CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

XENOPHON

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Xenophon's Socratic works (*Memorabilia*, *Apology*, *Symposium*, *Oeconomicus*) report instructive conversations between Socrates and various interlocutors on the authority of an unnamed narrator who was either present himself or heard the reports of others. Like the Platonic dialogues, therefore, they are not concerned with transmitting a complete narrative of Socrates' life, but with the presentation of paradigmatic episodes. In all of them except the *Oeconomicus* the presence of the narrator is overt, as is his apologetic purpose: to defend the memory of Socrates from any suspicion that he was a bad influence on Athenian society and to argue that, on the contrary, he was a public benefactor. In keeping with this goal, all narration is subsequent narration, looking back at or reconstructing the events of an exemplary life.¹ This feature is, to be sure, one aspect of the entire genre of *sōkratikoí logoi*, which seems to have been generated as a response to the execution of Socrates in 399 BC. This generic focus also has one important implication for the present inquiry: the anecdotes that are narrated are all given deeper resonance by the one event that is never narrated in any of the works: the execution of Socrates. Every example of Socratic virtue is measured against and criticizes his unjust death. This is made an explicit structuring principle of the *Memorabilia*, which begins with the narrator stating that 'I have often wondered by what arguments Socrates' accusers persuaded the Athenians that he was worthy of death' (1.1.1) and ends with Socrates' equanimity in the face of death, a summary eulogy, and the assertion that Socrates' companions continue to miss him 'as being most useful for the practice of virtue' (4.8.11). The focalization of the narrative (and indeed the genre) through a Socratic disciple creates, then, a kind of implied prolepsis: a narrative of the past looks to a

¹ As Gray has pointed out, Xenophon's *Memorabilia* is marked by formal features connecting it with later rhetorical manuals that report the sayings of wise men (V.J. Gray 1998: 159–177).

future event that, while still in the past from the point of view of the narrator, continues to have repercussions in the present.

As was the case with the narrative of the *Hellenica* (→) the material is presented (at least in the case of the *Memorabilia* and *Oeconomicus*) with some lack of temporal precision, explicable here (as it is not in the historical work) by the focus on exemplary conversation. The *Memorabilia* is the least temporally focused, given that it is a collection of anecdotes from the whole range of Socrates' activities, grouped by topic. An exception to this trend are the anecdotes connected with Socrates' interaction with Critias when the latter was a member of the ruling junta of the 'Thirty Tyrants' (404–403 BC), which gain their point from their historical setting. The *Symposium*, although it purports to record the events of a specific dinner party (with a dramatic date of 421 BC.), aims to prove that it is worthwhile to tell not just serious actions of good men, but also their recreation, and therefore reconstructs an entire party. The *Oeconomicus*, although its narrative structure is more complex (including an embedded narrative) still represents a single conversation at an indeterminate time that distills the fruits of Socrates' experience in management. The *Apology* has an obvious dramatic date of 399, the year of Socrates' death, for its narrative. Unlike Plato's version of Socrates' defence, which masquerades as a court speech, Xenophon's is set in a narrative frame and has a particular purpose: to bring out an aspect of Socrates' defence that he considers to have been insufficiently appreciated in other treatments (that Socrates had decided that death was preferable to life, 1.1). The temporal setting is specific, but rather than simply reporting Socrates' speech at his trial, the narrative starts by reporting Socrates' conversation with Hermogenes (who is the cited source for the defence speech) in the days immediately preceding the trial (2–10). In this work, we must conclude, argument over how precisely to interpret Socrates' intentions with regard to his defence (how, that is, to focalize him) has led to an extension of the temporal range of the fabula, the inclusion of material prior and subsequent to the occasion of his defence speech.² This enables the narrator to end effectively by referring briefly to Socrates' steadfastness as he met his end: 'after he decided that dying was better for him than living ... he did not soften with regard to death, but awaited it and died cheerfully' (1.33).

² Cf. V.J. Gray 1989b for a discussion of Xenophon's concerns with conforming to contemporary standards of rhetorical appropriateness.

Order

The recollections of the *Memorabilia* have two temporal points of reference: a general one of the years of Socrates' maturity, and the specific time of his trial and death. The series of anecdotes is related with the general aim of proving that the accusations against him were unjust (explicitly at 1.2.1, 9, 49–64). The narrator's own reflections at beginning, end, major subdivisions, and elsewhere (e.g. 1.2.21–24, where he muses on the phenomenon that people forget words of instruction when they pay no attention to them and then applies these thoughts to Critias and Alcibiades), in addition to references to his selective activity, make the narratee aware of a constant shuttling back and forth between past and narrative present. The narrator, then, presents himself as being constantly concerned with application of the past to his own present. Prolepsis, by contrast, is not an important feature of the work, although related to prolepsis are instances where the narrator or Socrates explores the possible course of future arguments or actions. Thus the narrator speculates 'Perhaps someone might say in response to this, that Socrates should have taught his companions moderation before politics' (1.2.17; cf. 1.2.19), before dealing with this objection.³ Or Socrates asks Chaerecrates to explain how he would behave if he wanted to win someone over (2.3.11–13). If external analeptic narrative in the *Memorabilia* as a whole serves the purpose of illustrating larger moral points, it does so also at the actorial level in the *Symposium*. Thus at 4.23 Socrates defends himself against the charge of being indulgent to the passion of Critobulus for Cleinias by telling how Critobulus' father entrusted him to Socrates in order to have Socrates help him calm his passion, and how in fact the situation has already improved. Similarly at 4.29–32 Charmides justifies his pride in his current poverty by narrating the state of tension in which he lived when he was rich.

The deployment of analepsis becomes more complex in the *Oeconomicus*, where concentration on a single subject entails closer attention to what is said at each point in the discussion. We find therefore a higher proportion of internal analepsis than in other Socratic works by Xenophon. There is also a substantial amount of external actorial analepsis as Socrates recounts a useful conversation he had previously had with Ischomachus, the prototype of the Athenian gentleman. The

³ Cf. V.J. Gray 1998: 60–73 for the voice of opposition as a structuring device in the *Memorabilia*.

complexity of the analepses in this dialogue makes it the chief focus of my current analysis.⁴

First: external analepsis. Like Plato's *Symposium*, the *Oeconomicus* nests conversations within conversations. This nesting acts as a structural device (although there are also external analepses with no structuring function: e.g. 4.20; 3.7). The primary narrator reports the conversation between Socrates and Critobulus in a floating present. The conversation between the two takes up the first part of the dialogue (1.1–6.11). Within this first part secondary narratives by Socrates report stories about the Great King of the Persians and Cyrus the Younger (4.4–20), but then Socrates proposes to narrate the conversation he had with Ischomachus. This he does from 7–21, and there is no return to the framing conversation at the end of the work. Within this conversation, Ischomachus narrates conversations he has previously had with his wife and how he and she put into practice the principles he enunciated in these conversations. He also (7.14–15) reports how he and his wife recalled the advice previously given to them by their parents concerning moderation. With Socrates' encouragement, Ischomachus also tells the principles he uses in his daily life and gives examples of how he has put them into practice. As we might expect, these tales of principle and practice are, broadly speaking, iterative, in that Ischomachus narrates once actions and speeches that he makes on an ongoing basis (cf. 13.10: 'These, then, are the things I do when I want to make people more obedient, teaching those whom I want to make overseers'). Given the exemplary status of Ischomachus' narrated actions and conversations, it is also no surprise that the temporal specificity of these reports does not seem to be a particular concern. Ischomachus' first conversation with his wife is explicitly marked as such (7.43), but subsequent conversations are labelled by topic rather than being arranged by temporal succession (e.g. 8.1–23: the importance of *taxis* in the household, with an inset narrative of Ischomachus' visit to a Phoenician ship and his conversation there concerning nautical *taxis*; 10.2–9 on cosmetics).

As in Plato (→), internal analepsis keeps track of the progression of the discussion. The initial conversation between Socrates and Critobulus establishes that the latter has no idea how to manage his wealth. Critobulus wants advice on how to increase his property, unless Socrates thinks that they are already rich enough. Socrates responds that al-

⁴ On the complex structure of the *Oeconomicus* see further Pomeroy 1994: 17–18.

though he (Socrates) is rich enough, Critobulus, although he is wealthier than Socrates, sometimes seems poor to him. Critobulus is incredulous, but Socrates argues that only he has sufficient property for his needs, whereas Critobulus lives beyond his means (2.1–8). This first part of their exchange is summarized and marked off by an internal analepsis where Socrates remarks ‘And don’t you think that this is an amazing situation you have constructed for yourself, Critobulus, that a little while ago when I said I was rich, you laughed at me as though I knew nothing ... but now you command me to help you and to take care that you don’t at all become a truly poor man?’ (2.9). Analeptic survey of the prior discussion continues at 2.11–12, as Critobulus tries to persuade Socrates to give him financial advice, until at 2.16 Socrates promises to refer him to those who are knowledgeable. A series of hypothetical questions (3.1–4, e.g. 3.1: ‘What if I prove to you, first of all, that some people build expensive and useless houses while others build ones for much less that have everything they need, will I seem to you to demonstrate one of the activities of estate management?’) encourage Critobulus to learn what he needs, and the next stage of the discussion can commence. Analepsis and anticipation of the argument by Socrates here perform a protreptic function in addition to articulating the discussion.

Elsewhere it is the ‘pupil’ who initiates analepsis so that he may keep track of the argument and promote progress. At 6.1, after an extensive Socratic digression on farming, Critobulus asks Socrates to ‘go back to where you left off talking about estate management and try to go through the subjects connected with this’. In order to do so, Socrates proposes to ‘recapitulate the agreements we have reached’ (6.2) to provide a model for the remaining discussion (which he does at 6.4–10, preparatory to narrating his conversation with Ischomachus). Again, in the inset conversation with Ischomachus, Socrates reminds his teacher what he said about successful farm management, since he thinks this topic has not yet been covered in enough detail (15.6). Finally, analepsis may mark intellectual progress, as at 19.14. Here Socrates, puzzling over the problem of how to plant an olive tree, remarks ‘but I am again thinking why, when you asked me a while ago briefly if I knew how to plant, I said no. For I thought that I would not be able to say at all how one should plant, but when you made the effort to ask me point by point, I answer you, as you say, the things which you know as an expert farmer’. This makes Socrates realize the value of teaching by means of questions.

The narrative of the *Apology* is set within a general framework of reminiscence (subsequent narration) studded with external actorial analepses as Socrates (and his accuser) argues over how to interpret his past actions and speech. Thus when Meletus complains that Socrates has taught the young to obey him rather than their parents, Socrates confesses that he has indeed done this when the issue is education, since he is an expert, but counters that listening to experts is sound Athenian democratic practice (20–21). The most effective anachrony in the work, however, is the actorial prolepsis reserved for the conclusion. After the end of the trial Socrates is reported to have made some choice remarks concerning the ethics of Anytus, one of his accusers, who had been annoyed with Socrates over some remarks that the latter had made concerning his son's education (precisely the issue that Meletus had focused on). Socrates explicitly lays claim to the power of prophecy that attends Homeric heroes and makes a prediction:

‘I predict that he will not continue in the slavish occupation that his father has prepared for him, and because he has no serious advisor, he will fall into some shameful desire and will advance far in villainy.’ His speech was no lie, for the young man took pleasure in wine and never stopped drinking day or night and in the end became worthless both to his friends and to himself. So Anytus because of his son's evil education and his own ignorance has an evil reputation even though he is dead.

(30–31)

We see here the convergence of actorial prolepsis and narratorial analepsis, as Socrates anticipates the disaster awaiting Anytus and his son and has his prophecy confirmed by the narrator, who looks back on the prophecy from his own temporal perspective.⁵ This use of prolepsis confirms Socrates' wisdom, yet it is only an extreme example of a more general phenomenon, the ethical expertise that ensures he continues to be beneficial to those who remember him. Because of his steadfastness in life and death Socrates' future reputation is assured—and constructed and perpetuated in the work before us.

⁵ A more generalized prophecy is also found in Plato's *Apology* 39b–c. For the connection of this motif with ancient poetic *vitae* see Compton 1990.

Rhythm

I noted above that only two of Xenophon's four Socratic works are tied to specific occasions. Yet the narrator of each makes it clear that the conversations have been selected for their exemplary qualities: that of the *Symposium* for its presentation of good men at play, that of the *Oeconomicus* because it distils management experience, that of the *Apology* because it crystallizes Socrates' heroic virtue in the face of death. The multiple conversations of the *Memorabilia* present examples of Socratic usefulness to his friends and controvert general misapprehensions about Socrates. Even within the *Apology*, there are explicit indications of selectivity, as we shall see, but it is the *Memorabilia* that goes the furthest in making selectivity of anecdotes a guiding narrative principle. In philosophical narrative, then, as well as in Xenophon's (→) historical narrative the textual space devoted to an event is determined by what is worth remembering rather than by actual duration. I shall begin here with the *Symposium*, since it comes closest to presenting a complete narrative unit, defined by the prelude to the occasion, the party itself, and its conclusion.

The narrative of the dinner party involves Socrates and other members of the Athenian elite (most of the characters are historically attested), and combines scenic narration, direct quotation of the conversation, and various summary statements. There is, perhaps, greater variety in temporal rhythm precisely because the narrator is attempting to present a complete occasion and chooses not to skip from highlight to highlight, as he does in the *Memorabilia*, but to include more scenic detail (consonant with his opening conviction that the deeds of gentlemen are 'worth remembering' (*axiomnēmoneuta*) even when they are amusing themselves). The opening supplies the real historical background (the victory of the boy Autolycus) and the important information of the host's love for him (1.1–2) against which the narrative (itself largely fictional) is set.⁶ Then comes the dinner invitation and preliminary reactions to it in some detail (1.3–6), followed by a swift summary of further reactions and the arrivals of the guests (1.7–8). The narrator then emphatically marks the beginning of scenic narration:

⁶ For the historical significance of the background and characters in the dinner party see Huss 1999: 398–403.

Now someone who took note of what happened would immediately have thought that beauty is something royal by nature ... the beauty of Autolycus drew everybody's gaze to him. None of those watching failed to experience something in his soul because of him. Some became rather silent, while others somehow took a pose. All people who are possessed by a god seem worth looking at ... Callias then because of his love was worth looking at ... so they were feasting in silence. (1.8–10)

Interestingly, this scenic narration is thematized and made paradigmatic in itself of psychic reactions (note 'worth looking at' and 'took a pose'), but if extended would have undermined the promised conversation, and thus the entrance of a buffoon is needed to start the conversation that takes up most of the rest of the work. Short summary passages accelerate the narrative over inessential episodes such as the removal of the dinner tables (2.1) or various performances of the entertainers or the buffoon (2.1, 8, 11, 22–23; 3.1), as also over the reactions of the company (2.17, 27; 3.1, 10, 14; 6.1; 8.42), whether those reactions are general laughter or surprise, or consist in many people asking similar questions or making similar remarks simultaneously. Especially characteristic is the iterative presentation functioning as a summary at 4.56: "Certainly", they replied, and when they had once said "Certainly", they all replied this for the remainder of his questions'. It is clear that Socrates' substantive comments and conversations are the focus of the narrative. Both acceleration and slow-down are employed to this end, so that, for example, the narrative can focus on the details of the exchange between Socrates, Callias, and Lycon on the scents and odours appropriate to men and women (2.3–5). This exchange is introduced by a brief summary of a musical performance by the entertainers ('and when the flute-girl had played the flute for them and the boy played the cithara, and both of them seemed to cheer the company to everyone's great satisfaction, Socrates said ...', 2.2). The quoted dialogue that follows eventually turns from real to metaphorical scent (that of *kalokagathia*, the excellence of a gentleman), and scene becomes summary as the company considers where one might find a teacher for this ('Then many people spoke, and one of them said "Where will he find a teacher of this?" and someone else said that it was not teachable ...'). Socrates changes the subject since the topic is debatable: it must be put off for another time, and he directs attention towards the dancing girl (2.7). Socrates stops the progress of the discussion, then, when it draws too close to the usual subject matter of Socratic conversation.

The *Oeconomicus* starts abruptly: ‘I once (*pote*) heard him having a conversation about estate management also, along the following lines’ (1.1). The use of *pote* marks the opening of a narrative, but the lack of specificity in providing referents for ‘him’ and ‘also’ is notable (see below under ‘Frequency’ for other examples of ‘once’ and ‘also’ in the *Memorabilia*). The narrator demands of the narratee that (s)he have a familiarity with the broad situation, constructing a rhetoric where Socrates needs no introduction.⁷ The conversation is with Critobulus (we are not told the identity of the narrator) and represents the kind of Socratic conversation with which we are familiar from Plato, where one topic is examined in depth. As will be the case with the *Memorabilia*, the didactic and exemplary function of the work dictates a certain selectivity in the narrative material. We hear a conversation between Socrates and Critobulus knowing that it is but one Socratic conversation of many, but also that it has been selected because it is thought to typify Socratic techniques and opinions on the subject. Within this constraint, *Oeconomicus* purports to represent the content of an entire conversation, although the failure to return to the framing Critobulus conversation from the inset Ischomachus conversation means that one is uncertain how either conversation ended, even though Socrates had promised (6.12) to narrate the entire conversation: ‘What if I narrate to you from the beginning (*ex arkhēs diēgēsomai*) how I once (*pote*) met a man who seemed to me really to be one of these [gentlemen]’. Selectivity is even more evident in the Ischomachus conversation and its tertiary narrative. Ischomachus chooses to narrate to Socrates particular examples of his conversations with his wife and of his own practices, although each conversational vignette moves at a leisurely pace. Socrates (11.1) has to prevent him from multiplying examples of the admirably ‘masculine temperament’ of his wife in order to make him concentrate on himself. Throughout the conversation Socrates is greedy for detail (‘Narrate completely’, 11.6, 11), whereas Ischomachus is keener to impart principles (11.7, 12), and indeed the methodological points made towards the end of the work (19.13–16) are tied to the amount of detail that is necessary to make a point and teach one’s pupil. Thus when Socrates asks

⁷ For those familiar with the *Memorabilia*, it is as though the *Oeconomicus* were merely the beginning of a new chapter in that work. This presumption of generic familiarity is shared with Platonic dialogues (*SAGN* 1:366). Cf. *SAGN* 1:379 for the introductory formulae of the Socratic works and the ‘impression that they form a continuous sequence’.

how to plant olives, Ischomachus replies ‘Here again you’re making trial of me, when you know very well’.

In the *Apology*, the scope of the work extends beyond the trial itself to include illustrative pre-trial and post-trial material. Moreover, at section 22, the narrator is explicit that more was said during the trial than he has reported; all he wants is to make it clear that Socrates’ chief concern was to avoid the appearance or actuality of any improper behaviour towards gods or men. Socrates’ consciousness of his innocence and his belief that the time had come for him to die explains his ‘big talking’ (*megalēgoria*, 1). Even though all of Socrates’ behaviour at the time of his trial was exemplary, the narrator’s particular focus on an overlooked explanation for his conduct makes the quality of the narrative more than usually uneven. Detailed reports of speech are followed by swift acceleration to the next exemplary moment. Thus the narrator lingers on the pre-trial exchange with Hermogenes that establishes Socrates’ attitude to the court (1–9) and sums it up at 10 with the remark ‘He [Hermogenes] said that having assessed the situation in this way, when his opponents accused him of not believing in the gods the city believed in and introducing new divinities and corrupting the youth, Socrates came forward and said ...’. There follows Socrates’ self-justification, punctuated by the uproar of the jurors (reported in summary). Demolition of his accuser Meletus gives way to brief anecdotes of his attitude during the penalty phase of the trial and while he was in prison (23) and to a slightly more extended presentation of his remarks as he left the courtroom (24–30). The verdict is presumed, rather than reported (23). Finally, the narrative ends with the narrator’s comments on the blessed nature of his hero’s fate (32–34).

The *Memorabilia* can be considered a compendium of wisdom, grouped by topic.⁸ This organization dictates an episodic narrative, and the narrator makes his theory explicit at 4.6.1:

I shall try also to tell this: how he used to make his companions better at discussion. For Socrates used to think that those who know what each individual thing is can also explain it to others, but he said that it is not astonishing that those who do not know trip up both themselves and others. Because of this he never used to stop examining with his companions what each individual thing is. Now it would be a great task to go through how he defined everything, but I shall tell this much: what I think will demonstrate the method of his enquiry. (4.6.1)

⁸ *SAGV* 1:380.

Similarly (though less theoretically), the narrator at 1.3.1 says that he will set down ‘as much as I can recollect’ of the actions and conversations by which Socrates benefited his companions.⁹ Since the first part of book 1 focuses on rebutting the accusations brought against Socrates at his trial, there is more argument than narrative, based on a summary of Socratic practice. Consequently, questions of slow-down and acceleration do not come to the forefront. The pace starts to slow with the more detailed treatment of Critias and Alcibiades, which begins with an overview of their relationship with him (1.24–28) and then proceeds to narrate individual conversations involving them, punctuated again by summary statements (‘What sort of relationship existed between Critias and Socrates and how they behaved towards each other has been narrated, and I would say that nobody can get an education from someone he does not like’, 1.2.38–39). At 1.3, the narrative takes on the quality it will retain for the rest of the work, as the narrator announces his intention of reporting beneficial conversations. Individual anecdotes are reported and carefully set within an evaluative framework. As one example of many, I cite the beginning of book 3, as the narrator declares, ‘I shall now narrate this, that he benefited those who strove for noble achievements by making them attentive to the things for which they strove’ (3.1.1). This is followed by scenic accounts of his conversations with a young man who wanted to be a general and his spoken reflections on generalship (3.1.1–2.4), and then a preliminary ring composition is completed as the narrator concludes, ‘By examining in this way what the excellence of a good leader was, he dismissed all other considerations and left behind only the creation of happiness for those whom he led’ (3.2.4).

Frequency

Whatever their relationship to subsequent *chreiai* literature, the Socratic works also exhibit a strong affiliation with their Platonic (→) counterparts in terms of their creation of the ‘iterative world’ of Socratic dialectic. Socrates is a model of virtue for Xenophon’s narrator, who chooses his anecdotes with care for the lessons they teach. Yet we are continually made aware that these narratives are merely examples of a wider

⁹ Cf. e.g. also 1.6.1; 2.7.1; 3.3.1.

practice. Even the narrator's opening statement in the *Memorabilia*, 'I have *often* wondered ...', sets the tone: reflection on Socrates' life is an ongoing process that can mirror the learning that went on in his presence. This learning takes place because Socrates presents a consistent set of values and argues for them consistently. Iterative presentation can thus be an accurate portrayal of Socrates' because all of Socrates' actions are typical.

Xenophon created a specifically 'iterative' narrative in the *Memorabilia*, a characteristic that is closely connected with the selectivity examined above, whereby the narrator chooses exemplary Socratic conversations for presentation to a wider public as a didactic and apologetic tool. These effects are created by a combination of markers. The narrator uses the imperfect to express the repeated aspect of Socrates' actions, he characterizes his words or deeds with forms of the demonstratives *toioutos* and *toiosde* (which lend a generalizing tone), and he may say that Socrates does something 'often'. Thus in response to charges of atheism, the narrator responds 'he often used to sacrifice openly at home and often at the common altars of the city' (1.1.2). Or following a discussion of the imprisonment of madmen and the treatment of parents, we hear 'because of such things as this, he often used to think about how ignorance differs from madness' (1.2.50). The opening narration of his encounter with Hippias the sophist is significant. This episode follows examples of his obedience to and respect for the laws:

He *often used to speak like this* to others, and I know that he once [*pote*] had a conversation with Hippias of Elis *also* concerning justice along the following lines [*toiade*]. When Hippias arrived in Athens after a long absence he was present when Socrates was saying to some people that it was amazing: if one wished to have someone taught to be a cobbler, one would not be at a loss where to send him to get this ... but if one should wish to learn justice oneself or to have it taught to one's son or servant, one does not know where to go to obtain this. When Hippias heard this he said, as if mocking him, 'Are you still saying those same things, Socrates, which I once heard from you a long time ago?' And Socrates said, 'And what is more strange than this, Hippias, I not only always say the same things, but on the same subjects.' (4.4.5–6)

This passage employs all the markers specified above: the use of the imperfect, of 'often', and of the demonstrative *toiade*. It also uses *pote* to introduce an exemplary narrative, a technique with which we are familiar from Pindar (→) and others. Even more important, it addresses in its content the issue at hand: Socrates says the same things on the same subject. This continues even over a period of years, and the

imminence of his own death changes nothing. This congruence of formal features and content is familiar from Plato (→) although less developed.

It is beyond the scope of this study to review all the means by which Xenophon articulates his Socratic anecdotes. Besides the formula mentioned earlier ('he often used to ...'), we may note the repeated use, either alone or in combination, of past general conditions (3.9.12, 13: 'if someone said X, he said Y'; cf. 3.14.1), genitive absolutes (3.13.1–6; 4.2.3), and formulae such as 'and once' (*kai/de pote*, 2.3.1, 5.1; 3.3.2), 'again once' (*palin pote*, 1.6.11, 15), evoking impressions of both regularity and a certain temporal indeterminacy. Even phrases introducing speech like 'like this, more or less' (*hōde pōs*, 2.1.21; 4.6.2, 14; cf. 2.1.34) that speak for honesty of a narrator who does not claim to be able to reproduce Socrates' words precisely, also indicate perhaps that precise words are not important. It is the method and effect that matter. Paradoxically then, the episodic nature of the *Memorabilia* is no barrier to benefiting from it and acquiring a detailed acquaintance with Socrates' wisdom because of Socrates' consistency. He always says the same kind of thing in the same kind of way ('more or less like this'). Indeed, we are told that the very recollection of him when absent was a benefit (4.1.1), and this is of course a gloss on the object of the work as a whole.

Conclusion

Analysis of Xenophon's narrative art has become increasingly sophisticated in the last decades. We now have a much greater appreciation for the way he constructs didactic narrative. Many of Stadter's acute observations on the *Cyropaedia* might also be applied to Xenophon's Socratic works: the use of narrative for moral instruction, the creation of a narrative of virtue that teaches the narratee how to relate to others, the creation of a chronotope of 'biographical time', the generalization of time and space that features timeless repetition of action, and finally the complex interrelationship that is implied between the narratee's (and in the case of the Socratic works, the narrator's) awareness of his or her own present and the world of Socrates.¹⁰ The exemplary conversations

¹⁰ For the *Cyropaedia* as didactic narrative see Stadter 1991: 464–468; on the construction of time see 472–477, 491.

investigated in this chapter are not, of course, as unified a narrative as the *Cyropaedia*, but they do suggest Xenophon's broad interest in constructing experimental narratives that combine features of several genres: *sōkratikoī logoi*, instructional literature, the biographical or anecdotal 'pamphlet', and history.