Introduction

T'enjoy the World's Conveniencies,
Be fam'd in War, yet live in Ease,
Without great Vices, is a vain
EUTOPIA seated in the Brain.
Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (1.36 [23])

In the early eighteenth century, the Dutch writer and philosopher Bernard Mandeville produced a satire of human society via an allegorical description of a bee state entitled *The Fable of the Bees: or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*. His fable originated as a 433-line poem entitled *The Grumbling Hive: or Knaves turn'd Honest*, which attracted little attention from the reading public when it was first published in 1705. However, his subsequent expansion and prose elaboration of the poem in 1723 so scandalized European society that the Grand Jury of Middlesex recommended that Mandeville be prosecuted, the French translation of the *Fable of the Bees* was burned by the public hangman, and published critiques of his work abounded.[1] Mandeville attracted infamy because, instead of using bees to represent an orderly and virtuous monarchy,[2] he used the hive to model the rampant vices that he believed are responsible for a flourishing human society, namely greed, luxury, and other self-interested appetites.[3] As such, his work flouted the moralizers of Augustan England, epitomized by the

[1] On the hostile reception of the *Fable of the Bees* in the eighteenth century, see most recently Hundert (1994), Stafford (1997), and Goldsmith (2000).
[2] On the usual idealization of the bee in Augustan England, see Johnson (1961) and Allen (2004).
[3] Cf. Mandeville's explanation of his purpose in the preface to the fable: "For the main Design of the Fable (as it is briefly explain'd in the Moral) is to shew the Impossibility of enjoying all the most elegant Comforts of Life that are to be met with in an industrious, wealthy and powerful Nation, and at the same time be bless'd with all the Virtue and Innocence that can be wish'd for in a Golden Age; from thence to expose the Unreasonableness and Folly of those, that desirous of being an opulent and flourishing People, and wonderfully greedy after all the Benefits they can receive as such, are yet always murmuring at and exclaiming against those Vices and Inconveniences, that from the Beginning of the World to this present Day, have been inseparable from all Kingdoms and States that ever were fam'd for Strength, Riches, and Politeness, at the same time" (1.6–7 [vii]).

Society for the Reformation of Manners, who sought to police private life and eradicate immorality.[4] In contrast to these moralizers, Mandeville exposed virtue to be a mask or a delusion and set out a genealogy of society and morality based on the natural, self-interested passions that drive human beings.[5]

Mandeville's ultimate intentions and the ethical implications of his work are still debated, and his many published attempts to clarify and defend his position have only added to the controversy since many see his language as consistently pervaded with irony.[6] Still, if one does give weight to his words in the preface, it seems that his overall goal is not to praise the vices that have made a country like England prosperous so much as to point to the hypocrisy of those who are "always murmuring at and exclaiming against those Vices" (1.7 [vii]) while at the same time enjoying the conveniences of a country like England.[7] Mandeville himself espouses a preference not for the supposed greatness of a city like London but for a retired life in the country: "But if, without any regard to the Interest or Happiness of the City, the Question was put, What Place I thought most pleasant to walk in? No body can doubt but, before the stinking streets of *London*, I would esteem a fragrant Garden or a shady Grove in the country" (1.12 [xiii]).

Danielle Allen suggests that Mandeville was the first to invert the bee trope and use it to model vices instead of virtues.[8] The goal of this book, however, is to suggest that, in fact, his ideas and methods had been anticipated by writers in antiquity.[9] In particular, I argue that Xenophon's

[4] On the moral climate of Mandeville's England, see Horne (1978), Goldsmith (1985) 1–27, Hundert (1994) 1–15 and Jack (2000).

[5] On Mandeville's genealogy of morals and the intellectual influences on his conception of morality and human society, see Kaye (1924) 1.lxxvii–cxiii, Jack (1987) 98–113, Schneider (1987) 67–100, Hundert (1994) and Allen (2004).

[6] Monro (1975) 178 notes, "At least five distinct, and indeed widely different, moral theories have been attributed to Mandeville: moral scepticism . . . immoralism . . . rigorism or asceticism . . . utilitarianism . . . and ethical egoism." On Mandeville's irony and ambiguity, cf. Stumpf (2000) 115: "It is important to remember that Mandeville is a great literary figure, especially in the first volume of *The Fable of the Bees*, and that we should be as reluctant to impose ideological consistency upon him as we would be to impose it upon Swift. Librarians have difficulty putting Mandeville in one place, and so should we. His irony is both pervasive and elusive, and, like most great writers, he can entertain the truth of opposites." See also Hind (1968) and Schneider (1987) 194–231.

[7] As Allen (2004) 80 n. 16 notes, "The point that Mandeville's satire is aimed at hypocrisy was first made by Harth ("Satiric Purpose" [note 14], 328) and has been very influential in Mandeville studies." Her reference is to Harth (1969).

[8] Allen (2004) 78: "And indeed, his inversion of the bee trope was prodigious, in the sense of being without prior example."

[9] The classical influences on Mandeville have been well noted. In particular, Hundert (1994) emphasizes the influence of Epicureanism on his thought. Stumpf (2000) notes many connections between *The Fable of the Bees* and the *Georgics*, though he does not see any irony or satire in Virgil's own version of the bee state.

Oeconomicus, Varro's *De Re Rustica*, and Virgil's *Georgics* all utilize bee imagery, as well as broader agricultural allegory, to expose the greedy and self-interested underpinnings of human societies and conventional morality. Like the virtuous bee, the virtuous farmer is a familiar cultural trope from Greece and Rome.[10] While recent studies have brought out the complexity of the country–city dichotomy in ancient thought, with the result that one cannot simply equate the country with "good" and the city with "bad," the negatives generally attached to the life of the rustic farmer are qualities like boorishness or lack of sophistication.[11] Thus, the equation of farming with a materialistic value system, which I suggest informs the agricultural works of Xenophon, Varro, and Virgil, is as shocking as the equation of the beehive with greed and luxury. Like the beehive, the farmer's world in these works has metaphorical connections to political society, and these three writers use these connections to juxtapose the active, political life to a preferred contemplative ideal, perhaps akin to Mandeville's preference for a "fragrant Garden" or "shady Grove." Thus, far from being simple didactic manuals on farming, these works use allegory, irony, and satire to rethink the meaning of morality and critique the hypocrisy of politicians, moralizers, and anyone with pretensions to knowledge.

MENIPPEAN SATIRE, ANCIENT AND MODERN

There are some major differences, of course, between Mandeville's work and the works of Xenophon, Varro, and Virgil. None of the ancient works met with the kind of hostile reception that Mandeville's eventually did, and none of the ancient writers went out of their way to court the infamy that Mandeville enjoyed or to unpack the meaning of their works in explanatory essays. Indeed, many readers do not see irony or satire in their works at all, and none of them is classified generically as a satire. On the other hand, recent works on satire have sought to expand our notion of the genre to

[10] On the ideology of farming and country life in Greece and Rome, see most recently Rosen and Sluiter (2006). See also Martin (1971) *passim*, Dover (1974) 112–14, White (1977), Cossarini (1976–77), (1979–80), Miles (1980) 1–63, Hunter (1985) 109–13, Ross (1987) 10–25, Braund (1989a), Vasaly (1993) 156–90, Connors (1997), Nelson (1998) 88–91, Reay (2005), and Diederich (2007) 327–29. White (1977) 5 suggests that "this powerful, almost obsessive, morality myth is peculiar to the Romans. In the Greek tradition, from Hesiod's *Works and Days* onwards there are few signs of illusion on the subject." While the myth is more firmly entrenched in Rome, Hunter (1985) 109 points out that after the Peloponnesian war, "an opposition between 'town' and 'country' became an increasingly common structuring device in drama and literature" and that the "most common form of the city-country contrast in comedy is between the frivolity and luxury of the city and the virtue and stern morality of the country" (110).

[11] On the complexities of the city–country dichotomy in the ancient world, see esp. Rosen and Sluiter (2006) 1–12.

include works other than the generically self-conscious poems of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal.[12] In particular, more attention is being paid to the Menippean tradition of satire, a genre whose characteristics are much less fixed than those in formal verse satire; it is this type of satire that I believe is relevant to the agricultural works of Xenophon, Varro, and Virgil, as well as to Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*.[13]

Many modern theorists of Menippean satire have connected this genre to Socratic dialogue, though generally to Plato's version and not Xenophon's.[14] Thus, my suggestion that Xenophon's dialogue might have a genetic relationship to Menippean satire is not outlandish, especially since many believe that Xenophon's Socratic dialogues were influenced by those of Antisthenes, the purported founder of Cynicism, and Menippus himself was a famous Cynic.[15] Connections between Varro's *De Re Rustica* and Menippean satire are even more reasonable to suppose since Varro is known to be the author of 150 *Menippean Satires*, which survive in fragments, and so was clearly drawn to a Menippean frame of mind. Virgil's didactic poem, then, is the only work without a potential tie to Menippean satire; however, depending on how one defines this genre, many connections still might be made.

There seems to have been little notion of a fixed genre of Menippean satire in antiquity, and the various definitions that modern critics have come up with are wide ranging and diverse.[16] Menippus himself, the Greek

[12] E.g. Hooley (2007) 142: "Yet there is much more 'satire' out there, and even in Rome, the hexameter form was not the only way into this modality: comedy, philosophy, streetcorner diatribe, verse invective all did this thing we popularly call satire, if not exclusively, at least some of the time and in some ways."

[13] On the importance of integrating the study of Menippean satire with formal verse satire, see Griffin (1994) esp. ch. 1. On classifying Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* as Menippean satire, see Hind (1968).

[14] Most famously, Bakhtin (1981) 26: "A few words now about Menippean satire. Its folklore roots are identical with those of the Socratic dialogue, to which it is genetically related (it is usually considered a product of the disintegration of the Socratic dialogue)." See also Frye (1957) 310, Bakhtin (1984) 106–22, Relihan (1993) 6, 11, 25–26, 33, 180–86 and Dentith (2000) 45–58. Relihan (1993) 180 calls "Plato's narrator and self-deprecating naïf, Socrates, the most important model for Menippus's own literary personality."

[15] Bakhtin (1984) 113 even suggests that the "first representative" of Menippean satire was "perhaps Antisthenes." On Antisthenes' influence on Xenophon, see Branham and Goulet-Cazé (1996) 7 and Long (1996a) 32. For the modern critique of the Hellenistic belief that Antisthenes was the founder of Cynicism, as well as a moderate defense of the connections between Antisthenes and Cynicism, see Tsouna McKirahan (1994).

[16] Cf. Relihan (1984) 227: "That such a genre existed is evident from the lines of influence and tradition that can be traced in Varro, Seneca, Petronius, and others, but antiquity does not acknowledge the genre which modern literary acumen has uncovered and named on its own." See also Rimell (2005) 164–69, Henderson (2005) 316–18, and Hooley (2007) 143. For surveys of various modern definitions of the genre, see Kirk (1980) 223–84, Relihan (1993) 3–11, Griffin (1994) 31–34, Kaplan (2000) 47–58, Rimell (2005) 166–69, and Weinbrot (2005) 1–19.

founder of the genre in the third century BC, has left us no surviving works, though a few titles and fragments are recorded in Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus. The only two ancient writers who explicitly connect their works to Menippus are Varro, who wrote what Jerome labels *Satirarum Menippearum Libros CL*, and Lucian, who wrote several dialogues with Menippus as a character.[17] Quintilian does mention "another kind" (*alterum . . . genus*) of satire, written by Varro, which uses not just different meters, but prose and verse (10.1.95), but it is unclear if he is talking about an actual genre or simply a variation of Ennian satire.[18] Whatever its import for the ancient conception of the genre of Menippean satire, Quintilian's description of Varro's satire has been influential among classicists, who usually consider the mixture of prose and verse an essential feature of the genre.[19] Accordingly, Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* and Petronius' *Satyricon* are usually considered Menippean, even though they seem to have little in common with Varro's satires or Lucian's dialogues, which, incidentally, have little verse in them. Thus, if there was a tacitly recognized genre of Menippean satire in antiquity, then it was also recognized to be a genre with immense variety in form and content.[20] If one adds in the works that scholars of various modern literatures have considered Menippean, the diversity grows even more daunting, to the extent that some have questioned whether the name "Menippean satire" has any use at all as a marker of genre.[21]

[17] For an inclusive list of all potentially Menippean works and fragments from antiquity, see Kirk (1980) 3–37. Relihan (1993) limits the list of authors to Menippus, Varro, Seneca, Petronius and Lucian, as well as later writers like Julian, Martianus Capella, Fulgentius, and Ennodius.

[18] On the various interpretations of this controversial line of Quintilian, see Relihan (1984), who argues that Quintilian is grouping Varro's satires with the Ennian model instead of suggesting that Varro invented a new genre of satire. Relihan (1984) also points out that the term "Menippean satire" was not used as a marker of genre until 1581, in Justus Lipsius' *Somnium*.

[19] See, for instance, Duff's (1936) 84 traditional description: "Menippean Satire, which Quintilian regarded as an older type than Lucilian, has been touched upon in connection with Menippus of Gadara, after whom this blend of various meters with prose has been named. It had three exponents in the Roman classical period: first, M. Terentius Varro . . . secondly, Seneca, the philosopher, in his skit on the recently deceased Emperor Claudius; and, thirdly, Petronius, Nero's master of ceremonies, who wrote in his *Satyricon* the first picaresque novel."

[20] As Relihan (1993) 50–51 notes regarding Varro's *Menippeans*, "It is inconceivable that all of the *Menippeans* would formally belong to the same genre . . . Menippean satire likes to appropriate various genres of literature as grist for its mill." See also Weinbrot (2005) 4: "[Menippean satire] often attaches itself to other kinds of works within other dominant genres, and peers in as occasion requires. It is perhaps less a clearly defined genre than a set of variable but compatible devices whose traits support an authorial theme."

[21] Cf. Relihan (1993) 3: "Outside of classical circles Menippean satire has become a critical term used to discuss a vast genre of world literature, comprising practically the full range of seriocomic and learned fiction, and denotes, in very general terms, an unsettling or subversive combination

Most scholars of Menippean satire, however, find something useful about the term and are drawn to attempts at definition and classification, despite what Kirk (1980) calls the "inherent circularity of such a procedure" since "the members and the class would define each other" (x). As Rimell (2005) notes, "one of the most convincing arguments for genre is simply that it is a useful critical tool that facilitates debate on the relation between literary texts" (166). While there is much diversity in modern definitions of the genre, there is also interesting common ground that I think justifies the endeavor to look for resemblances among works that either declare themselves Menippean or have led readers to think that they are. For instance, since Cicero, it has been recognized that Menippean satire involves both humor and philosophy,[22] and one of the most consistent elements of modern definitions of Menippean satire is the presence of parody of philosophy, or of prevalent orthodoxies or of those who profess to be knowledgeable.[23] In general, it seems that what Dryden said about Lucian's satires could be said about most representatives of the genre: "his business . . . was rather to pull down every thing, than to set up any thing."[24] This destructive, rather than constructive, tendency of Menippean satire makes sense for a genre with deep roots in Cynicism, a philosophy that never developed a formal school or doctrines but whose motto was to "deface the currency,"

of fantasy, learning, and philosophy. Within its categories are included, with varying degrees of persuasiveness, Erasmus and humanistic literature, Rabelais and Burton and Swift, *Tristram Shandy*, *Moby Dick*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Ulysses* . . . What was once novel is now a somewhat discredited commonplace; the term has been long enough in vogue that it has been expanded beyond what many would consider its reasonable bounds, and its usefulness has justly been questioned" (see also 221 n. 3).

[22] Cf. Cicero's rendition of Varro describing his Menippean satires (*Ac.* 1.8): "And yet in those old works of ours, which we interspersed with a certain humor, in imitation (not translation) of Menippus, there are many things mixed in from profound philosophy and many things said dialectically" (*et tamen in illis veteribus nostris quae Menippum imitati, non interpretati, quadam hilaritate conspersimus, multa admixta ex intima philosophia, multa dicta dialectice*).

[23] E.g. Frye (1957) 309: "A constant theme in the tradition is the ridicule of the *philosophus gloriosus*"; Bakhtin (1984) 114: "The most important characteristic of the menippea as a genre is the fact that its bold and unrestrained use of the fantastic and adventure is internally motivated, justified by and devoted to a purely ideational and philosophical end: the creation of *extraordinary situations* for the provoking and testing of a philosophical idea, a discourse, a *truth*, embodied in the image of a wise man, the seeker of this truth"; Relihan (1993) 10: "But I urge that the genre is primarily a parody of philosophical thought and forms of writing, a parody of the habits of civilized discourse in general, and that it ultimately turns into the parody of the author who has dared to write in such an orthodox way"; Weinbrot (2005) 6: "Menippean satire, then, is a form that uses at least two other genres, languages, cultures, or changes of voice to oppose a dangerous, false, or specious and threatening orthodoxy."

[24] Dryden, *Life of Lucian*. The quotation is from vol. 11.420 of the 1844 edition of *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. J. Mitford (New York: Harper & Brothers).

or to subvert tradition and convention.[25] It is also a philosophy intimately connected with the literary modes of satire and parody and known for its innovative creation of new types of satirical genres.[26]

IRONY IN XENOPHON, VARRO, AND VIRGIL

To return, then, to Xenophon, Varro, and Virgil: I would argue that this tradition of destructive, not constructive, satire, which gives voice to traditional beliefs or professional dogma only to subvert them through techniques of irony and parody,[27] informs the *Oeconomicus*, the *De Re Rustica*, and the *Georgics*, even if they do not fulfill all the formal features of the genre as it has been variously defined over the centuries.[28] While no one has labeled the *Oeconomicus* or *Georgics* "Menippean" before, and only superficial aspects of Menippean satire have been granted the *De Re Rustica*,[29] several of the fundamental characteristics that I believe connect

[25] Diogenes' mission to "deface the currency" (παραχάραττειν τὸ νόμισμα) is connected by Diogenes Laertius to a literal act of defacing coinage (D.L. 6.20–21), which led to the philosopher's exile, though most give it a symbolic sense. E.g. Bosman (2006) 101: "Cynicism attempts to redefine the relationship between human nature and human behaviour, which naturally leads to conflict with generally accepted norms. This is the meaning of the programmatic Cynic slogan, παραχάραττειν τὸ νόμισμα (D.L. 6.20; 56; 71): 'reminting the coinage', the 'transvaluation of values'." See also Dudley (1937) 22, Branham (1996), and Prince (2006) 89–90.

[26] Cf. Branham and Goulet-Cazé (1996) 2: "Menippean satire is probably the most familiar Cynic genre, but in antiquity Cynics were known for innovating forms of parody, satire, dialogue, diatribe, and aphorism"; Branham (1996) 93: "The Cynic motto – 'Deface the Current Coin' (*parakharattein to nomisma*) – makes joking, parody, and satire not merely a useful rhetorical tool, but an indispensable one, constitutive of Cynic ideology as such. Humor is the chisel stamp of Cynic discourse." See also Bosman (2006).

[27] While there is certainly much overlap between parody and satire, particularly in "their common use of irony as a rhetorical strategy" (Hutcheon [1985]/[2000] 52), Rose's (1993) 81 distinction is useful: "One major factor which distinguishes the parody from satire is . . . the parody's use of the preformed material of its 'target' as a constituent part of its own structure. Satire, on the other hand, need not be restricted to the imitation, distortion, or quotation of other literary texts or preformed artistic materials."

[28] This destructive, satiric spirit characterizes Mandeville, as well. Cf. Jack (1975) 37: "Mandeville was not concerned with advancing a substantive moral view when he advanced his paradox, 'private vices, public benefits'; rather he was concerned with exposing the inconsistency and hypocrisy of those who in his own society did try to retain an ascetic and utilitarian ethic simultaneously." Cf. also Jack (1987) 151–52 and Adolph (1975) 162: "He should be regarded as a kind of compulsive debunker of received opinion rather than as a satirist in the great tradition . . . Mandeville has the sociologist's instinct to reveal 'what really goes on' under the surface rather than the outrage emanating from a moral center which characterizes most satire."

[29] E.g. Hirzel (1895) 1.560–62, Heisterhagen (1952) 63–105, Green (1997) 429, Flach (1997) 42, Rösch-Binde (1998) 345 and Diederich (2007) 199–203. Of these, Heisterhagen gives the most detailed analysis of Menippean elements in the *De Re Rustica* and focuses on its use of parody, word-play and moral critique, though his interpretation of Varro's Menippean spirit is very different from the one I discuss further below and presents Varro as a traditional Roman moralist, not a subversive and self-parodic satirist.

these works to the genre have been noticed by other readers. Thus, I will briefly lay out the schools of interpretation of each author, with particular attention to interpretations which grant their works a high degree of irony, before suggesting why I think it is useful to bring all three works in conjunction with each other and Menippean satire.

Xenophon's current readers can be divided into three different camps: those who believe Xenophon is *not* capable of irony or philosophy, those who find him a capable philosopher and literary stylist but not an ironist, and those who see his works as deeply philosophical, literary, and laden with complex irony. Until fairly recently, the first group was ascendant, despite the high regard in which previous centuries held Xenophon.[30] Vlastos' low opinion of Xenophon is often cited as representative of this group, though there are many others who would join him in reviling Xenophon's philosophical talent.[31] In the last quarter century, however, there has been, as Tuplin notes (2004b), "not only a renaissance but a metamorphosis" in Xenophontic scholarship, both because of the increased scholarly activity on Xenophon and because of the change in attitude towards him by a series of scholars who have "conceded that [Xenophon] should be taken seriously as a distinctive voice on the history, society and thought-world of the later classical (and pre-hellenistic) era."[32] Within this group of scholars who take Xenophon seriously, there are still fierce debates over how to read Xenophon, with most of the disagreements centering on the nature and extent of Xenophon's use of irony.[33]

[30] On earlier centuries' esteem of Xenophon, see Bartlett (1996) 3, Howland (2000) 875–76, and Nadon (2001) 3. It is also interesting to note that it is only modern scholars who have seen Xenophon as more of a historian than a philosopher. See Pomeroy (1994) 21–22: "Greek and Roman authors did not question Xenophon's affiliation with Socrates, nor did they hesitate to call him a philosopher. In fact, they classified him more often among philosophers than among historians." See also Gray (1998) 4–5 and Long (1996b) 7: "In fact Plato, or what we call Plato's Socratic dialogues, appears to have been widely regarded [in antiquity] as neither a more nor a less authentic witness to Socrates than Xenophon's writings." In addition, Xenophon's rhetorical skills were highly regarded. See Bartlett (1996) 3 and Pomeroy (1994) 22 for the ancient references.

[31] E.g. Vlastos (1991) 99: "One could hardly imagine a man who in taste, temperament, and critical equipment (or lack of it) would differ as much as did Xenophon from leading members of the inner Socratic circle. The most important difference, of course, is that people like Plato, Aristippus, Antisthenes, Euclid, Phaedo were philosophers with aggressively original doctrines of their own, one of them a very great philosopher, while Xenophon, versatile and innovative litterateur, creator of whole new literary genres, does not seem versed nearly as well as they in philosophy or as talented in this area." For discussion and rebuttal of Vlastos' Xenophon, see Morrison (1987). For further examples of negative judgment about Xenophon's philosophical abilities, see Gray (1998) 1–6.

[32] Both quotations are from Tuplin (2004b) 13. See also Tuplin (2004b) 13 n. 1 for a list of the many books and commentaries published on Xenophon in the last few decades.

[33] Cf. Tuplin (1996) 1629: "A (perhaps *the*) central question, which divides modern readers into two camps, is how far style and content are really *faux-naif* and informed by humour and irony."

The "ironic" approach to reading Xenophon is strongly associated with the polarizing figure of Leo Strauss. Strauss was the first scholar to read Xenophon's Socratic works as containing the sort of complex and pervasive irony more often associated with Plato's Socrates, and his approach to Xenophon has been influential. The first major study of Xenophon to openly acknowledge its Straussian influence and focus extensively on Xenophon's use of irony is Higgins' 1977 book *Xenophon the Athenian*. While it garnered mixed reviews upon its initial publication, it has recently been credited with an important role in the course of Xenophontic scholarship in the decades since its publication.[34] Indeed, its ironic approach is now less revisionist and nearly mainstream, despite the vigorous debates still being waged about Xenophontic irony.[35] Along with this greater popularity of the ironic Xenophon has come perhaps a greater reticence about the influence of Strauss because of the negative baggage that comes with his name, especially among non-political scientists.[36] Indeed, the term "Straussian" is frequently used to dismiss ironic interpretations of Xenophon or Plato without having to grapple with them or even to define what is meant by the term Straussian.[37] As Smith (2006) points out in his recent book on Strauss, there are many misconceptions about what Straussianism is, ranging from the belief that it is "some kind of sinister cult replete with secret rites of initiation" to a "political movement, often allied with 'neoconservatism'" (2). Smith makes a strong case for the notion that Strauss' "works do not endorse any political program or party, whether of the Left or of the Right, Democratic or Republican. He was a philosopher," and that "Strauss was fundamentally a skeptic for whom the ends of politics and philosophy were inherently irreconcilable." He further suggests that

[34] Cf. Tuplin (2004b) 13 n. 1: "Several participants in the 1999 conference quite rightly drew special attention to the great importance of Higgins 1977 in the development of Xenophontic scholarship."

[35] In addition to Higgins (1977), examples of works on Xenophon that might be called "Straussian" in their reading of his irony are Tuplin (1993), Pangle (1994), Stevens (1994), Bartlett (1996), Too (1998), Howland (2000), Nadon (2001), Ambler (2001), Too (2001) and Johnson (2003). For a recent debate on the extent of Xenophon's irony, see Gray (2004) and D. M. Johnson (2004).

[36] Nadon (2001) 2 n. 7 notes regarding Tuplin (1993) that despite his "Straussian" approach to reading Xenophon, "Not a single work by Strauss appears in Tuplin's otherwise extensive bibliography. His explanation of Xenophon's reticence [i.e. fear of persecution] might well account for his own."

[37] For instance, Pomeroy's (1996) negative review of Bartlett (1996) consists almost entirely of the revelation that the essays are written in "Straussian style" by scholars whose primary affiliation is "with Political Science, not Classics," and who cite Leo Strauss throughout the volume. Cf. also Griswold (2002a) xvi n. 6: "I would further recommend that the use of the term 'Straussian' be suspended from Platonic studies, on the grounds that it has come to function primarily as a distracting polemical label and that its meaning is almost always vague conceptually." For a fair-minded assessment of Strauss' Plato and of the strangely virulent reactions to it among scholars, see Ferrari (1997).

"Straussianism is characterized above all by what its practitioners often call the art of 'careful reading'."[38] Nevertheless, there are trends in Strauss' "careful reading" that might give a more specific meaning to Straussianism, such as his belief that philosophical texts can have both an exoteric and an esoteric meaning, the latter of which is revealed only to select readers, who are attentive to irony and capable of "reading between the lines."[39] This belief underlies his controversial interpretations of Plato and Xenophon, and while his specific analyses of these authors tend to be marginalized in both classical and philosophical circles, his general approach to finding subtext and irony in these Socratic works and to reading them as works of literature has taken hold with many ancient philosophers and classicists – and not just with political scientists already in the "cult."[40]

My own approach to Xenophon is "Straussian" in the sense that I believe his writings are often deeply ironic, with an underlying meaning that can only be teased out by carefully studying the contradictions within the text. I prefer, however, to see the "esoteric" aspects of his texts as motivated not by fear of persecution or a sense of social responsibility,[41] but by the

[38] All three quotations are from S. B. Smith (2006) 12, 13 and 6 respectively. Cf. also G. B. Smith's (1997) similar conclusions: "Strauss was not a political partisan. When one looks at his large and complicated corpus, one primarily sees a great number of novel thought experiments undertaken in the service of resurrecting the *possibility* of political philosophy" (187); "Beyond a shared hermeneutic commitment to taking texts seriously as they present themselves, or in putting forward the ongoing need for political philosophy, there is no such thing as Straussianism" (187–88).

[39] See, for example, Strauss (1952) 25: "Persecution, then, gives rise to a peculiar technique of writing, and therewith to a peculiar type of literature, in which the truth about all crucial things is presented exclusively between the lines. That literature is addressed, not to all readers, but to trustworthy and intelligent readers only."

[40] Platonic studies are roughly divided between those who read Plato's dialogues as literary works whose meaning is never identified with a "straight" interpretation of any of the voices in his dialogues, and those who take Socrates at his word and (usually) as representing Plato's views. For a statement of the differences between the "literary" or "dramatic" and "doctrinal," "analytic," or "dogmatic" readings of Plato, and for further subdivisions of scholars within each approach, see Press (1993) vii–ix, (1996), and (1997). For an attempt to forge a "third way" in Platonic studies, i.e. "an interpretation that, unlike the sceptical one, grants positive content to Plato's philosophy, and that, unlike the 'doctrinal' one, is able to show some necessary connection between this philosophy and the dialogue form," see Gonzalez (1995) (quotation from p. 13). Gonzalez's attempt to find middle ground between the two approaches seems to be a trend. Cf. Griswold (2002a) x: "The emerging consensus in Platonic scholarship should help motivate us to drop the tired contrast between 'literary' and 'philosophical' approaches to Plato, insofar as these terms are used to describe supposedly self-standing approaches that could represent genuine alternative interpretive stances" and Press (1996) 514 "In short, the state of the question about Plato has changed. The question is no longer *whether* to take literary and dramatic aspects into consideration, but *how*."

[41] Cf. S. B. Smith's (2006) 7 summary of Strauss' explanations for esoteric writing: "Strauss's discovery – actually, he called it a 'rediscovery' – of esoteric writing can be attributed to a number of causes, from the simple desire to avoid persecution for unpopular or heterodox opinions, to a sense of 'social responsibility' to uphold the dominant values of one's society, to the wish to tantalize potential readers with the promise of buried treasure."