theme of the Memorabilia. Indeed, Xenophon seems to identify Socrates' justice with Socrates' beneficence. To Xenophon, Socrates was "so just as to harm no one, not even a little, and to benefit to the greatest extent those who dealt with him" (4:8:11).

Xenophon's recollection of Socrates seems, moreover, to go beyond a mere testimony to Socrates' willingness and ability to benefit others. The very act of recalling Socrates appears also to have a deeper significance:

So beneficial was Socrates in every matter and in every manner ... that there was nothing more beneficial than being a companion of Socrates and spending time with him anywhere at all and in any matter whatsoever, since even

remembering him when he was not present was of no small benefit to those who were accustomed to being in his company and who were receptive to him. (4:1:1, emphasis added)

The recollection of Socrates seems to be the next best thing to simply being with him. Socrates' helpfulness thus continued, in a sense, to benefit his disciples even after his death. On the basis of this view, there appears to be a practical dimension to Xenophon's recollection of Socrates.

Xenophon's appeal to the significance of recalling Socrates seems to express an experience unique to the followers of Socrates. The meaning or significance attached to the act of recalling Socrates can perhaps be inferred from an argument in the Memorabilia which Xenophon makes in his own name.⁴² Although this argument is not attributed to Socrates, it is used in defence of him; and it is somewhat striking in that it appears to challenge a well-known Socratic thesis.

To refute what appears to be the Socratic thesis that virtue is knowledge, Xenophon tries to show that virtue requires training and constant practice. According to Xenophon, virtue can be lost through neglect just as poetry is forgotten unless it is often repeated. The neglect of the practice of virtue leads to a kind of forgetfulness:

For I see that, just as those who do not practice forget verses composed in meter, so also forgetfulness occurs in those neglecting the speeches that teach. And when someone forgets the speeches that admonish, he has also forgotten also what the soul experienced when it desired moderation. As he has forgotten this, it is no wonder that he forgets moderation as well. (1:2:21)⁴³

It seems imperative, therefore, to always bear in mind or to recall certain formative

experiences in order to sustain the desire for moderation or virtue. From this argument, it can be inferred that the recollection of Socrates is itself somehow beneficial because it helps to rekindle or to fortify in the mind those experiences that inspired Socrates' disciples to seek after virtue. Seen in this light, the recollection of Socrates may be construed as an attempt to-re-enact those circumstances that gave rise to the experience of the desire for virtue. Thus one of the purposes of the Memorabilia may be to provide the reader with the opportunity to experience vicariously those precious moments Xenophon gained through his encounters with Socrates.

Given the importance Xenophon attached to his recollection of Socrates, it would not be unreasonable to expect him to relate some of his personal or intimate experiences with Socrates. Yet the Memorabilia seems to be rather disappointing in this regard. The bulk of the work is devoted to the illustration of the various ways Socrates benefitted his companions by dispensing practical advice or moral counsel to them. Most of the episodes recounted are in the form of a dialogue which usually takes place in a public place. There is only one dialogue which features Xenophon as Socrates' interlocutor, and that exchange occurs in the presence of Critobulus. In other words, there is no report of a private conversation between Xenophon and Socrates.

The seemingly casual reporting of apparently mundane conversations between Socrates and his companions is perhaps largely responsible for the view that Xenophon's account of Socrates is altogether superficial, if not positively misleading. Various commentators have suggested that the text should be read in terms of its apologetic intention. A.E. Taylor, for instance, has argued that it would be in Xenophon's interest

“to suppress as far as he can, any feature in the character of his hero which is original, and therefore, disconcerting to a dull and conventionally-minded reader.”⁴⁴ Although the Memorabilia may be governed by an apologetic intention, this does not necessarily imply that it was written to appeal only to a dull and conventionally-minded reader. According to Xenophon, the sophist Hippias once remarked disparagingly that Socrates was always saying the same things on the same subjects (4:4:6). To the sophist, Socrates appeared rather tiresome and pedantic in his persistent efforts to clarify the conventional understanding of morality and virtue. The clever and unconventionally-minded sophist, it seems, regarded Socrates in much the same way as Xenophon’s critics regard his account of Socrates.

Although there seems to be a serious discrepancy between the seemingly pedestrian accounts of Socrates and the view that the Memorabilia is intended to convey Xenophon’s memorable experiences of Socrates, this discrepancy poses a problem only on the assumption that Xenophon’s experiences must be intimate in nature, or manifestly philosophical as opposed to being practical or moral. But in the case of the Memorabilia, those important, formative experiences do not necessarily have to be either intimate or philosophical in nature.

According to Xenophon, Socrates spent most of his time conversing in public. For someone so exposed to public scrutiny, it would surely be imprudent for him to express his thoughts openly without consideration for his own safety. If, moreover, Socrates’ “original” ideas were also disconcerting to the average citizens, then it would seem only sensible for him to dress them up in conventional terms. For this reason

Socrates' public discourses would not immediately strike the casual observer as being original or boldly unconventional. Like Hippias, the casual observer would most likely mistake Socrates' discourses as dull and conventional.

To the careful observer, on the other hand, Socrates' facility with speech, and in particular his ability to shape arguments and to command assent, could very well arouse an initial interest in Socrates' rhetorical skills (1:2:14 and 4:6:15). An appreciation of Socrates' rhetoric may be the necessary condition for the understanding of Socrates' teaching.⁴⁵ The appreciation of Socrates' rhetoric would be conveniently and effectively gained through the constant observation of, and thoughtful reflection on, Socrates' practice in public. Over time, one's understanding of Socrates can be tested against one's ability to re-enact or to re-construct the essential elements of Socrates' public discourses. This would go beyond a mere regurgitation of what Socrates said as it would involve a certain sensitivity to the manifold ways in which Socrates shaped his conversations to accommodate the interests, temperament and intellectual capacities of his interlocutors.

An understanding of Socrates would entail an understanding of the different types of individuals he conversed with. The more one understands Socrates the better one is able to re-present Socrates' mode of self-presentation, and to re-create the social context in which that self-presentation takes shape. The Memorabilia may well reflect such an understanding of Socrates' public or civic life. And only through the close study of the text can we firmly establish whether Xenophon's recollections of Socrates are truly worthy of the importance he attached to them.

V. The organisation of the dissertation

i) Xenophon's defense of Socrates

The first two chapters of the Memorabilia are devoted to Xenophon's refutation of the charges against Socrates. Apart from responding to the formal indictment of Socrates, Xenophon's refutation also covers a number of new and specific charges made by an unnamed accuser. An awareness of these various accusations is indispensable to the analysis of Socrates' interaction with his companions. The examination of Xenophon's defense will not only help to familiarise us with his rhetorical mode of argumentation, but it will also allow us to assess the extent to which he succeeds in refuting the accusations made against Socrates. Furthermore, since much of Xenophon's defense presupposes some knowledge of Socrates, we can draw on the defense to derive an initial account of Socrates. This account of Socrates can then serve as a provisional or tentative model to test for consistency in the way Socrates is represented in the rest of the Memorabilia, or the recollections proper. Accordingly, chapter two of the dissertation will examine Xenophon's defense of Socrates.

ii) The classification and selection of the companions

All the interlocutors in Xenophon's recollections are free persons. There are no reports of Socrates conversing with slaves or members of the lowest class of manual labourers. Even though the names of Socrates' well-known philosophical companions like Simmias, Cebes and even Plato are mentioned, there are no accounts of any conversation between Socrates and these companions. In the course of his defense of

Socrates in the first two chapters of the Memorabilia, Xenophon relates a conversation between Alcibiades and Pericles, and a brief exchange between Socrates and Critias. Xenophon characterises Alcibiades and Critias as the “most ambitious” of all the Athenians, but in the recollections there are no reports of Socrates conversing with either of these men. In other words, the recollections avoid representing the extreme human types, and hence they do not present the full range of possible types Socrates associated with. Those of the companions who are represented, however, seem to constitute the typical set of individuals Socrates frequently encountered in public.

The variety of individuals depicted in the recollections can be broadly divided into three main types. The first type consists of citizens who are chiefly concerned with their personal or private affairs; the second type comprises citizens who are extremely public-spirited or politically ambitious; and the third type is composed of foreigners or non-political strangers who are often actual or potential sophists. Although some of the sophists promote themselves as teachers of politics, they are generally not office-seekers or distinguished by their political aspirations and as such they are classified as non-political for the purposes of this dissertation.

For the dissertation, we shall devote a chapter to each of the three main types and focus on the following representatives:

Chapter Three: The non-political citizens:
Aristodemus, Crito and Critobulus.

Chapter Four: The political citizens:
Nicomachides, the younger Pericles and Charmides.

Chapter Five: The non-political stranger:
Aristippus.

Among the non-political citizens, Aristodemus is selected partly because he is quite a well-known companion of Socrates, but mainly because his conversation with Socrates is on the providence of the gods and has, therefore, a bearing on Xenophon's defense of Socrates' piety. Crito and his son, Critobulus, are both long-standing friends of Socrates, and their conversations with Socrates revolve around the questions of justice and friendship.

Socrates' conversations with the three political citizens illuminate the tensions between the city and its public-spirited citizens. Nicomachides is bitter at the city's decision not to elect him as a general. Although an elected general, the younger Pericles is nonetheless unhappy with the moral decline of the city and is pessimistic about its prospects in the Peloponnesian War. Charmides is especially significant because of his subsequent association with the Thirty Tyrants, the oligarchic faction that overthrew the Athenian democracy. The conversation with Charmides sheds some light on his resentment of the demos. In all three cases, Socrates attempts to reconcile each of the men to the conditions of the Athenian democracy.

Xenophon recounts two conversations between Socrates and Aristippus. In the first conversation, Aristippus offers an alternative to the political life of the citizen. He tells Socrates that he prefers the life of the wandering stranger with no political attachments. Socrates' attempt to enlighten Aristippus on the benefits of citizenship reveals his conception of the nature and limits of the political life. In the second conversation, Aristippus questions Socrates on the relation between the good and the noble. Although Aristippus is confounded by Socrates' attempt to reduce the noble to the

good, the conversation as a whole casts doubt on the feasibility of that reduction. The tension between the good and the noble draws attention to the character of Socrates' practical teaching and raises the question whether that teaching alone fully satisfies the human longing for the noble.

The classification of Socrates' companions is used both for the purpose of organising the dissertation and to facilitate the selection of the companions. The selection of the particular interlocutors is also partly determined by their relevance to the problems and issues raised in section five of this chapter. It should go without saying that the selective examination of the dialogues in the Memorabilia will only yield general conclusions. While these conclusions are not in themselves sufficient, they are nevertheless necessary to advance in support of the view that the Memorabilia as a whole reflects a thoughtful and coherent account of Socratic justice.

Notes

1. “Commentarii” is held by some commentators to be the correct Latin equivalent of the Greek title, see E.C. Marchant, “Introduction” in Xenophon in Seven Volumes (London, 1923), 4:vii; and W.K.C. Guthrie, History of Greek Philosophy, Vol.3, (Cambridge, 1969), p.342. The disagreement over the Latin title seems to revolve around the character of the text which does not conform to the usual canons of biographical writing. Section four of this chapter offers a brief discussion of the significance of the title.
2. A.E. Taylor, Socrates (New York, 1933), p.14. This attitude towards Xenophon’s defense of Socrates is typical among modern scholars. Section three of this chapter reviews the historical attitudes towards Xenophon.
3. Consider, for example, G. Vlastos’ “Introduction: The paradox of Socrates” in the Philosophy of Socrates (New York, 1971), ed. by G. Vlastos. Vlastos is considered to be the most influential contemporary critic of Xenophon’s Socratic writings in the English-speaking world, and perhaps the most effective in discouraging serious interest in Xenophon’s account of Socrates. Established scholars like Gerasimos Santas and Richard Kraut have deferred to him in their estimation of Xenophon. But it is quite disconcerting to discover that they defer to Vlastos on the basis of the first three pages of the aforementioned article; see D. Morrison “On Professor Vlastos’ Xenophon” in Ancient Philosophy (1987), vol.7, p.9.
4. Diogenes Laertius’ Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, vol.1 (Cambridge, 1925), pp.176-189, provides the earliest biography of Xenophon. For a more extensive account of the life of Xenophon see H.G. Dakyns, “Sketch of the life of Xenophon” in The Works of Xenophon, Vol.1 (London, 1897); and J.K. Anderson, Xenophon (London, 1974).
5. Whether Xenophon eventually returned to Athens is a matter on which there appears to be no agreement; compare, for example, Anderson, Xenophon, pp.192-193 with W.E. Higgins, Xenophon the Athenian (Albany, 1977), p.128.
6. The complete titles of Xenophon’s works are listed in Diogenes Laertius.
7. For a compelling interpretation of the work, see T. Pangle, “The Political Defense of Socratic Philosophy: A Study of Xenophon’s Apology of Socrates to the Jury” in Polity (1985), vol.1, pp.94-114.
8. For a discussion of the significance of the titles of the four Socratic works see L. Strauss in both Xenophon’s Socratic Discourse (Ithaca, New York, 1970), pp.89-

- 91, and "The Problem of Socrates" in The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism (Chicago, 1989), edited by T. Pangle, pp.135-136.
9. For an illuminating analysis of the latter, see L. Strauss, "The Spirit of Sparta, or the Taste of Xenophon" in Social Research (1939), vol.6, no.4, pp.502-536.
 10. J.K. Anderson, Xenophon, p.193.
 11. The Hiero, according to Strauss, is "the only writing of the classical period which is explicitly devoted to the discussion of tyranny and its implications, and to nothing else" (On Tyranny [Ithaca, New York, 1963], p.22).
 12. The Cyropaedia still commands considerable interests. Among the recent articles devoted it, the two most noteworthy are: W.R. Newell, "Tyranny and the Science of Ruling in Xenophon's Education of Cyrus" in Journal of Politics (1983), vol.45, pp.889-905; and John Ray, "The Education of Cyrus as Xenophon's 'Statesman'" in Interpretation (1992), vol.19, no.3, pp.225-242. For a useful study of the Cyropaedia from a literary point of view, see J. Tatum, Xenophon's Imperial Fiction: On the Education of Cyrus (Princeton, 1989).
 13. Vivienne Gray maintains that there is a unifying moral design governing the composition of the Hellenica, and this "is the sort of focus one would indeed expect from Xenophon the philosopher" (V. Gray, The Character of Xenophon's Hellenica [Baltimore, 1989], p.179). cf. W. Jaeger, Paideia, Vol.2 (Oxford, 1957), p.159.
 14. J. Tatum, Xenophon's Imperial Fiction, p.42-43. cf. L. Strauss, Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy (Chicago, 1983), pp.106-113.
 15. Cyrus' father, Cambyses, appears to be modelled after Xenophon's Socrates (Cyropaedia, 1:6:1-40); and one of Cyrus' friends, Tigranes was educated by a "sophist" who suffered a similar fate as Socrates (Cyropaedia, -3:1:38-40). On the Socratic character of the Hiero, consult Strauss, On Tyranny, p.26 and p.32.
 16. Xenophon On Hunting (13:1-18).
 17. The articles worthwhile mentioning as examples are: W.W. Baker, "An Apologetic for Xenophon's Memorabilia" in The Classical Journal (1917), vol.5, no.5, pp.293-309; W. Weathers, "Xenophon's Political Idealism" in The Classical Journal (1954), vol.49, no.7, pp.317-321; and Robert R. Wellman, "Socratic Method in Xenophon", Journal of the History of Ideas (1976), vol.38, no.2, pp.307-318.

18. A brief but useful critical review of the often questionable assumptions underlying the major German critics of Xenophon can be found in W.W. Baker, see above; see also G.C. Field, Plato and his Contemporaries (London, 1976), pp.133-145.
19. It would not be improper to characterise the prevailing view of Xenophon as a prejudice since it is mostly derived from a cursory treatment of his writings. Vlastos is a case in point. The superficiality of his treatment of Xenophon is attested to by his own retraction of the view that Xenophon's Socrates is devoid of "irony and paradox" (Vlastos, The Philosophy of Socrates, p.1). From detecting no trace of irony in Xenophon, Vlastos is moved to declare, years later, his discovery in Xenophon's Symposium of "a new form of irony unprecedented in Greek literature...which is peculiarly Socratic" (Vlastos, Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher [Ithaca, New York, 1991], p.31).
20. Cited in J.K. Anderson, Xenophon, p.1.
21. Cited in J. Tatum, Xenophon's Imperial Fiction, p.247, note 21.
22. H.G. Dakyns, The Works of Xenophon Vol.1, p.xix.
23. J. Tatum, Xenophon's Imperial Fiction, p.6.
24. L. Strauss, Thoughts on Machiavelli (Chicago, 1958), p.291.
25. Anthony, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, etc. vol.2 (Gloucester, Mass., 1963), p.309.
26. B. Franklin, Autobiographical Writings (1945), edited by Carl Van Doran, p.277.
27. On Xenophon's military innovations, see O.L. Spaulding, Pen and Sword in Greece and Rome (Princeton, 1937), pp.14-53. Neal Wood contends that Xenophon articulates a practical teaching on how to organise a society along military lines, see his "Xenophon's Theory of Leadership" in Classica et Mediaevalia (1964), vol.25, pp.33-66. On Xenophon's literary innovations, see A. Momigliano, The Development of Greek Biography (Cambridge, 1971), p.47-57.
28. Apart from Strauss' numerous works, see also Christopher Bruell, "Xenophon and his Socrates" in Interpretation (1988), vol.16, no.2 , pp.295-306, as well as his chapter on Xenophon in The History of Political Philosophy (Chicago, 1987), edited by L. Strauss and J. Cropsey, pp.90-117.
29. E. Zeller, Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy (New York, 1931), trans. by L.P. Palmer, p.106.

30. G. Vlastos, The Philosophy of Socrates, p.1.
31. S. Kierkegaard, The Concept of Irony (New Jersey, 1989), trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna Hong, p.18.
32. B. Russell, A History of Western Philosophy (New York, 1945), p.83.
33. Cited in C. Anton, Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates (New York, 1861), p.448.
34. W.K.C. Guthrie, History of Greek Philosophy Vol.3, p.335.
35. A.H. Chroust, Socrates. Man and Myth (Indiana, 1957), pp.1-16.
36. T. Gomperz, Greek Thinkers: A History of Ancient Philosophy (London, 1905) trans. by G.G. Berry, p.121.
37. Cited in L. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates (Ithaca, New York, 1972), p.179.
38. A.H. Chroust, "Treason and Patriotism in Ancient Greece" in Journal of the History of Ideas (1954), vol.15, no.2, p.285.
39. References to the Greek text of the Memorabilia are from E.C. Marchant's edition in the Loeb series (London, 1923). For the English translation I have relied on the recent work of Amy Bonnette, Xenophon Memorabilia (Ithaca, New York, 1994). On occasion I have made minor changes to her translation.
40. Xenophon Cyropaedia 1:1:1.
41. Xenophon Apology of Socrates 34.
42. L. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.13.
43. cf. Cyropaedia 1:6:1-44. The first book of Cyropaedia is devoted to the education of Cyrus. The final section of the first book concerns a conversation between Cyrus and his father, Cambyses. This conversation is intended to benefit Cyrus before he sets out to lead his army to war. References to past instruction is replete throughout this conversation. In a sense, this conversation dramatises Xenophon's notion of recollection; see also J. Tatum, Xenophon's Imperial Fiction, p.87.
44. A.E. Taylor, Socrates, p.14; see also J. Burnet, Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato (London, 1950), p.149; cf. Luis Navia, Socrates (Lanham, 1985), pp.116-133.

Xenophon has been due to a decline in the understanding of the significance of rhetoric." Xenophon's rhetoric, in particular, "is not ordinary rhetoric; it is Socratic rhetoric" (Strauss, On Tyranny, p.25).

Chapter Two

Xenophon's Defense of Socrates

I. Introduction

As a preliminary, it would be helpful to recall a typical criticism of Xenophon's defense of Socrates. According to A.E. Taylor, Xenophon's defense fails "precisely because it is too successful; if Socrates had been what Xenophon wants us to believe, he would never have been prosecuted."¹ Taylor's point of view would invariably prejudice one's reception of the rest of the Memorabilia. But at the same time the criticism shows how important a role Xenophon's defense plays in determining one's approach to his recollections of Socrates. In the course of the examination of Xenophon's defense, we hope to show that the typical criticism is mistaken. Our main purpose, however, is to arrive at an account of Socrates that would facilitate the examination of Socrates' conversations with his companions.

From the very outset, Xenophon indicates that the Athenians were and continue to be misled by the accusations against Socrates:

Many times I have wondered by what possible speeches
those who indicted Socrates persuaded the Athenians that
he deserved death from the city.(1:1:1)

In both the closing sections of the Memorabilia (4:8:4-10) and the opening segment of The Apology of Socrates to the Jury (sections 1-9), Xenophon conveys the report that Socrates did not avail himself of all possible legal defenses at his trial. From the accounts of both Plato and Xenophon, we also learn that in his actual speech before the jury Socrates made comments that outraged the Athenians.² On the basis of these reports, it

would be fair to assume that Socrates did not answer or resolve all the points of accusation marshalled against him at the trial. These unresolved issues would not only continue to compromise Socrates' reputation, but they could be used as weapons to undermine the place of philosophy in the city. This latter consideration lends a note of urgency to Xenophon's concern with those speeches that persuaded the Athenians that Socrates deserved death from the city.

The official indictment of Socrates consists of two principal charges: impiety and corrupting the young. The impiety charge contains two parts: not believing in the gods acknowledged by the city and introducing other, new "daimonia" or divine things. As the gods are held to be guardians and benefactors of the city, to disregard them would be tantamount to being disloyal to the city; and to introduce new daimonia would further implicitly question the sovereignty and the authority of the city's gods.³ Although the corruption charge is stated separately, it may not be unrelated to the impiety charge. In his response to the corruption charge, Xenophon will address five specific accusations that purport to show that Socrates led his companions to subvert the political and moral foundations of the city. All the charges against Socrates therefore concern matters of vital importance to the very survival of the city.

II. Xenophon's response to the impiety charge

Xenophon's response to the impiety charge is divided into three parts: first, he deals with the problem of Socrates' daimonion; next, he turns to a discussion of what Socrates typically said and did in the course of his daily activities; and finally, he cites Socrates' conduct at the trial of the generals who commanded the naval battle at Arginusae as compelling proof of Socrates' piety.

i) Socrates' daimonion

Xenophon begins by implying that he has serious doubts about the sort of evidence that were used by the accusers to show that Socrates did not believe in the city's gods. According to Xenophon, Socrates frequently offered sacrifices both at home and at the public altars, and he also made no secret of his use of divination.⁴ Apparently, Xenophon regards these religious practices as evidence of Socrates' piety. But in order to secure Socrates' defense, Xenophon has to address the problem of Socrates' daimonion. He is obliged to do so because Socrates was notorious for claiming that he was guided by it. This, Xenophon believes, was the most likely reason why Socrates was accused of introducing new daimonia. The defense of Socrates' piety would seem then to depend on Xenophon's response to the alleged novelty of Socrates' daimonion.

In response to the allegation, Xenophon argues that Socrates' daimonion did not amount to a religious innovation since it performed the same function as the other, more familiar kinds of divination, that of foretelling the future. In this, moreover, Socrates' daimonion was apparently very reliable. As evidence Xenophon refers to Socrates'

remarkable success in counselling many of his companions in accordance with the warnings of the daimonion. Xenophon does not tell us how Socrates himself benefitted from the daimonion; but he maintains that those who heeded Socrates' advice prospered, whereas those who did not came to regret it.⁵ On the basis of this evidence, Xenophon draws the following conclusion.

It is clear, then, that he would not have foretold these things unless he trusted that he was speaking the truth. But who would trust anyone in these matters other than a god? And trusting in gods, how could he not believe in the existence of the gods? (1:1:5)⁶

This argument clearly fails as a refutation of the impiety charge. Just because Socrates' daimonion performed the same function as the other kinds of divination does not mean that it was not altogether something new. In any case, Socrates was not charged with atheism. And even if Socrates did believe in the existence of the gods, it does not follow that he believed in that of the city's gods.

But the flaw in the argument is so obvious that it should not be immediately presumed that Xenophon is unaware of it. Rhetorically, the argument seems intended to draw attention away from Socrates' daimonion and towards the more fundamental consideration of Socrates' underlying conception of the gods. Indeed, this movement was more or less prefigured by a potentially contentious point Xenophon raised during his account of Socrates' daimonion. In his attempt to defend Socrates' reliance on the daimonion, Xenophon said that "the majority say that they are both encouraged and discouraged by the birds and by those they meet" (1:1:4).⁷ The many seem to believe that at times the gods gave them clear direction through such natural phenomena.

Presumably, there would be no need on these occasions for the people to consult oracles or soothsayers for guidance. But this would seem to suggest that the popular opinion about the gods allowed the people considerable scope to decide arbitrarily what the gods wished them to do.

Socrates, on the other hand, always maintained that his daimonion provided him with "signs" only (1:1:4).⁸ This implies that Socrates did not believe that the gods communicated directly and unequivocally with human beings. And since signs require interpretation, Xenophon's account of Socrates' daimonion implies that Socrates' advice always proved to be true only because he interpreted the signs from the daimonion correctly.⁹ In other words, Socrates had to exercise his independent judgment in order to make sense of the signs from the daimonion. But by attributing his advice to the daimonion, Socrates apparently did not wish to draw attention to his uncanny powers of judgment. Through the effectiveness of his advice, however, Socrates not only legitimised his claims about the daimonion, but he also reinforced the credibility of his view of divination. Socrates' view of divination, moreover, presupposes that he had a distinct conception of the gods.

If Socrates' view of divination was intended as a corrective to the popular understanding of divine communication, then it would seem to follow that his underlying conception of the gods was similarly intended as a corrective to the popular accounts of the gods. Thus far, however, Xenophon has spoken of Socrates' use of divination in relation to his daimonion. To show that Socrates' view of divination was not idiosyncratic, Xenophon relates another way in which Socrates benefitted his

companions:

He advised regarding the necessary things that they also act as he held best. But concerning things whose outcomes were not clear, he sent them to seek divination about whether they should be done. And he said that those intending to manage households and cities nobly are in need of divination in addition. (1:1:6-7)

On occasion Socrates' daimonion somehow remained silent with respect to some of his companions. In this case, Socrates would send them to the public oracle.¹⁰ This would seem to indicate that Socrates' daimonion did not usurp or undermine the role of the public oracle. Indeed, with respect to helping his companions, Socrates' private daimonion and the public oracle seem to have complemented each other. By thus showing that Socrates' use of divination included the use of the public oracle, Xenophon is now in a position to generalise Socrates' view of divination.

According to Xenophon, Socrates claimed that the practical knowledge necessary to the management of both household and city is available and accessible to human beings. Socrates also maintained that the things human beings can know by learning are given by the gods for them to learn; hence, these are the things human beings ought to learn (1:1:9). But the possession of this practical knowledge is not sufficient to assure the well-being of the individual. Someone may, for example, plant a field "nobly" (kalōs) and yet be unable to tell who will eventually reap the fruits of his labour. Likewise, the man who is able to command an army or lead a city cannot know if it is to his "advantage" (sumpherei, 1:1:8) to do so. Knowledge of the outcome of these human endeavours belongs properly to the gods. For this reason it would be "crazy" to deny

divination in the belief that such knowledge is within the realm of human judgment. On the other hand, it would be gravely improper or "unlawful" (athemita, 1:1:8) to consult the gods on matters that are well within the individual's capacity to know.

By indicating the sorts of knowledge that are necessary and available to human beings, Socrates invariably limited the use of divination. He clearly understood that the individual's concern for his own well-being underlies the practice of divination.

According to Socrates' view of divination, the right to consult the gods about one's future is reserved only for those who have taken the trouble to cultivate a noble life. In this regard, Socrates seems to have suggested that the noble may be cultivated through the practice of any useful art. For example, the farmer must not only possess the art of farming and attend diligently to the care of his crops; but in order to provide for the security of his activity he should also make every effort to gain the cooperation of others. Hence, Socrates' view of divination appears to have been an attempt to reconcile the good with the noble by intensifying and enlarging the self-interest of the individual.

Furthermore, the habits of virtue acquired through the prudent practice of one's art may eventually carry over into one's public life. In terms of ruling, Socrates' underlying teaching implies that a good ruler would attend to the needs of the ruled rather than to his own advantage (see, for example, 3:2:1-4). The incentive for undertaking any practical activity in a way that is both noble and good is supplied by the belief that the gods are just in that they are concerned with the efforts and sacrifices the individual makes in both his private and public life (2:1:33).

Socrates' view of divination, therefore, presupposes a conception of the gods that

places a premium on the independent efforts of human beings both as individuals and as members of a political community. Xenophon's account of it suggests that the majority of the believers in divination subscribe to a view of the gods that does not dispose them to make the necessary efforts and sacrifices to ensure the sound management of their private and public affairs. By pointing to this deficiency, Xenophon tacitly underlines the superiority of Socrates' underlying conception of the gods. Accordingly, Xenophon also raises the consideration of whether Socrates' own way of life conformed to his teaching of man's obligation to the gods. This consideration would help in part to explain why the subsequent parts of his response to the impiety charge are devoted to accounts of Socrates' life as a private citizen and as a public official.

ii) Socrates' daily activities

The ostensible reason for this discussion is to show that Socrates did not say or do anything religiously improper in the course of his daily activities. Xenophon begins by asserting that Socrates was always in the open where he spent most of his time talking and anyone who wished could listen to what he had to say. Socrates, therefore, had nothing to hide; more importantly, no one ever saw him do or heard him say anything impious or unholy.¹¹ To support this contention, however, Xenophon turns rather abruptly to an account of Socrates' confrontation with the proponents of natural philosophy.

According to Xenophon, Socrates "did not converse about the nature of all things in the way most of the others did" (1:1:11).¹² In other words, Socrates did converse about

nature albeit in a different manner. In the present context, Xenophon suggests that one of the ways Socrates conversed about nature was by raising sensible objections to the various speculative theories of nature.¹³ But the point which Xenophon emphasizes is that Socrates made it a practice to criticise the conduct and motives of the proponents of natural philosophy. Many of them went to extremes in defending and disseminating their theories. Like madmen, they embroiled themselves in heated but fruitless disputes: that is to say, they lost all sense of moderation and propriety in their enthusiasm to promote their new and, no doubt, often unsettling ideas.

One striking instance of the grave extremes to which their enthusiasm carried them is reflected in the belief that nature can be mastered (1:1:15). Along with the encouragement of vain ambition and false hopes, such a belief would invariably undermine the foundation of religion. In this regard, Socrates' criticisms of his philosophic counterparts are consistent with his objection to those who would deny divination on the grounds that nothing is beyond the realm of human judgment (see 1:1:9). Through this account, Xenophon traces the non-believers not only to the natural philosophers but also to the sophists and their students. The students of the sophists are drawn mainly from the wealthier classes and many of them seek instruction in order to advance their political ambitions. Socrates was apparently concerned about the possible corruption of these young men. At the same time, his criticisms of the sophists seem to suggest that with the introduction of philosophy into the city the traditional education of the citizen-gentleman may no longer be adequate. Consequently, these criticisms point to the need for a new or improved civic education. This is made explicit in the immediate

sequel.

To underline the contrast between Socrates and most of his philosophic counterparts, Xenophon says that Socrates' conversations were always about "the human things":

What is pious, what is impious; what is noble, what is base; what is just, what is unjust; what is moderation, what is madness; what is courage, what is cowardice; what is a city, what is a statesman; what is rule over human beings, what is a skilled ruler of human beings, as well as the other things, knowledge of which he believed made men into gentlemen, while those who are ignorant of them would justly be called slavish. (1:1:16)¹⁴

Socrates apparently attached greater importance to these questions especially in relation to the education of the citizen-gentleman. The list enumerated by Xenophon calls attention to two sets of questions: the first concerning five pairs of virtues and vices, the second concerning politics or ruling. Against the background of the speculations about nature, the list gives an indication of the sorts of issues that need to be resolved. For example, the question of justice and injustice which occupies the central place in the first set of questions may be in dispute because different cities maintain different notions of what is just or unjust. From this perspective, the questionableness of justice is connected to the understanding of what the city is. For if the city is merely conventional, then it may be the case that its justice is similarly conventional and, hence, possibly arbitrary.

It is rather striking that prudence, one of the cardinal virtues, is not mentioned in the first set of questions concerning the moral virtues. On the other hand, prudence seems to be implied in the second set of questions through the consideration of the nature

of the statesman and the skilled ruler of human beings. The two individuals may be distinct, but they would seem to have in common some knowledge or expertise in the practical art of ruling; and prudence is implied in the art of ruling. Here it is relevant to recall an important part of Xenophon's previous account of Socrates' conception of the gods. In that account it was said that Socrates thought that the gods provided human beings with knowledge of the practical arts, including the art of the "ruler of human beings" (anthrōpōn archikon, 1:1:7). In the present account, however, Xenophon leaves in doubt whether Socrates thought that the gods similarly provided human beings with knowledge of the moral virtues. Knowledge of the moral virtues may not be available; or even if it were, it may not be accessible to all human beings. This consideration points to a serious, underlying problem with the moral education of the citizen-gentleman. As Xenophon will show later, one of the most controversial aspects of the charge that Socrates corrupted the young revolves around the question of whether virtue can be taught.

For now, it is important to note that Xenophon concludes this part of his response to the impiety charge by stating that what he had just disclosed about Socrates' discourses was not known to the jurors and, by implication, to the vast majority of the Athenians (1:1:17). Thus, contrary to the initial impression given by Xenophon, Socrates' daily conversations in the open clearly did not fully reflect or reveal what he said in less public circumstances or what he may have thought in private. Xenophon partially resolves this discrepancy by implying that Socrates had to exercise more discretion in his encounters with the proponents of natural philosophy. Socrates evidently varied his conversations to

accommodate the ordinary citizens, on the one hand, and those among the youth who were attracted either to philosophy or to the sort of political education offered by the sophists, on the other. In each case, Xenophon shows that Socrates' conversations consistently reflected a concern for the religious and moral foundations of the city. Aside from the defense of Socrates' civic responsibility, this part of the response also brings to light a more complex understanding of Socrates as a citizen-philosopher.

Xenophon's account of Socrates' criticisms of the proponents of natural philosophy does not deny the possibility of philosophy. On the contrary, the account of Socrates' intervention tacitly underlines the important role that philosophy plays in the city. The presentation of Socrates' critical discourses and his abiding interest in conversing about the human things is in keeping with the idea of philosophy as essentially a quest for knowledge of the most important things. This view of philosophy implies that the philosopher is acutely aware of his ignorance of the most important things. As a result of this, he is equally aware of the true nature and extent of the fundamental problems afflicting political life. The philosopher's sober appreciation of the city's true predicament puts him in a better position to offer the city practical but necessarily limited guidance in resolving these fundamental problems.

Socrates' conception of the gods is a case in point. Nowhere in his defense of Socrates' piety does Xenophon assert the truth of Socrates' conception of the gods. Within the context of the impiety charge, however, Xenophon shows that Socrates' conception of the gods not only helped to clarify the scope and limits of human action but was also a means to moderate the potentially destructive conflict between religion and

philosophy. Given the troubling political implications of that conflict, Socrates' conception of the gods comes to sight as a reasonable and practical response to it. In the final part of his defense of Socrates' piety, Xenophon will reaffirm for the sake of sound political practice the necessity of reforming the conventional opinions about the gods.

iii) Socrates' conduct at the trial of the generals

After relating aspects of Socrates' private life that were not generally known to all the Athenians, Xenophon now turns to recount an event involving Socrates which was known to all the Athenians. This was the event in which Socrates presided in the assembly and, despite threats from every quarter, stood firmly opposed to an illegal vote to try collectively the generals in command at the successful naval battle at Arginusae.¹⁵ Xenophon says that Socrates justified his conduct on the grounds that he was bound by the oath of office to uphold the law.¹⁶

In citing this episode of Socrates' life as proof of his piety, Xenophon implies that the people acted impiously in demanding the illegal vote.¹⁷ In connection with this implicit indictment of the people, Xenophon says that Socrates differed from the many in his belief that the gods know everything including man's secret purposes (1:1:19). But the relevance of this remark is not immediately apparent. After all, the events surrounding the trial of the generals were supposed to be known to all. So what was concealed by the action of the people that prompted Xenophon to insert Socrates' remark about the omniscience of the gods?

A plausible answer to this may be found in the notion of collective responsibility.

The generals were tried together because they were held to be collectively accountable for the tragic fate of the shipwrecked sailors. But since the generals were elected by the people, the logic of collective responsibility would also implicate the people. From this perspective, the trial constituted an illegitimate attempt by the people to absolve itself of all responsibility by placing the blame entirely on the generals. This act of bad faith seems to be the hidden factor in the trial. The disavowal of responsibility in particular reflects the point of Socrates' criticism that the majority of the believers in divination subscribe to a view of the gods that does not dispose them to assume full responsibility for their private and public affairs.

By inserting Socrates' remark on the omniscience of the gods, Xenophon suggests that the trial directly reflected the grave political consequences of the conventional view of the gods. If the gods are ignorant of man's secret purposes, they would be susceptible to deception. It would be possible, therefore, to avoid or to escape divine sanctions. This possibility would undermine the authority of the gods, and consequently the authority of law as the permanent guide to human action. Xenophon's account of the trial traces the people's contempt for the law to its questionable understanding of the nature of the gods. In contrast, his account of Socrates' conduct at the trial affirms the necessity of reinforcing the rule of law by putting in place a more rational account of the gods.

iv) Summary

In his defense of Socrates' piety, Xenophon portrays Socrates as a critical but responsible citizen. He does not deny that Socrates questioned the city's religious beliefs.

He shows, however, that Socrates' views on divination and the gods helped, on the one hand, to expose fundamental deficiencies in the conventional understanding of the gods and, on the other hand, to clarify the distinction and relation between things human and divine. Socrates was clearly not a subverter of piety. Indeed, his attempts to restrain the proponents of natural philosophy were undertaken in part to defend the city's religious foundation. Moreover, his intervention in the conflict between religion and philosophy was conducted with the utmost discretion and moderation. His conduct was a reflection of his civic responsibility: for his opposition to the demos at the trial of the generals showed that he did not fear the consequences of offending the democracy. Thus, Socrates' conduct conformed to his own tenets about man's obligation to the gods; that is to say, his conduct evinced both a measure of self-reliance and a concern for the common-good.

In light of the skeptical challenges brought about by natural philosophy, Xenophon also shows that Socrates' philosophical activities were crucial in addressing the need for a new civic education. But in his account of Socrates' interest in the human things, Xenophon points to potential difficulties in Socrates' approach to the moral education of the young. And so his defense of Socrates' piety anticipates the controversy surrounding the charges that Socrates corrupted the young.

III. Xenophon's response to the corruption charge

Xenophon's response begins with a general refutation of the official indictment. This is followed by a point by point response to five specific charges made against

Socrates by an unnamed accuser. Following our examination of the general refutation, we shall treat Xenophon's responses to the unnamed accuser in three parts. The first two charges made by the accuser fall together as they both relate to the allegation that Socrates caused his companions to be violent. The next two charges both concern Socrates' alleged role in alienating his companions from their families and friends. The last charge is that Socrates taught his companions to become malefactors and tyrants through the perverse interpretation of the works of the most famous poets.

i) The general refutation

The general refutation opens with the reminder to the reader not to lose sight of the previous considerations urged on behalf of Socrates' piety. Xenophon then proceeds to argue that since Socrates was so continent and inured to such an austere way of life, he could not have led others into vice. On the contrary, Socrates stopped the vices of many "by making them desire virtue and by giving them hope that if they took care of themselves they would become gentlemen" (1:2:2:). Although Xenophon goes on to maintain that Socrates was the model of gentlemanly virtue and therefore worthy of imitation, his general refutation focuses almost exclusively on Socrates' extraordinary continence. This is curious because continence relates mainly to the discipline of the bodily desires and is, at best, only a means to virtue. Ultimately, the discipline of the body is subordinated to, or in the service of, "the care of the soul" (1:2:5). The care of the soul would seem to be an intrinsically choiceworthy but inherently self-regarding good. How, then, is it related to Socrates' interest in encouraging the desire for virtue among his

companions?

Furthermore, Socrates said that his self-control ensured his freedom from unnecessary obligation to others. In this connection, he denounced the sophists for virtually selling themselves into bondage since they were obliged to converse with anyone who paid them a fee. In addition, he deplored their practice of making money out of the profession of virtue on the grounds that "the greatest profit would be the gain of a good friend" (1:2:7). Socrates evidently did not wish to converse with all those who sought the benefit of his conversations. His interest in conversing about virtue and encouraging the desire for it, however, appears to be aimed at the acquisition of good friends. Just as the discipline of the body is necessary to the care of the soul, perhaps good friends are similarly necessary as partners or helpers in the quest for virtue. That being the case, the care of the soul would require the cultivation of friendship. At any rate, Xenophon says that Socrates was confident that those of his companions who accepted what he himself approved of would always be good friends both to him and to one another (1:2:8).

While extolling Socrates as a model of virtue and a good friend, Xenophon does not explain how Socrates inspired his companions with the desire for virtue. In this regard, he is especially emphatic in pointing out that Socrates never professed to be a teacher of virtue (1:2:3 and 8). This, of course, does not mean that Socrates did not teach. Here, Xenophon's reluctance to address Socrates' teachings may be connected with the ambiguous and possibly controversial character of Socrates' approach to the question of virtue. But since it is evidently not Xenophon's intention to deny that Socrates taught, it

is fair to assume that the main purpose of the general refutation is to frame the context within which to discuss Socrates' teachings: that is, to establish that whatever Socrates may have taught must be considered in the light of his intention to inspire his companions with the desire for virtue.

ii) Socrates as a teacher of politics

This section will examine the first two charges made against Socrates by the unnamed accuser.¹⁸ The first charge is that Socrates led his companions to despise the established laws, above all by calling into question the democratic practice of appointing the rulers by lot, and that in so doing Socrates made his companions violent (1:2:9). The second charge expands on the first by accusing Socrates of responsibility for the grave misdeeds of two of his known associates, Critias and Alcibiades. According to the accuser, the two caused the greatest evil to the city. Critias was "the most rapacious, the most violent, and the most murderous under the oligarchy", and Alcibiades was "the most licentious, the most insolent, and the most violent under the democracy" (1:2:12).

In his response to the first charge, Xenophon only denies that Socrates caused his companions to be violent. While conceding the point that Socrates criticised the democratic regime, Xenophon insists that Socrates relied on and advocated the use of persuasion to encourage political reform. In reply to the second charge, Xenophon goes to great length to explain the nature of Critias and Alcibiades' relationship with Socrates. He begins by noting that the two men were by nature "the most honour-loving" of all the Athenians. They were attracted to Socrates because they saw that in his speeches

Socrates "could manage all his interlocutors in any manner he wished" (1:2:14). By consorting with Socrates, Xenophon says, they thought they would excel both in speaking and in doing. In short, they attached themselves to Socrates for the sake of a political education.

In his initial account, Xenophon leaves no doubt that Critias and Alcibiades were not in the least attracted to Socrates' continence or his austere way of life. But since the political ambitions of both men should have been apparent to Socrates, the question naturally arises whether Socrates took any steps to prepare them for an education in politics. Xenophon responds to this concern by taking it upon himself to raise two objections to Socrates' approach to the question of virtue. The first objection is that Socrates should have taught (didaskain, 1:2:17) his companions moderation before teaching them politics. In response, Xenophon maintains that Socrates did prepare his companions by showing them that he himself was a true gentleman and by conversing most nobly about virtue and the other human things (1:2:18). Socrates, then, did not provide formal instruction in virtue. This point recalls Xenophon's previous contention that Socrates never professed to be a teacher of virtue.

From his response to the first objection it can be reasonably inferred that Xenophon agrees with the view implied in Socrates' disavowal of teaching that virtue cannot simply be taught or acquired. The second objection, however, pursues the point about teaching by claiming that a just man, for example, can never be unjust, since no one having learned anything can ever become ignorant of it. In effect, the objection implies that knowledge is sufficient for virtue. Moreover, it presupposes that knowledge of virtue

is both available and teachable. But by attributing this objection to "many of those who claim to philosophise" (1:2:19), Xenophon makes it clear that it is based on an unconventional and perhaps even sophistical way of thinking.¹⁹

To counteract the second objection, Xenophon advances in his own name an argument that appeals to the conventional understanding of virtue as based on habit. Accordingly, he maintains that virtue is acquired through rigorous discipline and sustained not only by constant practice, but also by conscientious efforts to avoid every temptation to vice. Virtue, on this view, can be lost through neglect or frequent exposure to vice. Furthermore, the neglect of virtue leads to a kind of forgetfulness.

And when someone forgets the speeches that admonish, he has forgotten also what the soul experienced when it desired moderation. As he has forgotten this, it is no wonder that he forgets moderation as well. (1:2:21)

The discipline of virtue is fostered and facilitated by speeches that are designed to inspire the soul with the desire for virtue. Through this argument, Xenophon indicates that he associates Socrates' approach to the cultivation of virtue with the production of these formative experiences of the soul. For his immediate purposes, however, the argument is used to show that Critias and Alcibiades only became corrupted after they left Socrates and consorted with people who were only too willing to indulge their every passion.²⁰

According to Xenophon, both Critias and Alcibiades were moderate so long as they remained with Socrates. They had in Socrates an ally who could help them overcome their ignoble desires. As an example, Xenophon recounts an incident in which Socrates publicly rebuked Critias for his amorous advances to a young man (1:2:29-30).²¹

More significantly, Xenophon says that both Critias and Alcibiades resented being cross-examined about their errors by Socrates (1:2:47). Evidently, they did not relish having their ignorance exposed but, by the same token, they were compelled to recognise and confront their limitations and deficiencies.

An awareness of one's ignorance would seem to be the appropriate starting point for the quest for virtue. But it is one thing to inspire a desire for virtue, quite another to sustain the pursuit of virtue. A life characterised by the quest for virtue is not, strictly speaking, virtuous. It is, at best, only provisionally so. Without a firm foundation in knowledge, such a life would be vulnerable to countervailing influences. Socrates' limited success with Critias and Alcibiades points to the difficulty of insulating the most ambitious citizens from the seduction and corruption of political life (1:2:24).

Through his account of Critias and Alcibiades, Xenophon articulates his perspective on the role that Socrates' political or practical education played within the context of his informal education to virtue. Xenophon does not deny that the teaching of virtue ought to precede the teaching of politics. Yet he is acutely aware that the teaching of virtue is problematic. He, therefore, offers Socrates' approach to the cultivation of virtue as a more sensible and practical alternative. In his education of the citizen, Socrates reversed the order of priority. His political and practical discourses served as means to attract his companions to the higher pursuit of virtue. Along with his monitions and cross-examinations, Socrates sought to arouse in his companions an awareness of their ignorance. By such means Socrates hoped not only to moderate his companions, but also to inspire them with the desire for virtue.

Xenophon concludes the account of Socrates' approach to the cultivation of virtue by contrasting Critias and Alcibiades with the true associates of Socrates. These were men who consorted with Socrates in order that they might become gentlemen able to make noble use of house and household, relatives and friends, city and citizens (1:2:48). Socrates' true associates are characterised by their endeavours to strike an even balance between their private and public lives. According to Xenophon, none of these men ever caused any evil or incurred any blame in his lifetime.

Among the true associates were individuals like Crito, a wealthy and respectable country gentleman; Chaerophon, a noted democrat; and Hermogenes, a poor but exceptionally pious person. Xenophon also mentions the names of Simmias, Cebes and Phaedondas, all of whom were foreigners and students of philosophy.²² Through this list Xenophon indicates Socrates' wide-ranging appeal and his ability to relate to vastly disparate individuals. Socrates' success with his true associates points to the possibility of cultivating a class of gentlemen which could potentially moderate the conflict between the democrats and the oligarchs. By moderating the competing claims of the dominant factions, this class may indirectly restrain the ambitions of individuals like Critias and Alcibiades.

iii) Socrates' wisdom

In his response to the next set of charges, Xenophon does not deny the central point that Socrates led his companions to believe that there was no one wiser and more helpful than he (1:2:52). But the accuser adds that Socrates caused his companions to

treat their fathers with contempt and to disparage their family and friends. What is striking about Xenophon's subsequent response is that he makes little effort to rebut these additional charges. One is left with the distinct impression that Socrates tolerated a certain degree of recalcitrance towards paternal authority and the conventional norms of kinship and amity. As a result, there appears to be a discrepancy between this implicit characterisation of Socrates' companions and the previous account of Socrates' true associates as gentlemen who sought to make noble use of family, friends and fellow citizens.

To resolve this discrepancy, one might first examine the only point of dispute between Xenophon and the accuser. As evidence of the charge that Socrates subverted paternal authority, the accuser claims that Socrates made use of a law that allowed a son to confine his father who has been convicted of insanity as proof that it was lawful for the wiser to confine the more ignorant (1:2:49). Xenophon denies this by claiming that while Socrates thought it expedient to confine a madman, he also held that those who are ignorant of what they ought to know deserve to learn from those who know. At first glance, the distinction between ignorance and madness does not appear relevant to the problem of the companions' attitude towards their fathers. On further reflection, however, the distinction proves to be quite helpful in clarifying the problem.

Both the companions and their fathers are, in a sense, ignorant. As students of Socrates, however, the companions are more likely to be aware of their ignorance. Conversely, lacking the benefit of a Socratic education, their fathers are more likely to be ignorant of their ignorance. This characterisation of the fathers may be extended to

include members of the larger community. In terms of the potential to cause harm to themselves and to others without intending to do so, those who are ignorant of their ignorance are not significantly different from madmen.²³ By way of an analogy, Socrates said that because each man loves his body most of all he willingly removes, and even allows another to remove, from his body whatever is useless or harmful (1:2:54). In other words, it was for the sake of the good of his companions that Socrates liberated them from the uncritical acceptance of paternal authority as well as the prevailing norms of the community.

Socrates' remark on the body also implies that each man cares most about his own well-being, and that human relations are partly governed by utilitarian considerations. Since human beings are inclined to make use of one another, the crucial question is whether they would do so in mutually beneficial ways. To be truly useful to one another, each man would need to know what is good for himself. Socrates was most helpful in this particular regard because he knew "the needful things" (*ta deonta*, 1:2:52) and could explain them. So, for example, he taught his companions that although each man loves his body most of all, the body is useless without prudence (*phronēsis*, 1:2:53). By appealing to their self-interest, Socrates thus led his companions to the cultivation of prudence.

According to Xenophon, Socrates made these remarks so as to encourage his companions to be as sensible and useful as possible. Therefore, it was not Socrates' intention to alienate his companions from their families and friends. Yet, as Xenophon indicates, Socrates' education did arouse considerable resentment in or among various

elements of the city. For Socrates did in fact cause his companions to question the conventional views of kinship, friendship and citizenship. By so doing, however, he helped to insulate them from the unreasonable demands of the community, and to prepare them to re-establish their ties to it on a more rational basis.

iv) Socrates' civic virtue

The fifth and final charge seems to draw on elements of the previous charges to accuse Socrates of being a teacher of violent, iconoclastic self-assertion. For the accuser now states that Socrates selected from the most famous poets the most pernicious passages and used them as authorities in teaching his companions to be "malefactors and tyrants" (1:2:56). To substantiate this, the accuser offers Socrates' alleged interpretation of a verse from Hesiod and a passage from Homer.

The verse from Hesiod reads: "Work is no disgrace, but idleness is a disgrace."²⁴ Socrates is charged with interpreting this as an injunction to refrain from no work however unjust or shameful but to do anything for gain. Xenophon responds by asserting that Socrates understood work to mean any activity that is beneficial and good. But an activity such as gambling that is base and leads to loss, Socrates considered idle. As a response, this account of Socrates' conception of work is not fully satisfactory. One who gains a profit from gambling or any other illicit activity would not be regarded as idle. Moreover, the Socratic conception of work leaves open to question whether what is beneficial and good is also just. The underlying reason for this response becomes clearer, however, in Xenophon's reply to the accuser's account of Socrates' use of the Homeric

passage.

The Homeric passage shows how Odysseus treated "a regal and eminent man" differently from "a man of the people" (1:2:58). The former was treated respectfully, whereas the latter was treated rather harshly. According to the accuser, Socrates "frequently" quoted this passage and used it as a justification to chastise the common and poor folk. Xenophon denies this and asserts that what Socrates said with respect to it was that:

...the one who should be checked by every means, even if they happen to be rich, are those who are not beneficial either in speech or in deed, nor competent to bring aid if it should be needed either to army or to city or even to the demos itself. (1:2:59)

By this criteria one cannot simply disregard the potential utility of those who are normally engaged in activities that are morally questionable. A good thief, for example, may be useful to the city in a time of war.

This reply brings into sharper relief the implicit tension between the accuser's concern for justice and Socrates' view of the good understood in terms of what is useful or beneficial. While legitimate, the accuser's concern for justice does not adequately consider the possibility that in a time of crisis the city may have to defend itself by means that would not normally be regarded as just. Socrates' utilitarian conception of work involves a political perspective that transcends the boundaries of justice. This does not necessarily mean that justice should be sacrificed to mere utility. But Xenophon seems to suggest that Socrates thought that in times of need the city's concern for justice may have to be subordinated to considerations of the good.

Since a man's worth is judged in terms of his usefulness to the city, Xenophon says in closing that Socrates was deserving of great honour from the city. For Socrates showed himself to be "a man of the people" and "a philanthropist" by freely dispensing the greatest service to all who cared to receive him and, above all, he always made his companions better men before he departed from them. This depiction of Socrates seems so exaggerated that it is most likely articulated with a view to overcome any lingering doubts about Xenophon's response to the final charge against Socrates. The exaggeration is evident once it is recalled that Socrates did not wish to converse with all who sought his conversation (see 1:2:6). The doubts surrounding Xenophon's response are probably related to his own attempt to play down the seriousness of the final charge by truncating what the accuser may have said in reference to Socrates' use of the Homeric passage. For in his reproduction of the accuser's citation of that passage, Xenophon apparently omitted the following line: "... not good is the rule of the many, one should be ruler, one should be king."²⁵ The additional information provided by this line suggests that the accuser may have originally intended to connect Socrates' alleged rejection of democracy to his alleged preference for the rule of one man.

From the democratic point of view, Socrates' alleged preference for the rule of one man could easily be misconstrued as an endorsement of tyranny. Conversely, Xenophon's closing account of Socrates' unstinting beneficence could be taken as a tacit refutation of that allegation. Nonetheless, the problem of Socrates' frequent use of that Homeric passage remains unresolved. Moreover, Xenophon's account of Socrates' utilitarian teaching lends support to the notion of one man rule. For, in principle, the

individual who is most able and willing to make the greatest contribution to the city would be most deserving of ruling the city. Perhaps Socrates' use of the Homeric passage was intended only as an illustration of what it means to rule well. Like a king, a good ruler should be distinguished by his knowledge as well as his willingness to benefit the ruled (see, for example, 3:2:1-4). Seen in this light, Xenophon's account of Socrates' beneficence appears as a vindication of the practical outcome of this teaching on ruling. By characterising Socrates as a man of the people and one who was able and willing to benefit others, Xenophon upholds Socrates' example as a practical standard to evaluate an individual's capacity and fitness to rule. In the context of democratic politics, Socrates' example and his teachings may then be seen as an attempt to make his companions more deserving of the right to participate in ruling the city.

IV. Conclusion

The examination of Xenophon's defense shows that Xenophon does not portray Socrates in such a way as to render him "not only innocent but also altogether innocuous."²⁶ Nor does Xenophon compromise his defense by inadvertent but damaging references to Socrates' philosophical activities.²⁷ The examination of the defense shows that one of Xenophon's chief aims is to articulate Socrates' complex role as a critical but responsible citizen-philosopher. For this reason, Xenophon does not deny that Socrates questioned the traditional and authoritative opinions of the city. But by clarifying Socrates' situation, Xenophon shows that Socrates' intervention was guided in part by the need to moderate the conflicts among the prominent factions within the city.

As Xenophon is clearly aware of the potentially subversive implications of Socrates' critical discourses, his defense refrains from championing the cause of Socrates' philosophical way of life. Nonetheless, his discreet references to Socrates' philosophical activities are necessary to his clarification of Socrates' situation. By disclosing Socrates' criticisms of the proponents of natural philosophy, Xenophon reveals that Socrates had a distinct conception of the limits of human knowledge. Through his reference to Socrates' constant preoccupation with the fundamental questions of political life, Xenophon indicates that Socrates doubted whether the knowledge of virtue was available or accessible to the vast majority of human beings. This understanding of Socrates helps to explain why Socrates consistently and emphatically disavowed being a teacher of virtue. More importantly, it shows that Socrates' awareness of the problem of virtue both informed and circumscribed his role in the city.

The infamous trial of the generals and the extreme expression of partisan politics epitomised by Critias and Alcibiades testify to the extent of the disorder and moral confusion afflicting the city. In recounting Socrates' failure to dissuade the demos during the trial of the generals and his limited success in moderating Critias and Alcibiades, Xenophon brings to light the practical limits of philosophy to offer a comprehensive solution to the fundamental problems of political life. In view of these limitations, Xenophon's defense of Socrates calls attention to Socrates' relative success with his true associates. Socrates' true associates, or those among his companions who accepted what he himself approved of, point to the practical possibility of cultivating a class of gentlemen that could potentially mediate and hence moderate the dangerous conflict

between the democratic and oligarchic factions in the city. By moderating the claims of the competing factions, these gentlemen would in effect be contributing to the city's need for a practical resolution to the problem of virtue.

In defending Socrates' relationship with his companions, Xenophon says that Socrates' intention was to foster the spirit of friendship based on gentlemanliness. In this regard, Xenophon extols Socrates as the model of gentlemanly virtue. Yet in so doing Xenophon leaves no doubt that in practice the standard of human excellence would have to be set much lower with respect to the companions. Socrates' exemplary conduct was based in part on his extraordinary continence. But as the account of Critias and Alcibiades shows, Socrates' continence, while admirable, was not regarded as the most attractive feature of Socrates' life. Socrates' companions were drawn instead to his practical wisdom as they stood to benefit directly from it.

Given the self-interest of the companions, Xenophon shows that Socrates consciously made use of his practical wisdom to inspire his companions with the desire for virtue or self-cultivation. Through a combination of methods, Socrates led his companions to take a more serious interest in the improvement of their personal or private affairs. By appealing to their self-interest, Socrates not only encouraged them to cultivate prudence, but he also led them to realise the necessity of cooperation. In order to secure the services of others, one has to render oneself useful to others; and in order to be useful, one has to acquire the knowledge necessary to the management of household and city. Socrates' practical or utilitarian teaching thus played a crucial role in the civic education of his companions. The political implications of this teaching are evident from

Xenophon's account of Socrates' attempts to liberate his companions from the uncritical attachment to the conventional bonds of family, amity, and citizenship.

Xenophon's presentation of Socrates' utilitarian teaching implicitly raises the question of Socrates' underlying interest in the friendship of his companions. Although Xenophon constantly stresses Socrates' beneficence, he nevertheless makes it known that Socrates did not wish to converse with all who sought the benefit of his conversations. Moreover, Socrates himself declared that his continence freed him from unnecessary obligation to others. This suggests that there is an underlying element of necessity governing Socrates' interest in the cultivation of friendship. Socrates no doubt had a personal interest in protecting his philosophical way of life. But as the account of his intervention in the conflict between religion and philosophy indicates, Socrates acted in part to preserve the place of philosophy in the city. Therefore, it is fair to assume that Socrates' interest in friendship was also intended as a service to the cause of philosophy. As many of Socrates' true associates were not philosophically inclined, this would seem to suggest that the friendship of the non-philosophic gentleman may be necessary to the preservation of philosophy in the city.

On the basis of the preceding considerations, it should be clear that Xenophon's defense is an indispensable guide to the appreciation of his recollections of Socrates' interaction with his companions. Without the information supplied by the defense, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to explain why Xenophon deliberately refrains from including in his recollections any Socratic conversation with an extremely ambitious political individual. Xenophon's defense not only explains the importance he attaches to

Socrates' conversations with the ordinary citizens but it also calls our attention to the particular significance of Socrates' individual interlocutors. Each of Socrates' interlocutors may embody or express a dimension of the political or moral problems outlined in the defense; consequently, each of the Socratic conversations may reflect an aspect of Socrates' attempt at a practical resolution of those problems. In this connection, the defense also alerts us to the underlying political implications of Socrates' practical or seemingly mundane discourses. Last but not least, Xenophon's defense leads us to consider each of the Socratic dialogues as a part of Socrates' efforts to reconcile his private, philosophical pursuits with the duties and responsibilities of good citizenship.

Notes

1. A.E. Taylor, Socrates (New York, 1933), p.14.
2. Plato Apology of Socrates 20e and 30c; Xenophon Apology of Socrates To The Jury 14-15.
3. There is a tendency among contemporary writers to question the seriousness of the impiety charge; cf. I.F. Stone, The Trial of Socrates (New York, 1989), p.127; and Robin Waterfield, "Introduction to Socrates' Defense" in Xenophon, Conversations of Socrates (London, 1990) trans. by Hugh Tredennick and Robin Waterfield, pp.33-36. Luis Navia, on the other hand, rightly cautions us "to remember that the Athenians of the fifth century were an exceptionally religious people" (Navia, Socrates [Lanham, 1985], p.120).
4. Xenophon Apology of Socrates to the Jury 11-14.
5. According to the report by Hermogenes, Socrates' daimonion stopped him from thinking out a strategy for his defense, Mem. 4:8:5-6. Xenophon, however, does not offer any account of Socrates' use of his daimonion to help his companions. For such an account, one has to turn to Plato's Theages 128d-129d.
6. A similar attempt to turn the charge into one alleging atheism is employed by Plato's Socrates in the Apology of Socrates (26b-27e).
7. cf. Xenophon Cyropaedia 1:6:1-6.
8. Luis Navia, Socrates, p.124, seems to miss the point when he contends that Socrates' sign did not "differ significantly from other divine signs and means of communication to which the Greeks were perfectly accustomed." A.H. Chroust, Socrates. Man and Myth (Indiana, 1957), p.29, is even more careless in saying that Xenophon "seems to overlook the fact that between the gods and man there exist always certain intermediaries such as signs, dreams and the like."
9. According to Gregory Vlastos, Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher (Ithaca, New York, 1991), p.171 n.72, "The assumption that divine inspiration yields knowledge was of the orthodox view." On Socrates' daimonion, he declares that the divine sign "allows, indeed requires, unlimited scope for the deployment of his critical reason to extract whatever truth it can from those monitions" (p.170). Vlastos, however, does not credit this view of Socrates' daimonion to Xenophon (p.288).
10. Xenophon Anabasis 3:1:4-7, see also Leo Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates (Ithaca,

N.Y., 1972), p.5.

11. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.9.
12. Marchant translates this line to read: "He did not even discuss that topic so favoured by the other talkers, "The Nature of the Universe"." A.H. Chroust, Socrates, Man and Myth, p.53, takes this passage to mean that Socrates refused to discuss matters of cosmogony or cosmology.
13. Leo Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.7, suggests that a Socratic cosmology is implied in this presentation of Socrates' criticisms. See also Christopher Bruell's "Xenophon" in History of Political Philosophy (Chicago, 1987) edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, pp.108-109.
14. In 4:7:2-8, Xenophon relates Socrates' attempt to advance, within strict limits, the study of astronomy and geometry. A.E. Taylor refers to this account as one of several instances in which Xenophon unwittingly damages his defense of Socrates (Taylor, Socrates, pp.14-15).
15. For a more extensive account of the trial, see Xenophon Hellenica 1:7:1-35.
16. In Mem. 4:4:2, Xenophon refers to this aspect of Socrates' conduct as an instance of his justice.
17. As a consequence of this, it may not be an incidental fact that the word "demos" first appears in this part of the Memorabilia and is repeated throughout the passage.
18. The unnamed accuser seems to function as a rhetorical vehicle for Xenophon. This is suggested by Xenophon's dramatic representation of him throughout this part of the defense. When he is first introduced, the unnamed accuser expresses exasperation at Xenophon's preceding account of Socrates. Thus, through the use of the accuser, Xenophon alerts the reader to the need to reconsider Xenophon's own response to the charges against Socrates. As to the identity of the accuser, see Luis Navia, Socrates, pp.108-110 and especially H.G. Dakyns, The Works of Xenophon Vol.3 (London, 1897), pp.xxxviii-xl.
19. On the Socratic thesis, consult W.K.C. Guthrie, History of Greek Philosophy Vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1969), pp.453-459. It should be apparent from the context that Xenophon is not denying the thesis but rather the sophistic use of it to impugn Socrates' teachings. From Xenophon's various reports of Socrates' criticisms of the sophists, it would not be surprising to learn that Socrates became a target of attack by some of them; see especially Mem. 2:6:1-15.

20. Christopher Bruell, "Xenophon" in The History of Political Philosophy, p.107, notes that Xenophon's response fails to address the crucial question of whether Socrates should have supplied Critias and Alcibiades with tools for their ambition in the form of a political education. Although Bruell is right, we try to answer this objection in the discussion of the role of Socrates' political education. Also, it should be pointed out that Xenophon indicates quite clearly that neither Critias nor Alcibiades ever considered Socrates a potential political rival. Rather, the two were always comparing themselves with either "their fellow-disciples" (1:2:16) or the leading politicians (1:2:47). As an example of their rivalry with the leading politicians, Xenophon reports a conversation between a young Alcibiades and his guardian, the statesman Pericles. Alcibiades' cross-examination and refutation of Pericles on the question, "what is law?", shows that he was quite a competent student of Socrates. It should be noted that in his exchange with Pericles, Alcibiades took the view that law should aim at the common good (see 1:2:40-46). For a useful comment on this exchange, see Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, pp.14-15.
21. As a result of this reproach, Critias bore a long-standing grudge against Socrates. According to Xenophon (1:2:31), Critias kept this grudge in mind when he came to power and co-wrote a law to prohibit the teaching of the art of speeches. His intention, it seems, was to use this law to discredit Socrates before the many by imputing to him the practice commonly attributed to philosophers. But Xenophon also says that the law was applied to Socrates after Critias came to hear of a criticism Socrates made of the rule of the Thirty (1:2:31 and 37). In effect, the law was designed to prevent Socrates from further criticising the regime. At any rate, it is rather curious that, given his reputation for violence, Critias would choose to deal with Socrates in this manner rather than to resort to more coercive measures to silence Socrates. In light of this account, it is also worthwhile considering Critias' role in contributing to the popular prejudice against philosophy in general and Socrates in particular.
22. A.E. Taylor cites this reference to Socrates' true associates as another instance in which Xenophon unwittingly damages his defense of Socrates (Taylor, Socrates, p.15), see also note 14. John Burnet, Introduction to Plato's Phaedo (Oxford, 1911), pp.xix-xx, draws on the identification of the Pythagoreans as confirming Plato's testimony to the existence of "a circle of true disciples." But on the basis of his reading of the Memorabilia, Burnet claims that Xenophon did not belong to this circle and that "we can very well believe his sympathy with them [the true disciples] to have been very imperfect." As to the importance that Burnet and Taylor attach to the Pythagoreans, see A.E. Taylor, Varia Socratica (Oxford, 1911), pp.1-39.
23. cf. Mem. 1:1:14 and 3:9:6.

24. I.F. Stone, The Trial of Socrates, p.30, dismisses the significance of the accuser's reference to the verse from Hesiod on the following grounds: "It is simply an expression of the work ethic and has no relevance whatsoever to the issue raised by Polycrates [the accuser]." Although Stone regards Hesiod as the champion of the "struggling peasant farmer" he seems to ignore the point raised by the accuser himself that Socrates made vicious use of the most pernicious passages of the famous poets. In other words, the verse cited by the accuser may not simply be salutary. Immediately following the verse in question, Hesiod writes: "...and if you do work, the lazy man will soon begin to be envious as you grow rich, for with riches go nobility and honour" (Hesiod Works and Days 310). The sequel seems to imply that the poor are lazy and rightly excluded from nobility and honour. This implication would be in keeping with the accuser's intention of citing the verse from Hesiod as one of several examples to show Socrates' alleged hostility to the "common and poor folk."
25. Homer Iliad 2:203-205.
26. S. Kierkegaard, The Concept of Irony (New Jersey, 1989), p.18.
27. A.E. Taylor, Socrates, p.14.

Chapter Three

The Non-Political Citizens: Aristodemus, Crito and Critobulus

I. Introduction

The non-political citizens comprise the majority of Socrates' companions in the Memorabilia. These companions are non-political in the sense that they are not politically-ambitious. Most of them are in fact depicted as being mainly preoccupied with their personal or private affairs. In general, they seem to be decent, law-abiding citizens. But in many cases the Memorabilia shows that they are ignorant of the extent to which their activities may affect the well-being of other citizens. Stated differently, the non-political citizens often do not seem aware of the political context in which they pursue their private activities. In this chapter, we shall examine Socrates' interaction with three significant representatives of the non-political citizens: Aristodemus, Crito and Critobulus.

Among the non-political citizens, Aristodemus is exceptional for his almost reckless disregard for the potentially harmful consequences of his public behavior. The conversation with Aristodemus occurs shortly after Socrates has discovered that Aristodemus openly mocks those who are engaged in religious sacrifices and divination.¹ Aristodemus appears then to be a rather vain and foolish fellow. While he obviously lacks moderation, it is not immediately clear why Socrates is interested in someone like him. Yet Xenophon indicates that Aristodemus is one of Socrates' constant companions.

Moreover, this is the same Aristodemus who is credited with the report of the proceedings recounted in Plato's Symposium. This would seem to suggest that Aristodemus was regarded as a fairly reliable witness and transmitter of Socrates' speeches and teaching. Plato also describes him as an ardent lover and fanatical follower of Socrates.² Hence, in spite of his apparent foolishness, Aristodemus seems to have been a significant member of the Socratic circle. In the Memorabilia, however, Aristodemus is not depicted as an ardent lover or fanatical follower of Socrates. It is most likely that the conversation Xenophon reports took place before Aristodemus' conversion. But as the Memorabilia provides the only extended account of Aristodemus, it may shed some light both on Socrates' interest in cultivating the friendship of Aristodemus and on the latter's subsequent attachment to Socrates.

Although Socrates' relationship with Aristodemus is somewhat ambiguous, his relation to Crito and Critobulus seems more clearly defined. Both father and son are long-standing associates of Socrates. All three of them, moreover, come from the same deme or township. Crito and Critobulus also appear in some of Plato's dialogues, one of which is in fact named after Crito. From Plato, we learn that Crito was the only companion present when Socrates gave parting instructions to his family and was also charged with the responsibility of attending to Socrates' final request.³ Crito was apparently entrusted with the care of Socrates' family affairs. Critobulus enjoys a certain pride of place in Xenophon's Socratic works: he appears in three of the four Socratic works. In addition to his significant appearances in the Memorabilia, Critobulus is also featured prominently in the Symposium and the Oeconomicus. The Oeconomicus in

particular is ostensibly devoted to Socrates' attempt to teach Critobulus the art of household management.

It so happens that Socrates' conversations with both Crito and Critobulus concern the subject of friendship. In the conversation with Critobulus, Socrates devotes his attention to Critobulus' difficulties in acquiring the friendship of gentlemen. In Crito's case, Socrates goes out of his way to help Crito gain the friendship of a trustworthy business partner. What is most striking in both cases is that Socrates, who is clearly depicted as a friend and a teacher, is acknowledged by neither father nor son as the most desirable sort of friend. Their relationship with Socrates seems to reflect Socrates' utilitarian teaching on friendship. Should this prove to be the case, the examination of Socrates' interaction with Crito and Critobulus could contribute to the understanding of Socrates' attitude to his companions in general.

II. Aristodemus

i) Xenophon's preface

Xenophon's recollection of Socrates' conversation with Aristodemus is preceded by some prefatory remarks. He begins by revealing that there were "some written and spoken criticisms" of Socrates that have led some people to believe that although Socrates was most excellent at exhorting human beings to virtue, he was nevertheless incompetent in leading them to it (1:4:1).⁴ These criticisms allude to the problem, noted in Xenophon's defense, underlying Socrates' consistent disavowal of being a teacher of virtue (see 1:2:3 and 8).

In his response to these criticisms, Xenophon proposes that Socrates be judged according to his ability to make his companions "better" (belitious). Xenophon admits that Socrates did not lead his companions to virtue. But to make a person better or to improve him in some respects is surely more than merely exhorting him to virtue. Xenophon thus indicates that there is a middle ground between virtue and vice, and that Socrates should be judged according to the standard implied in it.

To facilitate this judgment, Xenophon invites us to examine "not only what he asked in refuting those who thought they knew everything, in order to chasten them, but also what he passed his day saying to those who spent time with him" (1:4:1). By calling attention to these specific features of Socrates' discourses, Xenophon suggests that the conversation with Aristodemus combines Socrates' moral exhortations and cross-examinations in a way that is appropriate to Aristodemus' situation and to the public nature of the conversation. Since the conversation discusses the question of the gods, the reference to the public character of Socrates' daily conversations tells us that we should not overlook the various constraints on Socrates' articulation of his views on the gods. Furthermore, Xenophon indicates that Aristodemus should be regarded as a constant companion who had a rather high opinion of himself. But it should be recalled that Socrates did not wish to converse with all those who sought the benefit of his conversation (see 1:2:6). So even though Aristodemus was a constant companion, this qualification alone does not imply that he was a regular or favoured conversational partner. The opening remarks of the conversation indicate that Socrates' interest in conversing with Aristodemus was directly related to the recent discovery of the latter's

imprudent behavior.

ii) Aristodemus' conduct and character

Socrates initiates the conversation with Aristodemus after having observed that Aristodemus not only did not offer sacrifices or make use of divination but even ridiculed those who did.⁵ Aristodemus behaves as though he knows better than those who worship the gods and consult the oracles. He outwardly resembles those who think they know everything. Furthermore, his actions imply that he is rather eager to display his knowledge. But his open contempt of the practices of the believers must have been quite alarming, even though it appears that his behaviour was tolerated to some extent. For this reason, Socrates' intervention at this point may have been timely and intended to prevent Aristodemus from foolishly but seriously endangering himself.

Xenophon introduces this conversation as one which deals specifically with "the divine" (tu daimoniou, 1:4:1), thereby indicating that it bears a relation to the question of Socrates' piety or his teaching on piety. Xenophon thus implies that Socrates made use of Aristodemus' doubts about the gods to discuss this sensitive topic. Aristodemus' behaviour is evidently impious, but the immediate problem has to do with his apparent lack of prudence and moderation. As Aristodemus' behaviour clearly suggests a certain intellectual conceit, it is altogether appropriate for Socrates to begin the conversation by asking Aristodemus whether he admires any human being for "wisdom" (sophia). To his credit, Aristodemus' reply indicates that his conceit is based on his appreciation of the serious arts.

There are a number of exceptional men whom Aristodemus regards as wise: in epic poetry, Homer comes first in his estimation; in dithyramb, it is Melanippides; in tragedy, Sophocles; in sculpture, Polycleitus; and in painting, Zeuxis. Aristodemus is clearly a lover of the arts, and each of his heroes excels in a particular art. This suggests that he does not believe in the simply wise man or that wisdom consists in knowledge of the whole. His list, moreover, indicates that he is particularly attracted to the production of beautiful (or noble) works of art, and that he takes pride in his judgment of their excellence.

It is perhaps significant that Homer is mentioned first in his list. Homer is one of the principal sources for the conventional beliefs about the gods. Aristodemus' impious behaviour implies that he doubts the veracity of the Homeric accounts of the gods. That is to say, either the gods do not exist or they do not exist in the way that are depicted in Homer's epics. Even if they do exist, Aristodemus apparently believes that they neither demand sacrifices nor respond to supplicants.

Aristodemus' implicit rejection of providential gods is perhaps related to his admiration of Sophocles, the tragic poet who is mentioned in the center of his list. Aristodemus may be predisposed to a tragic point of view. This would help to explain the absence of any comic poet from his list of wise human beings. Along with his pride in his own judgment, Aristodemus' impiety would seem to suggest a view of the world in which man is abandoned to struggle on his own against the forces around him. In this regard, it is worthwhile noting that Aristodemus is also nicknamed "the Small" or "the Dwarf" (ton mikron, 1:4:2).⁶ Physically, he is not well-endowed by nature. Aristodemus

may have regarded his physical deformity as evidence of the indifference of nature. His deformity may have contributed to the belief that what is by nature is imperfect, and consequently human ingenuity is required to correct or to offset the defects of nature. If so, his admiration for the poets and artists may well reflect a desire to transcend the limitations of nature.

Aristodemus' tragic point of view would also seem to preclude the possibility of good and permanent laws rooted in some conception of nature or the divine. This might explain why he does not consider any legislator or philosopher as among the wise. We are thus led to suspect that even though Aristodemus is a companion of Socrates, he is not as yet fully persuaded or fully aware of Socrates' type of wisdom. Or to put it another way, Socrates' reputation for helpfulness or his practical wisdom is somehow not sufficient to impress someone like Aristodemus, whose tragic disposition inclines him to seek consolation in works of beauty or nobility. On the other hand, Aristodemus' view of the world would lead him to admire Socrates' seemingly proud indifference to the cares and anxieties that afflict the lives of ordinary people. This would mean that Aristodemus does see the possible connection between Socrates' nobility and Socrates' practical wisdom.

iii) Socrates' response to Aristodemus

In view of Aristodemus' attraction to the arts, Socrates asks him whether "the makers of animals with sense and activity" are not more worthy of admiration than "the makers of senseless and motionless images" (1:4:4). The question is obviously rhetorical

and Aristodemus seems to realise that his concurrence could commit him to the view that there are non-human makers of animals. Thus, even though he is compelled to answer in the affirmative, Aristodemus immediately adds the qualification that the animals must have come into being not by chance but by design.

Aristodemus' reply in effect challenges Socrates to prove that there are purposeful, non-human makers of animals. To meet this challenge, Socrates first gains Aristodemus' assent to the view that "things which are manifestly beneficial" are the works of design (1:4:4). Socrates then proceeds to show that certain parts of the human and the animal body are manifestly useful in relation to their function and arrangement. Socrates' entire procedure, however, is open to doubt. For, at the very outset of his demonstration, Socrates clearly begs the question by assuming the existence of "the one who from the beginning made human beings" (1:4:5). Also, the argument that the body is arranged in an orderly fashion is not sufficient to prove the existence of an intelligent creator. In spite of these problems, Aristodemus finds that he is unable to contest the conclusion that the construction of the body reflects the forethought of an intelligent creator: "...by Zeus...when one examines them in this way at least these things very much resemble the contrivance of some wise craftsman who loves animals" (1:4:7).

While Aristodemus is not fully convinced, his response shows that he is struck by the novelty of Socrates' arguments. Since Aristodemus has given some thought to the question of creation, his recognition of the novelty of Socrates' arguments indicates that they are not based on the conventional accounts of creation. With regard to the creation of animals, Aristodemus has apparently not considered the body in terms of both its form

and its function. Aristodemus may have been inhibited from taking such a point of view because of his own physical deformity. At any rate, Socrates' perspective on the body has now exposed Aristodemus to the consideration of the relation between the useful and the beautiful. In addition, Socrates' subsequent account of the natural desire for procreation and self-preservation (1:4:7) has also led Aristodemus to associate the creation of animals with an intelligible and permanent, or self-perpetuating, natural order.

Aristodemus' cautious response, however, implies that he is still somewhat skeptical. Yet despite his reservations, Aristodemus has not raised any objection to Socrates' questionable procedure. Perhaps it is with a view to discovering Aristodemus' underlying skepticism that Socrates asks him if he thinks he has any prudence.

Aristodemus, in reply, does not answer Socrates directly: "If you ask a question, at any rate, I will answer" (1:4:8). The tone of the reply is somewhat assertive, if not defiant. Aristodemus seems more than willing to display his prudence to Socrates. But to Aristodemus' disappointment, Socrates instead rebukes him for his intellectual conceit. Although Socrates' rebuke is not entirely serious, it accuses Aristodemus of not seeing that his mind constitutes only a small part of what seems like a cosmic mind that arranges "those surpassingly large and infinitely numerous things" of the world in an orderly fashion (1:4:8). Astonished but unrattled, Aristodemus rejoins: "By Zeus, I do not see the masters as I see the craftsmen of what comes to be here" (1:4:9).

Socrates' rebuke has succeeded in provoking Aristodemus to betray the source of his skepticism. Aristodemus' skepticism turns out to be based on a vulgar empiricism. Such a point of view is ultimately untenable and reflects the shallowness of Aristodemus'

thinking. Not surprisingly, Socrates is able to dispose of Aristodemus' objection with ease. Since Aristodemus does not see his soul which is master of his body, then, by the logic of his thinking, it should follow that he does nothing by design but everything by chance. By exposing Aristodemus' ignorance, this simple argument seems to have a profound effect on Aristodemus. Evidently chastened by it, Aristodemus finally concedes in a subdued tone of voice: "I, for my part, Socrates, do not look down upon the divine, but I believe that it is too magnificent as to need my service in addition" (1:4:10).

Aristodemus' capitulation seems all the more remarkable for its self-deprecation. Aristodemus is no doubt willing to concede the existence of the divine, but he seems unable to relinquish the belief that it is indifferent to the fate of human beings. Indeed, he may be even more convinced of this belief now. Thus far, Socrates has only spoken of the creation of animals and of their survival in an endless cycle of reproduction. Perhaps it is this sense of the futility of mere existence that accounts in part for Aristodemus' despondency. In any case, the conversation seems to reach a turning point. For in reply to Socrates' attempt to console him, Aristodemus says: "Know well that if I believed that the gods worried at all about human beings, I would not neglect them" (1:4:10).

Aristodemus seems to be prepared to re-consider his beliefs about the gods. Socrates, for his part, is now confronted with the task of assuring Aristodemus that the gods care for the fate of human beings.

iv) Divine providence and piety

In his appeal to Socrates, Aristodemus refers to the gods (theous, 1:4:11) instead of the divine (to daimonion, 1:4:10). Aristodemus may be unconsciously confusing these terms. But the apparent discrepancy in Aristodemus' use of these terms can be traced to ambiguities in Socrates' arguments. In his defense of divine creation, Socrates began by referring to the "makers of animals" (1:4:4). A little later, he invoked the image of the single maker of animals (1:4:5); and finally, he concluded by alluding to the existence of a cosmic-mind (1:4:8). Hence Aristodemus' confusion of terms may be a reflection of these ambiguities in Socrates' arguments.

On the other hand, Aristodemus may be calling for some explanation of how the divine is able, perhaps with the assistance of the gods, to provide for the manifold needs of humanity. In relation to this, it is worthwhile noting that Socrates does not attribute the existence of the fundamental elements of nature to either the single maker of animals or the cosmic-mind. The cosmic-mind is credited with the organisation of the elements of nature. Yet such things as earthquakes and floods would seem to suggest that nature occasionally disrupts the order imposed by the cosmic-mind. Similarly, the compound of the individual animal is vulnerable to destruction by such things as diseases. These phenomena could not be said to be manifestly useful or beneficial to human beings. As Socrates' account of creation does not adequately address the human need for security, comfort, and happiness, Aristodemus' demand for an account of how the gods care for human beings is not unreasonable.

Socrates addresses Aristodemus' concern with a speech that emphasizes the

advantages human beings have over the other animals. In addition to their physical prowess, Socrates says, human beings are endowed with the power of speech, and there is no prescribed season for them to indulge in the sexual pleasures. Best of all, "the god" has implanted in human beings "the greatest and most excellent soul" (1:4:13). And so human beings are the only animals who are able to perceive "the gods who put in order the greatest and noblest (or most beautiful) things" (1:4:13). In comparison with the other animals, human beings live like gods unrivalled in both body and soul.

At first glance, Socrates' arguments seem to move in the direction initially demanded by Aristodemus. Along the way, however, they raise a new set of considerations. Compared to the other animals, human beings may be privileged in the ways suggested by Socrates. But the well-being of human beings is clearly contingent on what they make of their natural advantages. Yet it is by virtue of their advantages that humans can do the most harm to one another. And even if they do put their advantages to good use, Socrates says that humans are only less likely to suffer harm, and correspondingly more able to eke out a relatively happier existence for themselves. The good things in life do not come easily to human beings. They have to labour with their bodies and toil after knowledge in order to reap the benefits latent in their natural advantages.

Furthermore, Socrates' account of the soul points to the pleasure that comes from contemplating the beauty of the cosmos. But this seems to be in tension with the account of the body which emphasizes the perennial human interest in the sexual pleasures. With respect to both accounts, Socrates raises but does not resolve the fundamental question of

the individual's happiness. As a whole, Socrates' speech seems to be radically incomplete. And so Aristodemus is not without justification in expressing dissatisfaction with it. When Socrates concludes his speech by asking Aristodemus what the gods will have to do to make him believe that they worry about him, the latter replies, "When they send--as you say that they send to you--counsellors regarding what should or should not be done" (1:4:15).

Aristodemus' dissatisfaction is quite telling. First, it shows that he is much more concerned with his own well-being than that of human beings in general. Second, by raising the question of divination, Aristodemus is in effect placing a new demand on Socrates. This means that Aristodemus' initial promise not to neglect the gods if Socrates could show him that they cared for human beings collectively was either premature or not entirely serious. In view of these two considerations, Socrates' speech seems in retrospect to have been designed to reveal the underlying self-regarding element in Aristodemus' concern about the providence of the gods and to lead him towards the question of divination. To put it another way, the incomplete nature of Socrates' speech was intended to show that an account of the general providence of the gods is not sufficient to inspire piety in human beings. Piety, at least in Aristodemus' case, seems to require the belief that the gods care for the fate of the individual human being. Hence, the importance or even the necessity of divination as it is this which presupposes that the gods are willing and able to intercede on behalf of the individual.

v) On divination

Since Aristodemus does not believe in divination, his reference to Socrates' daimonion implies that he is not persuaded of the existence of the daimonion even though he is familiar with the claims that Socrates makes on its behalf. This means that Aristodemus has hitherto always treated Socrates' apparently prophetic utterances as mere expressions of Socrates' wisdom. In spite of this tacit acknowledgement of Socrates' human wisdom, Aristodemus has apparently not accorded Socrates the same importance that he accords to the poets and artists. As Socrates often offered his advice in a practical context, Aristodemus may have regarded Socrates' wisdom as admirable only in terms of its usefulness. In keeping with his attraction to the fine arts, Aristodemus would not naturally regard Socrates' practical wisdom as worthy of the highest admiration. But now that he is exposed to Socrates' perspective on the relation between the useful and the beautiful, Aristodemus may be inclined to revise his opinion of the character of Socrates' wisdom, and to review its connection to Socrates' noble way of life. But then Aristodemus may begin to sense that Socrates' self-sufficient way of life has more to do with his wisdom rather than his piety. In that case he would be less inclined to revise his opinion about the gods. Hence, Aristodemus' present interest in Socrates' daimonion may undermine Socrates' efforts to cure Aristodemus of his impiety which seems to be rooted in his dogmatic rejection of the belief in divination.

In his response to Aristodemus' question on divination, Socrates embarks on a monologue which brings the conversation to an end. Socrates' closing speech can be divided into three parts. The first part of the speech consists of a series of rhetorical

questions aimed at justifying the belief in divination. This is followed by a brief, analogical account of the omniscience of the god, or "the divine" (to theion). In the third and final part, Socrates advises Aristodemus to serve the gods in order to find out if they would counsel him on matters hidden from human beings.

In the first part of the speech, Socrates implicitly asserts the view that the gods reply to the Athenians who inquire of them by divination. But then Socrates goes further to declare that the gods also send omens to the rest of the Greeks as well as all human beings (1:4:15). As Socrates' gods do not seem to distinguish between Greeks and non-Greeks, they are not necessarily the gods acknowledged by the city. Even so, Socrates characterises these gods in a way that appeals to the conventional belief in the power of gods "to do good and bad" (1:4:16). In keeping with this belief, Socrates further implies that fear is one of the major, underlying reasons why "the most ancient and wisest" human institutions and the most sensible human beings adopt a prudent attitude towards the gods (1:4:16).

The element of prudence is further underlined in the second, related part of the speech. Here Socrates tells Aristodemus that just as his "mind" (nous) manages his body as it wishes, so does "the prudence in all things" (ten en tw(i) panti phronēsin, 1:4:17) arrange everything as is pleasing to itself. Also, "the eye of god" is able to see everything at the same time.⁷ As a whole, this part of the speech projects an awe-inspiring image of an intelligent and personal god. This magnificent image at once recalls and appeals to Aristodemus' love of beautiful and noble creations. But along with the previous notion of the power of the gods to help and to harm, this image of the god may also have been

shaped to inculcate an element of sobering fear in Aristodemus, and correspondingly to induce a degree of prudence in his attitude towards divine things.

Throughout his defense of divination, Socrates omits any mention of his daimonion. This omission may have been calculated to encourage Aristodemus to cultivate his prudence. On the assumption that Socrates' daimonion liberates him from any anxiety over the future, this omission implies that Aristodemus' anxiety for his future well-being is not fully assuaged. Aristodemus' anxiety would intensify his interest in divination. It is relevant to recall that Socrates' view of divination is such that it does not spare human beings the effort of exercising their independent judgment if they wish to make sense of the warnings of the gods (see 1:1:4). On this view, the appreciation of the scope and limits of divination requires the cultivation of prudence. Unless Aristodemus first takes the trouble to cultivate his prudence, his interest in divination or Socrates' daimonion will be superficial and self-defeating.

Socrates' defense of divination hints at the various considerations Aristodemus ought to reflect upon in order to assure his own well-being. Apart from the cultivation of prudence, Socrates' defense shows Aristodemus that his well-being as an individual is related to the fate of human beings in general. Aristodemus ought therefore to re-examine his understanding of the human things. But such an understanding presupposes some distinction between human and non-human things. With regard to the latter, one cannot avoid considering the further distinction between things natural and divine. This distinction, however, is obscured perhaps intentionally in Socrates' defense of divination.

On the basis of Socrates' defense of divination, it is difficult to distinguish

supernatural signs from natural ones. Nature itself is imposing and awe-inspiring, and some of its manifestations forewarn human beings of impending disasters. Those who respond appropriately to these warnings of nature would most likely be benefitted. Conversely, those who ignore them would most likely suffer harm. The resemblance between the gods and nature is further indicated in the view that the gods only send signs to warn human beings but are somehow unable or unwilling to reverse or to alter the inexorable course of natural events. All in all, Aristodemus would have to be a student of nature as well in order to fully appreciate the relation between things human and divine.

Socrates brings the conversation to an end by advising Aristodemus to serve the gods in order to find out whether they would counsel him on matters hidden from human beings. Just as one would put strangers to the test in order to find out if they are trustworthy, Socrates' parting advice to Aristodemus is tantamount to a recommendation to put the gods to a test. But in order to put the gods to a test, Aristodemus must first take them seriously and consider more carefully the various accounts of them. By way of an encouragement, Socrates' parting advice appeals to Aristodemus' pride in his own judgment and directs it towards a serious and thoughtful confrontation with the gods. In this way, Socrates helps to retain Aristodemus' healthy regard for human wisdom without jeopardising the attempt to cure Aristodemus of his brazen impiety.

vi) Epilogue and conclusion

The conversation with Aristodemus ends on an ambiguous note. We are not told whether Aristodemus was satisfied with Socrates' defense of divination or whether he

accepted Socrates' parting advice. Xenophon concludes his report of this conversation by offering instead the following observation.

In my opinion, by saying these things he made his constant companions refrain from impious, unjust and shameful things, not only when they were seen by human beings, but even when they were alone, since they believed that nothing they might do would escape the notice of the gods.
(1:4:19)

Xenophon's observation suggests that Socrates did in fact gain a measure of success with Aristodemus.

Xenophon's observation implies that in this case Socrates did not make Aristodemus pious, but only prevented him from behaving impiously. To appreciate, therefore, the limited extent of Socrates' success with Aristodemus, we should restate the two main, related problems presented by Aristodemus. The first and most fundamental one has to do with his implicit rejection of the city's gods. The second but more urgent problem involves his open contempt for the religious practices of the city. Xenophon's closing observation indicates that Socrates dealt more successfully with the latter problem.

Since Aristodemus has conceded that he had been too hasty in dismissing the belief in the providence of the gods, he would no longer be justified in continuing his impious behavior. Also, since he has been made aware that it is in his best interest to re-evaluate his opinions about the gods, he would be more reluctant to assert his former opinions. His awareness of his own ignorance would make him more cautious and prudent both in public and in private. In this way, Socrates would have succeeded in

keeping Aristodemus from "impious, unjust and shameful things". This, moreover, would be in keeping with Xenophon's original contention that even though Socrates could not lead his companions to virtue, he nevertheless made them "better" (1:4:1).

Still, Socrates' limited success with Aristodemus leads us to wonder about the implications of his apparent failure to dispel Aristodemus' doubts about the city's gods. To begin with, Socrates' apparent failure may be a consequence of the provisional character of his defense of divine providence. This, in turn, may be due to the public character of the conversation with Aristodemus. In order to dispel Aristodemus' doubts, Socrates would have to be explicit and systematic in his treatment of divine providence. But it would not be in Socrates' interest to do so since it is evident, even from his provisional account of divine providence, that there are novel, and hence potentially subversive, elements in Socrates' understanding of the gods.

Socrates' use of his novel teaching is also particularly significant. Prior to the introduction of Aristodemus to this teaching, Socrates did not make any effort to examine Aristodemus' opinion about the city's view of the gods. Socrates, it seems, tacitly underlined his agreement with Aristodemus' doubts about the city's gods. On the one hand, this implicit agreement suggests that the city's view of the gods is, in a sense, indefensible. On the other hand, it tells us that it does not require a superior intellect or an exceptional skeptic to discern the deficiencies in the city's view of the gods. In sum, this implicit agreement shows that the city may have no adequate defense against the skeptics except perhaps through the threat or actual use of force to silence dissent. Paradoxically, Socrates' use of his novel teaching implies that an unconventional teaching

may be the only means available to restrain the skeptics and to preserve the sanctity of the city's religious practices.

The conversation with Aristodemus not only serves as an illustration of how Socrates prevented a skeptic from questioning the belief in the city's gods, it also shows how Socrates transformed an imprudent companion into an ardent disciple. The anxiety and sense of ignorance aroused by his encounter with Socrates would no doubt induce Aristodemus to seek further clarification from Socrates. Furthermore, in conjunction with the provisional character of his defense of divine providence, Socrates' parting advice seems to leave open the possibility for future discussions with Aristodemus. This perhaps explains why the conversation ends on such an ambiguous note. But what would Socrates gain from this association with Aristodemus? What possible interest could Socrates have in someone like Aristodemus?

In both his prefatory and closing observations, Xenophon indicates that Aristodemus was one of Socrates' constant companions. Furthermore, Aristodemus' reference to Socrates' daimonion indicates that although he has been intrigued by it, he has nevertheless been skeptical of the claims Socrates made on its behalf. Along with this skepticism, Aristodemus' outrageous public behavior would surely be a serious source of concern to Socrates. For Aristodemus' public impiety could be falsely attributed to the time he spent with Socrates. For this reason, Socrates would have a prudential interest in moderating Aristodemus' behavior.

If Socrates had wished merely to restrain Aristodemus' public behavior, he would not presumably have managed their conversation in such an open-ended fashion as to

invite Aristodemus' future participation in conversation. Socrates' interest in Aristodemus seems to go beyond a narrow regard for his own preservation. From his various responses to Socrates, it is safe to assume that Aristodemus is not desirable as a philosophical companion. Aristodemus, however, is an admirer of human wisdom. He is, therefore, a potential ally of philosophy. His inclination towards the tragic point of view, moreover, puts him in a serious frame of mind. Along with these qualities, his love of the beautiful and the noble would make him an ideal vehicle for the transmission of a serious and salutary vision of the philosophical way of life.

III. Crito

i) The significance of Crito

Earlier, in his formal defense of Socrates, Xenophon identified Crito as a prominent member of Socrates' circle of true associates (1:2:48).⁸ According to Xenophon, Socrates' true associates were mainly private citizens who consorted with Socrates in order that they might become gentlemen and be able to manage their private and public affairs in a noble manner. Xenophon further asserted that none of Socrates' true associates ever committed an evil or incurred any blame either in his youth or old age. On the basis of this characterisation of the true associates, we would expect Crito to be a decent, citizen-gentleman with an unblemished reputation.

From Plato's Crito, we learn that during the period of Socrates' confinement prior to the execution it was Crito who undertook the responsibility of persuading Socrates to escape and to flee the city.⁹ Socrates' conviction no doubt presented his friends with a

genuine dilemma. Crito in particular was apparently resolved to break the law in order to save the life of Socrates. His devotion to Socrates seems to have been more important than his obligation to uphold the city's laws.¹⁰

Like Plato's Crito, Xenophon's account of Crito in the Memorabilia deals with a potential conflict between Crito and the city. As Crito is being falsely accused by the sycophants, he is in danger of being unjustly punished by the city. Crito's situation thus alludes to the trial of Socrates. The similarities between Plato and Xenophon's use of Crito as a figure in their dialogues suggests that Crito is somehow an appropriate Socratic companion to invoke in exploring the question of the potential conflicts between the ordinary citizens and the laws.

As a well-to-do farmer in particular, Crito appears to be a typical representative of the older, conservative democratic faction in Athens. But, as Xenophon's account shows, Crito's wealth renders him vulnerable to the harassment of the city's sycophants. As a consequence of this, Crito may become disenchanted with the democracy. Accordingly, his predicament seems to dramatize the potentially divisive conflict between the rich and the poor.

ii) Crito's dilemma

The conversation opens with Crito lamenting to Socrates that life in Athens is difficult for a man who wishes "to mind his own business" (ta heautou pratein, 2:9:1).¹¹ Through no apparent fault of his own, Crito is now faced with an impending court action brought about by the sycophants. The sycophants are professional accusers who operate

by pressing or threatening to press charges against wealthy citizens who are then compelled to pay them off in order to avoid the inconvenience and uncertainties of a lawsuit. Not surprisingly, Crito indicates that he is quite prepared to pay off his accusers to avoid the trouble of going to court. But it is rather curious that Crito is neither angry nor indignant at being falsely accused. Perhaps he is all too aware that the sycophants have become an unpleasant fact of life in the city. At any rate, his sense of resignation reveals his inability to confront the threat posed by the sycophants. Yet by giving in to their demands, Crito would invariably open himself to further harassment in the future.

In response to Crito's plight, Socrates advises Crito to find someone who would act like a guard dog to ward off his enemies. Since Crito maintains dogs to protect his sheep, he readily appreciates the value of such a human guardian. He is, however, afraid that the prospective human guardian would degenerate into a wolf and turn on him as well. Crito's reservation may be rooted in his experiences as a household manager. In particular, it may reflect the difficulties he has had managing his servants and slaves. Unlike dogs, human beings are especially resistant to being ruled by other human beings. One of the ways in which a good household master attempts to exercise control over his subordinates is to reward the good helpers and to punish the bad ones.¹² But Crito's dispirited response to the sycophants is an indication of his aversion to the unpleasant but often necessary task of punishing offenders. Although Crito may be exceedingly diligent in attending to his own affairs, his aversion to certain practices would render him somewhat ineffective as a household manager. Thus, his apparent reservation about the trustworthiness of the prospective human guardian may in fact be an unconscious

expression of his ineptitude in managing human beings.

Paradoxically, both Crito's predicament with the sycophants and his reservation about the prospective human guardian seem to be related to his own implicit view that it is good to mind one's own business. Like Crito, the sycophants are no less earnest in trying to mind their own business. It just happens that their business involves interfering with Crito's. Both Crito and the sycophants desire wealth and are in effect in competition for it. The love of personal gain and the competition it engenders often inspires mutual suspicion and mistrust. And since Crito is dedicated to the pursuit of his own good, he would naturally assume that others are similarly motivated.

iii) Guardians and sycophants

Crito is evidently afraid that the prospective human guardian would turn out to be as harmful and as difficult to deal with as the sycophants. To allay Crito's fears, Socrates first assures him that it is "much more pleasant" (pollo(i) hedion) to profit by gratifying someone like Crito than by quarrelling with him. Then Socrates proceeds to raise Crito's hopes by declaring that he knows "of this sort of man here who would very much love the honour (panu philotimētheien) of dealing with" Crito as a friend. Through his characterisation of Crito's prospective guardian, Socrates shows that he does not object to the love of profit. Indeed, he implies that there are more pleasant and honourable ways of gaining from the rich. This seems to suggest that Socrates is not primarily concerned with whether the actions of the sycophants are unjust.

The practice of the sycophants is tolerated by the democracy in the belief that it

contributes to the preservation of the regime. By spying and informing on the activities of the rich, the sycophants performed a kind of policing role.¹³ The lawsuits brought about by them would also benefit the poorer citizens who are paid a stipend for sitting in the jury. The city also stands to gain materially from the distribution of the fines imposed on either the defendants or their accusers depending on the nature and outcome of the trials. But by condoning and perhaps even encouraging the practice of sycophancy, the city may unwittingly undermine the citizens' attachment to the laws. For the practice could lead to the perception that the laws are merely instruments to be exploited for the sake of profit. Moreover, by targeting the rich, the sycophants could in the long run alienate the rich from the regime.¹⁴

Socrates' implicit criticism of the sycophants is by extension a criticism of the democracy's apparently misguided efforts to manage and to utilise the resources of its wealthier citizens. Still, Socrates appears to be sympathetic to the city's underlying concern for the nature and consequences of the uneven distribution of wealth. Some of the rich tend to be derelict in their duties to the city. Crito, who much prefers to mind his own business, is at best perfunctory in the discharge of his public duties. Yet, in spite of the imperfection and corruption of the city, Crito is still ensured a measure of security to go about managing his business with relative success. As a wealthy farmer in particular, Crito is no doubt reliant on the city for the protection of his estate from invaders. The city thus has a legitimate claim to a greater contribution from its wealthier citizens. Apart from this, the problem posed by the sycophants is symptomatic of the perennial political tension between the rich and the poor. As long as there is a great disparity in the

distribution of wealth, the poor will be tempted to seek some recourse, legal or otherwise, to remedy the inequality.

The above considerations may help to explain why Socrates refrains from calling the practice of the sycophants unjust. The love of gain which implicates both the sycophants and their victims seems to exonerate the former. Socrates, however, implicitly accuses the sycophants of being foolish. For they do not seem to realise that there may be more pleasant ways to gratify their desire for wealth. Also, part of their ignorance seems to be reflected in their apparent willingness to compromise their reputation for the sake of mere profit. In comparing Crito's prospective guardian to the sycophants, Socrates tacitly acknowledges that the former is no less motivated by the love of gain. But the prospective guardian seems to shun the practice of the sycophants not because it is unpleasant but because it is ignoble (see 2:9:4). The attachment to the noble or the desire for good reputation seems to be the primary factor distinguishing the prospective guardian from the sycophants.

In characterising the prospective guardian as someone who seeks a dignified way of pursuing his desire for wealth, Socrates seems to be appealing to Crito's self-image as a respectable money-maker. Because Crito can immediately identify with someone like this, the prospective guardian comes to sight as someone with whom Crito can easily deal. But by calling attention to the conjunction of the pleasant and the honourable, Socrates points to a latent tension or contradiction in the constitution of individuals like Crito and his prospective guardian. Honour after all is often gained through sacrifice, and sacrifice is not pleasant. On the other hand, this tension may be necessary in moderating

what would otherwise be the unlimited and shameless pursuit of wealth.

Excessive wealth implies immoderation, and the corresponding disparity in the distribution of wealth further inspires it. Moderation, on the other hand, seems to require an equitable distribution of wealth. From this perspective, poverty would seem to be a potential source of corruption. By thus pointing to the potentially corrupting circumstances of the impoverished citizens, Socrates indicates that an equitable distribution of wealth may be necessary to the political health of the democracy. With respect to Crito, Socrates' remarks on the prospective guardian indicates that it is to Crito's advantage to take a more serious interest in alleviating the economic situation of the poor but decent-minded citizens. This appeal to Crito's self-interest serves as an example of what can be done to prompt the rich to take a more active interest in addressing the economic inequalities in the city.

iv) Archedemus

Socrates' remarks on the prospective guardian concludes the brief exchange with Crito. Crito must have been sufficiently persuaded by Socrates for Xenophon goes on to say that they subsequently went in search of a man by the name of Archedemus. Socrates' role seems to terminate with the introduction of Archedemus. The rest of the Xenophon's report is devoted to an elaboration of the friendship between Crito and Archedemus. Archedemus is introduced as an excellent speaker and man of affairs, but poor. His poverty is ascribed to his aversion to making money by any means.¹⁵ In this regard, Archedemus is further described as "an honest man" (*philochrēstos*) who knows

how "to take forfeit from the sycophants" (2:9:4). Archedemus is, therefore, precisely the sort of person who would be most able to help Crito resolve his difficulties with the sycophants.

At first glance, it is not immediately clear why someone with Archedemus' abilities and credentials should be poor. His poverty could have been a consequence of the depressed economic conditions of the city.¹⁶ But if it were as easy as he claimed to profit from the sycophants, then why did he not attempt to make a living from prosecuting the sycophants? One explanation for Archedemus' reluctance to profit from the sycophants may be his aversion to making money through morally questionable means. Furthermore, in the particular context of Athenian democratic politics, it may be imprudent to attack the sycophants who are both the ostensible enemies of the rich and the perceived allies of the poor. In other words, Archedemus could have been inhibited from prosecuting the sycophants out of a legitimate concern for his public reputation. By the same token, he could have been equally inhibited from offering his services to the rich.

Archedemus' excellence as a speaker and a man of affairs would surely qualify him as a capable leader of the demos. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that Archedemus played a significant role as one of the leaders of the urban democrats. In his Hellenica, Xenophon mentions a certain Archedemus who was a leader of the demos.¹⁷ This Archedemus was also the first to accuse one of the returning generals in the aftermath of the naval battle of Arginusae (Hellenica, 1:7:2ff.; see also Memorabilia, 1:1:17-18). Archedemus initially accused the general of embezzling public funds. He

later added the charge of misconduct as a general. Shortly after that, the assembly, upon the instigation of others, undertook the illegal measure to try all the generals (save one) collectively. The generals were subsequently convicted for the failure to rescue the shipwrecked sailors, and those of the generals who chose to return after the battle were summarily executed.

In striking contrast to the illegal action of the assembly, Archedemus' prosecution of the single general was not only legal but, under the circumstances, both appropriate and moderate. Erasinides, the general accused by Archedemus, was in fact responsible for the proposal that would have entailed the complete abandonment of the shipwrecked sailors (Hellenica, 1:7:29). Furthermore, by first raising the charge of embezzlement, Archedemus apparently intended to play down the seriousness of the second charge of military misconduct. For, in truth, the generals did initiate some effort to save the shipwrecked sailors. Archedemus' action indicates that he attempted to temper the moral indignation of the demos while placating its demand for justice. Archedemus presumably would not have acted in this way if his reputation among the people were not fairly secure. More to the point, if this Archedemus is the same individual Socrates introduced to Crito, then the political significance of the friendship between Crito and Archedemus is further enhanced. For their friendship may well represent the sort of relationship necessary to the reconciliation of the rich and poor democrats.

If Archedemus was or aspired to be a prominent member of the poor, urban democrats, it would be especially difficult, if not inexpedient, for him to offer his services to the wealthy victims of the sycophants. For this reason, Socrates' role as an

intermediary would be of crucial importance to the prospective friendship between Crito and Archedemus. But to be an effective or trustworthy intermediary, Socrates must share something in common with Crito and Archedemus respectively. As a well-to-do farmer, Crito would have had a deep appreciation for Socrates' practical wisdom. But in addition to this, he would have found Socrates' apparent indifference to wealth a reassuring factor in their long-standing relationship. Likewise, Socrates' obvious poverty and self-sufficiency would appeal to the poor democrats who are fiercely proud of their freedom. Through their acceptance of Socrates as the intermediary, both Crito and Archedemus would help to endorse Socrates' public image as a good and honourable citizen.

v) Crito and his dog

Following their introduction, Crito spared no effort in securing the friendship of Archedemus. Crito not only offered portions of the produce from his farm to Archedemus, he also invited him to share in his sacrifices to the gods. These acts of generosity and piety earned Crito the trust and gratitude of Archedemus. In return, Archedemus made inquiries into the affairs of one of Crito's accusers and, upon discovering that the culprit was guilty of many crimes and had many enemies, initiated legal proceedings against him. The culprit was given a taste of his own medicine, so to speak. But this shows that Archedemus was acting very much like Crito's personal sycophant. And, in keeping with the practice of the sycophants, Archedemus did not desist in his harassment of the culprit until the latter agreed to withdraw his action against Crito and to pay compensation.

Archedemus was so effective in this and several other enterprises of this sort that Crito's friends begged him to extend Archedemus' services to them. Archedemus, for his part, was glad to gratify Crito and he was, no doubt, appropriately rewarded by Crito's friends. As a result of Archedemus' activities, Xenophon says, not only was Crito at peace, but his friends were as well. Needless to say, this peace was made possible only by Archedemus' successful warfare on the enemies of Crito and his friends. Archedemus thus vindicated Socrates' confidence that he could find a suitable guardian for Crito. According to Xenophon, Archedemus became one of Crito's friends and was honoured by "the other friends of Crito" (2:9:8). Since Socrates did not benefit from Archedemus' activities, there is no reason to include Socrates as one of those who honoured Archedemus. Xenophon, therefore, leaves open to question whether Socrates truly regarded himself as one of Crito's friends.

Although Archedemus was regarded by Crito as a friend and, by implication, an equal, Xenophon nonetheless compares Crito to a shepherd and Archedemus to a "good dog" (2:9:8). Crito is implicitly accorded a higher status. Crito's superiority can perhaps be traced to his preference for minding his own business. Crito's benign disposition is not only more conducive to peace, but his authority over Archedemus may also serve to restrain the latter's more spirited or aggressive inclinations. Moreover, like an effective ruler, Crito has managed to improve his reputation as a benefactor to his friends, while delegating the unpleasant but necessary task of dealing with his enemies to Archedemus.¹⁸

As a consequence of his activities, Archedemus had to confront the hostility of

Crito's enemies. In response to the criticism that he was Crito's sycophant, Archedemus defended himself by saying the following:

Which, then, is shameful - to receive benefactions from honest human beings (chréstôn anthrôpôn) and to bestow them in return and thus to befriend this sort, while being at variance with the wicked; or rather to make enemies of the gentlemen (kalous kagathous) by trying to do them injustice, while working together with the wicked and to deal with them instead of gentlemen? (2:9:8)

Without denying the utilitarian and materialistic aspect of his dealings with Crito, Archedemus attempted to legitimise his friendship with Crito on the basis of its respectability. To that end, he equated the honest or fair-minded man with the gentleman. Through this equation, Archedemus evidently intended to express a democratic as opposed to an aristocratic conception of the noble and the good. In a sense, Archedemus was appealing to what we today might recognise as a "bourgeois" code of conduct.¹⁹

But just as the institution of sycophancy is, in a sense, unjust or ignoble, so too is the partnership between Crito and Archedemus. Although Crito's enemies were guilty of violations of the law, Archedemus made use of this information to extract ransom from them. Perhaps it did not occur to either Crito or Archedemus that this ransom was most likely paid from the illicit profits made from the other victims of the sycophants. At any rate, by settling these matters out of court, Archedemus - with Crito's tacit approval no doubt - permitted certain injustices to escape the notice of the city. Both Archedemus and Crito implicitly treated the law as an instrument of their personal advantage. They did not regard the law as the embodiment of the highest aspiration of the city. The entire affair, therefore, betrays the limited extent of Crito and Archedemus' attachment to the

city.

vi) Conclusion

Xenophon's account of Crito takes up eight numbered paragraphs or sections of which only the first three are occupied by the conversation with Socrates. Socrates' relatively minor role was, however, crucial to the development of the friendship between Crito and Archdemus. Even though Socrates did not take an active interest in how Crito procured the services of Archdemus, he was apparently confident that Crito would somehow gain the cooperation of Archdemus. Just as Archdemus eventually fulfilled Crito's wishes, Crito in his own way fulfilled Socrates' expectation. Crito's independent accomplishments seem to resemble what Socrates in another context conceived as the function of those who rule in an aristocracy. According to Socrates, aristocracy is a regime comprising "those who perfect (or complete) the lawful things" (tōn ta nomima epitelountōn, 4:6:12). In Crito's context, it could be said that Socrates' personal and practical advice took the place of the law. In line with this substitution, Crito's actions were aimed at the necessary rather than the lawful things. In this sense, Xenophon's account of Socrates' relationship with Crito and the latter's subsequent relationship with Archdemus resembles the hierarchical arrangement of a well-ordered city.

This resemblance implies that in actuality things are invariably less than perfect. From an aristocratic perspective, a democracy is necessarily a defective regime. Yet this perspective may be needed both to clarify and to resolve fundamental problems in actual democracies. Indeed, the use of this perspective is discernible in the development of

Xenophon's account of Socrates' interaction with Crito. The account begins by tracing Crito's predicament to various questionable practices of the Athenian democracy, and the resolution of Crito's predicament concludes with an emphasis on the democratic conception of the noble and the good. As a whole, the account of Socrates' interaction with Crito furnishes an illustration of how the Athenian democracy could be improved by adapting certain views of the aristocracy.

Wealth constitutes a part of the necessary equipment for an aristocratic or dignified way of life. For this reason, it would be a primary concern of the city to improve the economic well-being of its citizens. From Socrates we learn that Crito's predicament is due to the legitimate but misguided efforts of the city to redress the vast inequalities in the distribution of wealth. The practice of the sycophants accords with the custom of the democracy to burden the wealthy with considerable financial obligations. These practices are potentially destructive because they aggravate the tension between the rich and the poor. Against the background of these questionable practices, Socrates' advice to Crito points to a strategy of cooperating with some of the decent members of the poor to check the abuses of the democracy. In this regard, the partnership between Archdemus and Crito serves as a model for such cooperation.

Archdemus' role in itself is analogous to the role of the citizen-warrior. The war-like methods Archdemus employs against Crito's enemies allude to some of the aggressive policies of the Athenian democracy. Apart from the ambition to rule, these policies are also pursued for the sake of wealth. Through his criticisms of the sycophants, Socrates indicates that there are more pleasant and honourable ways for the city to enrich

itself and to improve its reputation. Crito's relationship with Archdemus points in effect to the possibility of using commerce as a way of reforming the economic and political policies of the Athenian democracy. In keeping with this attempt to moderate the city, the subordination of Archdemus to Crito is analogous to the subordination of war to peaceful, commercial trade.

As a significant representative of the poor, urban democrats, Archdemus' endorsement of Crito's way of life further underlines the feasibility of Socrates' strategy of reforming the Athenian democracy. Crito's preference for a dignified and peaceful way of pursuing his private affairs serves as a practical example of the democratic adaptation of the noble and the good. Although Crito's preference for a noble, private life calls into question his devotion to the city, his desire for a good reputation compels him to be somewhat responsive to the needs and interests of the political community. In the context of the economic reforms proposed by Socrates, the desire for a good reputation founded on honesty and fair-dealing may be the most effective means of moderating the competition for wealth.

Socrates' indifference to wealth seems to set him apart from the ordinary concerns of the non-philosophic citizens. But his interest in Crito indicates that he also seeks to gain from gratifying Crito. Just as Archdemus' defense helps to legitimise Crito's way of life, Crito's willingness to defend Socrates would help to provide Socrates' philosophical way of life with a respectable cover. Apart from this consideration, Socrates' role in fostering the friendship between Crito and Archdemus indicates that his interest goes beyond a narrow concern for his own preservation. Socrates' role as a

trustworthy intermediary is predicated on his ability to accommodate the dominant prejudices of the rich and the poor. Socrates' action not only presupposes a clear understanding of the political community, but it also reveals that Socratic political philosophy offers practical insights into how a democracy may be reasonably improved.

IV. Critobulus

i) Critobulus' usefulness

Critobulus, the son of Crito, enjoys a certain pride of place in Xenophon's Socratic writings. In addition to his noteworthy appearances in the Memorabilia, Critobulus is prominently featured in the Oeconomicus and the Symposium. Yet in all these works Critobulus is consistently depicted as an incorrigibly lazy and fun-loving young man who would rather indulge his passion for love-affairs than invest his time cultivating the virtues of the serious gentleman. Critobulus was evidently disinclined to take either politics or philosophy seriously. Thus we cannot help but wonder why he plays such a large role in Xenophon's Socratic writings. While Xenophon does not state the reasons for his interest in Critobulus, his account of the latter in the Memorabilia offers some helpful hints about the useful role Critobulus plays as one of Socrates' companions.

Critobulus appears twice in the Memorabilia. In his first appearance, he is the silent object of a playful exchange between Socrates and Xenophon.²⁰ In this exchange, Xenophon defends Critobulus against Socrates' criticism of the latter's amorous predilections. In his mock rebuke of both Xenophon and Critobulus, Socrates assumes the demeanor of the austere and serious-minded gentleman (compare 1:3:11-13 with

Sym. 4:23, and Cyr. 5:1:2-16). Through his defense of Critobulus, however, Xenophon seems to call into question the serious gentleman's attitude towards erotic love.

Moreover, Xenophon's defense seems to imply that Critobulus' frivolousness and vulgar eroticism may serve as a kind of antidote to this narrow and inflexible attitude (see, for example, Cyr. 2:2:11-14; and consider also the case of Hermogenes, the lover of gentlemanliness, in the Sym., especially Socrates' implicit criticism of him at 6:1-4).

Also, Xenophon makes it clear that Socrates' criticism of Critobulus should not be taken too seriously. In the context of his exchange with Socrates, Xenophon clearly indicates that Socrates often treated the question of erotic love with an element of playfulness (1:3:7-9, see also 4:1:1-2; and Sym. 4:23-28). More importantly, Xenophon frequently notes that Socrates often characterised himself as a lover (1:6:13-14, 2:6:28-29, 3:11:16-18, 4:1:1-2; Sym. 8:1-4). As a lover, Socrates would seem to have something in common with Critobulus. And so there appears to be a tension between Socrates' characterisation of himself as a lover and his deliberate adoption of the role of the serious gentleman. In light of this tension, the figure of Critobulus may be useful in helping to clarify the similarities and differences between Socrates and both the erotic lover and the serious gentleman.²¹ Indeed, Critobulus' second encounter with Socrates in the Memorabilia lends support to this view of the role he plays as one of Socrates' companions.

Critobulus' second encounter with Socrates in the Memorabilia occurs within the series of conversations illustrating Socrates' utilitarian teaching on friendship (see, for example, 2:5:1-5). The conversation with Critobulus in particular is introduced as an

example of Socrates giving instruction on how to test what sort of friends are worth acquiring (2:6:1). Although Critobulus appears to be the beneficiary of this teaching, the greater part of the conversation is actually taken up by his flippant interest in discovering easy ways of making friends with beautiful-looking gentlemen. This apparent departure from the stated intention of the conversation indicates that the conversation as a whole should also be treated as an illustration of Socrates' evaluation of Critobulus value as a friend.

For the purpose of examination, Socrates' conversation with Critobulus can be divided into four parts. The first part involves the discussion on how to test for the qualities of the good friend. This discussion ends with the indication that Critobulus may not be worthy of the friendship of the good man. The second part is ostensibly devoted to the question of how to acquire friends. But this part of the conversation shows that Critobulus is predisposed to the use of questionable means of acquiring friends because of the difficulties he has had in gaining the friendship of gentlemen. Accordingly, the third part addresses Critobulus' erotic interest in noble or public-spirited gentlemen. In the fourth and final part, Socrates attempts to show Critobulus how he can make himself worthy of the friendships he desires.

ii) Socrates' initial evaluation of Critobulus

Socrates begins the conversation by inviting Critobulus to consider how they would proceed in their investigation if they should "need a good friend" (deoimetha philou agathou, 2:6:1). The invitation to Critobulus indicates that Socrates thinks that

Critobulus has a need for a good friend. According to Socrates, the good friend is someone who would be:

... continent in the bodily pleasures and, while easy to live with and easy to bargain with, would also happen to be contentious not to be deficient in the good treatment of those who do him good deeds... (2:6:5)²²

This description of the good friend comes after Socrates has led Critobulus to reject as suitable candidates for friendship those individuals who are either incontinent, factious, ungrateful, or, above all, greedy for money-(2:6:1-4). Critobulus, for his part, makes it known that he sees no profit in dealing with any of these individuals. But it is worthwhile recalling that in their previous encounter Critobulus was rebuked by Socrates for his inability to control his amorous desires (1:3:9).

Critobulus' amorous desires, moreover, are one of the chief reasons why he neglects his household affairs (Oecon. 2:7). Along with his lavish spending, Critobulus' negligence could eventually cause him to become greedy for money, if he is not so already. It would be to his interest, therefore, to have friends who would not take unfair advantage of his wealth but who would gladly assist him in time of need. At this point, however, it is not yet clear whether Critobulus would be attracted to an individual with just those qualities commended by Socrates. For now, the description of the good friend is so obviously appealing from the point of view of profit that Critobulus is naturally eager to learn how to test for the qualities of the friend in question.

Rather than answering Critobulus directly, Socrates offers him two analogies. First, Socrates says that a sculptor is tested not on what he says, but on how "beautifully"

(kalōs, 2:6:6) his past sculptures were made. Critobulus treats this analogy to mean that someone "who visibly treats his previous friends well would do good deeds to those who become his friends later as well" (2:6:7). Although Socrates agrees with this interpretation, he immediately offers a second analogy which Critobulus accepts without comment. The second analogy is based on the horse-owner who is tested on how "nobly" (kalōs) he treats his horses. This additional analogy suggests that Critobulus' initial interpretation may be correct but inadequate, and that Socrates may have a broader interpretation in mind with respect to both analogies.

Both analogies seem to emphasize the importance of deeds. Critobulus, however, implicitly understands the emphasis on deeds to mean the doing of what is good or useful. Yet both analogies clearly call attention to the noble understood in terms of what is beautiful or fine. By focusing exclusively on the good, Critobulus' initial interpretation seems to reflect the limited and instrumental nature of his interest in the good friend. If Critobulus is only thinking of his personal profit or advantage, then there is the real danger that he would misuse or even abuse the relationship with the good friend.

This problem brings to light a broader understanding of the two analogies. The first analogy is based on an expert who knows how to improve what is given by nature. From this perspective, the analogy implies that Critobulus' nature is in need of improvement. As a corollary, the second analogy suggests that Critobulus needs to transform his mercenary attitude into a gentlemanly one in order to become deserving of the friendship he desires. Since a good friend is a precious possession, Critobulus must show that he is able and willing to make noble use of him. All in all, the analogies

suggest that Critobulus needs a moral guardian. Indeed, Socrates' following advice further underscores Critobulus' need for improvement.

On the basis of his initial understanding of Socrates' analogies, Critobulus proceeds to ask Socrates for an account of how friends are acquired. In reply, Socrates tells Critobulus that he should first seek the approval of the gods. This advice is striking as it is the first and only time in the Memorabilia that Socrates is shown offering it (2:6:8; cf. 1:1:6). The advice clearly reflects Socrates' uncertainty about the relationship between Critobulus and the good friend. But it also seems to suggest that Critobulus' nature is particularly recalcitrant, and that it would require the help of a god to improve Critobulus. Socrates' concern with Critobulus is further underlined by the latter's subsequent view that the approval of the gods would not be problematic. Critobulus' sanguine assumption shows that he has little or no awareness that he may be a bad influence on his prospective friend. Consequently, Socrates is forced to voice his concern in a more explicit manner. Thus, in his response to Critobulus' desire to know how friends are acquired, Socrates explicitly warns Critobulus against the use of force and deception (2:6:9). And in keeping with this underlying concern, Socrates turns the conversation to address Critobulus' attitude towards the use of deceptive devices to acquire friends.

iii) The use of incantations

To gratify Critobulus' eagerness to know how friends are acquired, Socrates seeks recourse to what others have said about the use of incantations. As an example of the use of incantations, Socrates cites the Homeric account of how the Sirens addressed

Odysseus. Socrates' intention, it seems, is to limit the use of this example to "those who love the honour accorded to virtue" (2:6:12). Critobulus, however, seems to approach the example from a democratic perspective. He uses the example to formulate the general principle that words of praise must be made to fit the listener. Socrates does not object to this formulation of the principle underlying the use of praise. But in his subsequent exchange with Critobulus, Socrates discloses the flaws in Critobulus' understanding of the principle.

Critobulus' understanding of the use of praise only presupposes that the user should recognise, and call attention to, the praiseworthy aspects of a person's character. Words of praise, in Critobulus' view, are used to embellish the good qualities of the listener. But Socrates also adds that the listener must know that he is in fact worthy of what is said in praise of him (2:6:12). This qualification indicates that words of praise may mislead by focusing exclusively on the good qualities of the listener. By ignoring other less praiseworthy qualities of the listener, the user may unwittingly excite the listener's imagination or inflame his ambition to an inappropriate degree. For this reason, even a fitting and well-intentioned praise may unintentionally produce undesirable consequences. So even if the listener is worthy, the user has the further responsibility of ensuring that the listener does not get misled by what is said in praise of him. For otherwise the listener may come to hate the user (2:6:12). Ultimately, the user must have knowledge of what is good both for himself and for the listener.

In light of the above, Socrates' reference to the Sirens comes to sight as an apt illustration of the dangers inherent in the use of praise. The Sirens were in fact

malevolent creatures. The words they chanted to Odysseus were meant to seduce him. More significantly, the noble Odysseus showed that he was not immune to the seduction of the Sirens. Socrates further underscores the danger of seduction by referring to the example of Pericles. Socrates characterises Pericles as a master in the use of incantations and implicitly criticizes his leadership by contrasting it with the solid achievements of Themistocles (2:6:13). The inclusion of the example of Pericles shows that neither the well-born nor the common people are immune from the potentially harmful effects of persuasive speech.²³

Judging from his response, Critobulus is apparently not averse to the use of incantations. He betrays no awareness of the problems implied in the example of the Sirens. Indeed, the reference to Pericles came about as a result of his insistence to hear more about other types of incantations. Furthermore, his reference to Themistocles immediately after Socrates had spoken of the example of Pericles suggests that he is not happy with the implication that one must be a good speaker to win friends.²⁴ Critobulus seems to be looking for less demanding ways of winning friends.

Through his response to Critobulus' reference to Themistocles, Socrates shows that he is only willing to concede that speech is insufficient as a means of winning good friends. Accordingly, he leads Critobulus to consider the principle that one must be "good in speaking and in doing" to acquire good friends (2:6:14). Critobulus, however, implicitly objects to this principle on the grounds that he has seen poor speakers who are friends with good public speakers, and men who are wholly unmilitary intimate with competent generals (2:6:15). These examples indicate that Critobulus assumes that being

good means being competent or knowledgeable in some particular activity.

But Critobulus' objection is actually based on a radical misunderstanding of what Socrates meant by the good. In fact, Critobulus' objection was introduced rather hastily while Socrates was attempting to clarify what he meant by the good by posing the question whether it is possible "for one who is wicked (ponēron) to acquire honest friends (chrēstous philous, 2:6:14).²⁵ Critobulus' objection as such is clearly irrelevant. Nonetheless, the objection seems to reflect Critobulus' belief that one need not apply oneself to any serious activity in order to gain good friends.

In response to Critobulus' misunderstanding, Socrates proceeds to distinguish the good and the wicked in terms of those who are "beneficial" (ōphelimous) and those who are "not beneficial" (anōpheleis, 2:6:16) respectively.²⁶ This distinction shows that Socrates had originally intended to equate the good with the beneficial. Being good thus understood does not mean being technically proficient. On this understanding, Socrates' revised principle of friendship means that in addition to being good in speaking, Critobulus must be a doer of good or beneficial deeds in order to gain good friends.

Critobulus, however, takes to the distinction between the good and the wicked in a rather surprising way. Without any justification, he implicitly associates the good, or those who are beneficial, with the gentlemen (kalois kagathois, 2:6:16). He, therefore, overlooks Socrates' previous reference to honest men (chrēstous, 2:6:14). Despite the oversight, Critobulus' association of the good with the gentleman prompts him into revealing his current state of mind. For, immediately after he has drawn the association, he reveals that he is quite anxious to know "whether one who has become a gentleman

can readily become friends with gentleman" (2:6:16).

Critobulus' interest in the gentleman brings about a new development in the conversation. But even though he reveals that he is more attracted to the gentleman than to the simply honest man, his anxiety about the friendship of gentlemen betrays an ambivalent attitude towards gentlemanliness. As it turns out, his ambivalence is based on the observation that not only gentlemen "but also the cities that are most attentive to the noble things and least admit the shameful are frequently in a state of hostility with one another" (2:6:18). Because the gentleman is understood as both noble and good, Critobulus is genuinely perplexed by the spectacle of strife and conflict afflicting the life of the gentleman.

But since Critobulus is both attracted to and repulsed by those who are regarded as gentlemen, his desire for their friendship is necessarily frustrated. Given his obvious aversion to violence and conflict, Critobulus' keen interest in Socrates' questionable account of the use of incantations may have been a manifestation of his desperate but somewhat incoherent search for a solution to his frustration. Moreover, his disenchantment with the destructive actions of the gentleman may be one of the main reasons why he avoids taking a serious interest in the cultivation of the gentlemanly virtues. In other words, the legitimate grounds of Critobulus' ambivalence towards gentlemanliness may be one of the major impediments to his moral improvement. It is, therefore, incumbent on Socrates now to address Critobulus' understanding of the gentleman.

iv) Socrates' account of the true gentleman

Critobulus attributes the conflict among gentlemen to their desire to lead the city (2:6:20). To Critobulus, the gentleman is an essentially political or public-spirited being. Socrates first addresses the problem of conflict by stating that the matter is complex because human beings are by nature neither good nor bad. Some elements in human beings contribute to friendship while others lead them into conflict. From his brief statement on the causes of conflict, it can be inferred that the gentleman fights for leadership because he believes that ruling is "noble and pleasant" (2:6:21). The desire for leadership, however, is corrupted by envy and "the erotic desire to acquire an excess" (2:6:21). In the case of the gentleman, the erotic desire to acquire an excess would seem to be corrupting not only because it arouses an inordinate sense of his superiority, but also because it perverts his desire to rule into a desire "to have license to steal wealth, to do violence to human beings, and to experience pleasure" (2:6:24).

Although Socrates traces the violent conflicts of political life to the corruption of the erotic desires, he does not explain how this corruption comes about. Rather, he proceeds to focus his attention on an account of the life of the true gentleman. Contrary to Critobulus' view of the gentleman as an essentially political being, Socrates' true gentleman is distinguished by his preference to live a noble, private life. The true gentleman engages in politics mainly, though not exclusively, for reasons of necessity and prudence. For example, he is motivated to rule "so that he himself would not be done injustice, and can bring just aid to his friends" (2:2:25). Moreover, it is expedient for him to enlist the cooperation of the best because "the wicked require many more good deeds

than the good" (2:6:27). As a whole, the account of the public life of the true gentleman seems to be designed with the aim of mitigating Critobulus' negative view of the political life of the gentleman.

On the other hand, the most attractive features of the true gentleman are to be found in the account of his private life. Socrates begins the account with the assertion that the true gentleman is able to overcome the impediments to friendship because of his "virtue" (aretēn, 2:6:22). Virtue is, therefore, necessary to friendship. Socrates, however, refrains from naming or discussing the virtue in question. Nonetheless, he implies that it underlies the noble and fulfilling activities of the gentleman's private life. More significantly, Socrates repeatedly stresses that these noble activities are carried out without pain or distress (aneu ponou...alupōs...mē lupein...2:6:22-23). Also, the virtue of the gentleman does not preclude him from being "pleased by sex with those in bloom" (2:6:22). As a whole, the private life of the true gentleman seems to be both noble and pleasant.

Socrates' account of the true gentleman is obviously designed to appeal to the human desire for what is both noble and pleasant. Also, it is worthwhile noting that the account of the true gentleman is compatible with the brief description of the good friend that was offered earlier in the conversation (see 2:6:5). The allusion to the good friend suggests that the account of the true gentleman is also intended as a test to see if Critobulus would respond more positively to an embellished version of the good friend. If Critobulus is genuinely attracted to the good friend, then he would realise the necessity of cultivating the virtue of the true gentleman. But in order to cultivate the virtue in

question, he must first know what it consists in. One way to test the extent of Critobulus' interest in the good friend then would be to gauge his response to Socrates' deliberately vague treatment of the virtue in question.

Furthermore, the need to re-evaluate Critobulus' response to the good friend would be especially relevant given the view that the gentleman is not immune to corruption. According to Socrates, human beings are corrupted by the erotic desire for an excess. Although Socrates does not say how this corruption comes about, his previous account of the use of incantations points to a plausible explanation. In particular, the example of the Sirens suggested that even legitimate words of praise may mislead the listener into forming an exaggerated opinion of himself.

In the present context, the example of the Sirens suggests that the good friend or the true gentleman may be seduced by seemingly innocent gestures of friendship. Critobulus' complacent attitude towards friendship may, therefore, be a factor in the corruption of the good friend. In the case of the gentleman, the corruption of the erotic desires manifests itself in the violent struggle for political superiority. In other words, Critobulus' complacency may contribute to the very state of affairs that he himself deplors. Critobulus' ignorance of the self-defeating character of his attitude towards friendship thus underlines the need to re-evaluate his response to the good friend. Not surprisingly, Critobulus' subsequent response will prove to be disappointing. That is to say, he will continue to resist the idea of virtue or self-improvement, while persisting in his self-defeating attitude towards friendship.

v) Critobulus' eroticism

Socrates' concludes the account of the true gentleman by encouraging Critobulus to become "good" (2:6:28). On that condition, Socrates says that he will gladly help Critobulus in the hunt for those who are "both noble and good". As a further inducement, Socrates says that he is not only experienced in the hunting of human beings, but that he is also an exceptionally passionate lover (2:6:28-29). Socrates' interest in helping Critobulus seems to be based in part on the view that Critobulus is not experienced in matters of love. As Critobulus is inexperienced, he would invariably have trouble dealing with the intense passion of love.

In his response to Socrates' offer, Critobulus not only ignores the condition that he must become good, but he reveals that his abiding interest in learning how to hunt human beings is primarily motivated by the desire to possess those who are "good in their souls" and "beautiful in their bodies" (2:6:30 and 33). Although Critobulus indicates that he genuinely admires those who are good, there is nevertheless a distinctively vulgar and superficial aspect to his eroticism. Moreover, since he is inexperienced in love, he underestimates the seductive power of those who are both good-natured and beautiful-looking. Those who are good are more likely to resist someone like Critobulus who is not truly worthy of their attention. And in so doing, they might induce him to make use of unscrupulous means to win their affection.²⁷ The possibility that Critobulus might be tempted to deceive the potential friend helps to explain why Socrates is also keen to learn the names of those to whom Critobulus is attracted (2:6:29).

Critobulus' irrepressible desire to possess beautiful bodies leads Socrates to clarify

and to modify his offer of assistance. Socrates now says that he will offer himself as a go-between. But when he has to speak on Critobulus' behalf, Socrates says that he will be able "to accuse" (kateipein, 2:6:33) Critobulus only of admiring his potential friend and of having good intentions towards him. More cannot be said without deceiving the potential friend. For example, it would be misleading to represent Critobulus as a conventional gentleman, that is, as someone who seeks to surpass his friends in helping them and his enemies in harming them (2:6:35). Socrates' use of the accusatory term implies that Critobulus is responsible for what he is, and that it is not beyond his capacity to improve himself. Through his speech, moreover, Socrates not only reveals the current limits of his offer to help Critobulus, but he also revises the condition attached to the offer. Critobulus must now strive to be both good and noble in order to earn Socrates' full assistance. The revised condition is appropriate in light of the fact that Critobulus' irrepressible desire for beautiful bodies does not discriminate between the good man and the conventional gentleman.

The reinstatement of the conventional, public-spirited gentleman indicates that the striving for superiority or the erotic desire to acquire an excess cannot be simply eradicated. As human relations are invariably political, conflict cannot always be avoided. The virtue of the conventional gentleman -- helping friends and harming enemies -- is, therefore, necessary to the survival of the political community. But since the erotic desires of the gentleman can be corrupted by the excessive love of victory or glory, the present context suggests that the vulgar but inherently private type of eroticism characterised by Critobulus may be useful in diffusing the eroticism, and in so doing

moderate the political ambitions, of the public-spirited gentleman. So, for instance, while Socrates would not encourage a vulgar relationship, his limited offer to help Critobulus indicates that he would not necessarily discourage it.

To Critobulus, Socrates' current limited offer of assistance is naturally disappointing. But in expressing his disappointment, Critobulus shows that he has failed to learn the lesson that words of praise however well-intentioned may be potentially harmful (2:6:36; also compare 2:6:33 with 2:6:12). This forces Socrates to remind Critobulus of the real harm that false representation does not only to the potential friend, but to Critobulus as well as to his go-between. In the course of so doing, Socrates also gives a demonstration on how to make good use of praise.

According to Socrates, words of praise should aim at benefitting the listener by encouraging him towards self-improvement (2:6:37). Not only should the user of praise remark on the good qualities of the listener, but he should also bring to light the deficiencies of the listener and point him towards the appropriate path to self-improvement. On this view, Socrates has proven himself to be a master of the use of praise. For he has remarked on Critobulus' redeeming features and, through the course of the conversation, he has also clarified Critobulus' deficiencies.

Moreover, in his closing speech, Socrates points to a number of activities that Critobulus could undertake to improve himself. The list of activities seems designed to lead Critobulus to the consideration of improving his skills as a household manager (2:6:38). This suggestion is made plausible by the fact that the Oeconomicus is devoted to Socrates' attempt to teach Critobulus the art of household management. At one point

in that work, Socrates calls attention to the connection between Critobulus' love affairs and Critobulus' need for money (Oecon. 2:7). The connection suggests that one way to moderate Critobulus' erotic desire would be to show him that he needs to pay more attention to making money in order to support his love affairs.

vi) Conclusion

At the very end of the conversation Critobulus admits that he would be ashamed to contradict the points raised in criticism of him. For then he would be speaking "neither nobly nor truly" (2:6:39). By acknowledging these criticisms, Critobulus indicates that he is now more aware of his own deficiencies. As a concluding remark, however, Critobulus' admission does not suggest that he is inspired by these criticisms to improve himself. The ambiguity of the concluding remark indicates that the problem of Critobulus' eroticism has not been fully resolved.

The apparent recalcitrance of Critobulus' erotic nature seems to be the most obvious reason why Socrates offers to help Critobulus. By allowing Critobulus to make use of him, Socrates may be able to prevent Critobulus from giving in to the temptation of misleading the potential friend. In this way, Socrates would also be benefitting Critobulus' potential friend. But Socrates' offer to help also indicates that he does not regard Critobulus as an unworthy partner in the hunt for good friends.

Through his praise of Critobulus, Socrates acknowledges that Critobulus genuinely admires those who are both beautiful and good. In other words, Critobulus may be particularly useful as a partner in Socrates' hunt for good or potentially good

souls. Since those who are most promising would most likely resist Critobulus' advances, the latter would most likely appeal to Socrates for help in those cases when he encounters a beautiful and promising individual. Furthermore, by clarifying Critobulus' understanding of what is truly desirable, Socrates has in effect made Critobulus a better scout in the hunt for good souls.

We should recall that the conversation with Critobulus is intended as an illustration of Socrates giving instruction on what sort of friends are worth acquiring. Critobulus has turned out, on examination, to be a useful Socratic partner. But Critobulus' value as a friend is based partly on Socrates' ability to lead Critobulus to confront his fundamental deficiencies. Ultimately, the conversation with Critobulus deals with the question of an individual's worth. According to the Socratic teaching presented through the examples of the sculptor and the horse-owner, the test of an individual's worth is based on his ability to improve what is given by nature. Through his evaluation and improvement of Critobulus, Socrates demonstrates his worth as a teacher and a benefactor.

The Socratic teaching would seem to imply that the test of Socrates' worth as a philosopher would consist in his ability to lead the most gifted individuals towards the life of philosophy. This would help to explain Socrates' interest in the hunt for good souls. But Socrates' interest in the friendship of the most gifted individuals would also put him in a state of potential conflict with the city. In contrast to Socrates, the city wishes to transform the most gifted individuals into its best citizens, that is, those who would sacrifice themselves for the sake of the good of the city.

In the conversation with Critobulus, the tension between philosophy and politics is reflected in the discussion of the differences between the true gentleman and the conventional, public-spirited gentleman. But the discussion also points to a partial resolution of the tension between philosophy and the city. By indicating that extreme public-spiritedness is not only corrupting but that this corruption of the gentleman also defeats the city's intention of preserving its freedom and dignity, Socrates' account of the true gentleman underlines the necessity of maintaining the distinction between the public and the private. Without denying the longing for noble, public-spirited action, the distinction between the public and the private leaves room for the life of private contemplation.

Finally, through the contrast between Critobulus and the conventional gentleman, the conversation also sheds some light on the similarities and differences between Socrates and both the vulgar erotic lover and the serious, public-spirited gentleman. For instance, Socrates' eroticism is similar to Critobulus' in being inherently private. Unlike Critobulus, however, Socrates prefers a good soul to a beautiful body. And even though Socrates is not a lover of public fame or glory, he is as intense as the serious gentleman in pursuing the object of his desire. Perhaps the most significant difference between Socrates and the serious gentleman is that Socrates, like Critobulus, is averse to harming human beings because he is a genuine lover of what is latently or manifestly good in human beings. For this reason, Socrates necessarily lacks that part of the gentleman's virtue which consists in surpassing his enemies in treating them badly.

V. Summary: Socrates' interaction with the non-political citizens

Each of the three companions presented Socrates with a problem that was of fundamental importance to his personal life. In each case, Socrates resolved the problem by accommodating and clarifying the companion's ruling prejudice. Moreover, the particular companion's ruling prejudice not only defined the non-political character of his life, but it also partly informed his implicit opposition to the political life of the city. Therefore, in clarifying the companion's ruling prejudice, Socrates also helped in each case to reconcile him with the political community.

Aristodemus' search for order and beauty in human life brought him into conflict with the religious tradition of the city. By appealing to Aristodemus' love of human wisdom, Socrates' teaching on divination led Aristodemus to reconsider his rejection of the city's gods. By preying on his wealth, the city's sycophants threatened to undermine Crito's attachment to the democracy. Through Archdemus, Socrates showed Crito that his desire for wealth and reputation could be improved by enlisting the cooperation of the poor but honest democrats. In Critobulus' case, his desire for the friendship of gentleman was frustrated by the political corruption of the public-spirited gentleman. By clarifying as well as refining the object of Critobulus' erotic desire, Socrates' account of the true gentleman not only diffused the source of Critobulus' frustration, but it also mitigated Critobulus' negative view of the gentleman's participation in the political life of the community.

Although Socrates helped in each case to moderate his companion's attitude towards the city, he nevertheless showed in deed that he sympathised with the

companion's fundamental disagreement with the city. Thus, in his conversation with Aristodemus, Socrates made no effort to contradict Aristodemus' underlying skepticism toward the belief in the city's gods. With Crito and Critobulus, Socrates discreetly underscored his agreement with their respective views about the deplorable political state of the city. By not denying the companions' fundamental disagreements with the city, Socrates partially vindicated their preference for a private life.

Furthermore, in his conversations with Crito and Critobulus, Socrates indicated that his philosophical aims were in tension with the city's political aspirations. In light of this tension, Socrates actions revealed that his interests in the well-being and improvement of his companions were dictated in part by the need to ensure the security of his way of life, and in part by the desire to fulfil his philosophical aims. Thus, it was in his interest not only to cure Aristodemus of his brazen impiety, but also to utilise Aristodemus' interest in the serious arts to promote an edifying vision of philosophy. Also, given their long-standing relationship, it was clearly in Socrates' interest to protect and enhance the reputation of Crito among the democrats. Moreover, it benefitted Socrates not only to restrain Critobulus' vulgar eroticism, but also to re-direct it towards the quest for the most promising or gifted individuals.

Last but not least, Socrates also made use of his conversations with the companions to point out practical ways in which the city could be improved. Through his advice to Aristodemus, Socrates indicated that the deficiencies in the religious life of the city may be corrected by encouraging the practice of prudent self-reliance. The conversation with Crito suggested that the conflicts between the rich and the poor may be

mitigated by the appropriate reforms in the economic and political policies of the Athenian democracy. And finally, in his conversation with Critobulus, Socrates indicated that the corruption of the public-spirited gentleman may be averted by promoting the virtues of a noble, private life. All in all, these practical proposals would not only help to legitimise Socrates' way of life among the non-philosophic citizens, but their implementation would also help to make the city more hospitable to philosophy.

Notes

1. According to Vlastos, Aristodemus' public behavior "speaks eloquently for the wide margin of deviant religious belief and practice that was tolerated in Athens" (Vlastos, Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher [Ithaca, N.Y., 1991], p.295). It may be true that the Athenians were fairly tolerant. But the Athenian public is also known to have been quite fickle. Moreover, Xenophon suggests that Aristodemus started behaving in this way only recently. In other words, one cannot predict what the Athenians would have done if Aristodemus should have persisted in this kind of behavior.
2. Plato Symposium 173b.
3. Plato Phaedo 115b-118a.
4. A similar criticism of Socrates is reported in Plato's Cleitophon.
5. Following Hude's edition of the Memorabilia, Amy Bonnette's translation of this particular passage reads: "Upon observing that the latter neither sacrificed to the gods when he was not engaged in a battle..." (1:4:2). Bonnette notes, however, that Hude himself questions the addition of the line "when he was not engaged in a battle." Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates (Ithaca, N.Y., 1972), p.22, does not refer to this line in his interpretation of the conversation. In any case, the status of the line would not affect our analysis of the conversation.
6. Plato's Symposium (173b) also calls attention to Aristodemus' deformity.
7. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.25, calls attention to the fact that Socrates does not say that the gods hear everything.
8. When Xenophon first introduces the true associates, Crito's name is mentioned first, and in the Greek text Crito's name is separated from the other true associates (see 1:2:48).
9. Plato Crito 44b-46a.
10. Plato, however, makes it known that Crito never quite appreciated Socrates' philosophical way of life (Euthydemus 304d-307c). See also Leo Strauss, Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy (Chicago, 1983), p.68 and p.71.
11. Crito here uses a phrase that is identical to the one Socrates uses to describe the just man in Plato's Republic (433ab). Also, the subsequent discussion of dogs and wolves is similar to Plato's treatment of the degeneration of the auxiliaries

(Republic 416a).

12. See Mem. 3:4:8. Also, Xenophon's Oeconomicus (especially chapters 12-14) contains a discussion of how the skilled household manager governs his subordinates. Crito's inability to deal with his enemies is an indication that he is not truly a skilled household manager (see Oecon. 1:14-15). This would help to explain why the task of educating Critobulus falls on Socrates instead.
13. C. Anton, "Notes" in Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates, p.270: "Life, indeed, was harassing and full of trouble at Athens, on account of the swarm of sycophants or informers, whom the people permitted to accuse and harass the better class, erroneously thinking that it tended to preserve the purity of their democracy." For a brief discussion of the dynamics of class conflict during Xenophon's time, see Steven Johnstone, "Virtuous Toil, Vicious Work: Xenophon on Aristocratic Style" in Classical Philology (1994), vol.89, no.3, pp.221-225.
14. The situation of Charmides is a case in point; cf. Xenophon's Symposium (4:31-34).
15. This description of Archdemus recalls the unnamed accuser's perspective on justice, see Mem. 1:2:56-57.
16. Consider, for example, the situation of Eutherus in Mem. 2:8:1-6.
17. According to C. Anton, the Archdemus of the Memorabilia is the same as the one referred to in the Hellenica (C. Anton, "Notes" in Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates, p.271).
18. To improve Hiero's regime, Simonides offers this advice (Xenophon Hiero 9:2-4).
19. Paul Friedlander, Plato vol.2 (Princeton, 1958), trans. by H. Meyerhoff, p.193, refers to Crito as "one of the benevolent capitalists."
20. This is the only conversation Xenophon has with Socrates in the Memorabilia. Also, this conversation is the first of the series introduced in the recollections proper.
21. See Xenophon Oeconomicus 11:3-6.
22. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.46, notes that piety and prudence are not mentioned in the description of the good friend. For an alternative description of the good friend, see Mem. 2:4:6-7.

23. Xenophon Symposium 8:20.
24. In Xenophon's Symposium (4:11-18), Critobulus says that he relies on his beauty to make friends.
25. Recall Archedemus' defense of Crito in Mem. 2:9:8.
26. For an alternative discussion of this part of the exchange between Socrates and Critobulus, see Donald Morrison, "On Professor Vlastos' Xenophon" in Ancient Philosophy (1987) vol.7, pp.17-18.
27. Or consider the case of Araspas who lost control of himself when he fell in love with the beautiful Panthea (Xenophon Cyropaedia 6:1:31-37).

Chapter Four

The Political Citizens: Nicomachides, the Younger Pericles and Charmides

I. Introduction

By the political citizens, we mean those who are depicted in the Memorabilia as actual or aspiring military or political leaders of the city. Most of Socrates' conversations with these citizens are recorded in the first seven chapters of book three which contains fourteen chapters. It is introduced by a brief but noteworthy editorial statement: "That he benefitted those who longed for the noble things by making them take trouble about what they longed for--this I shall now describe" (3:1:1). Since the editorial statement seems to apply equally well to some of the conversations in the latter half of book three, it is perhaps safe to say that Xenophon is here treating political ambition as only one significant manifestation of the longing for the noble things.¹ In other words, Xenophon seems to leave open to question whether the political life is the most choiceworthy way of life or the necessary culmination of the longing for the noble things.²

The editorial statement also indicates that the political citizens in question failed or neglected to make the necessary efforts to realize their ambitions. They were therefore in need of some guidance or instruction. With regard to Socrates' interaction with these citizens, it is relevant to recall the charge that Socrates was responsible for the political crimes of Critias and Alcibiades (see 1:2:12). Characterized by Xenophon as "the most honor-loving" (philotimotatōpantōn--1:2:14) of all the Athenians, both Critias and

Alcibiades are the extreme examples of the political citizens. In view of this charge, it is particularly important for us to be alert to the difficulties Socrates encounters in his dealings with the political citizens as these may serve as instructive indicators of the problems specific to the education of the politically ambitious.

The first three chapters of book three involve conversations with individuals who are not named, whereas the subsequent four chapters each involve an individual who is either well-known or bears a characteristic name. For the purposes of this chapter we shall examine Socrates' interaction with three of the named political citizens: Nicomachides, the younger Pericles and Charmides.

Nicomachides and the younger Pericles are depicted as being somewhat disenchanted with the city. Nicomachides, a veteran soldier, is bitterly disappointed at not being elected general. He is, moreover, furious at the Athenians for electing a wealthy businessman with little military experience. The younger Pericles, on the other hand, has just been elected general. He is, however, painfully aware and deeply critical of the general decline and moral corruption of the city. In his attempt to reconcile each man to his respective situation, Socrates adopts the role of a defender of the city. Thus the examination of Socrates' conversations with these men may shed further light on his attitude towards the Athenian democracy.

The conversation with Charmides, however, seems to call into question Socrates' defense of the Athenian democracy. Of all the political citizens in book three, Charmides is perhaps the most significant. He was not only an acknowledged associate of Socrates, but he was also the nephew of Critias and, like his uncle, he played a leading role in the

overthrow of the Athenian democracy in 404 B.C. That a good deal of the conversation with Charmides should revolve around his attitude towards the Athenian demos is therefore not likely to be mere coincidence. Here, Socrates tries to persuade Charmides to take a more active role in the affairs of the Athenians. But Socrates does this by demeaning the character of the demos. Consequently, we are led to wonder if this conversation might shed some light on Charmides' subsequent rejection of the democracy. In particular, we shall have to ask whether Socrates' derogatory remarks about the demos were necessary to overcome Charmides' distaste for democratic politics. In this connection, we shall also have to reflect on the implications of Socrates' apparent failure to persuade Charmides.

II. Nicomachides

i) Introduction

Set against the background of the city's election of its generals, the conversation with Nicomachides deals in part with the potentially destructive consequences of the intense rivalry for leadership (see 2:6:18-21 and 3:5:19). Nicomachides, whose name means victorious fighter, is an ambitious citizen-soldier who aspires to be a general. True to the spirit of his name, Nicomachides takes exceptional pride in his accomplishments on the battlefield. For that reason he is especially angry at the city for electing a rival who has no military achievement to speak of. Nicomachides' situation commands attention because it points to the city's inability to satisfy the competing claims for honor or recognition. Indeed, when Nicomachides impugns the judgement of the assembly

which elected his rival, he in effect calls into question the integrity of the democratic regime and its practices. Thus, in order to address Nicomachides' situation, Socrates has to confront this implicit criticism of the Athenian democracy.

ii) Nicomachides and Antisthenes

The conversation opens with Socrates casually asking Nicomachides who were the generals elected. As Nicomachides has just departed from the elections, it is highly unlikely that Socrates could have failed to notice that Nicomachides does not bear the proud countenance of a man who has succeeded to the generalship. Socrates' question, which expresses interest in the victors only, seems rather insensitive in view of Nicomachides' apparent defeat. Perhaps it is Socrates' intention to provoke Nicomachides in the hope that after the latter has vented his frustration he would be more amenable to a sober discussion.

In any case, the question produces an immediate outburst from Nicomachides who proceeds to blame "the Athenians" for behaving in what he regards as a typically arbitrary fashion (3:4:1). Nicomachides is consequently not entirely surprised that the assembly has rejected him in favor of Antisthenes, a wealthy businessman. But as regards this complaint, it is perhaps germane to note Nicomachides' silence on the election of the other generals. For this silence could be a token of his tacit approval of the selection of those generals. If that is the case, then Nicomachides may not be in total disagreement with the city. Thus, while his initial reaction may seem extreme, Nicomachides may in fact have been quite willing hitherto to tolerate the questionable

conduct of the people. That is to say, he only takes special umbrage at the Athenians now mainly because they have elected Antisthenes.

Nicomachides is convinced that he is more deserving of the generalship than Antisthenes. During his long service in the infantry, Nicomachides has had the experience of commanding a company as well as a regiment. More importantly, he is confident that he has proven his mettle in combat, a fact he emphasizes by displaying his battle scars to Socrates. To Nicomachides, courage, fighting ability and, above all, past sacrifices are essential elements of a man's military credentials. Antisthenes, in contrast, has never served in the infantry, nor has he distinguished himself in the calvary.³ From Nicomachides' standpoint, Antisthenes "understands nothing other than how to gather wealth" (3:4:1). This contemptuous remark is no doubt intended to suggest that Antisthenes is solely devoted to personal profit and is, therefore, not the sort who would engage in acts of heroic self-sacrifice.

On the basis of this initial contrast, Nicomachides appears to have a legitimate complaint against the city. At first sight, Antisthenes' election does seem rather dubious, especially from a strictly military perspective. But, by the same token, it is not at all clear that what Nicomachides has said on his own behalf is sufficient to qualify him for the generalship (see, for example, Socrates' characterization of the competent general in 3:1:6-7). Yet, so long as the immediate question of Antisthenes' election goes unresolved, Nicomachides would continue to believe that he has been unjustly deprived of the generalship. Consequently he would not feel the need, nor the justification, to review his suitability for the office.

iii) Socrates' defense of Antisthenes

Confronted with Nicomachides' grievance, Socrates first addresses

Nicomachides' evident disdain for money-making. Provided that Antisthenes is able to supply the needs of the soldiers, Socrates says, his business capacity would be a good or useful thing. Nicomachides, however, denies this by claiming in effect that the ability to make money is not an essential attribute of the general. But he is mistaken in assuming that Socrates had suggested otherwise. Socrates, in fact, had merely treated Antisthenes' business capacity as a relevant consideration. Indeed, Socrates will later suggest that Antisthenes' wealth as such may have been a crucial factor leading to his election (see 3:4:3).

Since military campaigns are costly affairs, the rich citizens are naturally in the best position to help defray the costs of these campaigns. Short of using force, the city has to find some means to induce the rich to contribute to them. In Antisthenes' case, the city may have been confronted with the choice of acceding to his ambition for high office or frustrating it, and so risk losing his generous sponsorship. Thus, the generalship may have been awarded to Antisthenes in exchange for the opportunity to exploit his wealth. Such an exchange nonetheless involves the city in a dilemma. Citizens like Nicomachides would not readily appreciate such a mercenary policy; nor is it in the interest of the city to project a crass, materialistic image of itself.

Rather, the city seeks to establish itself as an object of reverence worthy of the greatest sacrifices. To that end, it fosters the sort of heroic attitude held by Nicomachides. Still, the city cannot realistically afford to ignore the claims of citizens

like Antisthenes. Generally speaking, Nicomachides' quarrel with Antisthenes evokes the conflict between two significant but competing ways of life, namely, the warrior's and the economist's. A democracy is vulnerable to the problem of adjudicating the competing claims of its citizens. Moreover, in the case of Athens, the fact of its empire shows that the city desires both wealth and glory, which are not, strictly speaking, compatible goals. The problem confronting the city is, in a sense, one of its own making; it reflects a lack of agreement on what constitutes the city's highest good.

The initial defense of Antisthenes points to a fundamental problem that underscores the urgent need for compromise. Nicomachides' rejection of that defense indicates that such a compromise cannot be achieved on the basis of mere utility. Socrates is thus obliged to renew his defense by characterizing Antisthenes as being "also a lover of victory" (3:4:3). Besides its appeal to Nicomachides' victory promising name, this characterization is most likely intended to show that Antisthenes is not averse to war. Furthermore, to support it Socrates refers to Antisthenes successful record as choragus. Nicomachides is, not surprisingly, unimpressed, for he sees no similarity between leading a choir and leading an army.

In spite of Nicomachides' objection, Socrates goes on to say that Antisthenes succeeded because he was able to find the best experts in song and dance. The logic of this argument leads Nicomachides to infer correctly that as regards the army Antisthenes would have to find some experts to command and others to fight. Nicomachides is obviously not prepared to accept such a seemingly absurd situation not least because he still regards the generalship from a conventional perspective. For that reason, he is not

aware that Socrates has implicitly introduced a distinction between leading and ruling. In this context, Antisthenes' generalship is no longer comprehensible from the conventional point of view since he is not even expected to be actually leading the army.

So as not to leave Nicomachides with any doubts, Socrates states in no uncertain terms that "over whatever a man presides, if he knows what is needed and is able to procure it, he will be a good president whether it is a chorus, a household, a city, or an army that he presides over" (3:4:6). This is, to be sure, a rather astonishing thesis. Socrates has virtually elevated Antisthenes beyond the status of a mere general. For, according to this thesis, Antisthenes has the capacity to rule over an entire city; that is to say, his status is now comparable to that of a supreme legislator, or even that of a king.⁴

The thesis, however, provokes a rather surprising but revealing response from Nicomachides: "By Zeus, Socrates, I should never have thought to hear you say that good household managers would be good generals!" (3:4:6). Nicomachides apparently regards the equation of good household managers with good generals as the more radical implication of the Socratic thesis. Indeed, he treats the equation so seriously that from here on he ceases to concern himself with Antisthenes; that is, he no longer cares to indulge his indignation in the criticism of the latter. By radicalizing his defense of Antisthenes, Socrates has in effect forced Nicomachides to confront a more serious challenge to his claim to the generalship.

iv) Nicomachides' defense of the warrior's way of life

In terms of the equation he imputes to the Socrates thesis, Nicomachides clearly assumes that good household managers are different from, and even opposed to, good generals. From his standpoint the good general seems to be most clearly and unequivocally defined in direct contrast with the good household manager. In other words, Nicomachides not only assumes that he knows what a good household manager is, but he tacitly acknowledges that he is not one as a consequence of his claim to the generalship. As is most likely, his ardent pursuit of military honors has led him to neglect his private affairs. As the highest military office, the generalship represents the peak or the ultimate fulfilment of Nicomachides' longing for the noble things. Thus, by collapsing the distinction between good household managers and good generals, the Socratic thesis necessarily undermines the exclusivity and superiority of that way of life which for Nicomachides culminates in the generalship.

Because Nicomachides is no doubt eager to refute the Socratic thesis, he readily accepts Socrates' invitation to review the activities of both the household manager and the general. Thereafter, Socrates proceeds to enumerate seven activities that Nicomachides grants are similar for both household manager and general. These activities show that it is incumbent on both to take a serious and constant interest in the management of their subordinates and in the solicitation of external helpers or allies. Nicomachides is thus forced to acknowledge the household manager's capacity to rule. Yet his subsequent response shows that he regards ruling as neither the distinctive nor the highest activity of the general.

After agreeing to the similarities pointed out by Socrates, Nicomachides interjects to remark that fighting is not common to both the household manager and the general. Fighting as such turns out to be what Nicomachides considers the principal element distinguishing the general from the household manager. War, it follows, is the primary and most meaningful activity of the general; and the good general comes to sight as the most excellent warrior. Given the contrast intended by Nicomachides, the household manager must be devoted to activities that are primarily peaceful. This would further imply that ruling, from Nicomachides' perspective, is essentially an activity that is aimed at fostering peace.⁶

To counter Nicomachides' objection, Socrates says that the household manager, like the general, is bound to have enemies; hence it would be to his advantage to overcome them. But even though Nicomachides agrees with this, it is clear that Socrates' argument fails to meet Nicomachides' objection. The argument does not entail that the household manager is a warrior. At best Socrates' argument proves that the household manager needs the skills or the services of the warrior. Accordingly, Nicomachides is right to point out that Socrates has failed to show how the art of household management will be a benefit when it is necessary to fight. If, as Nicomachides implies, the art in question does not equip one to fight, then the household manager is ultimately dependent on the warrior for his defense. And unless Socrates resolves the question of this dependency, Nicomachides would be in the position to reaffirm his belief in the superiority of the warrior's way of life.

v) Socrates' defense of the art of household management

According to Socrates, the art of household management is the most beneficial because it guarantees the greatest likelihood of success in war.

For the good household manager knowing that nothing is as profitable and gainful as being victorious over the enemy, and nothing as unprofitable and costly as being defeated, will eagerly seek out and furnish what is advantageous for victory, and attentively examine and guard against what brings defeat; and if he sees that his preparations are such as to bring victory he will fight energetically, and, what is not the least important, if he is unprepared he will guard against joining battle. (3:4:11)

Although Socrates continues to beg the question concerning the martial ability of the household manager, his aim here is clearly to show that fighting ability alone is not sufficient to achieve success in war. The rational and practical abilities of the good household manager is just as important in securing victory, if not more so. Thus, insofar as they both seek to gain the advantage over a common enemy, the warrior and the good household manager are bound together in a relation of mutual dependence.

But by associating victory with profit, the good household manager not only rationalizes the understanding of war, but transforms it into an economic activity. War, on this view, cannot be regarded as an end in itself; and fighting accordingly ceases to be an intrinsically choice worthy activity. Furthermore, even though the good household manager is not averse to war, he is always mindful of the grave consequences of defeat. He is, therefore, more likely to avoid conflict and to seek other avenues of profit. In other words, the good household manager possesses the ability to benefit others in war and in

peace. In this regard, the good household manager proves to be superior to even the most excellent warrior.

Having exposed the limitations of the warrior's way of life, Socrates ends the conversation by telling Nicomachides not to despise "men skilled at household management."

For attending to public affairs differs only in terms of multitude from attending to private ones...those who attend to public affairs do not use any other human beings than those whom they use in private affairs when managing their households. And those who understand how to use these human beings fare nobly (*kalōs*) both in private and in public; and those who do not understand strike false notes (*plēmmelousi*) in both. (3:4:12)

With these remarks Socrates further clarifies the thesis he had stated in defense of Antisthenes (see 3:4:6). Here Socrates makes it more explicit that he is treating the good household manager as the model of the good ruler. As is suggested by the contrast with the one who does not understand how to use human beings, the good household manager is distinguished by his ability to produce order and concord among his subordinates.

The account of the good household manager, however, seems to entail, at least in theory, the collapse of the distinction between the private and the public. For in terms of the use of human beings ruling a household is not fundamentally different from ruling an army. But it should be obvious that a general is elected to rule an army made up of free, male citizens--his political equals. By ignoring the fact of election, the account of the good household manager thus seems to deny the democratic notions of freedom and equality.⁷

Yet, in his concluding remarks, Socrates constantly refers to the distinction between the private and the public. This seems to suggest that Socrates does not envisage the destruction of that distinction in practice. Perhaps the best way of resolving this ambiguity is to consider the account of the good household manager as a discreet attempt to address a serious, practical problem with the Athenian democracy. In this regard, it is relevant to note that Socrates has yet to resolve Nicomachides' quarrel with the Athenians who rejected his bid for the generalship (see 3:4:1). In view of Nicomachides' attitude towards the Athenians, the account of the good household manager may be aimed at helping Nicomachides refine his judgement of them. As the Athenian democracy is made up of household managers, the account teaches him to distinguish the good ones from the bad. Socrates does not therefore deny Nicomachides' doubts about the Athenians. Rather, he helps Nicomachides to see that the questionable conduct of the city is due in no small measure to the influence of bad household managers in the democracy. If Nicomachides wishes to improve the regime, he should give his support to the class of good household managers. Thus, instead of denouncing Antisthenes' election, Nicomachides should regard it as a fortuitous event that might help to improve the city.

vi) Conclusion

The account of the good household manager is used initially to overcome Nicomachides' determined but nonetheless self-defeating resistance to the defense of Antisthenes. As the latter is an elected general, it would be foolish for Nicomachides to question or to oppose his authority. Nicomachides resents Antisthenes because he

believes that the generalship should be reserved for deserving warriors like himself.

While Socrates agrees that the warrior performs a necessary role in the city, his account of the household manager shows that Nicomachides over-estimates the importance and hence the worth of the warrior. Conversely, Nicomachides grossly under-estimates the role of the household manager. Thus, his resentment of Antisthenes is as unreasonable as his anger with the city for electing Antisthenes.

Socrates invariably undermines Nicomachides' claim to the generalship by casting doubt on his belief in the superiority of the warrior. But by drawing an implicit distinction between the warrior and the general, Socrates helps Nicomachides to see that in order to become worthy of the generalship he has to transcend the narrow horizon of the warrior and to adopt the more comprehensive perspective of the good household manager. And even if Nicomachides is not entirely convinced by Socrates' arguments, he cannot simply dismiss the claims about the ruling abilities of the good household manager. By thus compelling Nicomachides to take these claims seriously, Socrates would have succeeded in making him take more trouble about what he longed for.

As an extension of his defense of Antisthenes, Socrates' account of the good household manager lends the impression that Socrates is defending the democracy even as it yields upon closer scrutiny a radical critique of the regime. And in view of its radical implications, that account is not likely to be one that the city would fully appreciate or accept. This, however, implies that the city or, more precisely, the democracy would not be able rationally to resolve the problem of the competing claims for honor or recognition. But by exposing the intractability of this problem, Socrates'

account of the good household manager also shows that the cultivation of good household managers may be the most practical and sensible means of moderating the fundamental conflicts within the city.

Socrates clearly aims to improve rather than to subvert the regime by advancing the good household manager as the model of the good ruler. Moreover, the knowledge and practice of household management is said to enable one to fare nobly both in private and in public. The life of the good household manager thus appears to be complete and self-sufficient with respect to the noble things. It seems, accordingly, to be the most choiceworthy way of life. There are, however, indications that the life of the good household manager may not be as fulfilling as it is made out to be in the conversation with Nicomachides. In the first place, Socrates suggests that it only as a class that the good household manager can hope to moderate the internal conflicts afflicting the city. In the second place, Socrates omits to say here that “those intending to manage households and cities nobly are in need of divination” (1:1:7). As this is a critical omission, it raises serious doubts about whether the life of the good household manager is truly complete and self-sufficient.

III. The Younger Pericles

i) Introduction

Pericles is a newly elected general, and in a brief editorial note Xenophon underlines the fact that he is the son of Pericles, the great Athenian statesman.⁸

Xenophon thus indicates that the reputation and influence of the father has some bearing

on Socrates' conversation with the son. To start with, it would seem most likely that the city has elected the son in the hope that he will prove to be at least as good a leader as his father. After all, in preferring the achievements of his generation to those of his ancestors, the elder Pericles fostered the belief that the present is superior to the past.⁹ In keeping with this vision of progress would be the view that the young should realize, if not exceed, the expectations or unfulfilled ambitions of their elders.¹⁰

The younger Pericles, however, longs to recover the city's ancient virtue and glory. So while he may be as ambitious as his father, he seems to have a radically different conception of what is good for the city. And unlike his father, he is doubtful of his own abilities partly because he harbors deep misgivings about the city's prospects in the war against Sparta. As this conversation concerns Socrates' attempt to deal with the difficulties of the younger Pericles, these initial considerations suggest that it would involve some critical comments on the leadership of the elder statesman.

ii) The problem of fear

Socrates apparently approves of Pericles' election as he begins the conversation by expressing his hope that with Pericles as general the city "will both be better and more famous in matters of war, and will vanquish its enemies" (3:5:1). Socrates has evidently overstated Pericles' potential but his intention may be to elicit Pericles' reaction to this high expectation of his leadership. For his part, Pericles seems to be overwhelmed by the task set before him. He tells Socrates that although he wishes for these changes, he is unable to discern how they might come about.

In response to Pericles' uncertainty, Socrates proposes that they should "by arguing" (*dialogizomenoi*, 3:5:1) about these things consider what is feasible.¹¹ The proposal seems to call for some form of debate. Perhaps, such a procedure would encourage Pericles to make the most compelling case for his implicitly negative view of the city's future. This exercise would allow Socrates to assess Pericles' understanding of the situation confronting the city. And by rebutting Pericles, Socrates may then help him to revise his opinion about the city's prospects.

Having gained Pericles' assent, Socrates proceeds to compare the Athenians with the Boeotians. It is striking that Socrates should choose to focus on the Boeotians instead of the Spartans, who are the principal antagonists of the Athenians. But in view of Pericles' pessimism, perhaps it is Socrates' intention to begin with a less formidable threat to the Athenians. At any rate, the comparison leads Pericles to acknowledge that the Athenians are by far superior to the Boeotians. Nevertheless, Pericles goes on to raise the objection that since the Athenians have suffered two major defeats at the hands of the Boeotians, they now regard themselves as inferior and are even fearful of an invasion. For the Boeotians have become so exalted that they are now prepared even without the aid of allies to attack the city.

Pericles' objection raises potentially troubling questions about the political and military policies of the city. The two major battles -- the first at Coronea in 446 B.C. and the second at Delium in 424 B.C. -- both concerned Athens' attempt to impose her hegemony on the Boeotians.¹² The objection thus seems to question the wisdom of the city's imperial ambition. Furthermore, both defeats were suffered on land. As Athens is

an established naval power, the objection points to a significant weakness in the city's military capabilities. Moreover, as the city's naval supremacy is intimately connected to the ascendancy of the democracy, the weakness of the Athenian army suggests a corresponding decline in the traditional non-democratic elements in the city.

Although Socrates concurs with the observation that the Athenians are in a fearful state, he maintains that the situation is far from being desperate. "It seems to me that the disposition of the city is now more acceptable to a good man who rules it. For confidence implants neglect, easygoingness and disobedience, while fear makes people more attentive, more obedient, and more orderly" (3:5:5). As a case in point, Socrates cites the behavior of sailors who though unruly when there is nothing to fear are exceedingly well-behaved when a storm or an attack is imminent. A good ruler should, accordingly, be able to turn the people's fear to an advantage. Here, Socrates seems to be alluding to the extraordinary leadership of the elder Pericles. The example of the sailors reinforces the allusion as it is well known that the elder statesman placed great emphasis on the might of the Athenian navy.¹³

Still, Socrates' reference to the sailors is puzzling in light of the fact that the military situation described by Pericles stresses the role of the army, not the navy. If the reference to the sailors is to be relevant to the military situation, then Socrates might be proposing here the possibility of reorganizing the army by enlisting the poorer citizens.¹⁴ Such a proposal would, moreover, bring about a fundamental shift away from the elder Pericles' policy of investing in the navy. In all, the allusion to the elder Pericles seems to serve the purpose of inspiring the younger Pericles by reminding him of his father's

singular leadership, while at same time prompting him to consider a strategy that would entail a significant revision of his father's guiding policy.

Pericles, however, is not fully satisfied with Socrates' perspective on the situation. Although he grants that the Athenians are now willing to obey out of fear, he wishes to know how to revive in them "the passionate longing for the ancient virtue, fame and happiness" (3:5:7). He apparently envisages more than what the practical, military situation might demand. For the situation, as he himself has depicted it, calls for a solution to the threat of an invasion. Within that context, Socrates' proposal of an expanded army may be sufficient in terms of the need to prepare the Athenians to mount an adequate defense. But insofar as the Athenians are compelled to defend themselves, they are lacking in freedom. Moreover, Socrates' proposal does not preclude the Athenians from reverting to a disorderly state once the threat has passed. Hence, Pericles' desire to foster the longing for virtue seems to reflect a desire for the Athenians to act in a constant fashion from choice rather than necessity.

iii) The desire for wealth

Instead of speaking directly to Pericles' interest in ennobling the Athenians, Socrates curiously prefaces his reply with an example that appeals to the vulgar desire for wealth.

If then, on the one hand, we wished them to lay claim to the wealth held by others, we would show them that it is their patrimony and belongs to them, and it is in this way especially that we would set them on the path to claiming it. Since, on the other hand, we want them to strive for pre-eminence along with virtue, we must show

them that this in turn, has from long ago belonged most to them, and by striving for it they would be best of all. (3:5:8).

At first glance Socrates seems to be suggesting that the desire for virtue can be brought about as easily as the desire for wealth. But such a proposition would seem to be too good to be true. Furthermore, by associating the desire for virtue with the desire for wealth, Socrates seems to be treating virtue here as a means rather than as an end in itself. This would perhaps help to explain why Socrates speaks in terms of the desire for “pre-eminence along with virtue” (τὸν μετ’ ἀρετῆς πρῶτευσιν) and not simply of the desire for pre-eminence in virtue.

As a whole, Socrates’ curious reply would seem more appropriate as a set of preliminary remarks aimed at stimulating discussion on the question of reviving the desire for virtue. At the very least, its apparent ambiguity should alert Pericles to the possibility that Socrates is not fully prepared to speak directly and unequivocally to his chief concern. For this reason, Pericles’ subsequent response is significant in that it helps to shed some light on why Socrates takes such a cautious, circumlocutory approach to Pericles’ interest in ennobling the Athenians. Pericles, as it turns out, displays no awareness of the ambiguity in Socrates’ reply. Moreover, he is not in the least intrigued by Socrates’ comments on the desire for wealth.

Rather, Pericles’ response shows that he is concerned exclusively with Socrates’ treatment of the desire for virtue. It betrays what would now seem like a characteristic inclination to depreciate the low or useful things. For his indifference to Socrates’ comments on the desire for wealth is consistent with his unenthusiastic response to

Socrates' practical treatment of the problem of fear. Pericles' single-minded pursuit of the noble things seems to lead him to overlook or to ignore their possible connection with the useful things. Consequently, some of the things he is likely to dismiss as extrinsic to his purpose may well prove on reflection to be helpful to his quest for the noble things.

In view of this analysis of Pericles' response, it would be reasonable to assume that Socrates' treatment of the desire for wealth bears some relevance to Pericles' interest in fostering the desire for virtue. To begin with, the desire for wealth can only be satisfied by the acquisition of wealth. But to have a desire is one thing, to satisfy it another. The desire, however, leads one to seek the means necessary to satisfy it. And to satisfy the desire for wealth one may be led to adopt certain practices that would accord with the demands of virtue. Self-control, for example, would seem to be a means necessary to the satisfaction of both the desire for wealth and the desire for virtue. In other words, the foundation for virtue may be laid by appealing to the desire for wealth.

Now, since Pericles aspires to ennoble the Athenians, it may be far more practical for him to initiate this project by making or including an appeal to a passion that is most likely to be shared by the vast majority of the citizens. Such a strategy may nonetheless have its limitations. Many of the citizens may come to appreciate virtue as only a means. But the strategy does not preclude the possibility that some of them may come to cherish virtue for its own sake. At all events, such a strategy is compatible with the immediate requirement of encouraging as many citizens as possible to pursue the practice of virtue.

iv) The ancestral way of life

As the practical value of the lesson on wealth appears to be lost on Pericles, Socrates has no recourse but to accommodate Pericles' demand to know how they might teach the Athenians about the virtue of their ancestors. In reply, Socrates says that they might do so by reminding the Athenians that "their most ancient ancestors of whom we hear were, as they themselves have heard, the most excellent" (3:5:9). Socrates thus appeals to a tradition that, while familiar to the Athenians, has been partly forgotten or corrupted through neglect. Furthermore, he makes it clear that the excellent reputation of the earliest ancestors is based on hearsay; that is, it is not necessarily true. In so doing, he implies that the history of the ancestors may be manipulated so as to accommodate the needs of the present day Athenians.

On the basis of Socrates' reference to the earliest ancestors, Pericles draws the inference that Socrates himself meant to refer to "the judgement of the gods which Cecrops and his men delivered on account of their virtue" (3:5:10). This is the only time in the conversation that the gods are mentioned.¹⁵ Pericles seems to imply that virtue is dear to and hence supported by the gods. His statement, however, is phrased in such a way that it accentuates the excellence of the ancestors rather than the favor of the gods. In particular, it calls attention to the judgement that established the goddess Athena as the patron deity of the city.

Although Pericles mentions Cecrops, the legendary first king of Athens, his statement implies that the founding of the city was a collective enterprise.¹⁶ Along with the stress on the virtue of the ancestors, this further implies that Pericles is of the view

that the original political community was an aristocratic one. Also, the election of Athena entailed the rejection of Poseidon, god of the sea. In symbolic terms, this would seem to suggest that the earliest ancestors did not aspire to become masters of the sea. Accordingly, the emergence of the city as both a democracy and a maritime power would seem to signify a radical break with the ancestral way of life.

The invocation of the earliest ancestors thus contains elements that are potentially critical of the democracy. This partly explains why, in his response to Pericles' imputation, Socrates proceeds to broaden his reference to the ancestors by including those who fought in the Persian wars. The inclusion of these recent, democratic ancestors shows that Socrates is careful not to exclude the democracy from the consideration of virtue. But then Socrates goes on to claim that these ancestors "acquired power and resources in amounts surpassing what their ancestors had, and accomplished the greatest deeds" (3:5:11); that is, they seem to have reached the peak of human excellence. Yet this is clearly in conflict with the previously stated claim according to which the earliest ancestors were held to be "most excellent" (3:5:9).

As Pericles hopes to make the city better and more famous by restoring the ancestral way of life, the conflicting accounts of the ancestors seem to indicate that he should not be so hasty in his quest as to ignore the merits of the democratic tradition. In any case, Pericles cannot fully justify his preference for the pre-democratic ancestors without an adequate assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the democracy. But Pericles is apparently unaware of the obvious discrepancy in Socrates' treatment of the ancestors. As his subsequent responses to it show, Pericles is concerned with how the

city declined, and how its ancient virtue may be recovered. These two concerns are, logically speaking, unrelated. They do, however, reflect his determination to find a way of restoring the ancestral way of life, and hence his reluctance to explore alternative ways of improving the city. Moreover, Pericles' resolve also implies that he is not disposed to consider the possibility that his understanding of virtue may be unduly narrow and hence distorted.

v) Socrates' defense of the Athenians

With respect to the question of how the city declined, Socrates says that the Athenians became complacent and so neglected themselves. In other words, the Athenians were as over-confident then as the Boeotians are now (see 3:5:4-6). This explanation recalls Socrates' teaching on fear. By alluding to it, Socrates reminds Pericles of their earlier effort to find a practical solution to the military situation confronting the city. In light of Pericles' unwillingness to explore the problem of virtue, it is quite appropriate for Socrates to return to questions of a practical nature. But before he can accomplish this Socrates has to deal with Pericles' desire to recover the ancestral way of life.

The Athenians, according to Socrates, could recover their ancient virtue in two ways. First, if they could discover and practice their ancestral customs, they would be no worse off than their ancestors. Alternatively, they could imitate those who are now pre-eminent. In this connection, Socrates suggests that it is even possible for the Athenians to surpass the latter. Such a prospect presupposes that those currently in the lead are not as

diligent as they could be in the observation of their own customs (3:5:14). In other words, the current leaders seem to be no less vulnerable to the problem of overconfidence. And since their virtue is supposed to be compatible with the ancient virtue of the Athenians, Socrates seems to be suggesting that there may be no permanent solution to the problem of moral decline.

In the face of these alternatives, Pericles despairs of the possibility of the city recovering its ancient virtue. He finds the alternative no less elusive. For the example set by the Lacedaimonians seems to indicate that “nobility and goodness” are beyond the reach of the Athenians. Unlike the Lacedaimonians, the Athenians show no reverence for age and are contemptuous of authority. Worse yet, they have not only abandoned their civic duties, but are constantly engaged in personal conflicts both in private and in public. For these reasons, Pericles is greatly fearful lest some evil past endurance should befall the city. His concern for the fate of the city is no doubt genuine. Nonetheless, his evident admiration of the Lacedaimonians clearly sets him in opposition to the Athenian regime.

Socrates does not deny that the Athenians are depraved. But he claims that their conduct is not incorrigible. To support this claim, Socrates points to the excellent discipline maintained by the sailors, the athletes and the choristers (3:5:18; cf. 3:5:6). What these groups have in common is that they are made up of citizens from the poorer classes. More importantly, Socrates refers to these citizens in the context of their participation in the public activities of the city. The democracy is therefore not as unstable and anarchic as Pericles had depicted it. This partial defense of the Athenians,

moreover, reveals two related flaws in Pericles' judgement of the city. First, it shows that Pericles has not paid sufficient attention to significant aspects of Athenian life. Second, it reveals that the harshness of his judgement of the Athenians is due in no small measure to the fact that he takes a less comprehensive, and hence less realistic, approach to the problems afflicting the city.

Pericles, for his part, is surprised at the discipline of the poor citizens. For that reason, he is all the more distressed by the seemingly inexplicable disorder in the army. The army is mainly made up of citizens from the wealthier classes, and these citizens, according to Pericles, are supposed to be distinguished by their gentlemanliness. Apparently, it has not occurred to Pericles that the unrestrained competition for honor is a principal source of corruption in the army. In any case, he seems to regard the degeneration of the army as sufficient evidence for his belief that the city is lacking in nobility and goodness.

In order to correct Pericles' belief, Socrates refers to the council of the Aeropagus, which is an ancient institution composed of former magistrates who have passed the process of scrutiny. Pericles is then made to acknowledge that no other magistrates have acted "more nobly, more lawfully, more augustly, or most justly in their judgement of cases and in all other respects" (3:5:20). Consequently, Pericles can no longer maintain that nobility and goodness has no place in the democracy. Yet it ought to be noted that the functions of the Aeropagus have been severely restricted by policies that were largely determined by the elder Pericles.¹⁷ This indicates that it is not so much the people as its leaders who are to blame for the decline of moral authority in the city.

vi) On leadership

As a result of Socrates' defense of the Athenians, Pericles is more anxious than ever to learn why the army in particular is in such a deplorable state. According to Socrates, the ill-discipline among the soldiers may be attributed to the ignorance of their generals. Socrates is somehow unable or unwilling to furnish Pericles with a more precise explanation. Socrates' reserve in this regard may be due to the fact that he had earlier traced the good discipline of the sailors to fear (see 3:5:6). Thus, it is open to question whether the art of generalship is necessary to bring about good order. But, on the other hand, the art of generalship may be a sufficient condition for good order. The one who knows how to rule does not need to rely on chance or external exigencies to manage his subordinates, whereas most of the current crop of generals, according to Socrates, "make things up as they go along" (3:5:22).

Having questioned the competence of the generals, Socrates then proceeds to praise Pericles as the outstanding exception. In addition to the vast store of generalship he has inherited and preserved from his father, Pericles is praised for the initiatives he has taken to acquire as much military knowledge as possible. Pericles, to his credit, realizes that Socrates is making use of this praise to point out his deficiencies and to show him the way of becoming a good general. He does not deny that he needs to improve along the lines suggested by Socrates. In so doing, he tacitly acknowledges that his father had failed to provide him with an adequate education. This, in turn, raises questions about whether the elder statesman had given adequate thought to the future leadership of the city.

But now that Pericles has conceded to the criticism of his military competence, he is more amenable to instruction. Accordingly, Socrates turns the discussion back to the question of the military threat posed by the Boeotians. Taking into account the rugged terrain of the country, Socrates suggests that skirmishes carried out by small bands of lightly armed, young Athenians may be sufficient to frustrate the intentions of the Boeotians. As the primary mode of warfare, the use of light arms means that less emphasis would be placed on the hoplites and the cavalry. And since these arms are less expensive to acquire and maintain, many of the poorer citizens would be able to afford to join the army. The necessity of meeting the Boeotian threat thus leads to a fundamental reform of the army.

Apart from the reform of the army, Socrates' teaching raises considerations that conflict with the policies of the elder Pericles. To begin with, the teaching minimizes the threat posed by the Spartans by focusing exclusively on the dangers posed by the Boeotians. This indicates that Socrates is in principle not opposed to a policy of appeasement with the Spartans. The elder Pericles, on the other hand, was resolutely opposed to such a policy.¹⁸ He was, moreover, so determined to maintain the city's naval advantage that he was prepared to sacrifice the defense of the land in the event of an invasion.¹⁹ In contrast, Socrates' teaching presupposes the importance of protecting the land and envisages, consequently, an enlarged role for the army. Furthermore, by allowing manpower to be diverted from the fleet, Socrates' proposed reform of the army would invariably retard the growth of the navy.

While Pericles says that he appreciates the practical value of Socrates' teaching, it is not clear if he is fully aware of its radical implications. In any case, Socrates urges him to attempt those parts of it that please him. "For whichever of them you may accomplish, it will be both noble for you and good for the city, and should you fail in part, you will neither harm the city, nor disgrace yourself" (3:5:28). As Pericles has not only abandoned all hope of recapturing the city's former glory, but is now more aware of his inadequacies, it is necessary for Socrates to assure him that he can still hope to gain some recognition for himself by applying the lessons from this discussion. Socrates is apparently confident that his teaching would bring some benefit to the city. Nonetheless, he indicates that what would be good for the city may not necessarily be good for Pericles.

As noted in Xenophon's Hellenica, Pericles was one of the generals who were unjustly tried and executed after having led the successful naval campaign at Arginusae.²⁰ The generals were convicted on the charge of failing to rescue the shipwrecked sailors, even though they did in fact assign thirty ships for that very purpose. To the city, the campaign was essentially a rescue operation undertaken to break a blockade that was endangering over half the city's fleet. On the basis of the teaching conveyed in this conversation, it could be said that the campaign succeeded because the Athenians acted out of fear that they would lose the war.

Following the success of this campaign, the generals decided on a plan to pursue the enemy in order to gain a more complete victory. None of them stayed back to conduct the rescue of the shipwrecked sailors. As for the generals, it could be said that

they became over-confident, and in their haste to pursue the enemy they failed to appreciate the situation from the perspective of the majority of their subordinates, that is, the ordinary citizens. The tragic situation might not have occurred if the generals had succeeded with their plan, which had to be abandoned because of a storm that also impeded the rescue of the sailors. The fact that two of the generals chose not to return to the city after this indicates that the other generals may have been too confident that their actions would meet with the approval of the people. In view of these considerations, Pericles' tragedy could be seen as a result of his failure to reflect on Socrates' teaching on the nature and character of the democracy.

vii) Conclusion

Although the conversation deals ostensibly with the difficulties of Pericles, it reveals on examination an account of Socrates' critique of political idealism. In the case of Pericles, the conversation shows that while he is genuinely concerned with the fate of the city, he adopts a rigid aristocratic perspective that prevents him from finding a satisfactory solution to the city's military predicament. Stated simply, Pericles aims too high and ends up defeating himself in more ways than one. As a general, he cannot afford to allow himself to be absorbed by the problem of the city's moral degeneration. But when his hopes of recovering the city's ancient virtue are aroused, he shows how easily he can be distracted from attending to the more practical aspects of Socrates' teaching. And when those hopes are dashed, he, in frustration, foolishly declares his

sympathy for the Spartans, thus endangering himself by raising doubts about his attachment to the established Athenian regime.

Needless to say, Socrates must first try to restore Pericles' faith in the city. Hence, the references to the sailors are necessary to show Pericles that the Athenians can be motivated to obey their leaders. More importantly, by reminding him of the irreproachable conduct of the Aeropagites, Socrates effectively refutes Pericles' belief that the democracy in its present state is inhospitable to nobility and goodness. Last but not least, Socrates makes use of Pericles' remaining doubts about the integrity of the army to drive home the point that Pericles needs to improve himself by taking a more serious interest in acquiring the necessary knowledge of generalship. These measures, as a whole, are aimed at reducing the impediments to Pericles' practical judgement. Accordingly, they help him to see that the best way for him to realise his noble ambitions would be to take a more realistic and reasonable approach to the affairs of the city.

In his attempt to moderate Pericles' prejudices, Socrates does not invalidate the criticisms that Pericles levels at the city. But in his responses to them, Socrates reveals that they are largely connected to the policies of the elder Pericles. Thus, part of the reason why the Athenians have abandoned their traditions could be traced to the elder Pericles' depreciation of the achievements of the ancestors. Furthermore, the inordinate attention he gave to the navy would help to account for the demoralization of the army. And, in the final analysis, the decline of the city is attributed to those qualities the elder Pericles celebrated as the defining characteristics of the Athenians, namely, their daring and easy-goingness. As the leading policies of the elder Pericles were aimed at the

preservation and future expansion of the Athenian empire, Socrates' implicit criticism of them points to the necessity of moderating the imperial ambitions of the city.

To that end, Socrates' proposed reform of the army envisages an alternative strategy that would help to mitigate the excesses of the Athenians both at home and abroad. In the first place, the proposed reform does not prevent the poorer citizens from joining the army. Indeed, it even provides them with the incentive to do so by suggesting that they should be given some stake in the land which they are obliged as soldiers to defend, just as the sailors are rewarded with the fruits of the empire. This is in keeping with both Socrates' account of the desire for wealth and his reference to the excellence of the athletes and choristers, which indicate that the ordinary Athenians can be motivated to excel not only from fear but from considerations of wealth and honor. Thus, the proposed reform of the army appeals to the democratic sentiments of the people by responding appropriately to their fears and desires. And since it would retard the growth of the navy, it would consequently limit the imperial ambitions of the city.

All in all, Socrates' underlying political teaching is opposed to both the radicalization of the democracy under the elder Pericles and the absolute rejection of the democratic tradition entailed by the younger Pericles' desire to recover the city's ancient virtue. Socrates, to be sure, is sympathetic to the younger Pericles' desire for virtue. But for obvious reasons he refrains from raising the philosophical problems with the conventional understanding of virtue. Nonetheless, he points to them by reformulating the younger Pericles' desire as the desire for pre-eminence along with virtue. Socrates does not therefore deny that virtue, or some form of it, enables a city to realise its loftiest

aspirations. Yet, in addition to his account of the ancestors, Socrates' implied criticism of the growing over-confidence of the Boeotians and the Spartans indicates that the peak of political life is ultimately incompatible with the life of virtue. Virtue gradually but inevitably declines in the course of a city's successes in gaining power and reputation. That is to say, virtue in political life is more likely to be regarded as a means rather than an end in itself.

As the philosophical life is devoted to the quest for virtue, the Socratic criticism of the peak of political life points to the fundamental tension between philosophy and politics. In light of this tension, the conversation with the younger Pericles shows that philosophy is compatible with politics only to the limited extent that the aims of the latter involves beliefs and practices conducive to the pursuit of virtue. But ultimately, the quest for virtue needs to be insulated from the corruption by the competing goods of political life, namely wealth, power and glory. To preserve this quest, the philosopher must be fully prepared for the dangers confronting it. In other words, the preservation of philosophy depends on a comprehensive understanding of the scope and limits of political life. Thus, the conversation with the younger Pericles provides a further vindication of the philosophical way of life.

IV. Charmides

i) The conversation with Glaucon

Of the seven conversations devoted to the political citizens that involving Charmides is the only one which shows Socrates encouraging his interlocutor to enter

politics. But in the course of his attempt to overcome Charmides' reluctance to participate in the city's affairs, Socrates makes a shockingly derogatory remark about the Athenian demos. This remark in particular calls attention to Charmides' later rejection of the democracy.²¹ For Charmides did eventually become active in politics but as a collaborator in the anti-democratic revolt led by his uncle, Critias.²² We are thus immediately reminded of the charge that Socrates was responsible for the political crimes of some of his prominent associates (see 1:2:12) . For this reason, it is not entirely clear how this conversation could serve as an unequivocal example of Socrates' justice.

Xenophon has obviously taken an unusual risk in reporting this conversation. This might help to explain why he first refers to Charmides in the preceding account of Socrates' conversation with Glaucon, Charmides' nephew. Xenophon thus ensures that it would not be surprising to encounter the discussion with Charmides. More importantly, the conversation with Glaucon alludes to the financial difficulties of Charmides. We know that Charmides was born to a wealthy, aristocratic family.²³ But we also know that he was eventually reduced to a state of poverty under the democracy.²⁴ The conversation with Glaucon thus prepares us to consider the relation between Charmides' financial difficulties and Socrates' attempt to reconcile him with democracy.

Plato's name is also mentioned in the conversation with Glaucon. This suggests that there may be a philosophical dimension to the conversation between Socrates and Charmides. From Plato, we learn that Charmides was only a youth when he was encouraged by Critias to become a follower of Socrates.²⁵ In Xenophon's Symposium, Charmides is in fact depicted as a constant companion of Socrates.²⁶ What this seems to

imply in the context of Socrates' attempt to persuade Charmides to enter politics is that Charmides is somehow not suited or not fully prepared for the life of philosophy. In that case, the arguments employed to persuade Charmides might help to reveal some aspects of Socrates' understanding of the demands of the philosophical way of life.

ii) Charmides' noble ambition

Xenophon says at the very outset that Socrates initiated this conversation because he saw that Charmides was “a man worthy of note and far more able than the politicians of the day, but was hesitant to approach the demos and to attend to the city's affairs” (3:7:1).²⁷ Charmides first comes to sight as a gentleman who prefers to lead the quiet life of a private citizen. Yet Xenophon has included him among those who “longed for the noble things” (3:1:1). Moreover, as a respectable member of an old and distinguished family, Charmides probably takes great pride in his aristocratic heritage. But a high-born gentleman is supposed to be animated by the desire to be “an exceedingly good worker of what is noble and August” (2:1:27). Hence, Charmides' reluctance to engage in the city's affairs appears to be at odds with his aristocratic background. Perhaps this is why Socrates thinks Charmides would be better off as an active citizen of the democracy.

To gain Charmides' attention Socrates begins the conversation by using an analogy to criticize Charmides for neglecting his duties to the city. He first leads Charmides to say that an athlete who avoids competition even though he is capable of winning honor for himself and his fatherland is both a weakling and a coward. Then, using Charmides' own words, Socrates proceeds to suggest that Charmides is behaving

like this athlete by avoiding the city's affairs. It is clearly quite insulting to accuse a gentleman of cowardice. But since the criticism is merely suggested by way of an analogy, its force is necessarily blunted. Charmides, for his part, responds appropriately by not taking offense. Instead, he is keen to learn the reasons behind Socrates' criticism, no doubt because he is now aware that his reputation is at stake.

After hearing Socrates' explanation, Charmides does not deny that it is incumbent on him as a citizen to participate in the city's affairs. He questions, however, Socrates' opinion that it is within his abilities to undertake this responsibility. He thus makes it seem like he is unable rather than unwilling to attend to the city's affairs. In reply, Socrates tells Charmides that he has formed this opinion of him by observing his dealings with the politicians. "For in fact whenever they consult with you on some matter I see you advising them nobly and, whenever they err in something, censuring them correctly" (3:7:3). Contrary to the impression given by Charmides, this observation reveals that he is willing to be indirectly involved in the city's affairs. In the first place, he seems to be willing to engage the politicians. In the second place, he appears to have acquired a reputation that has attracted the politicians to him.

What is more, the observation shows that there is a striking resemblance between Charmides' mode of conduct and Socrates'. Apart from his long association with Socrates, this seems to reflect Charmides' high regard for certain aspects of the latter's way of life. In particular, his conduct with the politicians is similar to Socrates' manner of exhorting and admonishing his companions. As noted by Xenophon, Socrates taught his companions by making them desire virtue and giving them the hope that by imitating

him they would come to be noble and good (1:2:2-3; see also 1:2:18). Charmides seems to have taken this teaching to heart. Taken to its logical conclusion, this form of imitation implies that Charmides aspires to be a citizen-philosopher. In the Socratic context, such an ambition would presuppose that Charmides has the ability and temperament to pursue philosophy seriously. But then Socrates' intention of persuading Charmides to enter politics indicates that Charmides is either not suited or not fully prepared for the life of philosophy.

iii) Charmides and the politicians

As it stands, the observation of Charmides' conduct serves not only to further the claim that he is competent and hence obligated to enter politics, but to reinforce the criticism that his reluctance to do so merely reflects his fear of the competition in public life. Charmides is therefore compelled to defend the legitimacy and propriety of his private dealings with the politicians. Accordingly, he responds to the observation by saying that "it is not the same thing to converse in private and to compete among the multitude" (3:7:4). To Charmides, the aims and dynamics of the private and public modes of discourse are just not compatible. Along with the element of competition he identifies the democratic process of adjudication as the dominant characteristics of public discourse. In so doing, he implies that his private conversations are governed neither by the desire for victory nor the need to appeal to popular opinion.

Charmides' characterization of the public mode of discourse points to the problem of the intense rivalry for leadership in the city (see, for example, 2:6:17-20). To win the

support of the people, the politicians are often driven to attack one another and, in the process of doing so, to assume an extreme position regarding what they hold to be in the city's best interest. By leaving little room for compromise, these public disputes invariably deepen the divisions within the city. One could perhaps try to resolve this problem by making the politicians see that it benefits them as well as the city to cooperate with one another. But then one would have to approach them in a context that does not compel them to compete amongst themselves. As for Charmides, this consideration leads to the praiseworthy notion that he may have been attempting to resolve or to moderate the disputes in public by enlightening the politicians in his private dealings with them. If so, then it would seem that, far from being fearful of competition, Charmides has deliberately refrained from it only because he does not wish to enlarge the disputes that corrode the unity of the city.

In his response to Charmides' defense of his private dealings with the politicians, Socrates simply denies the difference between the public and private modes of discourse. He tells Charmides that one who excels in counting or in playing the cithara is able to perform either of these skills well alone and in a crowd (3:7:4) . Socrates thus makes it clear that he sees no difference between a small group and a large gathering. Moreover, he suggests that Charmides' private conversations are not in fact significantly free of those troubling elements that infect the realm of public discourse. Charmides is therefore naive to think that he can transcend the struggle with vulgar opinion and base motives in his private intercourse with the politicians. He seems to have neglected the possibility that the politicians who consult with him treat his conversations as a kind of contest

because they perceive him as a potential, if not an actual, competitor. Indeed, as Socrates will later verify, some of them in fact have nothing but contempt for Charmides (3:7:7). It would be a mistake, then, for Charmides to think that he can moderate those who are not in sympathy with him. In view of this, it would make more sense for Charmides to pursue his political project by competing with these politicians in public and to rally the people to his side.

iv) Charmides and the people

Through the examples of the mathematician and the musician Socrates underscores the point that Charmides has the rational as well as the rhetorical skills necessary for public life. The example of the cithara player, however, indicates that technical proficiency is not sufficient for success in political life. Unless he appeals to the taste of his audience, the skilled musician cannot reasonably hope to win its approval. As for Charmides, this example means that he has to gain an adequate and sympathetic understanding of the Athenian demos. He needs, in short, some experience in dealing directly with the masses.

But Charmides now claims that he is inhibited from approaching the people because of a natural sense of “fear and awe” which exerts itself more powerfully in crowds than in private company (3:7:5). In stressing its naturalness, he reveals that it is a particularly dominant aspect of his character. This suggests that he is by nature inclined to acquiesce to the established conventions of the city. So even though he may have reservations about the conduct of the democratic assembly, he is not likely to question or

to challenge its authority. In other words, Charmides' sense of fear and awe prevents him from being an extreme or radical thinker.

In his response to Charmides, Socrates reveals that he has long suspected that Charmides' unduly respectful attitude towards the democracy is the main reason for his reluctance to approach the people.

In fact I have set out to teach you that you, who feel no awe of those who are prudent and no shame of those who are strongest, are ashamed to speak among those who are both the most senseless and the weakest. Is it the fullers among them or the shoemakers or the carpenters or the smiths or the farmers or the merchants or those who barter in the agora and worry about what they can buy for less and sell for more whom you feel shame before? For it is from these that the assembly is composed. (3:7:5-6)

Socrates is apparently convinced that Charmides needs above all to learn this particular lesson about the Athenian people. Yet, why is it necessary for Socrates to teach this lesson by rendering such a harsh and provocative judgement of them? The most immediate explanation for this is that Socrates somehow thinks that Charmides needs to be shocked into seeing the people for what they really are. In other words, Charmides' native sense of fear and awe has led him to mystify the authority of the people to such a great extent that Socrates is compelled to resort to this radical corrective.

It is clearly not Socrates' intention to turn Charmides against the people. Still, in paving the way for Charmides to approach the people, Socrates' teaching has the effect of reversing Charmides' attitude towards them. The teaching aims not only to liberate Charmides from his deference towards the people, but to ensure that he does not lose sight of his superiority to them. In this latter regard, Socrates goes on to remind

Charmides of his superiority to the politicians. But Socrates also makes it a point to tell Charmides that, while some of the politicians are contemptuous of him, the people by and large are not (3:7:7). Since the people bear him no ill-will, it should go without saying that Charmides has no good reason to treat them harshly.

Now, even though Charmides is unable to deny that he should not feel shame before the people, he is still not persuaded that he should therefore deal directly with them. He points to the futility of such an effort by noting that those in the assembly frequently ridicule those who speak correctly. But then, Socrates immediately reminds him that the politicians too are just as notorious in this particular regard, and yet Charmides has shown how easily he has been able to handle this problem in his private dealings with them. It would be surprising, Socrates says, if Charmides is unable to find some way of handling the people. This, however, implies that Charmides should not treat the people in exactly the same way as he treats the politicians. Here, Socrates may be reminding Charmides that the people are not his rivals but potential allies. At the same time, and in accordance with this reminder, he seems to be suggesting that Charmides needs to adapt himself to the character of the people.

v) Charmides' self-understanding

Having shown Charmides that there is no excuse for him to avoid the assembly, Socrates concludes the conversation by telling Charmides that it is in his best interest to attend to the city's affairs.

Do not be ignorant of yourself, good fellow, and don't err the way most do; for the many, having set out to examine the affairs of the others, do not turn to taking themselves under review. So don't be easygoing about this, but rather exert yourself to pay attention to yourself. And don't neglect the city's affairs, if due to you they can be in a somewhat better state. For when these things go well (kalōs echonton), not only the other citizens but your friends and, not least, yourself will benefit. (3:7:9).

Still, it is not clear how Charmides' involvement in the city's affairs will help him to understand himself better. Stated differently, what aspects of his personal life has Charmides neglected that is related to the affairs of the city? An answer to this question is suggested in the account of Socrates' conversation with Charmides' nephew, Glaucon. According to Xenophon, Charmides approached Socrates because he was worried about his nephew's foolish endeavor to speak before the assembly. To gratify Charmides, Socrates spoke to the young man and convinced him that he lacked the knowledge to lead the city. A considerable part of the conversation with Glaucon dealt with the question of how to make the city richer. In that context, Glaucon was told that the city is nothing more than a collection of households. And since he did not even have the rudimentary experience of running a single household and making it profitable, Socrates advised him to help his uncle. As for Charmides, Socrates made it clear then that he was in need of help with his household affairs (see 3:6:14).

The conversation with Glaucon thus points to Charmides' financial difficulties. We know from Xenophon's Symposium that Charmides would eventually be reduced to a state of poverty, a condition for which he would blame the city (see Sym 4:29-33). Like every other wealthy citizen, Charmides is not only constantly harassed by the

sycophants, but he is also burdened with various costly liturgies that the city imposes on the rich. Charmides' household affairs are therefore greatly affected by the policies of the city. But his inability to cope with these demands on his wealth means that he is seriously lacking in certain essential household skills, in particular the practical knowledge of money-making. In Charmides' case it is relevant to recall that he was raised in a wealthy, aristocratic family. As a high-born gentleman, he is most likely to frown on money-making as a vulgar pursuit. Accordingly, his ignorance of it may be attributed to this typical aristocratic prejudice. In view of these considerations, it would be safe to assume that Socrates' parting advice is aimed at Charmides' inability to manage his wealth.

This, however, raises an immediate problem. On the basis of the conversation with Glaucon, which stresses the importance of making the city richer, Charmides' inability to manage his wealth would seem to disqualify him as a suitable leader of the city. Why, then, is Socrates here treating Charmides as an exception? To resolve this problem, we might re-consider the contrast between Charmides and the people presented in this conversation.

In his criticism of the people, Socrates underlines the fact that they are essentially economic workers engaged in some productive or commercial activity. Thus, even though they are said to be senseless and weak, it is implied that they are nonetheless skilled in their respective trade or profession. Charmides, on the other hand, has no particular trade or profession to speak of. But his education and upbringing would have instilled in him the belief in the choice worthiness of the pursuit of the gentlemanly or

moral virtues. As opposed to a maker of things, Charmides is trained to be a doer of high and noble deeds. Indeed, both the observation of his conduct with the politicians and the repeated comparison of him to a trained athlete attest to the excellence of his understanding and practice of the moral virtues. So, even though he lacks the skills of the economist, he far exceeds the people and the politicians in terms of his ability to offer the city sound, moral guidance. To prevail among the many, however, Charmides would have to accommodate their vulgar desire for wealth; that is to say, he would have to overcome his prejudice against money-making. In so doing he would be more disposed to acquire the knowledge necessary to improve the material well being of the city, and thereby realize his potential and ambition to be a benefactor of the city. Thus, if he were to take Socrates' advice seriously, Charmides would stand to gain in terms of his practical knowledge as well as his self-understanding.

vi) Conclusion

Through this conversation, Socrates shows that Charmides' reluctance to participate in the democracy is ultimately self-defeating as it serves only to aggravate his difficulties with the established regime. Charmides is, in the first place, clearly troubled by the questionable conduct of the Athenian assembly. Yet, he is unable to resolve this problem because he has foolishly limited the scope of his political activities. This not only frustrates the public aims of his training and education, but it also impedes the progress of his self-understanding. In the second place, his present situation is complicated by his inability to manage his financial obligations to the city. All this

points to the precarious state of Charmides' uneasy relationship with the democracy. Accordingly, Socrates' attempt here to reconcile Charmides with the democracy is both timely and appropriate, not to mention just.

The conversation also reveals that there is a philosophical aspect to Socrates' interest in encouraging Charmides' involvement in the political life of the city. In keeping with his aristocratic heritage, Charmides appears to be a morally serious gentleman. Indeed, he seems to have modeled himself after the gentlemanly aspects of Socrates' way of life. But then the tension between Charmides' unduly high regard for the Athenian assembly and his evident doubts about its integrity betrays a critical flaw in his understanding of virtue. This, in turn, implies that he may have misconceived the Socratic way of life. As a result, he may in time come to regret, or even to resent, his misguided attempt to emulate that way of life. Under these circumstances, it is not altogether inappropriate for Socrates to make use of his critique of the democracy to address Charmides' underlying misconception of the life of virtue.

The immediate aim of Socrates' critique of the democracy is to help Charmides resolve his ambivalent attitude towards the Athenian demos. While it does not deny that the public conduct of the people may seem contemptible from a strict aristocratic point of view, it shows that in private the ordinary citizens are not entirely devoid of virtue. In their private lives, many of these citizens labor productively to improve their material conditions. In this regard, the critique aims to overcome Charmides' prejudice against the vulgar but necessary practice of money-making. This, however, implies that

Charmides' aristocratic conception of virtue is flawed in that it impedes his self-improvement.

Socrates' critique of the democracy thus reveals that the genuine pursuit of virtue requires critical reflection on all the prevailing opinions of virtue. But this would mean that the pursuit of virtue is ultimately incompatible with political life, which is fundamentally based on opinion. Charmides' participation in the ill-fated attempt to overthrow the democracy and to restore the city's ancient constitution would seem to indicate that he was unable or unwilling to compromise his noble aspirations by accommodating the vulgar concerns of the Athenian demos. His rejection of the democracy thus points to the irreconcilable differences between the aristocratic and democratic conceptions of virtue. But this shows that some degree of detachment from the moral concerns of the city is necessary to resolve the fundamental conflicts in political life. So even though Socrates failed to moderate Charmides, the conversation shows that the awareness of the tension between virtue and politics may nonetheless lead some political citizens to adopt a more sober and prudent approach to the moral conflicts afflicting the city.

V. Conclusion: Socrates' interaction with the political citizens

Despite apparent differences in character and ability, each of the three political citizens examined in this chapter showed that he was motivated by the ambition to glorify the city along lines dictated by his particular understanding of the noble things. But the predicament each of them encountered in his attempt to realize his ambition brought to light a problem that threatened to deepen a pre-existing quarrel with the democracy.

Ultimately, all of them felt that the ideals informing their noble ambitions were being endangered by the unrestrained and discreditable conduct of the democratic regime.

Nicomachides blamed his defeat in the election of the city's general on what he had long regarded as the characteristic abuses of the democracy. More importantly, the election of Antisthenes signified to him a blatant betrayal of those principles that had defined his way of life as a citizen-soldier. In the case of the younger Pericles, his desire to recover the city's ancient virtue led him to indict the conduct of the democracy for the demoralization of the army. To the younger Pericles, the possibility of recovering the city's virtue depended decisively on the excellence of the class of gentlemen which traditionally dominated the army. In view of the proclivity of the people to ridicule the counsel of those who adopted a strict moral perspective on the city's affairs, Charmides felt that he was compelled to find an alternative but invariably dissatisfying means of expressing his political concerns. As exemplified by his later rejection of the democracy, there would be a point at which he could no longer tolerate the excesses of the democracy.

Through the exchange with the political citizens, Socrates showed that their disagreements with the democracy were only partially justified. In the course of doing so, he revealed that their opinions of the city were invariably distorted not only by their exclusive focus on the noble, but by their questionable understanding of it as well. Thus, without denying their legitimate grievances against the democracy, Socrates showed that they were in fact ignorant of the complex nature of the city they each sought to influence or to govern. They were, in short, too easygoing about the very objects of their ambition.

But apart from exposing their principal defects, Socrates also pointed to the necessary steps each of them had to take both to improve himself and to make himself more deserving of the right to lead the city.

Nicomachides was shown that he had to transcend the narrow horizon of the warrior and to acquire the practical skills and, above all, the comprehensive outlook of the good household manager to become truly worthy of the generalship. The younger Pericles was made to see that his biased concern for the condition of the army was the source of his ignorance of the military capacity of the ordinary citizens and hence the cause of his unfounded anxieties regarding the city's prospects in the war against the Spartans. As for Charmides, he was led to see that he needed to engage in the affairs of the democracy in order to overcome his ambivalent attitude towards it and to realize his potential and desire to become a moral guardian of the city.

On the basis of these explicitly political conversations, it is quite clear that Socrates was neither a partisan nor, more importantly, a covert enemy of the Athenian democracy. While he did not deny that the regime necessarily fell short of the lofty standards held by the political citizens, he nevertheless argued the case that it was not as such an utterly depraved and incorrigible regime. The election of Antisthenes and the younger Pericles, which Socrates approved, demonstrated that the democracy was not intractably hostile to either the wealthy or the morally serious gentleman, in spite of the fact that the majority of its citizens were poor and vulgar. As regards its improvement, Socrates broadly indicated that the active participation of those citizens who were skilled in the art of household management and who, in addition, shared or were sympathetic to

the conservatism of the aristocratic gentleman could help to moderate the excesses of the democracy. As a whole, his conversations with the political citizens pointed to a preference for a mixed regime, or a moderate and conservative democracy.

Contrary to this political preference, the conversation with Charmides revealed that there was a radical and progressive aspect to Socrates' philosophical way of life. Apart from the explicit criticism of the democracy, the principle underlying the attempt to liberate Charmides from his native sense of fear and awe showed that the genuine pursuit of virtue required a certain type of courage or daring, the purpose of which was to facilitate the critical examination of the authoritative opinions of the city. The advice to Charmides reflected Socrates' relentless quest for self-knowledge; that is, his overarching concern for his self-improvement. His way of life was therefore necessarily in tension with the demands of citizenship. Yet, on the other hand, the problem posed by Charmides showed that it was necessary to transcend the realm of political opinion in order to grasp the essential limits or the fundamental problems of political life.

Notes

1. E.C. Marchant, Xenophon in Seven Volumes, 4:xiv, says that only the first seven chapters are political. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.180, shows on the other hand, that the conversation with Epigenes in chapter twelve is "emphatically political."
2. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.55, says that Xenophon's editorial statement implies that Socrates "did not encourage political ambition itself."
3. Difference in class or social standing may also account for Nicomachides' hostility towards Antisthenes. In the Anabasis (3:4:47), Xenophon recounts an episode in which a soldier expressed his envy of the knights.
4. In chapter two of book three, Socrates compares a good general to a good king. Socrates' references to kingship may have inspired the charge that he taught his companions to become tyrants, see Mem. 1:2:56-58.
5. In the Cyropaedia (8:3:35-50), one of Cyrus' captains, Pheraulas, who prefers the life of action, tells his friend that he would be only too glad to relieve himself of the burdens of managing his household.
6. This perhaps helps to explain why Nicomachides did not object to Socrates' comparison of the householder manager with the legislator (see 3:4:6).
7. In his Politics (1253b1-1255b4), Aristotle takes issue with those who hold that the art of household management is the same as the kingly art. See also, Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.63-64.
8. The authenticity of this dialogue has been questioned. In 3:5:4, Pericles says that the Boeotians are prepared to attack Athens by themselves. According to a number of commentators, this military event is only relevant to the period of the Theban supremacy following the battle of Leuctra in 371 B.C., that is, long after both Socrates and Pericles' deaths. See Robin Waterfield, "Memoirs of Socrates: Introduction" in Xenophon: Conversations with Socrates, p.54; E.C. Marchant, Socrates in Seven Volumes; 4:xv; Hans Rudolf Breitenbach, Xenophon von Athen (Stuttgart, 1966), p.1809; and Karl Joel, Der Echte und der Xenophontische Sokrates (Berlin, 1901), p.1080. This problem, however, does not affect our analysis of the dialogue. At any rate, it is not clear to us why Pericles' remark on the ambition of the Boeotians would only makes sense in the

context of events following the battle of Leuctra. It seems that Pericles' remark should first be considered within the context of his account of the battle of Coronea (446 B.C.) and the battle of Delium (424 B.C.). Since the Athenians lost both of these battles to the Boeotians, Pericles' remark may be only an expression of his concern with the increasing boldness of the Boeotians.

Marchant, Socrates in Seven Volumes, 4:xv, raises a further problem with the dating of the dialogue. He suggests, without explanation, that the dialogue may have occurred in 411 B.C. We know from Xenophon's Hellenica that Pericles was elected general in 407 B.C., but there is no record of him being elected general in 411 B.C. There is, however, some evidence that he was appointed treasurer (Hellenotamias) in 410/411 B.C., see J.K. Davies, Athenian Propertied Families (Oxford, 1971), p.458. For further comments on dating of the dialogue, see A. Delatte, Le Troisieme Livre des Souvenirs Socratiques de Xenophon (Paris, 1933), pp.61-62.

9. Thucydides, 2:36.
10. Pericles may have felt that he had a special obligation to accept the office. In the first place, he was the sole surviving member of the family, and hence the only one who could continue the tradition of leadership set by father. In the second place, according to Plutarch (Pericles 38), Pericles was born out of wedlock, and was therefore disqualified from citizenship by a law his father caused to be passed against illegitimate children. But the city suspended the law as a favor to the father after his legitimate sons died in the plague that ravaged the city. By thus gaining citizenship, the younger Pericles also inherited his father's debt to the city.
11. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.64, suggests that it is significant that the word "dialogizomenoi" occurs only here in Xenophon's Socratic writings.
12. Thucydides, 1:113 and 4:89-101. See also J.B. Bury and Russell Meiggs, A History of Greece, 4th edition (London, 1975), p.223 and pp.276-278.
13. Thucydides, 1:142-143.
14. In the Cyropaedia (2:1:9-18), Xenophon shows how Cyrus succeeded in transforming the Persian army by enlisting the support of the commoners. See also W.R. Newell, "Tyranny and the Science of Ruling in Xenophon's Education of Cyrus" in Journal of Politics (1983), vol.45, pp.897-898. Later in the dialogue, Socrates will raise the possibility of using lightly-armed soldiers to defend the city (Mem. 3:5:26-27).

15. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.65, says that the mention of the gods is in harmony with "the praise of antiquity, the ancestors and the paternal that pervades the whole conversation." But it is noteworthy that in his praise of Spartan customs and practices, Pericles does not mention either the gods or the Spartan's piety (see. Mem. 3:5:15-16).
16. The traditional view was that it was Cecrops who decided the contest between Athena and Poseidon, concerning which of the two would be the patron deity of the city.
17. Aristotle, Politics 1274a7-8, and Constitution of Athens 27.1. See also J.M. Moore, Aristotle and Xenophon on Democracy and Oligarchy (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1975), pp.251-252.
18. Thucydides, 1:140.
19. Thucydides, 1:143.
20. Xenophon, Hellenica 1:6:24-38 and 1:7:1-35.
21. Gregory Vlastos, "The Historical Socrates and Athenian Democracy" in Political Theory, vol.11, pp.505-512, cites this passage to challenge the truth of Xenophon's account of Socrates. cf. I.F. Stone, The Trial of Socrates, pp.117-118.
22. Xenophon, Hellenica 2:4:19.
23. Plato, Charmides 157e-158b,
24. Xenophon, Symposium 4:31-33.
25. Plato, Charmides 176b-d.
26. Xenophon, Symposium 4:32.
27. This is the first time that the word demos occurs in the section devoted to conversations with the political citizens. See Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.73. cf. Mem. 4:2:36-39.

Chapter Five

The Non-Political Stranger Aristippus

I. Introduction

According to Diogenes Laertes, Aristippus was the first Socratic to become a sophist, that is, a professional teacher. Aristippus is also held to be the founder of a school of philosophy which taught, among other things, a special form of hedonism.¹ In the Memorabilia, he is depicted as a companion who claims that he has the ability to teach the political art. He is also shown expressing a view of life which reflects that of the sophist Antiphon (cf. 2:1:9 with 1:6:2-3). More significantly, he tells Socrates that he intends to live as a stranger in order to avoid the unpleasant demands of political life. It is for this reason that we are treating him here as the prime example of the non-political stranger.

Aristippus is featured twice in the Memorabilia. He is first introduced as a companion who is extremely deficient in continence. In their first encounter, Socrates devotes considerable effort to showing that it is necessary for Aristippus to assume some civic responsibilities which would entail some measure of self-control. Socrates, however, concludes his teaching with an elaborate defense of the life of the public-spirited gentleman. But since Aristippus has explicitly rejected the political way of life, we are led to ask whether he derived any actual benefit from this teaching.²

In their next encounter, Aristippus tries to refute Socrates' understanding of the good and the noble. This suggests that he was particularly dissatisfied with Socrates'

defense of the gentleman, who is by definition both noble and good. But this encounter also ends on an ambiguous note. We are not told whether Aristippus was persuaded by Socrates' attempt to defend the virtue of the gentleman on the basis of its utility. As a whole, these encounters seem to cast doubt on the adequacy of Socrates' defense of political life.

According to Xenophon, both of these encounters took place in the presence of other companions. In fact, the chapter which reported the second encounter concludes with an account of a separate discussion Socrates had with those companions who witnessed Aristippus' attempts to refute Socrates. Furthermore, this chapter is set in the context of Xenophon's recollection of conversations Socrates had with the political citizens. All this seems to suggest that Socrates' defense of political life may have been partly intended for the purpose of insulating these companions from the potentially corrupting effects of Aristippus' attempt to vindicate his alternative way of life. As for Aristippus, it may have been used as a means to warn him of the dangers of offending the class of political citizens. In other words, these encounters could be seen as illustrations of Socrates' attempts to reconcile two competing sets of companions: those, like Aristippus, who rejected politics and turned to philosophy, and those, like Critias or Alcibiades, who rejected philosophy and turned to politics.

II. The First Encounter with Aristippus

i) Continenence and politics

Xenophon says that this encounter illustrates how Socrates "exhorted his companions to practice continence in their desire for meat and drink, and in regard to lust, sleep, cold, heat, and labor" (2:1:1). This suggests that Socrates intended to use this encounter to benefit his other companions as well. We are then told that Socrates initiated this encounter because he was aware that Aristippus was incontinent in all the stated respects. The extreme nature of Aristippus' incontinence thus made it appropriate for Socrates to use Aristippus to convey his teaching on the importance of self-mastery.

Socrates does not begin by addressing Aristippus' incontinence directly. Instead, he begins by asking Aristippus to consider how he would educate two youths: the first so that he would be competent to rule, and the second so that he would not even lay claim to rule. Socrates thus opens the conversation by treating Aristippus as a competent teacher of politics. He may have taken this approach because Aristippus is or aspires to be a sophist.

The ensuing discussion concentrates on the education of the first youth. The education of the second youth is not explicitly considered. In the latter's case, Socrates seems to assume that it is not necessary to train him in continence.³ But this is clearly insufficient to ensure that he would not lay claim to rule.⁴ The ambiguity regarding the education of the second youth suggests that the treatment of the first youth may be equally open to question.

The discussion regarding the first youth begins and ends with his training in continence. But in the middle of it Socrates digresses to ask Aristippus if it is necessary for this youth to learn "whatever learning there is that would be serviceable for overpowering one's enemies" (2:1:3). In reply, Aristippus not only agrees that this is necessary, but adds that "there is no benefit from the other things without such learning" (2:1:3). This would seem to imply that a continent person would not be fit to rule unless he has acquired the political art. Conversely, an incontinent person would not be unfit to rule if he knows the political art. In any case, the relation between continence and ruling does not appear to be quite as simple as Socrates had initially made it out to be.

Having established the necessity of learning the political art, Socrates goes on to emphasize its usefulness in helping one avoid capture and enslavement (2:1:4). He then turns to speak in great detail about the dangers of adultery (2:1:5). Aristippus agrees that adultery is foolish. But because he is sexually incontinent, he may be underestimating the power of his erotic desires and consequently his ability to resist the charms of a married woman.⁵ Along with the emphasis on the defensive aspects of the political art, the remarks on adultery seem to reflect Socrates' doubts about Aristippus' ability to conduct his affairs in safety.

These doubts are vindicated at the end of the discussion of the two youths. Socrates concludes it by acknowledging, and thereby tacitly praising Aristippus' political understanding. More precisely, he says that Aristippus knows the order of the tribes of those who are fit to rule and their opposites (2:1:7). The acknowledgment, however, considers the order of the tribes only from the point of view of continence. It fails to

account for the political art, which points to a more complex division of the tribes. Consequently, it is based on the false assumption that those who are continent belong without qualification to the tribe of rulers.

The acknowledgment is in fact a spurious one. Aristippus, for his part, appears to be quite pleased with it. This, however, proves that he can be easily misled. And it is by misleading him in this way that Socrates is able to show that Aristippus is not even aware that he lacks an adequate understanding of the political art. Aristippus' lack of self-understanding implies that he does not realize that he has a problem with his incontinence. In other words, he would be gravely mistaken if he thing that he can deal with the dangers to which his incontinence exposes him.

ii) Aristippus' view of political life

On the understanding that there are only two classes of individuals, namely those who are fit to rule and those who would not lay claim to rule, Socrates proceeds to ask Aristippus whether he has ever examined in which class he would justly put himself. In reply, Aristippus claims that he has thought about this matter before and has arrived at the opinion that he would not put himself at all in the class of those who "wish to rule" (2:1:8). Aristippus has not only ignored the requirement to approach the question from the perspective of justice, but he assumes without justification that those who are fit to rule also wish to rule. By doing so, however, he indicates that the fundamental question for him has to do with the desirability of the political way of life.

Without any prompting from Socrates, Aristippus goes to explain why he would not wish to rule. A ruler, he asserts, is not only expected to set aside his personal needs while attending to the needs of fellow citizens, but he even undergoes a penalty "unless he accomplishes everything the city wishes" (2:1:8). In short, rulers are treated no better than servants or even slaves.⁶ So only a fool would wish to rule. Aristippus obviously thinks he is wiser than those who wish to rule. Yet it would seem rather imprudent of him to expose the folly of rulers so openly and explicitly.

Aristippus implicitly denies that there is justice understood as the common good. At the same time, he seems to be opposed to tyranny or the rule over unwilling subjects. Tyrants, he suggest, are not, strictly speaking, rulers. They are more like household masters. Ruling properly understood presupposes a community of free and equal citizens. But then Aristippus also states that all citizens are household masters. In that capacity, they behave like tyrants thinking that they are somehow justified in exploiting their slaves for personal profit (2:1:9). Now, if all citizens are habituated to this mode of thinking in private, what is there to prevent a clever and resourceful ruler from contriving to transform the city into his personal domain? As it stands, Aristippus' view of ruling does not offer a solution to this problem. Rather, by exposing the folly of ruling, it helps to pave the way for tyranny.

Having explained why he would not wish to rule, Aristippus proudly declares that he puts himself in the class of those who wish to live "as easily and as pleasantly as possible" (2:1:9). Given the context, Aristippus here implies that those citizens who avoid public office live easily and pleasantly. Socrates, however, treats Aristippus'

remark to mean that those who do not wish to rule are contend to be ruled. He then proceeds on this premise to examine Aristippus' view of ruling.

Socrates begins by asking Aristippus to consider which of the following live more pleasantly: cities and nations that rule or those that are ruled. The question is clearly rhetorical. But the expected reply to it does not refute Aristippus' contention that rulers are badly treated by their fellow citizens. For that contention is based on the consideration of individuals within a political community. What Socrates' question does instead is to reveal that Aristippus' view of ruling is not sufficiently comprehensive, in that it does not take into account the question of the relation among political communities. Moreover, by showing that ruling is in the interest of all members of a political community, Socrates' question restores the notion of a common good. In all, it shows that Aristippus cannot maintain the view that ruling as such is simply foolish and unpleasant.

iii) Aristippus' alternative

To avoid the difficulties raised by Socrates' question, Aristippus now claims that there is a middle path that goes through neither ruling nor slavery. This is the path of freedom, which "especially leads to happiness" (2:1:11). In response, Socrates denies that this path is viable on the grounds that human life is necessarily political. To underscore this point, he reminds Aristippus that the stronger "both collectively and privately" seek to overpower the weaker in every sphere of human life. To live among human being, therefore, one must either rule or be ruled, or else submit oneself

voluntarily to those who rule (2:1:12). The third option indicates that there is in fact a viable alternative to ruling and slavery.

Aristippus, however, ignores that alternative because he thinks he has found a way to avoid the conflicts of political life. "I, for my part, do not confine myself to any regime but am a stranger everywhere" (2:1:13). As the regime determines the rights and duties of citizens, it is clear that Aristippus here means to avoid all forms of civic responsibility. He may be more resolved to do this now that he has been reminded of the fact that citizens are obliged to go to war to defend the city. He thinks that he can preserve his freedom and security by moving from city to city.

But Aristippus is apparently deluding himself. In the first place, he has evidently overlooked the dangers that criminals pose to the solitary traveler when he is on the road (2:1:14).⁷ Furthermore, he fails to see that even though citizens willingly submit themselves to the rule of law and undertake other necessary precautions to avoid suffering injustice, they nevertheless find that they cannot escape entirely from what they fear (2:1:14-15). This means that the solitary stranger would be far more exposed to the injustice of others. And that is not all that he has to worry about. By calling attention to the sacrifices and suffering of law-abiding citizens, Socrates indicates that Aristippus would also have to reckon with the moral indignation of these citizens.

Aristippus cannot deny that he lives "a very costly way of life" (2:1:15). This means that he cannot get by without the help of slaves. He is therefore dependent on the regimes that sanction the institution of slavery. Without their tacit support, Aristippus would be in no position to exploit his slaves, let alone prevent them from harming him.

As his well-being depends on these regimes, it would be patently unjust for him to disavow all obligation to them. And if he is unjust, then he deserves to be punished.

In order to alert Aristippus to this problem, Socrates asks him to consider how he would deal with a lazy and incontinent slave. In reply, Aristippus says that he would have to punish such a slave "with everything bad" until he becomes a reliable helper (2:1:17). Since Aristippus is aware that a useless individual is a costly liability, he should realize how every city would react to his blatantly irresponsible way of life. To avoid the fate of the useless slave, he would have to make himself useful to the regimes; that is, he cannot help but submit to those who rule. Regimes, however, differ from city to city. By not confining himself to any one of them, Aristippus in effect ends up having to serve many masters. So even though he need not abandon his plan to live as a stranger, his way of life now appears to be more troublesome than that of the ordinary citizen.

iv) Socrates' defense of political life

Thus far, Socrates has been defending the notion of citizenship against Aristippus' unpolitical and hedonistic way of life. But the preceding discussion of the slave has somehow given Aristippus the impression that Socrates equates the "kingly art" with happiness (2:1:17). Although Aristippus is mistaken, Socrates cannot deny the impression without casting doubt on the choice worthiness of the political way of life. On the other hand, if he does not deny it, he may be forced to explain why he prefers the private, philosophical way of life. Socrates is thus confronted with the difficult task of defending the political life without calling undue attention to his own way of life.

As for Aristippus, he cannot help but assume that Socrates believes that those who are both able and willing to rule live the best or most fulfilling way of life. Accordingly, he tells Socrates that he still cannot see how those who willingly undergo hardship and deprivation differ from slaves, except that the former are foolish. Aristippus is still convinced that rulers are deluded in thinking that ruling is rewarding. He thus indicates that the life of the stranger is preferable because it offers some real prospects of happiness.

In his response to Aristippus, Socrates says that those who are willing to toil derive pleasure from the hope of gaining good friends and subduing their enemies. Through these good and noble deeds, they come to "admire themselves", while being "praised and emulated by others" (2:1:19). On the other hand, the desire for easy and immediate pleasures suffice "neither to produce good condition in the body, as the gymnastic trainers say, nor to produce any understanding worth mentioning in the soul; but acts of attention exercised with endurance enable one to attain good and noble works, as the good men say" (2:1:20).

Socrates thus makes it clear that continence is necessary for the good condition of both the body and the soul. But he has also indicated that there are two other factors to consider with respect to the good of the soul: the cultivation of self-understanding and the practice of noble deeds. Yet, after having done so, he devotes the rest of his discourse to what some good men have said in defense of gentlemanly virtue. This means that from here onwards, Socrates no longer speaks in his own name and avoids discussing that aspect of the soul that concerns the philosophical life.⁸ His subsequent account of the

soul is therefore necessarily incomplete and the corresponding defense of political life is consequently open to qualification.

Socrates' defense of political life is based on the sayings of two poets and a sophist: Hesiod, Epicharmus, and Prodicus, the wise.⁹ The greatest part of it is taken up by the recollection of Prodicus' treatise on the moral education of Heracles, the mythical Greek hero. The treatise dramatized the triumph of virtue over vice in their struggle for the soul of Heracles. As a whole, it is aimed at showing that the life which accords with virtue, or culminates in the kingly art, is deserving of "the most blessed happiness" (2:1:33). Following the rendition of the treatise, Socrates concludes the conversation by advising Aristippus to incorporate it in his deliberations about the future. Along with the ambiguities noted earlier, there are other indications that suggest that it is not Socrates' intention to use Prodicus' treatise to resolve Aristippus' doubts about political life.

Prodicus' treatise is supposed to express a view of virtue that is similar to that held by all good men (2:1:20-21). It is primarily intended for those who are already habituated to continence. In keeping with the sayings of Hesiod and Epicharmus, it traces the necessity of toiling for the sake of virtue and its rewards to the gods. Indeed, it purports to give a "truthful" account of "the disposition the gods have made of the things that are" (2:1:27). In all, it reveals that virtue in political life depends decisively on the belief in providential gods.¹⁰ This, however, implies that an adequate defense of political life would require a comprehensive account of the gods.

By calling attention to the relation between virtue and piety, the treatise shows that Aristippus' doubts about political life would invariably suggest that he is skeptical

about the belief in providential gods. In other words, Aristippus cannot consistently maintain that ruling is foolish unless he is prepared to say that the gods do not care for virtue. But that would expose him to the charge of impiety. So, instead of resolving Aristippus' doubts, the treatise shows him that it is not really in his interest to express them. And since the expression of these doubts reflects in part his desire to display his wisdom, the treatise shows him a more prudent and profitable way of gaining recognition.

When Socrates first referred to Prodicus, he noted not only the latter's reputation for wisdom, but also the fact that he displayed his treatise on Heracles "most widely" (2:1:21). The treatise apparently contributed considerably to Prodicus' fame as a sophist. It was no doubt composed to demonstrate his skill as a rhetorician and to advertise at the same time his services as a teacher. But Prodicus apparently did not practice what his treatise ostensibly taught in that he was known to be as deficient as Aristippus in terms of his continence.¹¹ Even so, by commending Prodicus' treatise, Socrates suggests that Prodicus deserves the reputation for wisdom not least because he knew how to protect himself while advancing his private interests. And since Aristippus aspires to a life similar to that of Prodicus, it would surely benefit him to follow the latter's example.

v) Conclusion

As the conversation unfolds, it becomes increasingly apparent that Aristippus' incontinence is not limited to the mere desire to indulge in the pleasures of the body. As evidenced by his enthusiastic and unrestrained criticism of political life, Aristippus is no less keen to vindicate his hedonistic and unpolitical way of life, and to gain recognition

for his wisdom. He is, in a manner of speaking, also greedy for praise. But his attempt to justify his way of life turns out to be self-defeating. For, by publicly disavowing all civic responsibility, he unwittingly reveals that his way of life entails taking unfair advantage of the sacrifices of law-abiding citizens and is therefore unjust. Worse still, his view that ruling is foolish not only paves the way for tyranny but it exposes him to the charge of impiety.

Aristippus' lack of prudent self-restraint largely explains why Socrates takes such pains to warn him about the dangers involved in his way of life. Yet, this is not sufficient to induce Aristippus to abandon his plan to live as a stranger. For even though he does not wish to be enslaved, Aristippus resists the notion of citizenship because he is averse to the violent struggles that often characterize political life. Consequently, he leaves Socrates with little choice but to encourage him to follow the example of Prodicus. Apart from the attempt to restrain Aristippus from denigrating political life, Socrates makes use of Prodicus to induce Aristippus to improve his political awareness and consequently to moderate his incontinence. For the example of Prodicus shows that Aristippus would have to pay more serious attention to the study of rhetoric and politics in order to enjoy the fame and the rewards of a successful sophist.

In its attempt to deal with Aristippus' doubts about political life, the conversation also brings to light some aspects of Socrates' understanding of the relation between the philosopher, the gentleman, and the sophist. On the basis of the teaching that human life is political, Socrates shows that the gentleman plays a crucial role in preserving the freedom and well-being of the city. Furthermore, as a practitioner of the kingly art, the

gentleman is disposed to care for his friends. Hence, it is to the advantage of both the philosopher and the sophist to cultivate his friendship. But the gentleman is devoted to the life of noble action only because he has been led to believe that the gods care about virtue. As he is primarily a political actor, he is not as such equipped to deal with arguments that question his belief in the gods. He is therefore in need of assistance.

As regards the gentleman's vulnerability, the conversation as a whole illustrates how the philosopher plays a useful political role by neutralizing the subversive opinions of an irresponsible skeptic. But then, Socrates' use of Prodicus indicates that the philosopher is limited in his ability to vindicate fully the choice worthiness of the political way of life. At the same time it reveals that a prudent sophist can supplement the limited efforts of the philosopher by reinforcing, through his mastery of rhetoric, the salutary belief in the justice of the gods. This appreciation of the use of rhetoric not only helps to legitimize the role of the sophist in the city, it further explains Socrates' interest in encouraging Aristippus to follow Prodicus' example.

But Socrates' parting advice to Aristippus also reflects his limited ability to overcome Aristippus' incontinence. This implies that continence is not necessary for the sophist's way of life, as it is for both the political and philosophical ways of life. The sophist therefore appears to be closed to the possibility of philosophy as a way of life. This is not to say that he is incapable of acquiring some philosophical knowledge. But it does imply that he is limited in his understanding of the fundamental alternatives to the political life. Accordingly, he would be necessarily inferior to the philosopher in dealing with question of the best way of life.

A further consequence of the sophist's limitation is that it would lead him to regard the philosopher as a sophist and hence a rival. By competing with the latter, the sophist contributes to the confusion between philosophy and sophistry. Here, it is worthwhile recalling that Critias once tried to shame Socrates by accusing him of sophistry (see 1:2:31). Hence, the importance of distinguishing the two modes of activity. In this regard, the conversation with Aristippus could be seen as an attempt on Socrates' part to use the notion of continence as a means to distinguish the philosopher from the sophist on the one hand, and to underline the similarity between the philosopher and the morally serious gentleman on the other. The latter strategy partly explains why the theme of Socrates' continence recurs with such frequency in the Memorabilia.

III. The Second Encounter With Aristippus

i) Aristippus and the other companions

The chapter in which this encounter is reported consists of two parts. The second part recalls a discussion Socrates had with a group of companions. We are not told whether Aristippus participated in this discussion. On the other hand, the first part is devoted to two conversations that were initiated by Aristippus. The first conversation deals with the question of the good, the second with the noble. Taken together, these conversations would seem to have some bearing on the understanding of the gentleman, who is by definition both noble and good.

We are told that Aristippus initiated these conversations in order to refute Socrates, "just as he himself was refuted by him earlier" (3:8:1). Aristippus apparently

did not quite appreciate Socrates' attempt to moderate his continence. In general, it could be said that in their first encounter Socrates adopted the perspective of the morally serious gentleman to refute Aristippus' hedonism. So Aristippus' attempt here to refute Socrates was probably aimed at salvaging his hedonistic position as well as his intellectual pride. And by raising questions concerning the good and the noble, it would seem that Aristippus' strategy called for an attack on the defining qualities of the gentleman.

Xenophon also tells us at the very outset how Socrates responded to Aristippus. "Wishing to benefit his companions, Socrates answered him, not as those who are on guard lest their speech become entangled, but as one who has been persuaded that he would thus be doing what he should" (3:8:1). Xenophon thus indicates that one could take either a moral or a philosophical approach to the question raised by Aristippus. In so doing, he further indicates that there may be two separate sets of answers to those questions.¹² At any rate, Socrates chose the moral approach. But in this case, he had apparently little or no intention of benefitting Aristippus. Rather, his aim was to benefit the other companions who were present during these conversations.

It is reasonable to suppose that these companions are the same ones who are noted in the second part of the chapter. As for their significance, it is necessary to recall that the present encounter with Aristippus is reported in chapter eight of book three which, as a whole, is supposed to be devoted to those who "longed for the noble things" (3:1:1). Moreover, the first seven chapters are devoted to conversations with actual or aspiring political and military leaders. All this suggests that some, if not most, of the companions in this chapter belong to the class of those who wish to rule; that is, the class of political

citizens. And in keeping with the theme of book three, it would be Socrates' intention to lead these companions "to take more trouble about what they longed for" (3:1:1).

ii) The conversation on the good

Xenophon tells us that Aristippus initiated this conversation by asking Socrates whether he knew anything good. Aristippus was apparently quite confident that Socrates would mention something like "food, drink, wealth, health, strength, or daring" (3:8:2). He would then proceed to show Socrates that the thing mentioned is sometimes bad. Socrates may not have been aware of Aristippus' mischievous intention, but we are told that he took the following precaution: "knowing that if something annoys us we are in need of what will stop it, [Socrates] answered after the manner in which it is best also to act" (3:8:2). Xenophon thus leads us to consider how the manner in which Socrates answered Aristippus could be of practical value to the companions.

Contrary to Aristippus' expectation, Socrates responds by posing a series of questions. He asks Aristippus if he is asking him whether he knows something good for fever, ophthalmia, or hunger. These questions show that Socrates is taking the view that what is good is always useful for a specific need or purpose. Needless to say, Aristippus is completely unprepared for these questions. He does not know what to say in reply to them. His bewilderment prompts Socrates to end the conversation with a curt retort: "And if you are asking me at any rate if I know something that is good for nothing, I neither know it nor need it" (3:8:3).

By thus employing an utilitarian conception of the good, Socrates effectively prevents Aristippus from refuting him before the other companions. But what are these companions supposed to derive from this brief and seemingly pointless conversation? To address this question, we need to know something about the problems that might have arisen had Aristippus been given the opportunity to dispute with Socrates on the question of the good.

It so happens that some of these problems are brought out in an exchange between Socrates and Euthydemus, an ambitious young gentleman, in book four, chapter two, of the Memorabilia. That exchange occurs shortly after Socrates has exposed Euthydemus' ignorance of what justice is. To further evaluate the extent of Euthydemus' ignorance, Socrates asks Euthydemus to explain to him "what sorts of things are good, and what sorts are bad" (4:2:31).

In his response, Euthydemus reveals that the gentleman firmly believes that things such as health, strength, wisdom, and, above all happiness are indisputably good (4:2:33-34).¹³ But with little effort, Socrates is able to show that none of these things is indubitably good. A wise man, for example, may be killed by those who envy his wisdom. And if happiness depends on goods of this sort, then its goodness is no less questionable. This critique of the good devastates Euthydemus' self-confidence. At the end of it, he says in despair that he no longer knows even what he should "pray to the gods for" (4:2:36).

Euthydemus' demoralization shows that Aristippus' attempt to refute Socrates could have harmed the other companions, even though it was not his intention to do so.

Furthermore, the exchange with Euthydemus shows that the aspiring gentleman is not sophisticated enough to deal with a radical critique of the good. And since the other companions are probably as inexperienced as Euthydemus, it would surely benefit them to know how they should approach the sort of question raised by Aristippus. In this regard, the brief exchange with Aristippus teaches the companions that they should force the questioner to be more explicit by focusing on particular cases that are, in principle, amenable to practical solution.

iii) The conversation of the noble

The Greek word for the noble, kalon, also refers, among other things, to what is fine, beautiful, or honorable. The various meanings of the word are brought into play in this conversation. For the sake of convenience, we shall translate it as noble throughout this section.

The conversation begins with Aristippus asking Socrates whether he knows anything noble. Here, we are not told how Aristippus planned to refute Socrates. Perhaps, this is because the multi vocal nature of the noble allows Aristippus to employ various strategies to refute Socrates. In any case, Socrates says in reply that he knows many noble things. This leads Aristippus to follow-up with the question: "So are they all like one another?" (3:8:4).

Here, Aristippus may be expecting Socrates to answer in the affirmative. For it would seem that all noble things have something in common insofar as they are noble.¹⁴ But given the various meanings of the noble, it may be Aristippus' intention to show that

what is noble in one respect is not so in another. For instance, a woman may be noble in the sense of being beautiful. But if she is a prostitute, then she is not noble in the sense of being honorable.¹⁵

Socrates, however, says that some noble things are as unlike as possible. Aristippus seems to have anticipated this response. For he immediately challenges Socrates to explain how it is that "what is unlike the noble be noble?" (3:8:4). Here, Aristippus may be relying on a specific meaning of the noble to refute Socrates. For example, a woman who is beautiful cannot be said to be ugly at the same time. But, as his subsequent reaction will reveal, Aristippus is not quite prepared for what Socrates is about to say.

As to how some noble things are unlike, Socrates first offers two examples. Swearing by Zeus, he asserts that "a human being noble at wrestling is unlike another who is noble at running, and a shield noble for defense is as unlike as can be to a javelin noble for being forcefully and swiftly hurled" (3:8:4). This is the very first time Socrates swears in reply to Aristippus. In fact, he will go on to swear each time he defends this view of the noble (see 3:8:6-7). This uncharacteristic appeal to Zeus indicates that this view of the noble may not stand up to critical scrutiny.¹⁶

Aristippus, for his part, is surprised at this answer. He realizes that it is not different from the one Socrates gave to the question whether he knew anything good. Aristippus thus seems to believe that the noble cannot be treated in the same way as the good. But in spite of Aristippus' astonishment, Socrates goes on to argue that all things human beings use--and here he refers to things of both the body and the soul (i.e. virtue)--

"are held to be noble and good for the same things--whatever they are useful for" (3:8:5).

Socrates thus insists that his utilitarian view of the noble accords with the conventional view.

Still, it is doubtful whether the gentleman would readily accept the utilitarian view of the noble. For, as Aristippus subsequently notes, this would imply that a dung basket is noble if it is suited for its specific purpose. A gentleman, however, is not likely to regard such an unsightly object as a thing of beauty.¹⁷ He is even more likely to resist the further implication that just as the same things are both good and bad, so are they both noble and shameful (3:8:7). For this would mean the noble things he longs for could turn out to be shameful. Yet, he is not likely to think that it is ever shameful, say, to help one's friends and to harm one's enemies.

On the other hand, the ordinary citizens of the democracy are more likely to accept Socrates' utilitarian view of the noble. For it would allow them to claim a share in the noble so long as they are engaged in some productive activity. But why would Socrates wish to democratize, so to speak, the gentleman's understanding of the noble?

To answer this, we must first keep in mind that this conversation is also addressed to those companions who are politically ambitious. As regards the character of these companions, we need to draw on what we have learned about the political citizens. Generally speaking, we found that these citizens are inclined to be highly critical of the democracy (see 3:4:1, 3:5:15-16 and 3:7:8). Their love of the noble leads them to exaggerate the vices of the demos, and to regard the democracy as an obstacle to their ambition. As a result, these citizens often fail to appreciate the positive and useful

aspects of the democratic regime and its typical representatives (see, for example, 3:5:18-20). In light of this deficiency, the utilitarian view of the noble could be seen as an attempt to overcome the narrow and inflexible attitude of the noble-minded citizens. By teaching them to become more pragmatic and hence open-minded, it helps to moderate their disagreements with the democracy.

iv) Houses, temples and altars

Aristippus' resistance to the utilitarian treatment of the noble may have compromised Socrates' attempt to moderate the gentleman's prejudice against the democracy. Accordingly, Socrates is forced to undertake a further discussion of the noble with the other companions. The discussion begins with the subject of houses. Xenophon tells us at the very outset what motivated Socrates to speak on this subject: "And when he said that the same houses are both noble and useful, he was educating, at least in my opinion, as to the sort that should be built" (3:8:8). The discussion thus appears to be an attempt by Socrates to apply and thereby to clarify his utilitarian view of the noble.

Socrates' account of the perfect house is based on the premise that it is noble to build a house that is "both most pleasant to live in and most useful" (3:8:8-9). The main points are summarized in the following remarks. "In sum, the most pleasant and the most noble dwelling would plausibly be the one where one would have in every season the most pleasant refuge and where one would make one's belongings most secure. Paintings and embroideries deprive one of more delights that may provide" (3:8:10). The repeated

emphasis on the pleasant clearly qualifies the utilitarian view of the noble. Both the useful and the pleasant are now implicitly held to be essential components of the noble.

The consideration of the pleasant, however, indicates that the longing for the noble may be unduly intensified and consequently vitiated by the excessive desire for pleasure. Hence, the account of the perfect house could be seen as an attempt by Socrates to moderate the political ambitions of his companions by encouraging them to cultivate a noble, private life. In this connection, the negative remark on paintings and embroideries suggests that the true gentleman would derive more pleasure from contemplating the orderly arrangement of the useful or necessary things of the household.¹⁸

Earlier, in his conversations with the political citizens, Socrates has shown that those who lack the knowledge to rule can acquire the necessary knowledge through the art of household (see 3:4:6-12 and 3:6:4-18; consider also 4:2:37-39). So, by inducing his companions to take a serious interest in their household affairs, Socrates is indirectly helping his companions to become competent political men. But Socrates has also said that in addition to the art of household management "those intending to manage households and cities nobly are in need of divination" (1:1:7 cf. 4:7:10). This teaching helps to explain why the present discussion, which is supposed to be limited in its pedagogical intention to the subject of houses, ends with a seemingly unrelated remark on temples and altars.

According to Socrates, "the most becoming place for temples and altars [would] be that which, while most visible, would be most untrodden; for it is pleasant for those who see it to offer prayers, and it is pleasant for those who are undefiled to approach it"

(3:8:10). The secluded location of these religious artifacts is perhaps intended as a reminder that it is unlawful to seek the help of the gods on matters relating to the necessary affairs of the city and the household (see 1:1:9). On the other hand, their visibility serves perhaps to console those who toil nobly that the gods will somehow ensure that they will be justly rewarded for their virtue (see, for example, 2:1:33).

The concluding remark, however, does not explicitly refer to either the noble or the useful. The former is only implied in the phrase "the most becoming". And the phrase "the most untrodden" suggests that which is least used. Together, these phrases convey the impression that temples and altars, while beautiful and hence pleasant to look at, do not really serve any practical purpose. They thus point to a view of the noble in which the consideration of the pleasant supersedes that of the useful. But such a non-utilitarian view of the noble is incompatible with the previous one which, as presented in the account of the perfect house, placed equal emphasis on the pleasant and the useful.

To resolve this discrepancy, it is necessary to recall Socrates' response to Critobulus' observation that those who are "most attentive to the noble things and least admit the shameful are frequently in a state of hostility with one another" (2:6:18). According to Socrates, these conflicts occur mainly because those who long for the noble things "hold the same things to be both noble and pleasant" (2:6:21). From this, it can be inferred that the non-utilitarian view is actually the view that is held by Socrates' companions. So, in spite of its destructive potential, Socrates is nevertheless obliged to make some reference to it in order to gratify the companions. But this very gesture itself would seem to signify that there is a limit to Socrates' attempt to moderate the desire for

the noble. That is to say, there may be no permanent solution to the conflicts generated by the longing for the noble things.

v) Conclusion

Aristippus' attempt to refute Socrates in public reflects his keen desire to gain a reputation for wisdom. Paradoxically, this shows that he is much closer in spirit to those whose way of life he rejects, namely, the political citizens. For, despite his aversion to politics, Aristippus is nevertheless a lover of victory in that he seeks to outdo his rivals in wisdom. Moreover, like the inexperienced political citizens depicted in the first seven chapters of book three, he is inclined to act without fully thinking through the consequences of his actions. In this case, his conduct reveals that he has given little or no thought to the possibility that his intended course of action may be harmful to the other companions.

Aristippus' attempt to dispute the gentleman's view of the good and noble could have caused the companions to question their attachment to virtue and all that it entails in terms of their political ambition. Also, as a consequence of his resistance to Socrates' utilitarian treatment of the noble, he could have reinforced their aristocratic prejudice against the democracy. In a word, he could have set them on the path towards tyranny by unintentionally subverting their noble aspirations. It is therefore necessary for Socrates to prevent Aristippus from carrying out his mischievous intention, and even to exclude him from the complementary discussion of the noble with the other companions.

In that discussion, Socrates reveals that the longing for the noble things is ultimately inseparable from the desire for the pleasant things. Since the desire for pleasure is susceptible of excess, it may corrupt the longing for the noble things. This understanding of the noble underlines the necessity of moderating the political ambition of the companions. To that end Socrates draws on his teaching on the good household manager to encourage his companions to cultivate a noble, private life. As a further inducement, he appeals to their belief in providential gods. In so doing, Socrates indicates that a healthy political life is fundamentally dependent on a right attitude towards the gods as well as reasonable account of the gods.

By revealing the difficulties involved in moderating the longing for the noble things, the discussion with the other companions leads us to reconsider the implications of Socrates' treatment of Aristippus. In his first encounter with Aristippus, Socrates has indicated that the sophists in their capacity as teachers have a useful role to play in the city. But Aristippus' attempt to refute Socrates brings to mind the intense rivalry among the sophists and, more importantly, the detrimental impact of their intellectual disputes on the moral and political beliefs of the city (see 1:1:11-15; cf. 4:7:1-8). By exemplifying the sober and practical conduct of the good household manager in his responses to Aristippus, Socrates shows how the responsible citizens of the city can prevent the sophists from exceeding the bounds of appropriate speech. As for those who resist the imposition of these necessary limits to the dissemination of potentially subversive ideas, the exclusion of Aristippus from the discussion with the other companions indicates that they should be expelled from the city. Viewed in this light, the account of Socrates'

second encounter with Aristippus conveys a teaching underlining the need to moderate both the political and the intellectual elements of the city.

IV. Summary: Socrates' interaction with the non-political stranger

Aristippus' unrestrained ambition to gain a reputation for wisdom posed several potentially serious problems. His various attempts to justify his unpolitical and hedonistic way of life--first by questioning the justice of the city, and later by disputing the gentleman's view of the good and the noble--exposed him to charges that were eventually leveled against Socrates; namely, that of impiety and of corrupting the young. Thus, Aristippus' irresponsible conduct was not only self-destructive, but it also endangered his fellow companions as well as Socrates himself. It was therefore incumbent on Socrates to moderate Aristippus' conduct.

Socrates first tried to teach Aristippus why he was obligated to respect the moral and political conventions of the city. Although these conventions may be flawed, they nevertheless mitigated the problems of injustice both within and without the city. And since Aristippus benefitted from these conventions, he ought to show some gratitude by rendering himself useful to the city. To further induce Aristippus to become more prudent Socrates showed Aristippus that he had much to gain in terms of wealth and reputation by following the example of Prodicus. But in view of Aristippus' later attempt to question the gentleman's view of the good and the noble, Socrates was forced to employ a more drastic measure to discipline Aristippus. By excluding Aristippus from the discussion of the noble with the other companions, Socrates signified to Aristippus

that he could be permanently banished from the Socratic circle for his irresponsible conduct and so lose out in terms of the opportunity to improve his philosophical understanding. In political terms, this measure would be analogous to an act of expulsion, which in Aristippus' case would mean that he would be deprived of the chance to gain wealth and reputation from the most renowned city in Greece.

Socrates' treatment of Aristippus reflected in part the city's legitimate concerns about the intellectual activities of the sophists, particularly their dissemination of new and often unsettling ideas about nature and the cosmos. At the same time, Socrates recognized that it was in the city's interest to cultivate citizens who were properly schooled in the political art. In this regard, he indicated that the more prudent sophists could make useful contributions to the political and moral education of the noble-minded citizens. And since the practice of the political art is fostered and sustained by the belief in providential gods, Socrates further indicated, through his use of Prodicus' treatise on Heracles, that the sophists could benefit the city by propagating the gentleman's understanding of the gods.

The criticism of Aristippus' immoderation showed that it was necessary for Socrates to distinguish himself from the irresponsible sophist. On the other hand, the attempt to moderate Aristippus and to help him become a better and more responsible sophist indicated that it was in Socrates' interest to legitimize the role of the sophist as a unconventional teacher of politics. In the first place, this would help to vindicate Socrates' own way of life as a citizen who prefers to make use of his knowledge of politics to teach rather than to engage in public life. In the second place, it would benefit

Socrates to make use of the sophists to complete the education of his politically ambitious companions as this would give him more time to pursue his philosophical activities with his more gifted companions.

Notes

1. Diogenes Laertes, 2:65.
2. According to Kenneth C. Blanchard, Jr., "The Middle Road of Classical Political Philosophy: Socrates' Dialogues with Aristippus in Xenophon's Memorabilia" in Review of Politics, vol.56, pp.671-696, the two encounters between Socrates and Aristippus are intended to show that Socrates is the direct opposite of the sophist. But the same could be said of Socrates' encounters with the sophists Antiphon and Hippias. Because of his thesis, Blanchard fails to consider that part of Socrates' intention in conversing with Aristippus, who is introduced by Xenophon as a companion, may have been to help Aristippus become a better sophist.
3. In 1:5:2, Socrates argues that slaves cannot be trusted if they are not trained in continence.
4. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.33.
5. Consider, for example, the case of Araspas in the Cyropaedia (5:1:8-17 and 6:1:31-41).
6. cf. Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York, 1969), translated by George Lawrence, pp.253-254.
7. Here Socrates refers to three legendary robbers who were killed by Theseus, the founder of Athens. The allusion to the latter suggests that before the rule of law, men submitted to the authority of a strong individual.
8. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.35.
9. Epicharmus was a comic poet, who made fun of Heracles voracity, see Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.36. Strauss also calls attention to a comic element in Prodicus' treatise on Heracles (p.37). All this would seem to suggest that Socrates did not consider this part of his speech to be a serious one.
10. According to Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, pp.35-36, the statements of Hesiod, Epicharmus and Prodicus "differ from what had been said by Aristippus and Socrates because they trace the necessity of toiling to the gods; they give theological support to the Socratic recommendations which lack such support."

11. Plato, Protagoras 315d.
12. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.74, suggests that the section "consisting of [book three, chapters eight and nine] is at least externally the most philosophic part of the first three books of the Memorabilia."
13. cf. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1094b16-19.
14. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.75, says that Aristippus' question about the noble points to the inadequacy of Socrates' answer regarding the good; that is, Aristippus' question suggests that all good things have something in common.
15. Consider, for example, the case of Theodote later on in book three, chapter eleven, of the Memorabilia.
16. Strauss, Xenophon's Socrates, p.76.
17. In his Symposium (5:1-10), Xenophon depicts a beauty contest between Socrates and Critobulus which shows that the gentleman is not likely to accept Socrates' thesis that the noble is reducible to the useful.
18. In Xenophon's Oeconomicus (8:19), Ischomachus, the perfect gentleman, says that "even pots have a graceful look when distinctly arranged." See Leo Strauss, Xenophon's Socratic Discourse (Ithaca, New York, 1970), pp.140-145.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Part of the purpose of this dissertation is to show that Xenophon's predominantly modern critics are mistaken in dismissing the Memorabilia as a work worthy of serious consideration. These critics rightly maintain that the credibility and significance of Xenophon's recollection of Socrates' conversations with the companions hinge on the competence of his formal defense of Socrates in the opening two chapters of the work. But then they contend that Xenophon's defense succeeds so well that it is virtually impossible to imagine how Socrates could have been prosecuted in the first place, much less convicted and executed for the charges of impiety and corrupting the young. Since the account of Socrates given in the defense is obviously misleading, Xenophon's subsequent reports of Socrates cannot be trusted. The Memorabilia therefore cannot contribute anything of value to our understanding of Socrates.

Contrary to the claims of these critics, our examination of Xenophon's defense shows that it is designed to clarify Socrates' complex role as a critical but responsible citizen-philosopher. To that end, Xenophon does not deny that Socrates questioned the traditional and authoritative opinions of the city, and that he even encouraged his companions to do the same. Indeed, Xenophon defends these actions on the grounds that they served to alleviate the moral and political problems afflicting the city.

Xenophon's defense is based on his understanding of the implications of Socrates' philosophical way of life. The account of Socrates' confrontation with the proponents

of natural philosophy and his turn to the investigation of the human things accords with the Socratic notion of philosophy as the unfinished quest for knowledge of the most important things. In practical terms, this notion of philosophy means that Socrates was not in the position to provide a final and comprehensive solution to the fundamental problems of political life. But inasmuch as Socrates understood the nature and extent of these problems, he could and did offer the city limited but nonetheless invaluable practical guidance.

Socrates' unorthodox view of the omniscience of the gods is perhaps the most important example of the kind of practical guidance he rendered to the city. For it served to neutralise the philosophical opinions that threatened to undermine the belief in providential gods on the one hand, and to correct the troubling defects in the popular opinion about the nature of the city's gods on the other hand. As exemplified by the trial of the generals, the popular notion of the gods allowed the majority of the people to think that they could flout the law with impunity. In this particular regard, Socrates' view of the gods supplied the city with the means to reinforce the rule of law, which was necessary to check the self-destructive conduct of the democracy.

Furthermore, in keeping with his notion of piety, Socrates exhorted his companions to cultivate the habits of self-reliance and mutual cooperation. While he disavowed being a teacher of virtue, he nevertheless made use of his practical wisdom to inspire his companions with the desire for virtue. By making them aware of their own ignorance and deficiencies, Socrates led his companions to appreciate the need to acquire knowledge of the necessary things. And those of his companions who sought to improve

themselves in this way became more moderate and prudent in conducting their private and public affairs.

But Socrates' attempt to educate his companions also caused them to question the traditional claims to authority as well as the conventional norms of friendship and citizenship. Socrates, however, tolerated this critical attitude among his companions because it helped to insulate them from the excessive and unreasonable demands of the city. More importantly, by thus liberating his companions from the narrow partisan interests of the city, Socrates made his companions more capable of acting for the sake of the common good. Radical though it may seem, Socrates' utilitarian approach to the teaching of politics and the cultivation of virtue pointed to the possibility of creating a class of gentlemen which could moderate the factional conflicts in the city.

The presentation of Socrates' utilitarian teaching implies that there was a self-regarding element underlying Socrates' interest in the friendship of gentlemen. Socrates used his practical wisdom as a means to attract the most promising students to philosophy. But in his attempt to gain worthy partners in the quest for knowledge, Socrates also attracted political villains like Critias and Alcibiades. The notoriety of some of Socrates' companions clearly jeopardized his reputation as a teacher. Moreover, the reference to the irresponsible conduct of the proponents of natural philosophy indicated that Socrates was concerned with the fate of philosophy in the city. Hence it was in Socrates' interest to cultivate a circle of good and respectable friends both to protect his way of life and to preserve the place of philosophy in the city.

By thus clarifying Socrates' complex relation to the city, Xenophon's defense prepares us for the proper appreciation of his subsequent accounts of Socrates' interaction with the companions. More to the point, it leads us to consider each of the conversations reported in the ensuing chapters of the Memorabilia as an illustration of Socrates' practical efforts to reconcile his private, philosophical way of life with the demands of citizenship. To substantiate this reading of the defense, we examined a selection of these conversations. The main points of each of these conversations are outlined below.

1. Aristodemus. Socrates' immediate purpose in this conversation is to prevent Aristodemus from publicly disparaging the city's piety. He succeeds in this attempt by making use of his novel account of the gods to show Aristodemus that he has not given sufficient thought to the question of divine providence. Socrates, however, does not fully resolve Aristodemus' doubts about the gods. Instead, he leaves it open to Aristodemus to consult with him in the future about the truth regarding his alternative account of the gods. Socrates' interest in fostering the friendship of Aristodemus appears to be related to the latter's love of wisdom and beauty. These qualities would seem to make him the ideal disciple for the transmission of a noble and salutary vision of the philosophical life.
2. Crito. As a wealthy citizen, Crito is subjected to the constant harassment of the sycophants. Socrates solves Crito's predicament by introducing him to Archdemus, who is possibly one of the leaders of the poor, urban democrats. As Xenophon makes clear, the success of the partnership between Crito and Archdemus was due in part to Crito's own efforts to gain the trust of Archdemus. This conversation thus helps to explain why Crito was regarded as one of Socrates' true associates. Crito was able, with a little help

from Socrates, to take care of his private and public affairs. Socrates' intervention in this instance points to the feasibility of soliciting the cooperation of some of the more respectable members of the lower classes to moderate the conduct of the democracy.

3. Critobulus. In the course of dealing with Critobulus' desire for beautiful friends, this conversation explores the problem of the corruption of the conventional, public-spirited gentleman. Through his account of the dangers inherent in the use of praise and his implicit criticism of Pericles, Socrates suggests that, by flattering the people, Pericles contributed to the immoderation of the democracy, and this in turn led to the corruption of the noble-minded citizens. As a partial solution to disorder prevailing in the upper classes, Socrates points to the need for an education that would emphasize the cultivation of the pleasures of a noble, private life. Such a scheme would also open up a space for the philosophical education of the most promising individuals. In this context, Critobulus has a useful role to play as a helper in Socrates' hunt for good souls.

4. Nicomachides. As a distinguished soldier, Nicomachides is angry at the city for rejecting his bid for the generalship and electing instead Antisthenes, a businessman. Socrates partially defends the democracy by justifying Antisthenes' election. But at the same time he does not deny Nicomachides' view about the deplorable conduct of the Athenian assembly. In his attempt to overcome Nicomachides' resentment of Antisthenes, Socrates reveals that he regards the art of household management as the foundation of the political art. This teaching also helps to refine Nicomachides' critical attitude towards the Athenians by providing him with a criterion to distinguish the good from the bad democrats.

5. The Younger Pericles. In this conversation, Socrates reveals that he does not approve of both the radicalisation of the democracy by the elder Pericles and the extreme oligarchic tendency latent in the younger Pericles' hope of restoring the city's ancient virtue. Although Socrates agrees that the democracy is in a bad state, he denies that the situation is incorrigible. The problem, according to Socrates, is one of leadership. In this regard, Socrates shows that the aristocratic prejudices of the younger Pericles have actually hindered him from acquiring the practical skills and knowledge necessary to govern the democracy. Socrates suggests that a good ruler would be able to tame the demos by exploiting its hopes and fears. Also, as part of his attempt to help Pericles find a practical solution to the city's military predicament, Socrates points to the possibility of improving the democracy by de-emphasizing its reliance on the navy through a partial reorganisation of the army.

6. Charmides. The most striking feature of this conversation is Socrates' derogatory remark on the character of the demos. But Socrates makes it very clear that this is necessary to resolve Charmides' ambivalent attitude towards the democracy and to facilitate his active participation in its affairs. Furthermore, Socrates indicates that Charmides would learn more about himself by taking an active interest in the democracy. While Charmides appears to be more attracted to Socrates' noble but private way of life, his misunderstanding of the democracy seems to reflect his lack of awareness of the more radical aspects of Socrates' way of life. Despite his long association with Socrates, Charmides seems to have ignored or depreciated what Xenophon considers a fundamental

and controversial aspect of Socrates' philosophical way of life; that is, Socrates' utilitarian and hence seemingly vulgar approach to the central problems of political life.

7. Aristippus. The two encounters with Aristippus are partly intended for the clarification of the nature and limits of the gentleman's way of life. Socrates' attempt to reduce the noble to the good implies that the gentleman's notion of the noble is not rational. Hence the discourse on the perfect house is intended to help improve the practical judgment of the noble-minded companions by leading them to take a serious interest in the necessary affairs of the household. In terms of the gentleman's political life, the first encounter with Aristippus reveals that the belief in providential gods is necessary to foster and to sustain the gentleman's commitment to the practise of the kingly art. As for Aristippus, this understanding of the gentleman's way of life is used to show him that it is foolish and unjust for him to denigrate those who are both able and willing to rule. Apart from this, Socrates has a prudential interest in helping Aristippus become a better and more responsible sophist. It would benefit Socrates both to legitimise the role of the unconventional teacher of politics and to rely on the prudent sophist to complete the education of his non-philosophic companions.

These conversations show how Socrates accomplished, within the framework set by his awareness of the fundamental and unresolved questions of political life, different objectives at the same time; namely, to help his companions improve themselves, to point out practical ways of moderating the democracy, and to advance his private, philosophical interests. Accordingly, they serve to substantiate the account of Socrates' complex role as a citizen-philosopher given in Xenophon's defense.

Furthermore, they help to explain why Xenophon would attach such great value to the ordinary conversations Socrates had with the ordinary companions. By revealing the scope and limits of Socrates' practical ability to improve his companions, these conversations point to the various aspects of the problem of perfecting the city and its citizens. In all, they suggest that the Memorabilia is intended to convey in a systematic and comprehensive manner those experiences of Socrates' civic life that led Xenophon to reflect on the fundamental problems of politics.

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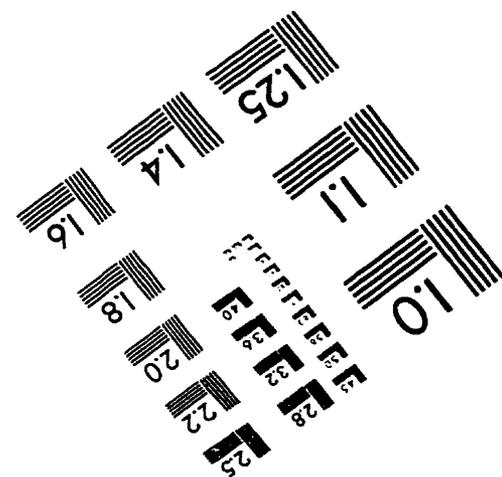
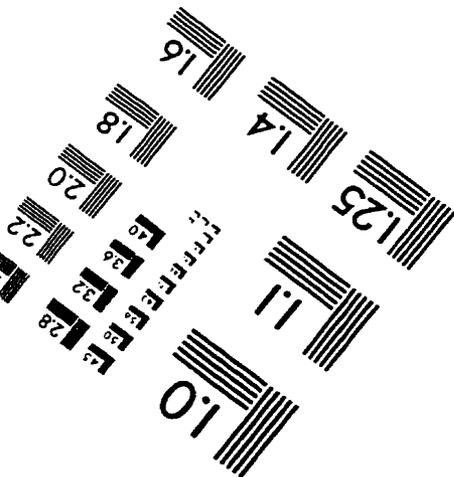
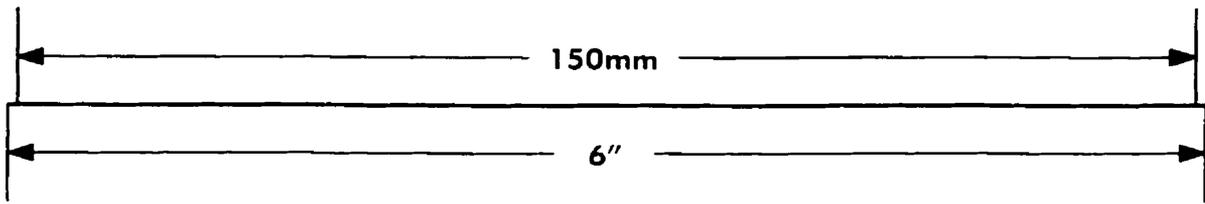
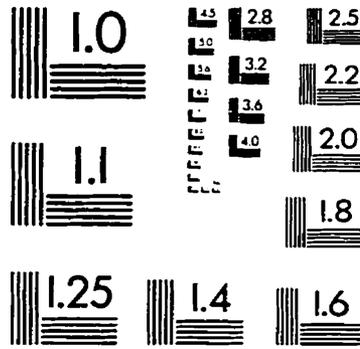
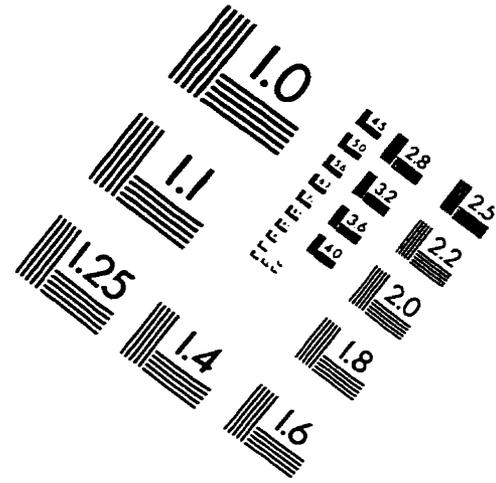
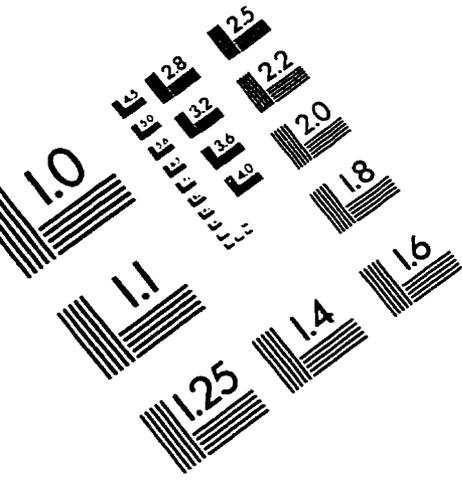
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