

# Socratic Dialectic between Philosophy and Politics in *Euthydemus* 305e5-306d1

ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα  
ἴδμεν δ', εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.

Hesiod, *Theogony* 27-8.

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## ABSTRACT

In the final scene of the *Euthydemus*, Socrates argues that because the art of speechwriting merely partakes of the two good arts philosophy and politics, it places third in the contest for wisdom. I argue that this curious speech is a reverse eikos argument, directed at the speechwriters own eikos argument for the preeminence of their art. A careful analysis of the partaking relation reveals that it is rather Socratic dialectic which occupies this intermediate position between philosophy and politics. This result entails that Socrates' peculiar art is only a part of philosophy, and its practitioner only partially wise.

Keywords: Euthydemus, partaking argument, rhetoric, sophistry.

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## INTRODUCTION: THE PARTAKING ARGUMENT (305E5-306D1)

In his final address to Crito in the *Euthydemus*, Socrates improvises an elaborate deduction (305e5-306d1) for the claim that the art of speechwriting comes in third place, after philosophy and politics, in the contest for wisdom (σοφία). As Socrates explains, the basis of this poor showing is that speechwriting and its practitioners merely stand between and partake (μετέχειν) of philosophy and the art of politics. This curious speech (hereafter ‘the partaking argument’) has received virtually no serious attention in the scholarly literature.<sup>1</sup> Its neglect is no doubt due to its apparently unserious nature: the argument as stated is obviously unsound; its premises are cryptic; and it utterly fails to clarify for Crito the real distinction between true and false educators (306d-307a). Indeed, Myles Burnyeat has suggested despairingly that in the face of these facts, we must conclude that Socrates is portrayed by Plato in this passage as *guying* the sophists: the obscurity of the argument and its apparent logic-chopping nature is meant to evoke and parody the eristic argumentation of the brothers Dionysodorus and Euthydemus.<sup>2</sup>

In my view, this interpretation is deeply mistaken. While Socrates’ argument is admittedly both obscure and playful, his final speech in the dialogue conceals a completely serious claim about the nature of Socratic wisdom which is also crucial to our understanding of the *Euthydemus* as a whole. The serious claim is that it is neither speechwriting nor sophistry but rather Socratic dialectic that lies between and partakes of philosophy and the political art. This thesis entails in turn that Socrates’ peculiar art is only a part of philosophy, and that its practitioner is only partially wise.

My defense and explanation of this claim is organized into four sections. I begin in section §1 by extracting the following initial gloss of the partaking relation from 305e5-306d1: an art X is a partaker of another art Y just in case the end at which X aims is identical to the end at which Y aims; but since X only partially shares in the relevant components that constitute Y, X will only imperfectly achieve the common end at which both X and Y aim. I then turn to consider a salient difference between the partaking argument of the *Euthydemus* and Socrates’ remarks on rhetoric and sophistry at *Gorgias* 462-465. The *Gorgias* explains the defects of these (so called) arts in terms of their imitation or imposture of true arts; the partaking argument by contrast attributes the inferiority of an art to its being a mere partaker of good arts. I explain this difference by pointing to the dialectical context of the partaking argument. The partaking argument replies to the following λόγος of the ‘speechwriters’ (οἱ λογοποιοί): anyone who partakes ‘μετρίως’ of both philosophy and politics is more likely to be successful in both private and public life than one who is wholly immersed in either of these arts (305d7-e2). Socrates observes in an aside to Crito that the speechwriters maintain this position ‘εἰκότως’ (305d7), though it is ‘plausible rather than true’ (εὐπρέπειαν μᾶλλον ἢ ἀλήθειαν, 305e5-6). I argue that what Socrates means by this is that their defense falls into a class of rhetorical argument known as the εἰκός argument, or the argument from likelihood. Socrates thus refrains from dismissing the speechwriters’ art as a mere imitation of a good art only because in the immediate dialectical context he responds to the speechwriters’ λόγος in kind: his opponent’s defense is an εἰκός argument; the partaking argument is a ‘reverse εἰκός argument’.

In section §2 I defend this claim by briefly explaining the nature and function of εἰκός ar-

guments in the rhetorical tradition. By drawing on recent work in the scholarly literature, I explain that εἰκός arguments are arguments from ‘likelihood’ because they are grounded in the social expectations of the audience. I conclude this section by explaining the technique of the ‘reverse εἰκός.’ This is a method of overthrowing one εἰκός argument by means of another which reverses the likelihood of the former’s conclusion.

On the basis of this account I turn in section §3 to the analysis of two near doubles of the speechwriters’ λόγος: Isocrates 10.5 (the fifth paragraph of his *Helenaie encomium*) and *Gorgias* 485a3-e2. I demonstrate that both passages are εἰκός arguments. I infer that the speechwriters’ λόγος in the *Euthydemus* is therefore an εἰκός argument also. I then demonstrate that Socrates’ partaking argument is a reverse εἰκός argument. The reversal involves three basis steps. First, it takes over the speechwriters’ premise that anyone who partakes μετρίως of both philosophy and politics is more likely to succeed in life than one who is wholly immersed in these arts. Next, Socrates points out that insofar as men are likely to be *benefitted* by either philosophy or politics, both of these arts must be *good* things. But if that is so, then it is after all more *unlikely* that the speechwriters and their art will reap the fruits of wisdom: they will place third behind philosophy and politics. The social conviction to which this claim is εἰκός or congruent is that having less than the whole of two goods is less beneficial than having their wholes.

Socrates’ appropriation of the εἰκός argument is successful from one point of view: as a piece of rhetoric, the partaking argument is actually more persuasive than the argument it reverses. However, precisely because Socrates responds to his opponent by reversal, his inference must leave in place the speechwriters’ starting point that they stand between and par-

take of philosophy and politics. But this is not something that Socrates genuinely believes.

In section §4 I explain why Socrates rejects the speechwriters’ assumption. If rhetoric or its practitioners partake of philosophy and politics, and the latter are good arts, rhetoric will turn out to be a *partially good art*. The same will follow for eristic. (For there is abundant evidence in the *Euthydemus* that the sophistic duo will defend their superiority in wisdom along precisely the same lines as the speechwriters’ λόγος.) However, a causal thesis regarding goodness and wisdom which Socrates and Cleinias discovered in the first protreptic episode entails that the good-making component of a good art is wisdom, and the bad-making component of a bad art is ignorance. It follows that if rhetoric partakes of philosophy and politics, rhetoric and its practitioners are *partially wise*. (The same follows for eristic and its practitioners.) However, as our analysis of partaking in section §1 reveals, a necessary condition of X partaking of another art Y is that X aims at the same end as Y. But there is abundant evidence in the *Euthydemus* that Socrates takes both rhetoric and eristic to aim at pleasure; and pleasure is not the end of either philosophy or politics (rightly conceived). It follows that neither rhetoric nor eristic partakes of philosophy and the political art. I argue that the proper relation that obtains between the former and latter pair of arts is *imitation*, not *partaking*. I provide a rigorous definition of each relation that explains why this is so. (To anticipate: knowledge of an art Y by another art X is not required in order for X to imitate Y since an imitating art (or pseudo-art) does not aim at the same end as its object of imitation.)

In section §4 I draw two main conclusions from my analysis of the partaking argument. The first is that Socrates’ appropriation of a rhetorical mode of argument conforms to my

definition of imitation. Thus both eristics, rhetoricians, and Socrates are imitators. However, the air of paradox of this result is removed once it is seen that Socrates and his protreptic rivals do not imitate the same things: the sophists and the speechwriters ignorantly imitate philosophy and the political art; by contrast, Socrates (in the partaking argument) imitates the art of the rhetorician.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, while the sophists and speechwriters partake of neither philosophy nor politics, the relation that Socrates and Socratic dialectic bear to philosophy and politics is partaking. This entails that Socrates is *partially wise*. I explain the proper sense we must attach to the claim that Socratic dialectic is a mere partaker of both philosophy and the political craft.

My second conclusion regards Socrates' purpose in 'performing' the partaking argument in the first place. I argue that he does so for Crito's benefit. Crito is deeply attracted to the 'plausibility' of the speechwriters' defense: it is congruent with his social convictions as an Athenian gentleman. Socrates purposefully declines to disabuse Crito of the belief that it is rhetoric, and not Socratic dialectic that stands between philosophy and politics. But he enjoins Crito to work out for himself the nature of philosophy ('the thing itself', *αὐτὸ τὸ πράγμα*, 307b6-c4). It follows that the epilogue of the *Euthydemus* returns both Crito and the reader to the central problem of the dialogue: the discrimination of the sophist, rhetorician, and philosopher.

## §1 IMITATION, PARTAKING, AND TRUTH-LIKENESS

By way of a first step toward the explanation and defense of these claims, we must begin by noting the dramatic context of the partaking argument within the epilogue of the dialogue.

At the commencement of the epilogue (304b6-305b3), Socrates concludes his rehearsal of his encounter with Euthydemus and Dionysodorus and addresses Crito once again directly, repeating the suggestion he made in the first outer frame (272b-d) that Crito should join him in making himself a pupil of the eristic pair. Crito demurs: while he is a lover of listening (*φιλήκοος*) to arguments, he cannot imagine himself ever employing the brothers' distasteful mode of refutation (304c6-d2). He then relates an uncomfortable encounter he had with a man who, like Crito, had been in the audience of the inner dialogue. Crito tells Socrates that this unnamed person ---who he says has a high opinion of himself as a speechwriter---declared 'philosophy' a worthless activity, and roundly condemned both the sophists for their mode of conversation as well as Socrates for subjecting himself to a pair of men 'who care nothing about what they say, but just snatch at every word'.<sup>4</sup> Crito continues that, while in the face of this attack on 'philosophy' he attempted to defend the activity as a charming (*χαρίεν*, 304e6) thing, he nevertheless agrees with the critic that Socrates deserves reproach for publicly putting himself at the disposal of such worthless practitioners of it (cp. 306e3-307a2).

In response to Crito's qualified endorsement of the speechwriter's condemnation of the foregoing discussion, Socrates inquires not after the *identity*, but the specific *occupation* of the man:

T1: Crito, men like these are very strange. Still, I don't yet know what to say in return. What sort of man was this who came up and attacked philosophy? Was he one of those clever persons who contend in the law courts, an orator? Or was he one of those who equip such men for battle, a writer of the speeches which the orators use? (305b4-305e4).

Crito replies forcefully that to his certain knowledge, the man is definitely *not* an orator (Ἠκιστα νῆ τὸν Δία ῥήτωρ, 305c1)—he thinks he has never appeared in court—but he is reputed to be ‘a clever man and clever at composing speeches’ (δεινὸν εἶναι καὶ δεινοὺς λόγους συντιθέναι, 305c3-4). To which Socrates responds:

T2: Now I understand---it was about this sort of person that I was just going to speak myself. These are the persons, Crito, whom Prodicus describes as occupying the marches between the philosopher and the statesman (μεθόρια φιλοσόφου τε ἀνδρὸς καὶ πολιτικοῦ). They think that they are the wisest of all men, and that they not only are but also seem to be so in the eyes of a great many, so that no one else keeps them from enjoying universal esteem except the men occupied with philosophy (οἷονται δ’ εἶναι πάντων σοφώτατοι ἀνθρώπων, πρὸς δὲ τῷ εἶναι καὶ δοκεῖν πάνυ παρὰ πολλοῖς, ὥστε παρὰ πᾶσιν εὐδοκίμειν ἐμποδῶν σφίσιν εἶναι οὐδένας ἄλλους ἢ τοὺς περὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἀνθρώπους). Therefore, they think that if they reduce the reputation of these men to the appearance of no worth, then indisputably and immediately and in the eyes of all they will carry off the prize of reputation in wisdom. For they think that they are in truth the wisest, but whenever they are caught in private conversation (ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἰδίοις), they think they are cut short by Euthydemus and his set. They think of themselves as very wise---likely (εἰκότως) enough; for they think they engage moderately in philosophy, and moderately in politics as well (μετρίως μὲν γὰρ φιλοσοφίας ἔχειν, μετρίως δὲ πολιτικῶν), on a quite likely ground (πάνυ ἔξ εἰκότος

λόγου)---for they think they partake of both to the extent that is needed (μετέχειν γὰρ ἀμφοτέρων ὅσον ἔδει), and keeping clear of risk and conflict, that they reap the fruits of wisdom. (305c5-305e2)<sup>5</sup>

There is nothing in this initial exchange between Crito and Socrates to indicate a lack of seriousness on Plato’s part toward the content of what is said. On the contrary, Crito’s observation that the speechwriter is not also an orator seems designed to make some kind of thematic connection with a crucial premise Socrates employed in his second protreptic demonstration earlier in the dialogue (288d-293a). This was the claim that the knowledge that will benefit us and make us happy must be a kind of knowledge which combines making and knowing how to use the thing which it makes (289b4-6). (Cp. 289d2-290a5, wherein Socrates explains at length why the λογοποιοί are thereby eliminated as possessors of the knowledge in question.) Crito’s remark is also surely meant to recall the fact that prior to their acquisition of the art of eristic, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus similarly used to teach the composition of speeches for the law courts without practicing oratory themselves (272a).

We would of course like to know a great deal more about the original context of Prodicus’ description of speechwriters in T2. Did his observation arise in the course of one of his famous semantic distinctions?<sup>6</sup> Was one of the words thus distinguished σοφία (wisdom) or σοφιστής (sophist)? Is the interesting metaphor of the μεθόρια (borderland or marches) between philosophy and politics Prodicus’ own, or is it a Platonic gloss?<sup>7</sup> However, we have no reason to suppose that Socrates is not being serious simply because of his reference to Prodicus. For the manner in which Socrates develops Prodicus’ point is perfectly consistent with things Plato states with utter conviction elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> It seems

safe to suppose therefore that Plato simply uses Prodicus (as he occasionally does) to introduce a topic or theme the sophist has treated unintelligently and superficially so that Socrates may develop it intelligently and in earnest.<sup>9</sup> We have then no reason to expect that Socrates adopts a sophistic guise when he responds as follows to Crito's follow-up question:

T3: And so, Socrates, do you think there is anything in what they say? For surely it can't be denied that their argument (λόγος) has a certain plausibility (εὐπρέπειαν).

Plausibility is just what it does have, Crito, rather than truth (Καὶ γὰρ ἔχει ὄντως, ὦ Κρίτων, εὐπρέπειαν μᾶλλον ἢ ἀλήθειαν). It is no easy matter to persuade (πείσαι) them that either men or any other things which are between two things and partake of both, where they are composed from a bad thing and a good thing, are better than the one and worse than the other (ὅσα μεταξύ τινοῖν δυοῖν ἐστὶν καὶ ἀμφοτέροιον τυγχάνει μετέχοντα, ὅσα μὲν ἐκ κακοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ, τοῦ μὲν βελτίω, τοῦ δὲ χείρω γίνονται); and that in the case where things are composed from two good things which do not aim at the same thing, they are worse than both with respect to the end for which each of the two of which they are composed is useful (ὅσα δὲ ἐκ δυοῖν ἀγαθοῖν μὴ πρὸς ταῦτόν, ἀμφοῖν χείρω πρὸς ὃ ἂν ἐκάτερον ἢ χρηστόν ἐκείνων ἐξ ὧν συνετέθη); while if things compounded of two bad things which do not aim at the same thing are in the middle, these alone are better than either of those things of which they have a portion (ὅσα δ' ἐκ δυοῖν κακοῖν συνεθέντα μὴ πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ ὄντων ἐν τῷ μέσῳ ἐστὶν, ταῦτα

μόνα βελτίω ἐκατέρου ἐκείνων ἐστὶν, ὧν ἀμφοτέρων μέρος μετέχουσιν). Now if philosophy is good, and so is political activity, and each aims at a different end, and those partaking of both of these things are in the middle (εἰ μὲν οὖν ἡ φιλοσοφία ἀγαθόν ἐστὶν καὶ ἡ πολιτικὴ πράξις, πρὸς ἄλλο δὲ ἐκάτερα, οὗτοι δ' ἀμφοτέρων μετέχοντες τούτων ἐν μέσῳ εἰσὶν), then these men are saying nothing---for they are inferior (φαιλότεροι) to both---but if one is good and the other bad, then they are better than the practitioners of the latter and worse than those of the former (εἰ δὲ ἀγαθόν καὶ κακόν, τῶν μὲν βελτίους, τῶν δὲ χείρους); while if both are bad (κακὰ ἀμφοτέρα), there would be some truth in what they say, but otherwise none at all. Now I don't suppose they would agree that both [philosophy and politics] are bad, or that one is bad and the other good; the fact of the matter is that these men while partaking of both are inferior to both with respect to each end for which either politics or philosophy is of value (ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι οὗτοι ἀμφοτέρων μετέχοντες ἀμφοτέρων ἤττους εἰσὶν πρὸς ἐκάτερον πρὸς ὃ ἢ τε πολιτικὴ καὶ ἡ φιλοσοφία ἀξίω λόγου ἐστὸν), and that whereas they are in truth in third place (τρίτοι ὄντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ) they seek to be regarded as being in first (ζητοῦσι πρῶτοι δοκεῖν εἶναι). However, we ought to forgive them their ambition and not be angry, though we should still judge such men to be what they are. After all, we should be glad of any man who says something of any good sense, and who labors bravely in its pursuit. (305e3-306d1)

T3 is the partaking argument in full. Now this argument certainly does seem unsound

as it stands. Why should we think for example that anything that is between two good things and partakes of both is necessarily worse than the two good things for which either is useful? What is the relevant sense of ‘betweenness’? What is the relevant relation of ‘partaking’? Is a ‘spork’---an eating utensil with a spoon-like concavity at one end and tines at the other---worse than either a spoon or a fork for conveying food to the mouth? Even more counterintuitive is the claim that anything that partakes of two ‘bad’ things is necessarily *better* than the two evils of which it has a share. Do the whites of two spoiled eggs make a relatively healthier omelet than that composed from the two rotten wholes? Is a new breed of dog that is produced from two breeds that have turned out *not* to be useful for the purpose for which they were bred necessarily better at the end---hunting, companionship---with respect to which the original breeds have proved failures?

However the argument improves if its scope is restricted (as Socrates suggests it is) to arts or activities and their practitioners.<sup>10</sup> In that case Socrates argues the critic of philosophy would concede (albeit grudgingly) all of the following (implied clauses and premises are in brackets):

- (1) If an art and its practitioners lie between and partake of a good art and a bad art, then they are worse than the good art but better than the bad art [with respect to the end for which either of the latter arts is useful].
- (2) If an art and its practitioners lie between and partake of two good arts which do not aim at the same thing, then they are worse than either good art with respect to the end for which either of the latter arts is useful.
- (3) If an art and its practitioners lie between and partake of two bad arts

which do not aim at the same thing, then they are better than the two bad arts of which they have a share [with respect to the end for which either bad art is useful].

- (4) Speechwriting and its practitioners lie between and partake of two arts, viz., philosophy and politics, which each aim at a different thing.
- (5) [If an art and its practitioners lie between and partake of two other arts, then the two other arts are either both good or are both bad, or one is good and one is bad].
- (6) Neither philosophy nor political activity is bad.
- (7) Therefore, Speechwriting and its practitioners lie between and partake of two good arts, viz., philosophy and politics, which each aim at a different thing. (By 4, 5, & 6).
- (8) Therefore, Speechwriting and its practitioners are worse than either philosophy or politics with respect to the end for which either of the latter arts is useful. (By 2 and 7).
- (9) Therefore Speechwriting and speechwriters come in third place in the contest for wisdom behind philosophy and politics. (By 8; and implicitly (?) by 1 and 3, as providing the definitions of coming in ‘second’ and ‘first’, respectively, relative to pairs of arts of which an art partakes and stands between).

The restriction seems licensed by the preceding reference to the contenders, true and false, for the reputation of wisdom and their various activities or arts: philosophers and philosophy (305c7, d8), sophists and eristic argument (τῶν ἀμφὶ Εὐθύδημον κολούεσθαι, 305d6-7), speech-



writers and speechwriting, and statesmen and politics (305c7, d8). We may then ask what Plato means by one activity or art being between (μεταξύ, 306a2) two others, and, while ‘partaking of’ or ‘sharing in’ (μετέχοντα, a3) these two others, coming off better or worse with respect to ‘the end for which each of the other two is useful’ (a3-4).

Here we are naturally drawn to *Gorgias* 462-465 to look for helpful clues. In a manner that is reminiscent of T3, Socrates there observes that true arts and their false counterparts are said to be ‘close to each other’---so much so that rhetors and sophists are ‘mixed up in the same area and about the same things (ἐγγύς ὄντων φύρονται ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ περὶ ταῦτα σοφισταὶ καὶ ῥήτορες) so that they don’t know what to make of themselves, and other people don’t know what to make of them’ (465c4-7). He famously articulates an elaborate comparison of the epistemic status of the crafts of politics (legislation and justice) and ‘body-care’ (gymnastic and medicine) with their false images (the flattering ‘knacks’ of sophistry, rhetoric, cosmetics, and cookery, respectively). At 464c1-3 he states that ‘Each member of these pairs—medicine with gymnastics, justice with legislation, shares with the other, insofar as they are both about the same thing (ἐπικοινωνοῦσι μὲν δὴ ἀλλήλαις, ἅτε περὶ τὸ αὐτὸ οὔσαι, ἐκάτεραι τούτων, ἢ τε ἰατρικὴ τῆ γυμναστικῆ καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη τῆ νομοθετικῆ); nevertheless they differ from one another in some respect (ὅμως δὲ διαφέρουσιν τι ἀλλήλων).’ It would seem that the *Gorgias* then endorses the following claim:

(G) If two arts X and Y share in each other, then X and Y are concerned with the same subject.

In the case of medicine and gymnastics, the common subject will be ‘body-care,’ or more

generally, the body; in the case of legislation and justice, the common subject will be politics, or more generally, the soul. It is clear however that sharing in common (ἐπικοινωνοῦσι) in this sense does not capture the relevant notion of sharing (μετέχοντα) in our text; for pairs of activities or arts are not therein said to be sharers or partakers of *each other*, but of still other activities or arts they are said to lie ‘between’ (μεταξύ). Moreover, Socrates’ inference in T3 will not go through if either good arts partake of their bad (or inferior) partakers, or bad (or inferior) arts partake of a better art that lies between *them*. This suggests that the partaking relation in the *Euthydemus* is not symmetric: outliers will not be partakers of the arts which lie between them. But if that is so, philosophy and politics (rightly conceived) are not partakers of speechwriting and sophistry.

What this seems to show is that we have overlooked Socrates’ allusion to ‘the ends for which each art is useful’ (Premise 2) or the end at which each art ‘aims’ (or is ‘πρός,’ 306a5, a7, b3, c4). His argument invites us to define the various arts in question teleologically, in terms of these ends. A *good* art therefore—like philosophy or politics, rightly conceived—neither lies between nor partakes of any other art; its own internal economy or constitution is sufficient to achieve the end at which it aims.<sup>11</sup> Given the ordinary sense of ‘μετέχειν’ and its cognates, Plato is also probably assuming that if X partakes of Y then X is not identical to Y (and so the partaking relation is irreflexive. Or put another way: one art cannot ‘partake’ of another as a whole, but only in part).<sup>12</sup> In that case if an art X is a partaker of another art Y the end at which X aims is identical to the end at which Y aims; but since X only partially shares in the relevant components that constitute Y, X will only imperfectly achieve the common end at which both X and Y aim. (An inference that is



supported by Socrates' language of composition or constitution, συνετέθη, συνεθέντα, 306a6-7.) This interpretation of the partaking relation in turn allows us to make sense of the related notion of 'betweenness'. It will obviously not be sufficient for an art A to lie between two others B and C that A is πρὸς neither B nor C (or their respective ends). For in that case, all other arts besides philosophy and politics (e.g. fly-fishing) will lie between philosophy and politics. What Socrates must mean is that an art A lies between two others B and C just in case A satisfies the two conditions of being a partaker of B and a partaker of C.

On this interpretation, T3 emerges as an intelligible counterargument to what Socrates has described in T2 as the conceit of those dwell in the borderlands between philosophy and politics. What Socrates first tells us in T2 is that the occupants of the marches between the philosopher and statesman include the speechwriters; however he also implies that the latter *misidentify* the teachers of eristic debate of the Euthydemus variety as philosophers.<sup>13</sup> Since the eristics in Socrates' estimation are not philosophers but contend with the speechwriters for the laurel of wisdom, Socrates implies that the sophists are co-occupants with the λογοποιοί of the μεθόρια between true philosophy and the true political craft. What Socrates tells us next in T2 is that the latter of these combatants have an argument for their supremacy in wisdom. The speechwriters say they possess or do both philosophy and politics in moderation (μετρίως μὲν γὰρ φιλοσοφίας ἔχειν, μετρίως δὲ πολιτικῶν, 305d8): they partake of both *only* to the extent that is needful (μετέχειν γὰρ ἀμφοτέρων ὅσον ἔδει, 305e1). In the immediate context the implication of this remark is that their eristic rivals do *not* practice such moderation. In the eyes of the critic Crito encountered earlier, Euthydemus and his crew are not 'partakers' of philosophy,

but 'philosophers', fully immersed in the eristic program of 'chattering about worthless things', 'snatching at every word' and teaching others to do so (304e-305a).<sup>14</sup>

Socrates' complex response in T3 is a counter to the speechwriter's argument for their supremacy in wisdom. If the speechwriter concedes that both philosophy and politics are *good*, Socrates' reply is that it is true of *any* art that lies between and partakes of two arts that are truly good that that art and its practitioner share merely a portion of the components that are constitutive of the truly good arts. Since, as Socrates implies, the speechwriters *wrongly* suppose that they have an *adequate* share (μετέχειν γὰρ ἀμφοτέρων ὅσον ἔδει, 305e1) of both philosophy and politics, the speechwriters themselves admit that they are mere partakers of those constitutive features of both philosophy and politics that enable these arts to fully realize their respective ends. Similar considerations will apply if the speechwriters retreat either to the position that philosophy and politics are both bad, or that one is bad and the other is good. (Ironically, they will only come out winners if they admit that they partake of two bad arts (3); but it is implied that they will never admit this, 306b7-c2.)

While T3 is aimed at the speechwriters' argument, it is important to note that Socrates insists that his response applies with full generality to *all* arts and practitioners (καὶ ἀνθρώποι καὶ τᾶλλα πάντα, 306a1-2). In the context of a three-way competition with his protreptic rivals, this can be no accident. For the claim entails that Socrates would be prepared to level the same argument against Euthydemus and Dionysodorus if the eristic duo attempted to defend their own supremacy in wisdom along the same lines as the speechwriters. But there is evidence elsewhere in the dialogue that they would do precisely this. For example, the soph-

ists reveal that they used to teach how to fight in armor and ‘all the things a man ought to know to be a good general’ (273c5; cp. 271d). They also used to teach the composition and delivery of speeches for the law courts (272a, 273c7-9). They now treat both of those things as ‘sidelines’ (παρέγοις, 273d3). In that case it is likely that they would characterize themselves as in possession of the political craft to the extent that is needful for any Athenian gentleman. As for their possession of ‘philosophy’, we are told a number of times that they have acquired their new skill in eristic combat with amazing speed.<sup>15</sup> This is small wonder; for it is clear from the behaviour of the sophistic duo that they are philosophical magpies: any bright shiny paradox, plucked from its philosophical context (Protagoras’ thesis that false belief is impossible, 286c; Socrates’ own belief in the Forms 300e-301b, or the doctrine of recollection, 293b-296d, 301e) is liable to show up in their nest of fallacies. While the term ‘moderately’ (μετρίως) scarcely seems to describe anything that the brothers do in the dialogue, from their own perspective they have rapidly acquired only what is needful to engage in ‘philosophy’ well.<sup>16</sup>

It would seem therefore that Plato has planted several clues in the dialogue that T3 constitutes a relevant riposte to *both* occupants of the μεθόρια between philosophy and politics: if either speechwriters or eristics defend their supremacy in wisdom on the ground that they partake of philosophy and politics to the extent that is needful, then there is nothing in what they say (306b7); for mere partakers do not grasp the whole of the constitutive features in virtue of which both philosophy and politics, rightly conceived, are able to fully realize their respective ends.

Seen in this light, a nearly unintelligible stretch of argumentation seems to reassert itself as a mere reformulation of things Plato

says elsewhere about rhetoricians and false philosophers. Thus the *Gorgias* speaks of rhetoric as an image of a part of the political art (ἔστιν γὰρ ἡ ῥητορική κατὰ τὸν ἕμὸν λόγον πολιτικῆς μορίου ἕιδωλον, 463d2), and of both sophistry and rhetoric as species of flattery (κολοσκευτική) which impersonate (ὑποδύσα) and pretend to be (προσποιεῖται) the true crafts of legislation and justice which always aim at the best (ἀεὶ πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον) (464c3-d1).<sup>17</sup> The *Republic* similarly employs the language of imitation to describe the souls who consort unworthily with philosophy, whose thoughts and opinions are capable of producing not true wisdom, but only sophisms (Cp. 491a1-2: τὰς μιμουμένας ταύτην καὶ εἰς τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα καθισταμένας αὐτῆς; cp. 496a5-9: τοὺς ἀναξίους παιδεύσεως, ὅταν αὐτῇ πλησιάζοντες ὁμιλῶσι μὴ κατ’ ἀξίαν, ποῖ’ ἄττα φῶμεν γεννᾶν διανοήματά τι καὶ δόξας; ἄρ’ οὐχ ὡς ἀληθῶς προσήκοντα ἀκοῦσαι σοφίσματα, καὶ οὐδὲν γνήσιον οὐδὲ φρονήσεως [ἄξιον] ἀληθινῆς ἐχόμενον.) Evidently what the *Euthydemus* does differently is to speak of the deficiencies of certain activities not in terms of their imitation or impersonation of true arts, but in terms of their partial sharing in or partaking of constitutive aspects or components of true crafts, in this case philosophy and politics, respectively.

While this discontinuity between the *Euthydemus* and other dialogues is noteworthy, we might set it aside as an intertextual problem in order to pursue more pressing questions which bear upon an analysis of our passage: What is it for one art to ‘partake’ of the constitutive components of another? What are the components of philosophy and the political art that make up the internal economy of each? What is the ‘good making’ component (or set of components) that makes each of these arts *good*? If an art lies between and partakes of two good arts, does that mean the intermediate art is *partially* good?

However it is apparent that Socrates' critique of the speechwriters' λόγος as 'εικότως' (T2) and 'εὐπρέπειαν μᾶλλον ἢ ἀλήθειαν' (T3) introduces a perspective from which he thinks their argument is exposed as a mere *likeness* of the truth. For these expressions suggest that Socrates critiques the speechwriters' self-conception as *like* the truth, or as *likenesses* of the truth, without the reality. But if that is so, then Socrates does turn out to denigrate rhetoric by means that are in doctrinal alignment with the *Gorgias* and other dialogues in the corpus where (as we have noted above), false pretenders to wisdom are derided as mere imitators of true arts. In that case the question arises why Socrates does not pursue this line of attack in the partaking argument itself. Since an answer to this question is crucial to our understanding of that argument, we must address Socrates' evaluative asides to Crito in T2 and T3 before proceeding to a more detailed analysis of the partaking argument.

T3 begins with Crito's query whether the speechwriters' λόγος that they are wisest is εὐπρέπειαν (plausible). The speechwriters' λόγος as related by Socrates in T2 is that they are wisest because they have only partaken of philosophy and politics to the extent that is needful (μετέχειν γὰρ ἀμφοτέρων ὅσον ἔδει, 305e1). Socrates replies archly that plausibility is indeed what this argument does have, *rather than truth* (Καὶ γὰρ ἔχει ὄντως, ὦ Κρίτων, εὐπρέπειαν μᾶλλον ἢ ἀλήθειαν, 305e5-306a1). In this line Socrates critiques his rivals from the perspective of 'true' philosophy by introducing an antithesis between mere plausibility and the truth. However in T2 Socrates emphatically (εικότως, 305d7; πᾶνυ ἐξ εικότος λόγου, 305e1) asserts that the speechwriters' ground for deeming themselves wisest is a *likely* one. This assessment is surely offered as a comment on the speechwriters' own *self-assessment* of their position ('their position is likely, as *they* would say').

Thus Socrates' arch observation responds from the perspective of philosophy to the speechwriters' perspective on their own λόγος as one that is maintained 'εικότως'.

So much is fairly clear. However on the interpretation I aim to defend, this shift in perspective carries with it a subtle shift on Plato's part between two senses of the participle εἰκώς / εικός on which the adverb εικότως is based: in T2 Socrates employs the term in a sense that Plato well knows is deeply rooted in the rhetorical tradition. As Manfred Kraus has persuasively argued, in this traditional sense εικός arguments

'[...] make their claim acceptable to the audience by pointing out a certain coherence and congruence of the speaker's own narrative with the audience's pre-established set of convictions, i.e. their ordinary everyday experience, their moral values, intellectual knowledge, emotional predispositions and behavioural habits. The speaker's line of argument must thus be adapted to what the audience themselves would feel or do in similar circumstances, or with how they know (or may reasonably assume) the person in question, or his or her friends or relatives, or else similar characters would tend to feel or act in similar situations and under similar conditions. This adaptation to anticipated audience response certainly is what is expressed by the sense of fittingness and appropriateness semantically conveyed by the word εικός. If the argument fits with the audience's own convictions, it establishes common ground, to which it may further appeal.'<sup>18</sup>

In essence, the warrant of an εικός argument is grounded in what most people believe.

This doxastic sense of the term is also reflected in Crito's question to Socrates at 305e3-4: does Socrates think there is anything to the speech-writers' argument? It certainly seems to have a certain plausibility (εὐπρέπειαν). Crito's question suggests that he feels the pull of the speech-writers' defense: it is εἰκός--it is like to or 'fits' with his *own* convictions and life experiences as an Athenian gentleman.<sup>19</sup> However in his riposte to Crito, Socrates introduces an *antithesis* between that which is either εἰκός or has εὐπρέπεια and the 'truth'; given the antithesis, the 'truth' invoked by Socrates must be objectively or ontologically independent of what most people believe.<sup>20</sup> Such an antithesis between τὸ εἰκός and ἡ εὐπρέπεια on the one hand and the 'truth' on the other bears a distinctively Platonic ring which is alien to the rhetorical tradition which Socrates critiques. That which is 'εἰκός' in this Platonic sense is a *likeness of* or *like* the truth, where the latter is conceived as an objective reality ontologically independent from belief. Plato employs the term 'εἰκός' and its cognates in this sense in many passages in the corpus.<sup>21</sup> But some familiar passages from the *Phaedrus* are most relevant to the interpretation of his riposte to Crito in T3:

T4: Well these people say that there is no need to be so solemn about all this and stretch it out to such lengths. For the fact is, as we said ourselves at the beginning of this discussion, that one who intends to be an able rhetorician has no need to know the truth about the things that are just or good or yet about the people who are such either by nature or upbringing. No one in a law court, you see, cares at all about the truth of such matters. They only care about what is convincing (τοῦ πιθανοῦ). This is called the 'likely' (τὸ εἰκός), and that is what a man who in-

tends to speak according to art should concentrate on. Sometimes, in fact, whether you are prosecuting or defending a case, you must not even say what actually happened, if it was not likely (μὴ εἰκότως) to have happened--you must say something that is likely (τὰ εἰκότα) instead. Whatever you say, you should pursue what is likely (τὸ εἰκός) and leave the truth aside: the whole art consists in cleaving to that throughout your speech. (272d2-273a1)<sup>22</sup>

T5: No doubt you've churned through Tisias' book quite carefully. Then let Tisias tell us this also: By 'the likely' (τὸ εἰκός) does he mean anything but what is accepted (τὸ τῷ πλήθει δοκοῦν) by the crowd?' (273a6-b1)

In T4 Plato introduces a contrast between τὸ εἰκός and the truth. In T5 he glosses 'τὸ εἰκός' in a sense that is genuinely grounded in the rhetorical tradition as that which is acceptable to most people. However in T6 Plato introduces a new gloss of 'τὸ εἰκός' which is (as many commentators have recognized)<sup>23</sup> alien to the tradition of which the Sicilian rhetorician Tisias was a founder:

T6: 'Tisias, some time ago, before you came into the picture, we were saying that people get the idea of what is likely (τὸ εἰκός) through its similarity to the truth (δι' ὁμοιότητα τοῦ ἀληθοῦς). And we just explained that in every case the person who knows the truth knows best how to determine similarities (τὰς ὁμοιότητας). So, if you have something new to say about the art of speaking, we shall listen. But if you don't, we shall remain convinced by the explanations we

gave just before: No one will ever possess the art of speaking, to the extent that any human being can, unless he acquires the ability to enumerate the sorts of characters to be found in any audience, to divide everything according to its kinds, and to grasp each single thing firmly by means of one form.’ (273d2-e4)

Here Plato interprets ‘εἰκός’ in terms of likeness or verisimilitude to the truth. The groundwork of this transformation was laid earlier in 262a-c, the argument to which Socrates alludes in T6:

T7: Therefore, if you are to deceive someone else and to avoid deception yourself, you must know precisely the respects in which things are similar and dissimilar (τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῶν ὄντων καὶ ἀνομοιότητα) to one another. [...]. And is it really possible for someone who doesn’t know what each thing truly is to detect a similarity (ὁμοιότητα)---whether large or small---between something he doesn’t know and anything else? [...]. Clearly, therefore, the state of being deceived and holding beliefs contrary to what is the case comes upon people by reason of certain similarities (ὁμοιοτήτων τινῶν). [...]. Could someone, then, who doesn’t know what each thing is ever have the art to lead others little by little through similarities (διὰ τῶν ὁμοιοτήτων) away from what is the case on each occasion to its opposite? Or could he escape this being done to himself? [...]. Therefore, my friend, the art of a speaker who doesn’t know the truth and chases opinions instead is likely to be a ridiculous thing---not an art at all (γελοῖαν τινά, ὡς ἔοικε, καὶ ἄτεχνον παρέξεται)! (262a5-c3)

On the interpretation of Socrates’ riposte I am defending, we find a precisely similar thought-pattern between T2 and T3 in the *Euthydemus*. That is, a conception of εἰκός arguments as trafficking in that which is acceptable to most people is succeeded by a critique of such arguments in terms of their mere verisimilitude to a ‘philosophical’ notion of a mind-independent, objective reality.

But if that is so, why does Socrates suddenly drop this line of attack and improvise the complicated partaking argument that constitutes his response to his protreptic rivals in T3? Why does he not (as in the *Gorgias*) proceed to inveigh against their arts as mere imitations of true crafts and their products as mere likenesses of the truth? I suggest the answer is quite simple: Socrates informs us that the partaking argument is meant to *persuade* his rivals (πείσαι, 306a1), not to alienate them.<sup>24</sup> In that case Socrates seeks common ground with his opponent; though he aims at refuting their λόγος, he will do this from within their own conceptual scheme. Moreover, Socrates is no doubt aware that Crito---as the loyal but proper Athenian mediocrity that he is---shares in this conceptual scheme.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the partaking argument seems designed to disentrail Crito from his attraction to the speechwriters’ λόγος. I suggest this is why in the remainder of T3 Socrates comes to grips with the speechwriters’ partaking argument with a ‘counter’ partaking argument of his own. As Socrates is well aware, Crito is not currently in any condition to ‘detect similarities’ between true and false philosophers on the basis of knowledge of realities.<sup>26</sup> Thus it will not do to denigrate the speechwriters as mere impersonators of wise men; indeed such a tactic might run the risk of alienating Crito as distastefully begging the question against the speechwriters’ claim to supremacy in wisdom.<sup>27</sup> Finally, it is clear that Socrates’ partaking argument is

a *counterargument* in the sense that he uses his dialectical opponents' premises against them: it is the speechwriter who introduces the relation of partaking and the concept of having a partial share of arts; Socrates takes over the relation of partaking and inverts it to his own advantage, involving his opponent in his own downfall in the process.

For all these reasons, Socrates does not appeal to the notion of verisimilitude in the philosopher's sense in his elaborate response to his protreptic rivals in T3. On the contrary: Socrates is responding to his opponent *in kind*. The speechwriter's argument is an *eikós* argument (in the speechwriter's sense), employing *eikós* premises; Socrates' counter is a 'reverse' *eikós* argument, as well as a self-conscious *imitation* of the speechwriters' mode of argumentation. In between these two performances Socrates tells us in his riposte to Crito (305e5-306a1), and speaking from the perspective of 'true' philosophy, that the speechwriter's *eikós* argument has plausibility rather than truth.

If that is so, then the notion of the imitation or impersonation of an art or its practitioners does make its way into the partaking argument after all, albeit in a delightfully unexpected way: Socrates does not accuse his protreptic rivals of imitating good arts; he rather imitates *their* doing this very same thing himself. In the next section (§2) I will defend this claim by briefly explaining the nature and function of *eikós* arguments (including reverse *eikós* arguments) in the rhetorical tradition. On the basis of this account I will then argue (in section §3) that two near doubles of the speechwriters' *lóγος* in T2---Isocrates 10.5 (the fifth paragraph of his *Helenaē encomium*) and *Gorgias* 485a3-e2---are *eikós* arguments. The comparison of these near doubles to the speechwriters' *lóγος* will justify my claim that the latter is also an *eikós* argument; an analysis of these doubles will also jus-

tify my identification of the partaking argument as a reverse *eikós* argument.

The interpretative benefits of this latter identification going forward will be twofold. First, this finding will supply a firmer footing to my claim that Socrates guys not the *sophist* in T3 but the *speechwriter*. Thus we may ignore analyses of T3 which deride the argument as eristic, on all fours with the howlers of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. Second, because Socrates responds to his opponent by reversal, his argument must leave in place the speechwriters' assumption that they stand between and partake of philosophy and politics. However this is not something that Socrates genuinely believes. In section §4 I explain why Socrates rejects the speechwriters' assumption. If rhetoric or its practitioners partake of philosophy and politics, and the latter are good arts, rhetoric will turn out to be a *partially good art*. The same will follow for eristic. (For there is abundant evidence in the *Euthydemus* that the sophistic duo will defend their superiority in wisdom along precisely the same lines as the speechwriters' *lóγος*.) However, a causal thesis regarding goodness and wisdom which Socrates and Cleinias discovered in the first protreptic episode entails that the good-making component of a good art is wisdom, and the bad-making component of a bad art is ignorance. It follows that if rhetoric partakes of philosophy and politics, rhetoric and its practitioners are *partially wise*. (The same follows for eristic and its practitioners.) However, as our analysis of partaking in section §1 reveals, a necessary condition of X partaking of another art Y is that X aims at the same end as Y. But there is abundant evidence in the *Euthydemus* that Socrates takes both rhetoric and eristic to aim at pleasure; and pleasure is not the end of either philosophy or politics (rightly conceived). It follows that neither rhetoric nor eristic partakes of philosophy and the political art. The



proper relation that obtains between the former and latter pair of arts is *imitation*, not *partaking*. In section §4 I provide a rigorous definition of each relation that explains why this is so.

## §2 ΕΙΚΟΣ ARGUMENTS IN THE RHETORICAL TRADITION

Ancient sources differ with respect to the origin of εἰκός arguments in the rhetorical tradition. However their invention is generally associated with the legendary founders of rhetoric, the Sicilians Corax and Tisias.<sup>28</sup> Aristotle attributes the following stock example of an εἰκός argument to a handbook composed by Corax:

T8: If the accused is not open to the charge – for instance if a weakling be tried for violent assault – the defense is that he was not likely (εἰκός) to do such a thing. But if he is open to the charge – i.e. if he is a strong man – the defense is still that he was not likely (εἰκός) to do such a thing, since he could be sure that people would think he *was* likely (εἰκός) to do it. (*Rhet* II 24, 1402a17-20)

Plato seems to attribute a very similar argument to Tisias:

T9: No doubt you've churned through Tisias' book quite carefully. Then let Tisias tell us this also: By 'the likely' (τὸ εἰκός) does he mean anything but what is accepted by the crowd (τὸ τῷ πλήθει δοκοῦν)? [...] And it's likely it was when he discovered this clever and artful technique that Tisias wrote that if a weak but spunky man is taken to court because he beat up a strong but cowardly one and stole his cloak or something else, neither one should tell the truth. The coward must

say that the spunky man didn't beat him up all by himself, while the latter must rebut this by saying that only the two of them were there, and fall back on that well-worn plea, "How could a man like me attack a man like him?" The strong man, naturally, will not admit his cowardice, but will try to invent some other lie, and may thus give his opponent the chance to refute him. (*Phaed.* 273a6-c4)

These examples illustrate a feature of εἰκός arguments that both Plato and Aristotle condemn.<sup>29</sup> This is their reversibility: in the scenario in question, a fight has occurred between a weaker and a stronger man. The question is who is guilty of assault (as opposed to merely defending himself)? The weak man argues that since he is weak, he is not likely to have assaulted a stronger man. The strong man seizes upon the likelihood of the weak man's argument and reverses this in the minds of the audience: precisely because a strong man is likely to have appeared capable of such an assault, he is not likely to have assaulted the weak man. Plato appears to ascribe the exploitation of such 'reverse' εἰκός arguments to Gorgias as well as Tisias:<sup>30</sup>

T10: And Tisias and Gorgias? How can we leave them out when it is they who realized that what is likely (τὰ εἰκότα) must be held in higher honor than what is true; they who, by the power of their language, make small things appear great and great things small [...]. (*Phaed.* 267a6-8)

Aristotle for his part associates Protagoras with the invention and teaching of arguments such as the 'weak man' and its reversal:

T11: This sort of argument illustrates what is meant by making the worse ar-

gument seem the better. Hence people were right in objecting to the training Protagoras undertook to give them. It was a fraud; the εἰκός it handled was not genuine but spurious, and has a place in no art except Rhetoric and Eristic. (*Rhet.* II 24, 1402a23-27)

Isocrates also appears to have a low opinion of the inventions of Corax and Tisias, obliquely identified in the following passage as the authors of the ‘so-called arts of oratory’:

T12: [19] Now as for the sophists who have lately sprung up and have very recently embraced these pretensions, even though they flourish at the moment, they will all, I am sure, come round to this position. But there remain to be considered those who lived before our time and did not scruple to write the so-called arts of oratory. These must not be dismissed without rebuke, since they professed to teach how to conduct law-suits, picking out the most discredited of terms, which the enemies, not the champions, of this discipline might have been expected to employ— [20] and that too although this facility, in so far as it can be taught, is of no greater aid to forensic than to all other discourse. But they were much worse than those who dabble in disputation; for although the latter expounded such captious theories that were anyone to cleave to them in practice he would at once be in all manner of trouble, they did, at any rate, make professions of virtue and sobriety in their teaching, whereas the former, although exhorting others to study political discourse, neglected all the good things which this study affords, and became nothing more than profes-

sors of meddlesomeness and greed. (*C. Soph.*).<sup>31</sup>

It is important to notice however that of the three, it is only Aristotle who classifies the reverse εἰκός argument as eristic. Plato by contrast does not supply Euthydemus or Dionysodorus with εἰκός arguments (reversing or otherwise), but with sophisms which Aristotle would classify as violating certain principles of syllogistic reasoning and contradiction (e.g. apparent refutations which are homonymous, or which employ the illicit adding or dropping of qualifications to predications). This difference may be explained by the fact that the stock reversing arguments with which Aristotle was familiar were entertaining sophistic antilogies used for the purpose of exercise and training rather than for public consumption in the court room or Assembly.<sup>32</sup> Such arguments are grist for the analytical mill of Aristotle, the taxonomist of fallacy.<sup>33</sup> Insofar as Plato attacks the same arguments on logical grounds, his analysis stops at the observation that two arguments for contradictory conclusions cannot both be sound.<sup>34</sup> This suggests that Plato’s hostility to εἰκός arguments is more epistemic than logical in its ground. Indeed this is no doubt why he deems them to be so dangerous. The sophistic antilogies on which orators in training cut their teeth do not win conviction in the real world. But the εἰκός argument that is intended for public consumption has a capacity to reverse opinion in the public domain where questions of polis management and justice hang in the balance. As Plato quite correctly observes in T5, this is because they appeal to what appears to be ‘likely’ to the audience in the absence of their knowledge of the truth.

It is crucial to note that the ‘likelihood’ to which Plato correctly maintains εἰκός arguments appeal has nothing to do with statistical probability. This is clear from a passage in the

*Rhetoric to Alexander*, a treatise which reflects the pre-Aristotelian tradition of rhetoric which Plato criticizes.<sup>35</sup> The author (who is often identified with Anaximenes of Lampsacus) identifies seven types of ‘warrants (or proofs: *πίσταις*) derived from words or actions or persons themselves’ (7.2. 1-3): *εικότα*, *παραδείγματα* (examples), *τεκμήρια* (marks or proofs), *ἐνθυμήματα* (enthymemes), *γνώμαι* (maxims), *σημεῖα* (signs), and *ἔλεγχοι* (refutations). The term ‘*εἰκός*’ is unfortunately standardly translated as ‘probability’, as in Forster’s rendering of Anaximenes’ definition of this term:

T13: It is a probability (*Εἰκός*) when one’s hearers have examples in their own minds of what is being said. For instance, if any one were to say that he desires the glorification of his country, the prosperity of his friends, and the misfortune of his foes, and the like, his statements taken together will seem to be probabilities (*εικότα*); for each one of his hearers is himself conscious that he entertains such wishes on these and similar subjects. We must, therefore, always carefully notice, when we are speaking, whether we are likely to find our audience in sympathy with us (*εἰ τοὺς ἀκούοντας συνειδότας ληψόμεθα*) on the subject on which we are speaking; for in that case they are most likely (*εἰκός*) to believe what we say. Such, then, is the nature of a probability (*τὸ εἰκός*).<sup>36</sup> (7.4.1-5.1)

But this translation is highly misleading for two reasons. First, it is anachronistic. As Ian Hacking has demonstrated, a frequency based conception of probability only emerged in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the Western world.<sup>37</sup> Second, the concept of statistical probability cannot be captured by the semantic range of the Greek terms

*τὸ εἰκός* / *εικότα*. This range is limited to the following four senses: 1) to be similar; 2) to seem 3) to befit and 4) to be likely---a sense which is associated only with the participle *εἰκός*.<sup>38</sup> And indeed it is clear from the definition above that the ‘examples present to the mind’ upon which the orator relies cannot be intended to underwrite objective statistical probabilities (e.g. ‘the accused was the friend of the murdered man, and friends wish their friends well; therefore it is statistically improbable that he was guilty of his murder’). What they support rather is the similarity or ‘fit’ between a major premise which the orator needs and his auditors’ subjective convictions regarding the way people behave or the way events occur under similar circumstances (e.g. ‘the accused was the friend of the murdered man, and friends wish their friends well; therefore he is not similar to one who would kill the murdered man’).

This makes perfect sense given the contentious contexts (political or judicial) in which orators appealed to such shared convictions. As is clear from Anaximenes’ extended remarks on the subject (chapters 7 and 14), the *εἰκός* argument was generally used where no compromise was possible between parties to a dispute (e.g. the defendant is either guilty or not guilty) and where their disagreement could not be settled by eye-witnesses or other direct evidence (e.g. written documents).<sup>39</sup> In such a context of complete *dissensus*, the orator attempts to align his narrative with the audience’s conception of ‘the way things are’ in order to reach common ground.<sup>40</sup>

If that is right, then *εἰκός* arguments are modes of reasoning which employ a logic of comparison as opposed to a logic of probability. This thesis has recently been defended by David Hoffman in an exhaustive survey of ‘*εἰκός*’ and cognate expressions in Homer’s *Odyssey*, Aeschylus, Herodotus, Antiphon, Lysias,

Thucydides, and Isocrates. The results of this study suggest that these terms are introduced to justify two broad classes of judgements, both of which are grounded in an original core sense of ‘to be similar’:<sup>41</sup>

*Class (1) concerns judgements about the appropriateness of an action:* ‘a social actor behaves appropriately or ‘befittingly’ when he or she acts in a way that is *like* or *similar* to what is expected.’ This first class in turn is divisible into four semantic fields:<sup>42</sup> (i) The befitting according to custom. Here the speaker compares the actual conduct of certain persons to the way people behave by custom or habit.<sup>43</sup> (ii) The befitting according to justice, wherein the speaker compares specific events under consideration to an ideal conception of ‘the way things should be’.<sup>44</sup> (iii) The befitting according to character and/or social status. Here the speaker compares the actual conduct of agents in a case to the conduct that is dictated by their character or social standing or role.<sup>45</sup> (iv) The befitting according to circumstance, in which the speaker compares what has actually happened in the particular case under discussion with what generally happens in similar circumstances.<sup>46</sup>

*Class (2) comprises judgements about whether an event has happened or whether an account is true.* Here the logic of comparison is invoked to support a claim such as the following: an event’s alleged occurrence or an account *resembles* or is *similar* to what is known to be true. Arguments in this second class thus involve judgements of truth-likeness or verisimilitude. However, as Hoffman rightly points out, such judgements of verisimilitude do not involve a comparison to a ‘Platonic’ notion of the truth as that which is ontologically independent of social convictions or expectations.<sup>47</sup> On the contrary: Class (2) judgements of verisimilitude are grounded in judgements of social expectation and opinions about the way things are:

‘Social expectations, because they have nearly the force of truth, have a large role to play in judgements of verisimilitude. They often define a “profile” against which accounts are compared. If the characters and events of a courtroom account seem typical in that they describe events that the audience would expect under the circumstances, then the narrative is *eikos*, and apparently true. It “fits the profile”. If the characters and events are strange and atypical, then the narrative is not *eikos*, and apparently false. It does not fit the profile.’<sup>48</sup>

Now it will be important for my analysis of Isocrates 10.1-5 and *Gorgias* 484c-485e in section §3 to note that εἰκός arguments in Class (1) may blend imperceptibly with those in Class (2). That is, an argument wherein it is claimed that an agent acts or does not act in a way that is *befitting* to what is socially expected may sometimes be indistinguishable from an argument in which it is claimed that events or actions fit or do not fit with what an audience would expect under the circumstances. This convergence is evident for example in Lysias 24.15-17:

T14: He says that I am insolent (ὕβριστής), savage, and utterly abandoned in my behaviour, as though he needed the use of terrifying terms to speak the truth, and could not do it in quite gentle language. But I expect you, gentlemen, to distinguish clearly between those people who are at liberty to be insolent and those who are debarred from it. For insolence is not likely (εἰκός) to be shown by poor men labouring in the utmost indigence, but by those who possess far more than the necessities of life; [...] For the wealthy purchase with their money escape from

the risks that they run, whereas the poor are compelled to moderation by the pressure of their want.<sup>49</sup>

In the case in question a poor disabled pensioner is accused (among other things) of having the insolence to ride a horse (in fact he only borrows it from a friend on occasion). Lysias argues on his behalf that it is not like a poor invalid to be hubristic. The argument appeals simultaneously to the fact that hubris is not *befitting* such a socially vulnerable individual, as well as to the *unlikelihood* of his cheating on his pension: since he is not *like* a hubristic person, he is not *likely* to be a sponge on the state.

A second example of the same phenomenon returns us to Socrates' protreptic rival Isocrates. In the following passage from *Against Euthynus* Isocrates argues for one Nicias who is prosecuting Euthynus for failure to return in full a large deposit of money; Euthynus claims to have returned the whole deposit. Contrary to his usual practice, Isocrates speaks for his client in court because the latter is inept at public speaking; a fact which Isocrates exploits in an *eikós* argument:

T15: I think that you all know that malicious prosecution is most generally attempted by those who are clever speakers but possess nothing, whereas the defendants lack skill in speaking but are able to pay money. Well, Nicias is better off than Euthynus, but has less ability as a speaker; so that there is no reason why he should have proceeded against Euthynus unjustly. No indeed, but from the very facts in the case anyone can see that it is far more likely (*eikòs*) that Euthynus received the money and then denied having done so than that Nicias did not entrust it to him and then entered his complaint.

For it is self-evident (*δῆλον*) that it is always for the sake of gain that men do wrong.<sup>50</sup> (*Euth.* 5-6)

Isocrates argues that Nicias is a wealthy and plain spoken Athenian gentleman; hence he does not fit the profile of a malicious prosecutor. Euthynus inversely fits the profile of one who would exploit the wealthy and inarticulate. Hence Euthynus is at once more *like* and *likely to be* an embezzler than Nicias is to be a false accuser.

Finally we may note that the foregoing analysis of the 'straight' *eikós* argument sheds considerable light on the strategy of the 'reverse' *eikós*. If the weak man's argument of T8 and T9 is anything to go by, *eikós* arguments that lend themselves easily to reversal involve a weighted comparison of two likelihoods; for the conclusion of the weak man is properly construed as the claim that since he is small and the strong man is large, it is *more likely* that the strong man assaulted him than that he assaulted the strong man. To tip the scales of this conclusion in his favor, the strong man slides to his side of the scale the weak man's claim that a large man is likely to have assaulted a weak man; but he adds to this a new likelihood, viz., that insofar as he is likely to have assaulted the weak man, he is likely to be suspected of having done so. Thus both the weak man and its reversal are governed by a logic of comparison which is grounded in social expectation. We may display this property of both arguments in the following reconstruction:

Weak Man:

Since x is weak >> **x is not like one to assault a stronger man** >> it is unlikely that x assaulted a stronger man y.

Since y is strong >> **y is like one to assault a weaker man** >> it is likely that y assaulted a weaker man x.

C: Since x is weak and y is strong >> it is more likely that y assaulted x than it is that x assaulted y.

Strong Man Reversal:

Since y is strong **y is like one to assault a weaker man** >> it is likely that y assaulted a weaker man x.

Since it is likely that y assaulted a weaker man x >> **y is like one to be suspected of assaulting a weaker man** >> y is likely to be suspected of assaulting a weaker man. Since y is likely to be suspected of assaulting a weaker man >> it is unlikely that y assaulted a weaker man.

C: Since x is weak and y is strong >> it is more likely that x assaulted y than it is that y assaulted x.

In the above reconstruction I use the symbol '>>' to indicate the weak implication that seems characteristic of εἰκός arguments. I am also assuming that the weak man and its reversal are fused or mixed cases of Case (1) and Case (2) εἰκός arguments. (I have put appeals to convictions regarding the 'befitting' in bold, and appeals to what is likely to be the case in regular font.) If this reconstruction captures the 'logic' (such as it is) of the weak man's reversal, it would seem that a necessary condition of an εἰκός argument's being *reversible* is that it involves a weighted comparison of likelihoods. This suggests that *reversibility* is a merely formal notion, not a normative one. For the strong man is clearly invalid by ordinary standards of logical implication: whatever we think of the validity of the argument it reverses, this is neither preserved nor enhanced by reversal. However it does not follow that a reversing argument is necessarily less congruent with an audience's social expectations than its target. Whether it is or not will depend entirely on the degree of

plausibility of the premises it exploits. For example, there might be certain societies (perhaps the U.S.A. is now one such) which would regard an inarticulate plutocrat as precisely fitting the profile of a man with powerful friends in the polis against whom a poor but clever man would not dare to trespass. A reversal of T15 which exploits this premise may be found much more persuasive to the general public than Isocrates' appeal to the rectitude of those who are poor in speech but wealthy.

This brief excursus into the origin, nature and function of the εἰκός argument in the rhetorical tradition of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. and beyond is of course radically incomplete. However my aim in this section has not been to provide a complete analysis (whether historical, philological or philosophical) of the εἰκός argument. I have rather attempted to identify the basic properties of this mode of argument that are most relevant to the demystification of the partaking argument in the epilogue of the *Euthydemus*. To that end we may tally up these properties as follows:

1. Eἰκός arguments are used in a context of absolute disagreement in order to reach common ground between the parties to a dispute.
2. They make their claims acceptable to an audience by establishing a congruence between a major premise which the speaker needs and the standing convictions of the audience (their ordinary experiences, moral values, common knowledge, shared emotional or behavioural dispositions).
3. They attain this congruence by employing a logic of comparison in two basic ways: either the orator claims that an agent acts (does not act) in a way that fits with what is socially expected; or he argues that events or actions fit (or do not



fit) with what an audience would expect under the circumstances, given the set of their social expectations.

4. These two strategies may be combined in the same εἰκός argument.

5. Εἰκός arguments are liable to be ‘reversed’ by an opponent in contexts of weighted comparisons of likelihoods.

To this list we may add that it is not a necessary condition of an argument’s being an εἰκός argument that the expressions εἰκός / εἰκότα or cognate expressions actually be employed in the inference. There are many examples in the orators where the speaker (having employed the terminology of εἰκός elsewhere) avoids the term, either for stylistic reasons (e.g. the avoidance of repetition) or where the argument is particularly weak. In such ‘implicit’ εἰκός arguments the speaker employs alternative linguistic formulations to establish congruence between the audience’s expectations and his argument. These include future less vivid constructions (if X should happen, then Y would happen), the potential optative, and counterfactual conditionals.<sup>51</sup>

### §3 Εἰκός VS. Εἰκός: THE PARTAKING ARGUMENT AS SOCRATIC IMPERSONATION

In this section I will argue that two near doubles of the speechwriters’ λόγος in T2-- Isocrates’ *Helenaē encomium* 5 and *Gorgias* 485a3-e2---exhibit the basic properties of the εἰκός argument we have identified in section §2. This finding will confer warrant on my claim that the speechwriters’ λόγος in T2 is an εἰκός argument also. On the basis of that conclusion I will then argue that in responding to the speechwriter, Socrates quite self-consciously employs the technique of the reverse εἰκός argument.

I begin with Isocrates 10.5. This argument concludes the following opening salvo of the *Helenaē encomium*:

T16: [1] There are some who are much pleased with themselves if, after setting up an absurd and self-contradictory subject, they succeed in discussing it in tolerable fashion; and men have grown old, some asserting that it is impossible to say, or to gainsay, what is false, or to speak on both sides of the same questions, others maintaining that courage and wisdom and justice are identical, and that we possess none of these as natural qualities, but that there is only one sort of knowledge concerned with them all; and still others waste their time in captious disputations (τὰς ἔριδας) that are not only entirely useless, but are sure to make trouble for their disciples. [2] For my part, if I observed that this futile affectation had arisen only recently in speeches (τοῖς λόγοις) and that these men were priding themselves upon the novelty of their inventions, I should not be surprised at them to such degree; but as it is, who is so backward in learning as not to know that Protagoras and the sophists of his time have left to us compositions of similar character and even far more overwrought than these? [3] For how could one surpass Gorgias, who dared to assert that nothing exists of the things that are, or Zeno, who ventured to prove the same things as possible and again as impossible, or Melissus who, although things in nature are infinite in number, made it his task to find proofs that the whole is one! [4] Nevertheless, although these men so clearly have shown that it is easy to contrive false statements on any

subject that may be proposed, they still waste time on this commonplace. They ought to give up the use of this claptrap, which pretends to prove things by verbal quibbles, which in fact have long since been refuted, and to pursue the truth, [5] to instruct their pupils in the practical affairs of our government and train to expertness therein, bearing in mind that to opine with a view to likelihood about useful things is far preferable to exact knowledge of the useless, and that to be a little superior in important things is of greater worth than to be pre-eminent in petty things that are without value for living.<sup>52</sup> ([5] καὶ περὶ τὰς πράξεις ἐν αἷς πολιτευόμεθα, τοὺς συνόντας παιδεύειν, καὶ περὶ τὴν ἐμπειρίαν τὴν τούτων γυμνάζειν, ἐνθυμουμένους ὅτι πολὺ κρεῖττόν ἐστι περὶ τῶν χρησίμων ἐπιεικῶς δοξάζειν ἢ περὶ τῶν ἀχρήστων ἀκριβῶς ἐπίστασθαι, καὶ μικρὸν προέχειν ἐν τοῖς μεγάλοις μᾶλλον ἢ πολὺ διαφέρειν ἐν τοῖς μικροῖς καὶ τοῖς μηδὲν πρὸς τὸν βίον ὠφελοῦσιν.)

As commentators have recognized, the ‘others’ in section [1] who maintain the unity of courage and justice with wisdom defend a thesis associated with the historical Socrates (or Socrates and Plato).<sup>53</sup> In the balance of [1]-[4] Isocrates takes the eristic faddists down a notch by pointing out that their paradoxes (e.g. that false speaking is impossible) are nothing new: their teaching is just Protagoras and Gorgias warmed over.<sup>54</sup> In section [5] he calls a pox on the houses of both: to opine plausibly or with a view to likelihood (ἐπιεικῶς δοξάζειν) about useful things is much better than to exercise exact knowledge (ἀκριβῶς ἐπίστασθαι) of things useless to practical living; likewise, to excel even in a small way in important things (μικρὸν

προέχειν ἐν τοῖς μεγάλοις) is better than to be preeminent (πολὺ διαφέρειν) in petty things that confer no advantage to one who would make his way in the ‘real’ world.<sup>55</sup> The similarity of this argument to the speechwriters’ defense in T2 while not exact is unmistakable:

[T2] They think of themselves as very wise---likely (εἰκότως) enough; for they think they engage moderately in philosophy, and moderately in politics as well (μετρίως μὲν γὰρ φιλοσοφίας ἔχειν, μετρίως δὲ πολιτικῶν), on a quite likely ground (πάνυ ἐξ εἰκότος λόγου)---for they think they partake of both to the extent that is needed (μετέχειν γὰρ ἀμφοτέρων ὅσον ἔδει), and keeping clear of risk and conflict, that they reap the fruits of wisdom. (*Euthyd.* 305d7-e2)

Isocrates does not employ the concept of partaking (μετέχειν) in T16. It is clear however that the notions of ‘ἐπιεικῶς δοξάζειν’ as *opposed* to knowing, and excelling ‘μικρὸν’ as *opposed* to excelling completely are conceptually isomorphic to that of having a partial share of some item.<sup>56</sup> If that is so we may diagram this isomorphism between Isocrates’ argument and T2 as follows:



The argument is addressed to any Athenian gentleman, or any prospective pupil of Isocrates. The upper blue arrows represent this person’s partial share of Useful Things and Important Things. Isocrates does not say that these sets of things are not identical; nor does he tell us what these things are. However in the context and given what he says elsewhere about his

educational program, he would probably identify these with the γνῶμαι (maxims), ὑποθήκαι (counsels), and παραδείγματα (examples) of the leading poets, lawmakers, and princes of the past, which Isocrates describes himself as gathering up, bee-like, from far and wide, as a treasury (ταμείου) of useful things (χρείαν).<sup>57</sup> We might describe this store-house of wisdom as occupying the tier above the pupil; alternatively it is the poets, etc. who do so. Such men are wise: they do not merely have a share of Useful and Important Things, but are masters of these topics as a whole. Likewise, Isocrates' protreptic rivals (Socrates/Plato and the eristics) occupy and do not merely partake of the bottom tier below the pupil's intermediate position. The bottom two arrows represent a sentiment that is only implicit in [5] but which Isocrates states explicitly elsewhere. This is that one must merely partake of the output of his protreptic rivals, i.e. one must study them in moderation: an Athenian gentleman may sharpen his mind if he reads their paradoxes as a young man; any deeper immersion runs the risk of sinking him to the level of the exact knowledge of things useless on the one hand and preeminence in pettifogging on the other.<sup>58</sup>

One salient difference between T2 and T16 is that the latter argument, unlike the former, is not explicit on the question of the proper stance one must take to the art of politics and its teachers. But this stance is implied if it is assumed that the upper tier includes the utterances of wise statesmen or poets (etc.) pronouncing on wise rule. Moreover, it is probable that those whom Isocrates attacks for wasting their time on 'captious disputation' (τὰς ἐριδας, [1]) are in fact rhetoricians who have caught the eristic fad. (Note that he complains that eristic has infected 'τοῖς λόγοις' [2], so this phrase cannot refer to eristic argumentation itself; but neither can 'τοῖς λόγοις' refer to Socratic argumentation, since

Isocrates does not confuse Socrates with the eristics).<sup>59</sup> In that case we might suppose that Isocrates conceives of 'Important Things' as the art of politics (as he conceives of it) and as opposed in his scale of value to pettifogging rhetoric. Alternatively, we might patch in Isocrates' implicit attack on Corax and Tisias in T12 to fill in his stance toward the art of politics. For as Isocrates asserts there, these inventors of the art of rhetoric, although 'exhorting others to study political discourse (τοὺς πολιτικούς λόγους, [20]), neglected all the good things which this study affords'. His present complaint is directed at their equally neglectful descendants: rather than exhorting men to the study of sage political discourse as they should, the practitioners of rhetoric are distracted by the perennially shiny toys of eristic paradox. But anyone who has even a partial share of the former would be better off than someone who has distinguished himself in knowledge of the latter.

Now that we have established the similarity of T16 to T2, it is short work to demonstrate that the former is an εἰκός argument. Isocrates ostensibly levels this argument at his prospective pupils. But these may certainly include the recruits of his protreptic rivals; hence it is wielded in a context of absolute disagreement between parties to a dispute. (As in T2, there can be only *one* school or mode of instruction that claims *first* place in the contest of wisdom.) He attempts to demonstrate the superiority of his art to this audience by establishing a congruence between its standing convictions or social expectations and his two major premises: (i) likely conjecture about useful things is far preferable to exact knowledge of the useless; (ii) to be a little superior in important things is of greater worth than to be pre-eminent in petty things that are without value for living. A single conviction of his audience---an 'example present in their own minds of what is being said'---is congruent with

both premises. This is that it is better to have a share of a good thing than it is to have the whole of a bad or useless thing. It is arguable that this conviction, applied to the domain of the arts under consideration, taps into the audience's intuitions regarding what is socially acceptable or befitting. (It is ill befitting a gentleman to immerse himself in the studies which Isocrates denigrates.) However it is equally arguable that this conviction raises its expectations regarding what is *likely to happen* to anyone who follows the path of immersion in arid Academic or eristic studies, as well as what is likely to happen to someone who partakes of the more useful or important counterparts of these arts. If that is right, then Isocrates' argument shares properties 1-4 of the *eikós* argument we set down in the conclusion of section §2.

That the argument satisfies the necessary condition of being reversible (property 5) is clear because it involves a weighted comparison of two likelihoods. The only question that remains is whether Isocrates explicitly describes T16 section [5] as an *eikós* argument. He does not. However, Isocrates' entire argument is a self-advertisement for learning to opine plausibly, or with a view to likelihood (*ἐπιεικῶς δοξάζειν*). By indulging in this self-referential description of his preferred mode of speech, Isocrates promotes his wares; by avoiding the explicit description of his present argument as *eikós*, he manages to suppress any suggestion that his argument is not up to the epistemic snuff of the Academy. In that case his speech falls into the class of the implicit *eikós* argument. For (as noted in section §2) it is not a necessary condition of an argument's being an *eikós* argument that it explicitly employs the term 'eikós'.

I turn now to *Gorgias* 485a3-e2. Here we may be brief, since this argument is more nearly an exact double of the speechwriters' defense in T2:

T17: But I think that the most correct thing is to have a share (*μετασχεῖν*) in both [philosophy and politics]. It is fine to have a share in philosophy far enough for education (*ὄσον παιδείας χάριν καλὸν μετέχειν*), and it is not shameful for someone to philosophize when he is a boy. But whenever a man who's now older still philosophizes, the thing becomes ridiculous (*καταγέλαστον*), Socrates. I'm struck by the philosophizers most nearly the way I'm struck by those who mumble and act childish. I mean---whenever I see a child, when that kind of dialogue is still fitting for him (*ὥ ἔτι προσήκει διαλέγεσθαι*), mumbling and being childish, I enjoy it; I find it charming (*χαρίεν*), suitable for a free citizen (*ἐλευθέριον*), suiting (*πρέπον*) the age of a child. And whenever I hear a child speaking a clear dialogue, I find it unpleasing; it annoys my ears; and I find it fit for a slave instead. But whenever someone hears a man mumbling, or sees him act childishly, he finds it ridiculous, unmanly (*ἄνανδρον*), deserving a beating. Well, philosophizers strike me the same way too. For when I see philosophy in a young boy, I admire it, I find it suitable (*πρέπειν*), and I regard him as a free man, and a non-philosophizer as un-free, someone who will never expect anything fine or noble from himself (*καλοῦ οὔτε γενναίου πράγματος*). But when I see an older man still philosophizing and not giving it up, I think this man needs a beating, Socrates. For, as I was saying just now, this person is bound to end up being unmanly, even if he has an altogether good nature; for he shuns the city centre and the public squares where the poet says men win good repu-

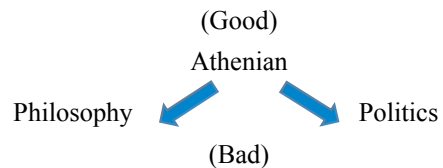
tations (ἀριπρεπεῖς). He is sunk away out of sight for the rest of his life, and lives whispering with three or four boys in a corner, and never gives voice to anything fit for a free man, great and powerful (ἐλεύθερον δὲ καὶ μέγα καὶ ἰκανὸν μηδέποτε φθέγγασθαι).<sup>60</sup>

This passage contains a complex comparison between children, men and practitioners of philosophy young and old: lispings lads stand to lispings philosophers as free spoken gentlemen stand to speechifying babes. However this comparison supports a claim which is doubled in T2: the man who would achieve distinction and power in the city should only have a share (μετασχεῖν) of both philosophy and politics. Nor does the similarity between Callicles' argument and T2 end there. In remarks introductory to T17 (484c-e), he has conceded condescendingly to Socrates the sentiment that he repeats in T17: philosophy is a charming thing (φιλοσοφία γάρ τοι ἔστιν, ὦ Σώκρατες, χαρίεν, 484c5-6). The same half-compliment is paid to philosophy by the socially conscious Crito in his confrontation with the Isocratean figure at *Euthyd.* 304e6-7. As Callicles is quick to add however, philosophy's charm is contingent on its being consumed in moderation (μετρίως, 484c6-7) and when young. Given Callicles' assertion in T17 that the same limitation should be observed towards the political art (484d7), his stance toward both arts is stated in virtually the same language as the speechwriters' defense in T2 (μετρίως μὲν γὰρ φιλοσοφίας ἔχειν, μετρίως δὲ πολιτικῶν, *Euthyd.* 305d8). Finally, we note that Callicles has pointed out the prospects of any philosopher who has neglected to master the mode of speech (τῶν λόγων, 484d3) necessary to become fine and good and well respected (καλὸν κάγαθὸν καὶ εὐδόκιμον, d1-2) in the city:

T18: For indeed they turn out inexperienced in the laws of the city, and in the speech (τῶν λόγων) they should use in meeting men in public and private transactions, and in human pleasures and desires; and altogether they turn out entirely ignorant of the ways of men. And so whenever they come to some private or political business, they prove themselves ridiculous, just as politicians, no doubt, whenever they in turn come to your discourses and discussions, are ridiculous. (*Gorg.* 484d2-e3)

The passage vividly recalls Socrates' account in T2 of the petulant reaction of the speechwriters whenever they are refuted in private conversation: they defensively blame it on 'Euthydemus and his followers' (*Euthyd.* 305d6-7). The sentiment brings the cultured Isocrates' estimation of the value of philosophy uncomfortably close to that of the *Übermensch* Callicles: to the extent that philosophy should be pursued at all, this will be for the social benefits it confers on the student--including the avoidance of ridicule. If Socrates refutes you, accuse him of arguing like a sophist (*Gorg.* 497a6) if that will help you save face.

Callicles' argument for the 'correct' approach to the study of philosophy and politics may be diagrammed as follows:



The arrows represent the partaking of an Athenian gentleman in the share of philosophy and politics by means of which he shall become καλὸν κάγαθὸν καὶ εὐδόκιμον in the city. From the context it is clear that Callicles conceives

this partaking to involve partaking of modes of speech (τῶν λόγων) or discourse (διαλέγεσθαι) proper to philosophy and politics, respectively. He does not tell us whether he thinks Socratic discourse exhausts the modes of discourse he would classify as belonging to ‘philosophy’. It is true that in the immediate context he is intent on persuading Socrates of the inefficacy of the latter’s preferred mode of discourse (no doubt he has the elenchus in mind). However, as we have just noted above, elsewhere in the *Gorgias* Callicles accuses Socrates of arguing like a sophist (497a6); so it is probable that he conceives of the class of ‘philosophical’ discourse as extending more widely than Socratic conversation.<sup>61</sup> Callicles also does not tell us what modes of discourse belong to ‘politics’. However, in the immediate context he is pointing out the political dangers to which Socrates is exposed as a result of his ignorance of speech that is ‘likely and persuasive’ (εἰκὸς ἂν καὶ πιθανὸν, 486a2-3):

T19: Now Socrates, I’m quite friendly towards you. And so I find you strike me now as Amphion struck Zethus in Euripides, whom I recalled just now. For indeed, the sorts of things come to me to say to you that Zethus said to his brother: ‘Socrates, you are careless of what you should care for; you twist this noble nature of your soul into a childish shape; you could not make a speech correctly to the council of justice, nor seize anything likely and persuasive, nor propose any daring resolution to help another’ (οὐτ’ ἂν δίκης βουλαῖσι προσθεῖ’ ἂν ὀρθῶς λόγον, οὐτ’ εἰκὸς ἂν καὶ πιθανὸν ἂν λάβοις, οὐθ’ ὑπὲρ ἄλλου νεανικὸν βούλευμα βουλεύσαιο). (485e2-486a3)

Thus it is certain that Callicles conceives the mode of speech proper to ‘politics’ as includ-

ing the ‘εἰκὸς καὶ πιθανὸν’. Callicles’ argument then is that by following a program of moderate immersion in the modes of discourse proper to philosophy and politics (so conceived), a man may outstrip a fellow citizen who is sunk like a sour water plant in the still pools of either study. A man of action---the ‘free and manly citizen’---will ‘move on to *greater things* and leave philosophy behind’ (ἐπὶ τὰ μείζω ἔλθης ἑάσας ἤδη φιλοσοφίαν, 484c4-5).

Now it is clear that Callicles’ argument satisfies the first five criteria of the εἰκὸς argument we set down in Section §2. His argument is obviously mounted in a context of absolute disagreement with Socrates. He attempts to turn Socrates to his own position by establishing a congruence between a major premise he employs and (what he hopes to be) Socrates’ shared standing convictions. This premise is that it is *better* to study philosophy and politics in moderation than to be immersed in either study. The conviction that he hopes Socrates will find congruent with this premise he does not articulate. As I shall point out momentarily, it is precisely the same omission in T2 which Socrates seizes upon in the partaking argument. Is the social ground of Callicles’ inference the idea that it is better to have shares of two *good* things rather than the whole of two *bad* ones? That would align his argument more closely with that of Isocrates in T16. But then, Callicles has made no mention of ‘bad things’ in his comparison. Or is he arguing that it is better to have shares of two *good* things rather than their *wholes*? (But why is that obvious?) Callicles has neglected to tell us whether he thinks philosophy or politics are *good*; he has only conceded that the former is *χαρίεν* (484c5-6). This instability in his position aside, it is clear that his argument satisfies the first two criteria of the argument from likelihood.



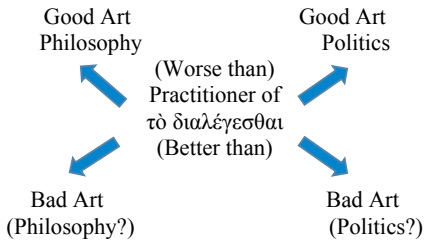
That his argument is ripe for reversal is evident as it involves the weighted comparison of likelihoods. (The citizen who merely partakes of philosophy and politics is more likely to succeed than the citizen who goes the total immersion route.) It is equally clear that his argument combines the strategies of the Class (1) and Class (2) εἰκός argument: his denigration of the philosopher is saturated with expressions that highlight his socially *unbefitting* status; at the same time, he aligns his narrative of the philosopher's social descent with what his audience would *expect to happen* to a citizen under *similar* circumstances. Finally, while Callicles does not describe his argument as 'εἰκός' in so many words, the entire drift of his remarks is that Socrates has neglected to learn how to speak *as Callicles does*, viz., to 'seize on the εἰκός καὶ πιθανόν'. To this observation we may add that Callicles does employ a formulation (the potential optative) that is characteristic of the 'implicit' εἰκός argument at 486a1-3. There can be no doubt therefore that Callicles' address to Socrates is cast in the mold of the εἰκός argument.

Now if both T16 and T17 are εἰκός arguments, the speechwriters' defense in T2 of which the former are near doubles is unquestionably an εἰκός argument also. In that case we are at long last in a position to grasp the full significance of Socrates' remark that the speechwriters maintain their conceit that they are wisest 'εἰκότως' (*Euthyd.* 305d7).

We are also at last in a position to appreciate that Socrates' rebuttal to his protreptic rival is a reverse εἰκός argument. As in any reverse εἰκός, the argument targeted for reversal involves a weighted comparison of likelihoods. In T2 (as in Callicles' argument), this is the speechwriters' conclusion that they (and their pupils) are more likely than their protreptic rivals (and *their* pupils) to 'reap the fruits of wisdom' (305e2). We may imagine that these

'fruits' are (as in Callicles' argument) to become καλὸν κάγαθὸν καὶ εὐδόκιμον.<sup>62</sup> To reverse this argument in proper εἰκός fashion, Socrates first slides to his side of the scale the εἰκός premise that underwrites his opponent's conclusion. This is the claim that anyone who partakes μετρίως of both philosophy and politics is more likely to attain the end in question than one who is wholly immersed in these arts. Next, Socrates adds to this likelihood another: insofar as men are likely to be *benefitted* by either philosophy or politics, both of these arts must be *good* things. (This is the implication of Socrates' observation that his opponent will surely *not* deny that both philosophy and politics are good, 306b7-c2). But if that is so, then it is after all more *unlikely* that either the λογοποιοί or their disciples will reap the fruits of wisdom. The social conviction to which this claim is εἰκός or congruent is that having less than the whole of two goods is in fact *less* beneficial than having their wholes. (As adapted to an argument concerning arts and their practitioners, this is premise (2) of the partaking argument.) But then the λογοποιοί do *not* place first in the contest for wisdom. That distinction will be reserved for those who are not mere partakers of philosophy and politics. The implication of this result seems to be that it is only the expert practitioners of either art--'the fully immersed'---who are likely to reap their 'full benefits', on the assumption that both philosophy and politics are good.

As we have noted above, the speechwriters' counter to this reversal is blocked by premises (1) and (3) of the partaking argument. These are εἰκός premises also. (I leave it as an exercise to the reader to work out the social convictions regarding the partaking of good and bad wholes which underwrite them.) The overall strategy of Socrates' reversal of his opponent may then be diagrammed as follows:



The argument Socrates reverses concerns the degree of value of modes of τὸ διαλέγεσθαι. The essence of Socrates' strategy is to press on the question which Callicles omitted to answer in his own version of the argument: how can the speechwriters be *benefitted* by standing between and partaking of philosophy and politics unless these latter arts are *good*? Yet if these are good arts, the speechwriters, insofar as they merely partake of these good arts, cannot outstrip those fully immersed in them in regard to attaining the end for which these arts are useful ('reaping the fruits of wisdom'). Rather, the speechwriters and their mode of argument will be worse in this regard than the practitioners of philosophy and politics and the modes of argument proper to these good arts. Ironically, the speechwriters could come out 'winners' if they concede that the arts of which they partake are thoroughly bad. But it is implied that they will not concede this; neither will they concede that they occupy a complex intermediate position, partaking of both good arts (philosophy and politics) and bad ones.

What is Socrates' estimation of the persuasive force of this argument? I suggest his answer will depend on the perspective from which the argument is evaluated. On the one hand, the partaking argument would seem to have a virtue which the strong man lacks: it actually *is* more persuasive than the *eikós* argument it reverses. This is the first joke that the partaking argument contains at the expense of Isocrates (or his tribe): Socrates has impersonated his protreptic

rival's mode of argument and beat him at his own game. On the other hand, there are distinct signs in T3 and its aftermath that Socrates grasps that his argument will have a limited effect on its intended audience. The first of these is Socrates' anticipatory remark in T3 that it will be 'no easy matter to persuade his opponent (οὐ γὰρ ῥάδιον αὐτοὺς πείσαι)' to accept his argument (306a1). The second is that Crito---for whose benefit Socrates improvised the partaking argument in the first place---seems strangely unaffected by it. For upon hearing the conclusion of Socrates' speech Crito responds as follows:

T20: All the same, Socrates, as I keep telling you, I am in doubt about what I ought to do with my sons. The younger one is still quite small, but Critobulus is at an age when he needs someone who will do him good. Now whenever I am in your company your presence has the effect of leading me to think it madness to have taken such pains about my children in various other ways, such as marrying to make sure that they would be of noble birth on the mother's side, and making money so that they would be as well off as possible, and then to give no thought to their education. But on the other hand, whenever I take a look at any of those persons who set up to educate men, I am amazed; and every last one of them strikes me as utterly grotesque, to speak frankly between ourselves. So the result is that I cannot see how I am to persuade the boy to take up philosophy (ὥστε οὐκ ἔχω ὅπως προτρέπω τὸ μειράκιον ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν). (306d2-307a2)

Coming at the end of the dialogue as it does, Crito's confession underscores a rather spectacular failure on his part: this self-de-

scribed φιλήκοος (304c6) of arguments, who at his own insistence has just heard a lengthy narrative involving the Socratic art of protreptic, does not know how to exhort (προτρέπω) his own son to take up philosophy. However when in T3 Socrates ‘adjusts’ his mode of argument from that which he employed with Cleinias to one that is better suited for Crito’s consumption, Socrates still fails to illuminate his friend regarding the value of philosophy. The partaking argument has at best stirred up a non-cognitive affect which Crito feels in Socrates’ presence. But Crito cannot sustain this emotion in Socrates’ absence;<sup>63</sup> and he is no better off, despite Socrates’ efforts in T3, at reflecting upon the theory of education that is implied by his behaviour: Crito seeks to purchase education as one would a commodity from the salesmen who, in Prodicus’ metaphor, stalk the muddy ground between philosophy and politics.

These two signs of trouble are surely related. For as I have argued above, Crito and Isocrates share the same social outlook and values which Socrates’ reverse εικός argument is designed to exploit.<sup>64</sup> I suggest however that Socrates does not regard the inefficacy of his performance as a failure on *his* part. On the contrary: its outcome rather demonstrates that ‘rhetorical argumentation falls short of its own objective’, viz. persuasion.<sup>65</sup> This is the second joke at the speechwriter’s expense that our passage contains. As Socrates explains, if Crito is to grasp the value of philosophy, he must study ‘the thing itself’:

T21: [...] pay no attention to the practitioners of philosophy, whether good or bad. Rather give serious consideration to the thing itself (αὐτὸ τὸ πράγμα): if it seems to you negligible, then turn everyone from it, not just your sons. But if it seems to you to be what I think it is, then

take heart, pursue it, practice it, both you and yours, as the proverb says. (307b6-c4)

Socrates’ reply entails that if Crito is to arrive at a true and *stable* estimation of the value of philosophy---one that he may sustain in the physical absence of Socrates’ powerful personality---he must study the properties of philosophical activity itself, not the men who practice it. Having clarified for himself what this activity is and why it is valuable, he must then practice it himself with others and with his sons; in particular, he must give up the passive role of φιλήκοος; and he must abandon the search for teachers who promise to decant wisdom into his sons’ heads as into empty vessels.<sup>66</sup>

Now if I am right that Socrates is conscious of the limitations of the partaking argument, there can be little doubt that this injunction to Crito reveals what the source of its inadequacy is. Crito’s remit is to work out (with suitable dialectical co-inquirers) the goodness of philosophy by working out what philosophy---the love of wisdom---is. But the partaking argument is silent on the precise relation of wisdom to goodness. The speechwriters claim they are wisest because they partake of philosophy and politics. As we have seen however what they seem to mean by this is that they partake of *modes of argument*. Socrates points out that if his opponents are *benefitted* by this partaking, they must admit that the arts of which they partake are good. But this move seems to invite the assumption that what makes philosophy and the political art good are simply modes of argument. But this does not explain what makes these modes of argument good. The strategy of reversal that Socrates employs seems to acquiesce in the same assumption. For the speechwriters’ defense is reversed on the basis of the folksy conviction that it is better to have the whole of two good things rather to partake of both. But

this conviction again does not explain what it is about the modes of argument proper to philosophy or politics that makes them good; nor does it explain what it *is* for modes of argument to *be* proper to either philosophy or the political art, as opposed to inferior arts. It follows that if Crito relies on the partaking argument alone to sort out the goodness of philosophy, he may arrive at the conclusion that the source or cause of its goodness may be explained in terms of modes of argumentation alone.

But this cannot be something that Socrates believes. Indeed, it is impossible to read the epilogue of the dialogue without being reminded of the fact that Socrates took a most definite and controversial stand on the nature and scope of a good-making property in his first protreptic interview with Cleinias (278e-282e). The cornerstone of Socrates' strategy for motivating Cleinias to become wise and virtuous is his argument that *wisdom is good*, and *ignorance is bad* (ἡ μὲν σοφία ἀγαθόν, ἡ δὲ ἀμαθία κακόν, 281e4-5); while all the other sorts of things which we might have supposed to be good things---wealth, beauty, health, etc.---are in themselves neither good nor bad. For

T22: [...] if ignorance controls them they are greater evils than their opposites, to the extent that they are more capable of complying with a bad master; but if good sense and wisdom are in control, they are greater goods; in themselves, however, neither sort is of any value (ἐὰν μὲν αὐτῶν ἡγήται ἀμαθία, μείζω κακὰ εἶναι τῶν ἐναντίων, ὅσῳ δυνατώτερα ὑπηρετεῖν τῷ ἡγουμένῳ κακῷ ὄντι, ἐὰν δὲ φρόνησίς τε καὶ σοφία, μείζω ἀγαθὰ, αὐτὰ δὲ καθ' αὐτὰ οὐδέτερα αὐτῶν οὐδενὸς ἄξια εἶναι, 281d6-e1).

Controversy has raged over the precise sense Plato attaches to Socrates' statement regarding

the evaluative status of the conventionally recognized goods.<sup>67</sup> However what is of immediate importance for our purposes is the manner in which Socrates pairs up the polar opposites of wisdom and ignorance with the polar opposites of *good* and *bad*. The bearing that this pairing has on Socrates' *eikós* argument is this: the relevant sense---and the only relevant sense---in which an art may be said to be 'good' is that it is controlled and led by wisdom; and the relevant sense---and the only relevant sense---in which an art may be said to be 'bad' is that it is controlled and led by ignorance.

Now if that is so, the internal economies of arts in T3 are more complex than Socrates' *eikós* argument lets on. For both the good and the bad arts that feature in that argument must be constituted by modes of argumentation, *together with* the cognitive component by which they are led: the good arts of διαλέγεσθαι will be composed of modes of argument, together with the wisdom by which they are led; their bad counterparts will be composed of modes of argument, together with the ignorance that leads them. It follows that Crito cannot grasp the nature and value of philosophy by reposing upon Socrates' *eikós* argument. For that argument ignores the causal thesis which Socrates labored to establish in his earlier efforts with Cleinias: it is wisdom and wisdom alone which makes the use of any so-called good---health, wealth, good reputation, power in the city, even dialectic itself---genuinely good. The same goes for the speechwriters: a merely persuasive argument---one which fails to inquire into the *cause* of goodness---cannot help the rhetoricians to understand who they really are.

In the next section I will sharpen this claim by demonstrating what Crito and the speechwriters *would* learn if the internal economies of good and bad arts were reconceptualized as containing a cognitive component. The les-

son for the speechwriters will not be an attractive one. For the reconceptualization will entail that the speechwriters do not in fact partake of philosophy and the political art at all; they only falsely believe that they do this. In fact their art is thoroughly bad and ignorant. This is the final joke that the partaking argument contains at the speechwriters' expense: even their demotion to third place in the contest for wisdom is a species of polite flattery, the product of an argument that is confined to the 'εἰκὸς καὶ πιθανός'.

The lesson for Crito is that it is Socrates' own peculiar art that stands between and partakes of the twin good arts of philosophy and politics; neither rhetoric nor eristic occupy this intermediate position in the hierarchy of arts. Crito can work this out for himself only if he brings the lesson of the first protreptic episode---the causal thesis---to bear upon his conception of what makes an art either good or bad. But if he does do this, he will be in a position to discriminate Socrates from his protreptic rivals, and so grasp philosophy 'the thing itself'.

#### §4 SOCRATIC DIALECTIC BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

The results of the last section return us with a vengeance to the pressing questions regarding partaking we set aside in section §1. We began our analysis of that relation by noting that any art that lies between and partakes of philosophy and politics must share some common constitutive features with the latter arts. Two questions we set aside regarding this requirement were (1): What is it for one art to partake of the constitutive components of another? (2): What are the components of philosophy and the political art that make up the internal economy of each? The foregoing analysis of Socrates' argument

suggests that the internal economies of both philosophy and politics will include *modes of argument* proper to these arts; this suggested to us in turn that an art partakes of philosophy and politics only if its practitioner employs modes of argument proper to either of these good arts.

We also noted that the partaking argument conceives of good arts teleologically in the following sense: a *good* art has no need to lie between or partake of the resources of another art; its own internal constitution is sufficient to achieve the end at which it aims. A *partaker* of a good art by contrast is therefore deficient in some sense in regard to at least one of the constitutive components that makes a good art good. As Socrates implies, this deficiency renders the partaker *worse* than either good art it lies between with respect to the end for which either of the latter arts is useful. This claim prompted our third question (3): What *is* the 'good-making' component (or set of components) that makes philosophy or politics good?

In section §3 we recalled that in his first protreptic interview with Cleinias, Socrates defended a causal thesis regarding the relation between goodness and wisdom. As applied to the use of arts, the thesis entails that an art is *good* just in case it is controlled and led by *wisdom*; an art is *bad* by contrast just in case it is controlled and led by *ignorance*. On the basis of this finding we decided that the partaking argument does not do justice to the internal economies of the arts concerned with argumentation: the good arts of διαλέγεσθαι must be composed of modes of argument, *together* with the wisdom by which they are led; their bad counterparts will be composed of modes of argument *together* with the ignorance that leads them.

To this finding we may now add the following observation. The complexity in the composition of both good and bad arts generally suggests that the internal economies of arts must

also have a certain *structure*: for example, in the case of a good art, there must exist a relation--call it *wise use*--between the wisdom by which the art is led or guided on the one hand, and the characteristic practices, activities, routines, behaviours, etc., that are formally internal to the art itself. We might fill this notion out with an example from medicine. In the case of the art of medicine of the 4<sup>th</sup> B.C.E., we might suppose that the characteristic practices internal to the art would include the diagnosis and prognosis of disease, therapeutic treatments (e.g. surgery, dietetics, pharmacology), and hygiene. If we further suppose that the end of medicine is health, (or the good of the body), then Socrates' causal thesis entails that if led by wisdom, the activities and practices internal to medicine will achieve health for the patient; while if they are guided by ignorance, they will not--indeed they may lead to more harm than if the patient had been left alone.<sup>68</sup>

The medical analogy suggests that a relation of *wise use* exists between the modes of argument internal to philosophy and politics and the wisdom by which either art is led. However the analogy also raises an immediate difficulty. As I have explored the analogy above, both the medical expert and the quack will employ the *same* characteristic activities or practices *internal* to the art of medicine. As applied to the partaking relation however this would entail that a mere partaker of the medical art partakes entirely in virtue of engaging in these activities or practices. In other words, the analogy (at least as I have explored it) entails that engaging in these activities and practices is not only necessary but also sufficient for partaking of the art of medicine. Yet this model does not seem to square with a key implication of the partaking argument: viz., that an art or its practitioner that stands between and partakes of two good arts is deficient *in the good-making component* of the outlier arts. (A

deficiency which in turn explains why the partaker is worse at attaining the end for which either outlier art is useful.) For on our current understanding of the good-making component of a good art, the overwhelming implication of this claim is that the practitioner of the intermediate art must be *less wise* than the practitioners of the two good outliers.

If that is so, we seem driven to the following conclusion: a mere partaker of an art A must partake of both the cognitive component by which the art is led, as well as the other internal components of A upon which this cognitive component operates. As applied to our medical analogy, this would imply that a quack partakes of medicine by engaging in certain characteristic practices internal to the art; but since he has only an inadequate share of the wisdom by which medicine is led, he does not reliably attain the end for which medicine is useful.

However, this result returns us immediately to the fourth and final question we were forced to put aside in section §1: (4) If an art lies between and partakes of two good arts, does that mean the intermediate art is *partially* good? For that matter: if an art partakes of *one* good art, does it turn up 'partially good' as a result? This does seem to be an immediate consequence of the partaking argument. Yet on the assumption that wisdom is the good-making component of good arts, it will follow that any art (or any practitioner) that lies between and partakes of both philosophy and politics is *partially wise*. Moreover, *on the assumption that the quack partakes of the art of medicine*, it will follow that quackery is partially good, and its practitioners *partially wise*.

Now this result will surely spell trouble if we are supposed to take seriously the conclusion of the partaking argument. Socrates assures Crito with a straight face that the speechwriters come in third place in the contest for wisdom



(306c2-4).<sup>69</sup> On our current understanding of the partaking relation, this will entail that the speechwriters have a share of the wisdom by which philosophy and the political art are led. It will also entail that the *modes of argument* employed by the philosopher and statesman are employed by the speechwriters (though not vice versa; recall that the partaking relation is not symmetric).<sup>70</sup> Of course a similar embarrassment will befall Socrates if he extends the partaking argument to his other set of protreptic rivals, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. As we noted above, the eristic pair are described in terms that make it clear that Socrates would endorse such an extension.<sup>71</sup> But this extension will entail that Euthydemus and his somewhat dimmer brother are endowed with a share of the wisdom by which the genuine philosopher and statesman are led. It will also entail that modes of argument employed by the completely dialectically and politically wise are employed by the sophistic duo.

Thus we seem to be faced with a dilemma. Either Socrates does not take himself to be genuinely committed to the claim that an art that lies between and partakes of two good arts is partially wise; or he does not genuinely believe that either eristic or rhetoric stands between and partakes of philosophy and politics.<sup>72</sup> But this dilemma is only apparent. Socrates *is* genuinely committed to the partial wisdom of partakers of good arts. But he is not committed at all to the claim that either eristics or rhetoricians partake of philosophy or politics. If it seems that he is, it is because we have lapsed into thinking that it is not only necessary but sufficient for an art X to partake of another art Y that X shares in both the internal practices of Y as well as the cognitive component of Y by which these are led. However as we noted in section §1, partaking seems to require in *addition* that the end at which X aims be identical to the end at which Y

aims.<sup>73</sup> It follows that Socrates will deny that eristic and rhetoric are partakers of the good arts of philosophy and politics if he denies that the former aim at the same ends as the latter. So is this something that Socrates does deny?

Of course the difficulty is that Socrates does not tell us what eristic or rhetoric aims at in the partaking argument itself. I suggest this is yet another sign of the rhetorical nature of that argument. Socrates' εἰκός argument is designed to persuade Crito but also to reach common ground with the speechwriters. Thus it will not do to inform them that the art they practice is thoroughly bad and aims at ends antithetical to those of philosophy and politics. But Socrates exercises no such restraint when describing speechwriting to Cleinias in his second protreptic conversation with the boy:

T23: [...] as far as I am concerned, whenever I have any contact with these same men who write speeches, they strike me as being persons of surpassing wisdom, Cleinias; and this art of theirs seems to me something marvelous and lofty. Though after all there is nothing remarkable in this, since it is part of the enchanters' art and but slightly inferior to it. (ἔστι γὰρ τῆς τῶν ἐπωδῶν τέχνης μῶριον μικρῶ τε ἐκείνης ὑποδεεστέρα). For the enchanters' art consists in charming (κήλησις) vipers and spiders and scorpions and other wild things, and in curing diseases, while the other art consists in charming and exhorting (κήλησις τε καὶ παραμυθία) the member of juries and assemblies and other sorts of crowds. Or do you have some other notion of it? (289e1-290a5)

For all its irony, this is surely a savage portrait: the λογοποιοί are enchanters and charmers, differing from the charmers of vermin only

in their inferiority to the latter. (Evidently the art of enchantment has some redeeming medicinal applications which speechwriting lacks.<sup>74</sup>) While Socrates does not tell us in this text what the arts of enchantment aim at, we may supply this missing link from the *Gorgias*: rhetoric aims at pleasure.<sup>75</sup>

As for Socrates' conception of the end at which eristic aims, the *Euthydemus* abounds with important clues that it too aims at pleasure:

T24: Then it is the wise who learn, and not the ignorant, and you gave Euthydemus a wrong answer just now. Whereupon the supporters of the pair laughed and cheered very loudly indeed, in admiration at their cleverness. (276c6-d2).

T25: These things are the playful (παιδιά) part of study, which is why I also tell you that the men are playing (παιδιᾶν); and I call these things 'play' because even if a man were to learn many or even all such things, he would be none the wiser as to the way things are but would only be able to make fun of people, tripping them up and overturning them by means of the distinctions in words, just like the people who pull the chair out from under a man who is going to sit down and then laugh gleefully when they see him sprawling on his back. So you must think of their performance as having been mere play. (278b2-c2)

T26: Whereupon, my dear Crito, there was no one there who did not praise to the skies the argument and the two men, laughing and applauding and exulting until they were nearly exhausted. In the case of each and every one of the previous arguments, it was only the admirers of

Euthydemus who made such an enthusiastic uproar; but now it almost seemed as if the pillars of the Lyceum applauded the pair and took pleasure in their success. (303b1-7)

T27: Ctesippus gave one of his tremendous laughs and said, Euthydemus, your brother has made the argument sit on both sides of the fence and it is ruined and done for! Cleinias was very pleased and too, which made Ctesippus swell to ten times his normal size. It is my opinion that Ctesippus, who is a bit of a rogue, had picked up these very things by overhearing these very men, because there is no wisdom of a comparable sort among any other persons of the present day. (300d3-9)

It follows that Socrates cannot believe that speechwriting and eristic partake of philosophy and politics if he does not believe that the latter good arts also aim at pleasure. Of course we may feel fairly confident that Socrates does not believe this; he says no such thing in the *Euthydemus*. However, here we face another difficulty: the partaking argument does not reveal to us the ends at which either φιλοσοφία or the πολιτική πράξις (306b1-2) aim. Socrates only drops the completely mysterious hint that while both philosophy and politics are *good*, they each aim at something *different* (εἰ μὲν οὖν ἡ φιλοσοφία ἀγαθόν ἐστὶν καὶ ἡ πολιτικὴ πρᾶξις, πρὸς ἄλλο δὲ ἑκάτερα, 306b2-3).

It is far beyond the scope of the present essay to elucidate this remark. What is of immediate importance for our purposes is that it provides a crucial clue to the solution of the ἀπορία Socrates reaches in his second protreptic conversation with Cleinias (288d-293a). That inquiry foundered when Socrates and Cleinias

could not discover the product of the superordinate art which, combining using and making, completes human happiness (289b4-6). An attractive solution to the puzzle is to observe that Socrates and Cleinias take a wrong turn when they assume that the political τέχνη must be identical with this superordinate art; for this assumption ignores the relationship of dialectic (290c5) to politics. What the co-inquirers might have explored is the notion that just as a 'using' art such as lyre-playing dictates to the lyre-maker the model of the instrument he requires (289d), so dialectic will dictate to the political art the nature of the virtues and social institutions needed to ensure human happiness. In other words, it will be the task of full blown dialectical wisdom to determine what Wisdom, Justice, Courage, Moderation, Unity, Freedom and Prosperity really are (281c, 292b). The task of the political art by contrast will be to produce citizens and institutions that instantiate these Forms.

Now one promising explanation of why Socrates does not say more about the ends of dialectic and politics in T3 is that he wants Crito to bestir himself to ask Socrates what he means by his obscure remark at 306b2-3. But Crito does not take the bait: Socrates' utterly mysterious but intriguing aside regarding the ends of these two good arts does not arouse his interest. Alternatively, Socrates could be making a deliberately obscure (but true) assertion to mock Crito's intellectual passivity.<sup>76</sup> In either case, the connection of Socrates' aside with the core problems of the second protreptic make it perfectly clear that Socrates will deny that either philosophy or politics aim at pleasure. But then Socrates cannot seriously believe that speechwriting and eristic genuinely partake of these two good arts.

But if speechwriting and eristic do not partake of philosophy and politics, what *is* the na-

ture of the relation that they bear to these arts? I suggest the relation that Socrates believes actually to obtain between eristic and rhetoric on the one hand, and philosophy and politics on the other, is *imitation*. Of course as we argued in section §1,<sup>77</sup> *this is precisely what he asserts of the speechwriters' defense in T3*: from the perspective of philosophy, their λόγος is sustained εικότως; a mere likeness of the truth, it is plausible rather than true (Καὶ γὰρ ἔχει ὄντως, ὡς Κρίτων, εὐπρέπειαν μᾶλλον ἢ ἀλήθειαν, 305e5-306a1). But we are only now in a position to offer a rigorous definition of the relation of imitation implicit in Socrates' remarks. Let us mark the distinction between *partaking* and *imitation* in terms of our analysis of the internal economies of arts. An art X *partakes* of an art Y just in case (i) X uses or employs practices or activities internal to Y, (ii) X is led by a share of the cognitive component by which Y is led, and (iii) X aims at the same end as Y. By contrast, an art A *imitates* another art B just in case (i) A appropriates some or all of the practices internal to B (ii) without being led by B's cognitive component and while (iii) aiming at a different end than that at which B aims. On this account of imitation the ignorant quack *imitates* the practices internal to medicine in a manner that is peculiarly *external* to medicine. To understand medicine from the inside, as it were, is to use or conduct its constitutive practices in a wise fashion to attain the end of health. To imitate medicine from the outside is to appropriate as many of the art's constitutive practices as one ignorantly supposes one needs to achieve one's end; but this end (e.g. money-making, fame) need have nothing to do with health. Moreover, because his practice of medicine is led by ignorance, the quack's performance transforms medical activity types into modes of action that are external to proper medical practice. In the same way the practice of eristic sophistry appropriates practices inter-

nal to genuine dialectic (e.g. obtaining premises by questioning, deduction, refutation); led by ignorance however eristic generates modes of argument that are *external* to the practice of genuine philosophy, and proper only to eristic.<sup>78</sup> The same may then be said of the speechwriters' art: since it is not guided by even a share of the cognitive component by which the true art of statesmanship is led, speechwriting generates modes of argument (e.g. the argument from 'likelihood') that are not proper to the practice of a genuine art of persuasion.<sup>79</sup>

The foregoing account of the imitative nature of eristic and speechwriting has been pieced together largely on the basis of the denial that these arts instantiate a relation---partaking---that is peculiar to the *Euthydemus*. Yet it is surely highly significant that precisely the same account of eristic imitation is voiced by Socrates in the *Republic*:

T28: We must now look at the ways in which this nature [i.e. the philosophic one] is corrupted, how it's destroyed in many people, while a small number (the ones that are called useless rather than bad) escape. After that, we must look in turn at the natures of the souls that imitate (τάς μιμουμένους) the philosophic nature and establish themselves in its way of life, so as to see what the people are like who thereby arrive at a way of life they are unworthy of and that is beyond them and who, because they often strike false notes, bring upon philosophy the reputation that you said it has with everyone everywhere. (*Rep.* VI 490e2-491a5)<sup>80</sup>

T29: What about when men who are unworthy of education approach philosophy and consort with her unworthily? What kinds of thoughts and opinions are we to

say they beget? Won't they truly be what are properly called sophisms (σοφίσματα), things that have nothing genuine about them or worthy of being called true wisdom? (*Rep.* VI 496 a5-9)<sup>81</sup>

What our analysis of the partaking relation adds to these familiar texts is perhaps a deeper appreciation of the aptness of Plato's choice to describe eristic and speechwriting as *imitators*, rather than even *marginal* partakers, of wise arts. For according to our analysis of partaking, no ignorant art is *epistemically embedded* in a wise or good one even to a marginal degree. Like mirror images and their originals, the practitioners of eristic or rhetoric must stand apart from the dialectician and the statesman in order to imitate the wisdom of the latter; if they partake of the latter they no longer imitate them.<sup>82</sup>

The foregoing analysis of the relations of partaking and imitation nevertheless leaves unaddressed two imposing questions. The first concerns partaking: if neither eristic nor speechwriting actually partakes of philosophy and statesmanship, is the partaking relation of the *Euthydemus* empty? Or is there some art and its practitioner dramatized in the dialogue or elsewhere in the corpus which instantiate the relation? The second question concerns imitation: I have argued that the partaking argument is a Socratic impersonation of a rhetorical mode of persuasion. Does this entail that Socrates *imitates* the speechwriter's art in the strict sense defined above? I will conclude this section by indicating my answer to each of these questions in turn.

I suggest the answer to our first question is hidden in plain sight in the partaking argument. Socrates' demand that Crito contemplate philosophy---'the thing itself'---entails the requirement that Crito discriminate Socratic activity from that of his protreptic rivals; for 'it is

the mark of one who knows to detect similarities and differences' (T7). If Crito is successful in this task, he will discover that it is in fact Socrates' own art that lies between and partakes of philosophy and the political art; neither eristic nor rhetoric occupies this intermediate position. If we as readers make the same discovery, Socrates' peculiar art is revealed to us as *partially good* and its practitioner *partially wise*. Thus the cognitive or epistemic component by which Socratic activity is led is *partial wisdom*.<sup>83</sup>

This result of course accords nicely with Socrates' famous profession of ignorance: as Socrates declares in the *Apology*, his dialectical activity is guided by a wisdom that is merely human, not divine.<sup>84</sup> But in what sense is Socrates--a *philosopher*--a mere partaker of philosophy? And how could he possibly be construed as a partaker of the art of the statesman? I suggest the unique design of the *Euthydemus* provides a clue to both of these questions.

The *Euthydemus* is constructed in such a way as to leave us in no doubt that there are two distinct functions to Socratic conversation. The dialogue artfully unfolds in a series of alternating encounters between the sophists, Socrates and Ctesippus on the one hand, and Socrates and Cleinias on the other. In the Cleinias scenes, it is the protreptic aspect of Socratic activity that is on display. In his scenes with the sophists, it is rather the elenctic or refutational function of Socrates' skill that is in evidence. The protreptic function of Socratic dialectic is more positive in nature: in this aspect, Socrates exhorts Cleinias to care for his soul by pursuing wisdom (282d).<sup>85</sup> The elenctic aspect of Socratic dialectic is more negative: the elenchus proves the ignorance of pretenders to virtue and knowledge. Thus Socratic dialectic is a complex art that aims at two immediate ends: in its protreptic aspect, it aims at turning people to the pursuit of 'virtue and wisdom' (278d3); in its refutatory function, it

aims at disabusing people of their false belief that they are already wise.

Now this might seem to spell trouble for the claim that Socrates' art partakes of philosophy and politics. For as I have argued above, it is a necessary condition of one art X partaking of another art Y that the end at which X aims is *identical* to the end at which Y aims.<sup>86</sup> Yet it seems clear that the ends of Socratic activity are not those of either the philosopher or statesman. As Socrates suggests himself at 306b2-3, while philosophy and politics are both good, they each aim at something different. I suggested above that a promising interpretation of this remark is that dialectic aims at discovering the accounts of the ordered structure of Forms (including Justice, Unity, Freedom, etc.); the political art by contrast aims at producing citizens and institutions that instantiate these. But if that is so, it does not seem true to say that Socratic dialectic partakes of either philosophy or politics. For the ends of the latter good arts are not identical to the dual ends of Socratic dialectic as I have described these above.

The solution to this challenge is to insist that Socratic activity aims at ends in addition to, or over and above, its own immediate ends. This is not problematic, since the successful attainment of the immediate ends of protreptic and elenctic activity does in fact *advance* the aims of philosophy (conceived of as full-blown dialectical wisdom) and politics. A famous passage from the *Gorgias* suggests that the hortatory aspect of Socrates' art bears precisely this relation to the art of politics:

T30: I think I am one of a few Athenians--not to say the only one---who undertake the real political craft and practice politics---the only one among people now. I don't aim at gratification with each of the speeches I make, but aim at the best,

not the pleasantest, and I'm not willing to do 'these subtle things' that you advise me. (521d6-e2)

As Socrates has argued prior to this assertion (515c-d), the goal of the politician is to make the citizens as good as possible. Socratic protreptic serves the propaedeutic function of turning the citizens to virtue and wisdom. Thus Socrates' protreptic skill advances the end of the statesman. Much the same can be said of the purgative function of the elenchus in relation to the end of dialectic. Refutation prepares the soul to know the Forms, since it extirpates from it the form of ignorance 'that causes all the mistakes we make when we think' (*Soph.* 229c5-6).

In that case we may state the solution to our first problem in this way: Socratic dialectic partakes of philosophy and politics because its dual functions---protreptic, elenchus---are propaedeutic arts which advance the ends of philosophy and politics. So conceived, protreptic and elenchus stand to philosophy and politics as parts to wholes. However, since the partaking relation is not symmetric, Socratic protreptic and elenchus are modes of argument which will not be employed by the completely wise dialectician or the philosopher king, at least when they are addressing interlocutors (advanced students of dialectic perhaps or intellectual peers) who stand in no need of elenchus or exhortation to philosophy.<sup>87</sup>

This result brings us to our final imposing problem. Does Socrates *imitate* the speechwriter in the epilogue of the *Euthydemus*? I submit we must clearly return an affirmative answer to this question. A good art---or a 'partially good' art such as Socratic dialectic---may imitate a bad art. The air of paradox is removed from this claim precisely because imitators are not epistemically embedded in the object of their imitation. In T3 Socrates appropriates a characteristic activity (persuasive speech) that is proper to

rhetoric. But his exercise in this activity is not contaminated by the ignorance of philosophy or politics by which the speechwriters are led. It is rather governed by the cognitive component---*partial wisdom*---which is internal to the economy of Socratic dialectic. The purpose of Socrates' imitation of the speechwriter is similarly internal to his own protreptic art. This is the apotreptic end of persuading Crito to resist the speechwriters' defense and to devote himself to philosophy. Finally, in the same way eristic or speechwriting generate modes of argument that are external to the practice of genuine philosophy or politics, the *eikós* argument that is *generated* by this Socratic mimesis is peculiarly *external* to the art of the speechwriter. On the one hand, Socrates' *eikós* argument is an undistorted and clear-eyed reproduction of a mode of persuasion that belongs to the rhetorical tradition that Plato critiques. Yet in Socrates' hands it is shaped and transformed by deliberate omissions and lacunae which are the product of Socrates' peculiar protreptic craft. As I have argued above, these omissions include: the suppression of the causal thesis, first broached in the first protreptic episode, concerning the relation between wisdom and goodness; the occlusion of the truth that it is Socrates, and neither of his protreptic rivals, who partakes of philosophy and the political art; and the absence of an explanation of the mysterious remark that while philosophy and politics are both good, they each aim at a different thing. Once discovered these lacunae return Crito and the reader as well to the central problems of the second protreptic and the practice of aporetic philosophy. Seen in this light, Socrates' final speech in the dialogue, so far from being a joke or a piece of sophistry, emerges as an instantiation of the *process* of Socratic protreptic: it quite literally 're-turns' Crito and the reader to retrace the gyres of the λαβύρινθος (291b7)---



-the central image of the dialogue and an image of 'philosophy itself' (αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα, 307b8).

The discovery that Socrates imitates the speechwriter in the *Euthydemus* of course immediately gives rise to the question whether he *also* imitates the pancratists (271c7, 272a5) who are his combatants in the main event: does Socrates indulge in deliberate mimesis of eristic refutation anywhere in the dialogue? I cannot address this important question here beyond suggesting two lines of inquiry along which it might be fruitfully pursued.

On the one hand we may ask whether Socrates' *direct report* of eristic discourse in the eristic scenes constitutes imitation in the sense defined here. The answer must be 'yes' if we suppose that, like his impersonation of the speechwriter, Socrates' reportage of eristic discourse aims at an end internal to Socratic protreptic and does not aim at the end of eristic itself, viz., pleasure. That his report does have this serious purpose seems plausible given its clearly apotreptic function: Crito insists at the beginning of the dialogue (271a, 272d) that Socrates relate to him the entire conversation he had with the sophistic duo; at the dialogue's end Crito expresses disgust at the sophists' λόγοι and refuses to take up Socrates' offer to study with them (304c-305b).

Admittedly this interpretative proposal must accommodate the impression of many readers that Socrates' story of his wild encounter with the sophistic duo *does* aim at producing pleasure. But the concept of 'play' (παιδιάν, 278b3) Socrates introduces in T25 suggests Plato is inclined to draw a distinction between the slapstick of his eristic clowns and the second order Socratic imitation of their antics. This distinction seems eventually (on the assumption that the *Euthydemus* predates the *Republic*) to be articulated in *Republic* 3. There Plato introduces an account of a more urbane form of play, viz.,

the imitation of an inferior person by his moral and intellectual superior:

T31: Well, I think that when a moderate (μέτριος) man comes upon the words or actions of a good man in his narrative, he'll be willing to report them as if he were that man himself, and he won't be ashamed of that kind of imitation. He'll imitate this good man most when he's acting in a faultless and intelligent manner, but he'll do so less, and with more reluctance, when the good man is upset by disease, sexual passion, drunkenness, or some other misfortune. When he comes upon a character unworthy of himself, however, he'll be unwilling to make himself seriously resemble (σπουδῇ ἀπεικάζειν) that inferior character---except perhaps for a brief period in which he's doing something good. Rather he'll be ashamed to do something like that, both because he's unpracticed (ἀγύμναστος) in the imitation of such people and because he can't stand to shape and mold himself according to a worse pattern. He despises this in his mind, unless it's just done in play (παιδιᾶς χάριν). (*Rep.* 3 396c5-396e2)

Alternatively (on the assumption that the *Euthydemus* is at least coeval with the *Republic*), the distinction is already implicit in T25: when Socrates suggests the sophists have only been playing (προσπαίξειν, 278b3) and exhorts them now to demonstrate serious things (τὰ σπουδαῖα, 278c3), he is actually pretending to the crowd that these 'wise men' (271c5, 272b9, 273c3, 274a8, 274d3, 275c7, 276d2) must really be philosophers who have briefly indulged in an imitation of the type of false philosophers and inferior men that they *actually* are. In other

words, he is pretending that they are merely *imitating* eristics, not *being* eristics.<sup>88</sup>

The second line of inquiry regarding a potential Socratic mimesis of eristic is more contentious. Does Socrates deliberately employ sophisticated arguments in his protreptic conversations with Cleinias? The charge that he does so has of course been leveled by several commentators on these passages.<sup>89</sup> Yet the account of imitation we have extracted from the partaking argument suggests the charge will stick only if it can be shown how Socrates' alleged adoption of sophisticated argumentation furthers an end (protreptic/apotreptic, elenctic) which is internal to Socratic dialectic. (For example: what apotreptic function is served by a fallacious performance of Socratic protreptic, and who is its target? What apotreptic function is thereby served which is not already served by Socrates' direct mimesis of the sophists' discourse?) Our analysis of the partaking argument suggests moreover that the charge of fallacy may be leveled too hastily at a product of Socrates' wonder-producing (279d8) art: omission, lacuna and *aporia* must not be confused with the dumbfounding toys of the eristic duo (e.g. asylogistic reasoning through homonymous terms, failing to contradict, fallacies of composition and *secundum quid*, etc.)

## CONCLUSION

Our analysis of the partaking argument in the epilogue of the *Euthydemus* has been long and complex. What I hope to have shown is that a close examination of this badly neglected passage reveals its key importance to the plan of the dialogue. So far from being a parody of eristic argumentation or a hopelessly obscure joke, the partaking argument tasks the reader with the central problem of the *Euthydemus*: the

discrimination of the sophist, rhetorician, and philosopher.

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- maux. Puisque ces gens ambitionnent d'être à la fois philosophes et politiques, ils ne peuvent considérer ces deux activités comme mauvaises: ils leur sont donc inférieurs.'
- 2 Burnyeat made the remark at a colloquium at Princeton University in the late 1990s where he presented an earlier draft of Burnyeat (2002). I have no idea if he still holds this view of the passage.
- 3 My finding that Socrates indulges in a deliberate mimesis of the speechwriter in the epilogue of the *Euthydemus* immediately raises the question whether he also deliberately employs eristic argumentation anywhere in the dialogue. This important and vexed question is far beyond the scope of this essay. However, since my analysis of imitation is in my view directly relevant to this problem, I suggest in a brief coda to section §4, 67-9 two lines of inquiry along which it might be fruitfully pursued in light of the account of imitation I offer here.
- 4 This passage teems with interest but I cannot discuss it in detail here. Scholars who have argued for identifying the critic with Isocrates include Schleiermacher (1836), 228; Thompson (1868), 179-182; Field (1930), 193; Ries (1959), 40-44; Guthrie (1975), 282-3; Hawtrey (1981), 189; Heitsch (2000); Kato (2000), 131; Michelini (2000), 530, and Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi (2014), 143-151. For opposing or skeptical viewpoints see Wilamowitz (1919), 235; Taylor (1926), 101-2; Bluck (1961) 115 n.4. Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi (2014), 142 claims that Crito's apparent acquiescence in the critic's application of the term 'philosophy' to eristic entails that Crito is inconsistent: on the one hand he rejects sophistical practice and seems willing to call it 'philosophy'; but on the other he defends 'philosophy' as a graceful thing. This seems to me to be an overreaction. It is more likely that Crito takes the term 'philosophy' to apply to dialectic in general, not to Socratic conversation exclusively. (For a somewhat similar suggestion see Peterson (2011), 200.) I suggest this reading is actually supported by the fact that Crito, due to his intellectual passivity, does not really understand precisely how Socratic dialectic differs from its other practitioners (an assessment of Crito with which Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi concurs, 141). For Crito, the φιλήκοος of arguments, 'philosophy' is dialectical conversation which can be practiced gracefully or rudely.
- 5 Some notes on my translation of T2: Sprague (1993) translates μεθόρια as 'no-man's land.' While the phrase is perhaps more evocative than 'marches' or 'borderlands', I think it evokes the wrong thing, viz., that a state of hostility exists between the philosopher and the statesman. Sprague also translates 'μετρίως μὲν γὰρ φιλοσοφίας ἔχειν, μετρίως δὲ πολιτικῶν' as follows: 'for they think they are not only pretty well up in philosophy but also in politics'. (Cp. Lamb (1977), who translates along similar lines.) While this rendering is certainly possible, I

## NOTES

- 1 I have found no systematic analysis of this passage in the scholarly literature on the dialogue. The following remarks are representative: Sprague (1962): 'It is obviously to the advantage of [the speech-writer] to malign both philosophy and politics, but, according to Socrates at 306c, he is apparently unwilling to do this. Thus, we are intended to conclude, his attack is inconsistent', 32. Cp. Nancy (1984), 141: 'Pour montrer en effet que ce type d'hommes n'a de savoir qu'apparent, Socrate use d'un raisonnement curieusement abstrait (306a1-c5): toute chose intermédiaire entre deux éléments à quoi elle participe n'est supérieure aux deux que s'il s'agit de deux

suggest it does not quite capture Isocrates' point: Socrates' rival is not conceding that he dabbles in philosophy and politics; he is rather insisting that unlike Euthydemus and his crew, he engages with philosophy and politics in due measure, i.e., he observes a line set against the excesses and deficiencies which (in his view) beset both the professional controversialists as well as those who are embroiled in political contests. (C. *Soph.* 14-15: some who have never taken a single lesson from the sophists have become able orators and statesmen; their success is grounded in natural ability and practical experience. As for the earlier sophists who composed technical manuals for pursuing lawsuits: they professed to exhort others to study political discourse but were in fact nothing but 'professors of meddlesomeness and greed', 19-20. Cp. *Ad Nic.* 39: Wise men do not dispute subtly about trifles (ἀκριβῶς περὶ μικρῶν ἐρίζοντες) but speak well on important issues; they are not those who while being in many perplexities themselves (πολλαῖς ἀπορίας) promise happiness to others; they make modest (μέτρια) claims for themselves and bear moderately (μετρίως) the vicissitudes of fortune; cp. 51-2: the teachers of philosophy debate about the proper discipline of the soul, some maintaining that this is achieved through disputation (τῶν ἐριστικῶν λόγων), others that it is through political discourse (τῶν πολιτικῶν); but regardless of his training the well-educated man must as a result of his training display an ability to deliberate and decide. Cp. *Antid.* 261-268: the study of eristics and other disciplines far removed from the necessities of life (e.g. geometry, astronomy) are not part of philosophy but a gymnastic propaedeutic to philosophy proper. Consequently the young should not allow their minds to be dried up in these barren studies. Cp. *Panath.* 27-29: There exist experts of disputation who have studied the art so closely that they have become less cultured than even their servants; and there are those who have become so skilled in oratory that their private discourse is insufferable and offensive to their fellow citizens, and they neglect their private affairs besides.) Moreover, while it is clear from 305a that Isocrates does not confuse Socrates with the eristics, the speechwriters' defense here is nevertheless equally directed at Socrates, insofar as it is congruent with Isocrates' general position that the kind of exact philosophical knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) which Socrates claims to seek is beyond our grasp: all we should really aim for is right opinion (δόξα). (Cp. C. *Soph.* 7-8; *Helen* 5; *Antid.* 270-271.) In that case the expression ὅσον ἔδει should be understood as the extent to what is needed or 'right'. Finally, on 'εἰκότως' and 'ἔξ εἰκότος λόγου': A standard translation of 'εἰκότως' is 'reasonable' or 'plausible'. Hence 'ἔξ εἰκότος λόγου' would standardly be translated 'on a plausible/reasonable ground' or 'for a plausible

reason'. However as I argue below (18-24) we will miss Socrates' point as well as the play in which he is engaged with these expressions if they are not translated in a way that brings out their connection to the participle εἰκώως (seeming like, like, fitting, appropriate, likely) on which the adverb εἰκότως is based. It is nearly impossible to capture this in English. I have attempted to do so by relying on the existence of an archaic use of 'likely' (OED entry B.2): 'in a suitable or appropriate manner; suitably, appropriate, fitly; (also) reasonably'.

- 6 *Meno* 75e; *Protag.* 337a-c, 340e-341c, 358a-b; *Crat.* 384b; *Euthyd.* 277e; *Lach.* 197d; *Charm.* 163d; *Phaedr.* 267b.
- 7 *Meno* 75e1-5 may be read as suggesting that Prodicus was known to have made some distinction at least regarding the terms 'πέρας' (limit) and 'ἔσχατον' (boundary). Aristotle may be thinking of T2 in *SE* 34, 183a37-b8. Dio Chrysotom clearly refers to T2 in *Orat.* 24.8-9.
- 8 Cp. *Phaedr.* 269b-269c: it is their ignorance of dialectic that causes the rhetoricians to think they have discovered what true rhetoric is, when they have really only mastered what it is necessary to learn as 'preliminaries to the art' (τὰ πρὸ τῆς τέχνης ἀναγκαῖα, 269b7-8). Knowing things preliminary to an art does not entail that one partakes of genuine constituents of the art.
- 9 Socrates' reference to Prodicus at *Euthyd.* 277e4 seems to serve this kind of function.
- 10 In speaking merely of 'things' or men standing between good and bad 'things' Socrates is being deliberately vague regarding the intended scope of the argument. I suggest this is because the outliers of which the speechwriters are said to partake are both philosophy and politics. Socrates refers to the latter as 'ἡ πολιτικὴ πράξις'; and he has asserted in the second protreptic episode that ἡ πολιτικὴ is identical to a τέχνη, viz., ἡ βασιλικὴ τέχνη (291c4-5). In the second protreptic this identification seems to facilitate Socrates' obtaining a premise to the effect that the kingly art must have a product of some kind (291e-292a). However Socrates does not identify philosophy as a τέχνη in this sense. Rather he calls philosophy 'the acquisition of knowledge' (Ἡ δέ γε φιλοσοφία κτήσις ἐπιστήμης, 288d8); a characterization which seems deliberately to leave the object of this knowledge unspecified. If he is not more forthcoming, presumably this is because Plato wants to leave it up to the reader (as Socrates wants to leave it up to Crito) to work out the precise relationship between philosophy and politics. Things are somewhat clarified in *Plts.* 259c-260c: there τέχναι are divided into πρακτικά, in which expertise is inseparable from πράξεις or 'doings', and γνωστικά τέχναι, the theoretical arts which are further divided into κριτικά and ἐπιτακτικά; the statesman's art falls into the latter 'directive' or ruling category. As I take it we are meant to see



- however, even this move does not settle the nature of the relationship between politics and philosophy in the second protreptic of *Euthyd.* For both arts are described as ‘using’ and therefore ruling arts (290b-c). Aristotle expresses the ensuing *aporia* this way: we think that the ἀρχιτέχτορες in each thing are wiser than the hand-workers because they know the causes and the that-for-the-sake-of-which the others make; so wisdom must be ἀρχική and the wise person must ἐπιτάττειν (*Metap.* 1.2 982a17-19). But if wisdom is ‘purely theoretical’, why is it valuable if it does not consider any of the things out of which happiness arises? (*EE* 5.12 = *NE* 6.12 1143b19-20)? (*Cp. Charm.* 172b-d.) And if φρόνησις is inferior to wisdom, why is it more authoritative (κυριωτέρα) than it, since it is epitactic and rules and commands about each thing (1143b34-5)? His answer to the first question is that ‘wisdom does produce happiness, not as the art of medicine produces health, but as health produces health’ (1144a3-5), i.e. the exercise of σοφία in contemplation *is* happiness. His answer to the second question is that while φρόνησις is the highest epitactic form of knowledge, it does not rule over σοφία; ‘for φρόνησις does not use σοφία (sc. as ἀρχιτεκτονική uses the manual arts), rather it sees how to bring it about; so it issues commands (ἐπιτάττει) for the sake of it, not to it’ (1145a6-11; cp. *Plts.* 308d1-e10). For evidence that Aristotle’s *aporiai* are inspired by the *Euthydemus*, see Menn (2018), Ia2. 10-13. My own view (Section §4, 58-9) is that considerable light is shed on Plato’s own solution to these puzzles by noticing that unlike his pupil, Plato does not conceive of dialectical wisdom as purely theoretical in Aristotle’s sense: for dialectical wisdom is infused with its knowledge of practical polis management (*Rep.* 539e2-540c2). (On this point cp. Reeve (1988), 83-4.) But this does not commit Plato to the view that the art of dialectic is strictly identical to the ruling art of practical polis management. The art of dialectic aims at grasping the Forms; the art of politics instills their order in the city and in the souls of the citizens. It is likely however that Socrates’ protreptic rivals in the *Euthydemus* conceive of political activity and philosophy as utterly distinct. (E.g. Isocrates may conceive of the latter as simply bestowing ‘mind-sharpening skills’ upon the young; the sophists may conceive of philosophy as aiming at pleasure or money-making.) But it is not Socrates’ purpose to disabuse them of these notions. On the role of education in both philosophy and politics see Nancy (1984) 143. On the relation of philosophy and politics in the *Euthyd.* cp. Hawtry (1981), 193-4; Morrison (1958), 209-10, 216; Sprague (1976), 55; Kahn (1988), 543-5; Kahn (1996), 209; Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi (2014), 60-64. On wisdom as a craft in the dialogue see Jones (2010), 96-131.
- 11 By this I mean only that the art needs no other art *qua* the art it is to achieve its own end. A subordinate art (such as that sought in the second protreptic episode, 288d-293a) will need to use the ends of subordinate arts in order to attain its end (290a-291d); it follows such an art may not attain its goal in the absence of other arts.
- 12 The verb ‘μετέχειν’ here means ‘to have a share of’. The irreflexivity of the partaking relation has the interesting consequence that we may not characterize the self-sufficiency of philosophy or politics in terms of either being a complete partaker of itself.
- 13 The Isocratean figure Crito encounters explicitly makes this mistake at 304e7-305a1. But the same point is clear from Socrates’ mention in T2 of the petulant reaction of the speechwriters whenever they are refuted in ‘private conversation’ (ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἰδίοις, 305d5-6): they defensively blame their downfall on ‘Euthydemus and his followers’ (305d6-7). What Socrates has said prior to this observation is that the speechwriters’ take their main rivals for the laurel of wisdom to be ‘the men occupied with philosophy’ (τοὺς περὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἀνθρώπους, 305d1-2). Contrary to the supposition of some commentators, Socrates does not apply the term ‘philosophy’ to the activity of the sophists here (nor at 305b6); he refers to genuine philosophers (like himself) whose activity prompts the speechwriters’ anxiety that they are not genuinely wise. What Socrates says next is that whenever the speechwriters are refuted in private conversation, they blame this on Euthydemus and his ilk. The remark suggests that the λογοποιοί resort to this accusation *whether or not* they have been refuted by eristics. Socrates’ point is that the speechwriters attempt to bring true philosophy into disrepute by encouraging the public’s (accurate) perception that the majority of professed philosophers are cranks. The speechwriters’ strategy is usefully compared to Adeimantus’ complaint at *Rep* 6 487a-d: the accuser (τὸν ἐγκαλοῦντα, 489d3) of philosophy who is refuted by Socrates’ argument for the supremacy of his own version of philosophy will, due to inexperience in argument, complain that the argument entraps him; but he will nevertheless deny the conclusion. Then in support of his denial he will wheel in the empirical claim that the greatest number of those who profess to practice philosophy are completely vicious, while a few (e.g. Socrates himself) are decent but useless.
- 14 Cp. n.5, 7-8 for references in Isocrates to his stance toward eristics. I discuss this stance in more detail below, Section §3, 35-40.
- 15 271d-272a, 273c-274a. Socrates asserts at 303e-304a that the sophists’ technique can be rapidly acquired by anyone, and that the behaviour of Ctesippus in his encounters with the brothers showed him this.
- 16 The fact that the brothers are philosophical magpies in my view suggests that Plato does not use Euthydemus and his brother as masks for some particular school of philosophy (e.g. ‘Megarianism’), but I cannot defend this position here.



- 17 Another point of overlap between our text and the *Gorgias* is of course Callicles' argument (485a3-e2) that while it is a fine thing for a young person to have a share in philosophy sufficient for the education of a free man, it is shameful if a man continues in philosophy beyond youth into adulthood: 'The most correct thing is to have a share in both'. I discuss this passage and its relevance to an interpretation of the partaking argument in section §3, 40-6.
- 18 Kraus (2007), 7.
- 19 Crito explains why in more detail in his final exchange with Socrates, 306d2-307a2: most men who set themselves up as educators of the young (like Euthydemus and his brother) are 'utterly grotesque'. I discuss this text (T20) in Section §3, 47-9.
- 20 Here it is important to note that at *Phaedo* 92d1-2, Simmias (with Socrates' evident approval) employs the term 'εὐπρέπειας' as a straightforward gloss of the phrase 'μετὰ εἰκότος'. Cp. *Theaet.* 162e where τὸ εἰκός and ἡ εὐπρέπεια are contrasted with the truth or knowledge.
- 21 *Soph.* 240a-b; *Theaet.* 162e4-163a1; *Tim.* 29b1-d3.
- 22 All translations of *Phaedrus* are from Nehamas and Woodruff in Cooper (1997).
- 23 Hoffman (2008), 9-10; Kraus (2006), 143; Turrini (1977), 542-543. Turrini shows how Plato exploits the etymological connection between εἰκῶν (likeness or image) and εἰκός in the *Timaeus* (29b-c). The Eleatic Visitor similarly suggests that the term εἰκαστική in his formula 'τεχνῆ εἰκαστική' (the art of likeness-making) is derived from 'εἰκῶν' (*Soph.* 236a). As Hoffman points out, the Visitor's distinction between the crafts of likeness-making and image-making seems to reflect Plato's distinction between the verisimilitude and the doxastic sense of εἰκός.
- 24 This reveals another difference between the *Euthydemus* and *Gorgias*: in the latter dialogue Socrates certainly takes no prisoners against his dialectical opponents.
- 25 Here it is revealing to note that as the epilogue begins, Socrates has told Crito what 'is especially fitting for *him* to hear': if he joins Socrates' plan to take the sophists' course, it will not hinder Crito in the making of money 304c3-4.
- 26 Apart from Socrates' general knowledge of Crito, there is an indication of the latter's lack of discernment in this regard even prior to his final declaration (306e) that he can discover no suitable educator for his sons. In response to the Isocratean's attack on the eristics, Crito insists that 'philosophy' is nevertheless a 'charming' or 'delightful' thing (χαρίεν, 304e6). As I have argued above (n.4, 6), Crito applies the term 'philosophy' here to dialectic in general, not Socrates' conception of philosophy. His use of 'χαρίεν' moreover reveals Crito as the pleasure seeking φιλήκοος of speeches that he is. Callicles describes philosophy in precisely the same terms: 'Philosophy is a charming thing, if someone touches it in moderation (μετρίως) at the right time of life', (*Gorg.* 484c5-7). I discuss the resonance of this text with T2 below, Section §3, 40-6.
- 27 As many commentators have noted, Socrates' no holds barred approach in the *Gorgias* seems to have precisely this effect on his interlocutors.
- 28 Hinks (1940), 63-66; Kuebler (1944), 15; Kennedy (1963), 26-51; Goebel (1989), 41-42; Gagarin (2002), 29. However as Gagarin (1990), 30 and Hoffman (2008), 11 point out, the speeches of Hermes in *HH* 4, 265 and 377 are the earliest example of an εἰκός argument in Greek literature---at least on the assumption that this text antedates 5 B.C.E. On the grounds for the designation cp. n.41, 30.
- 29 On the 'strong man' argument see Hoffman (2003).
- 30 I borrow the expression 'reverse *eikos* argument' from Gagarin (1990), 30; cp. Gagarin (1994), 51; Gagarin (1997), 14; Gagarin (2002), 112-114.
- 31 Transl. Norlin (1929).
- 32 An example is found in Antiphon's *First Tetralogy*, 2.3 and 2.6. This work is an instructional handbook, not a set of speeches for use in a practical context. Cp. Gagarin 1997, 14. On sophistic antilogies cp. Hoffman 2002.
- 33 For reasons which I cannot pursue here in *Rhet.* 2.24.9 Aristotle appears to classify the strong man and similar arguments as fallacies of qualification. His account of this mode of apparent refutation is given in *SE* 5 166b37-20 and 25 180a23-180b39.
- 34 By this I simply mean that we may extract from T9-T10 Plato's awareness that the conclusions of reversing arguments cannot both be true, and that hence at least one of the opposing arguments must be unsound. In this respect εἰκός arguments share the feature of eristic arguments of which Euthydemus and Dionysodorus are most proud: they refute an answerer 'no matter how' he responds (*Euthyd.* 275e), i.e. regardless of which pair of a contradictory pair of propositions the answerer elects to defend at the beginning of an encounter. The procedures of both eristic and rhetoric are for Plato consequently antithetical to a search for the truth.
- 35 Cp. Goebel (1989), 43-45; Schmitz (2000), 47-48.
- 36 Translation E.S. Forster in Barnes (1984). There are two other serious problems with Forster's translation: no term corresponds to his 'likely' in the phrase εἰ τοὺς ἀκούοντας συνειδότας ληψόμεθα; also 'εἰκός' in the penultimate line does mean 'likely to be true' but this is not the sense we should attach to τὸ εἰκός in the passage.
- 37 Hacking (1975).
- 38 Synodinou (1981), 1-34; Turrini (1977), 544-557.
- 39 Todorov (1968), 1; Anastassiou (1981), 358; Schmitz (2000), 48-49.
- 40 Kraus (2007), 6-8.
- 41 Hoffman (2008) appendix, 25-29. Hoffman uses the argument of Hermes in *Hymn to Hermes* (*HH* 4) to demonstrate how ἔοικα, which signifies 'to be like' only with a dative object, could have been extended

in other constructions to yield the senses 'to be fitting' and 'to be likely'. Hermes twice argues that he did not steal his brother's cattle on the ground that he is not *like* a driver of cattle or a strong man. First to Apollo at 265: 'οὐδὲ βοῶν ἐλατήρι, κραταιῷ φωτί, ἔοικα' ('I am not like to a driver of cattle or a strong man'). Here the perfect indicative is used with a dative object, a construction that is appropriately translated in the likeness sense. In his second address (to Zeus) at 377 the construction is still with a dative object but with the masculine perfect active participle ἔοικώς: 'αὐτὰρ ἐχὼ χθιζὸς γενόμεν...οὐτὶ βοῶν ἐλατήρι, κραταιῷ φωτί, ἔοικώς' ('But I was born yesterday...[and am] not one who is like to a driver of cattle or a strong man'). As Hoffman points out, it is one more short step to substituting the neuter perfect participle εἰκός in an infinitive with the accusative construction such as οὐκ ἔστιν εἰκὸς ἐμὲ λαμβάνειν τοὺς βοῦς, which may be translated as either 'It does not befit me to take the cattle' or 'It is not likely for me to take the cattle'. This suggests that the core 'similarity' sense of ἔοικα can give rise to the notion of the 'likely' or the 'befitting': Hermes is arguing that he is not *likely* to have stolen the cattle on the grounds that he is not *like* a cattle thief.

42 Hoffman (2008), 16.  
 43 Antiphon: 1.17, 1.18. Lysias: 13.41  
 44 Antiphon: 3.4.1 (2nd use), 5.4, 5.48, 5.49, 5.73. Lysias: 9.19, 12.28, 14.24, 19.3, 19.5, 19.38, 27.15, 30.13. Isocrates: 3.53, 4.2, 14.52, 16.14.  
 45 Antiphon: 1.2, 2.1.5, 2.2.7 (2nd use), 2.3.8, 3.4.1 (1st use), 5.63, 5.74. Lysias: 12.27 (2nd use), 12.27 (3rd use), 19.17, 19.58, 20.36, 24.16, 31.31. Isocrates: 1.45, 4.71, 5.19, 5.113, 11.35, 15.41, 15.86, 15.170, 21.14.  
 46 Antiphon: 1.7, 2.1.4, 2.2.7 (1st use), 2.4.5 (1st use), 2.4.5 (2nd use), 5.26, 5.28, 5.45, 5.60. Lysias: 1.6, 2.74, 2.75, 3.25, 7.13, 7.38, 12.27 (1st use), 14.4, 16.5, 19.36, 25.16. Isocrates: 4.163, 4.184, 5.41, 6.40, 6.75, 7.2, 11.11, 12.81, 12.105, 15.34, 15.82, 15.309, 17.46, 18.13, 18.14, 20.1, 20.12, 21.6, 21.7.  
 47 Hoffman (2008), 23.  
 48 Hoffman (2008), 21.  
 49 Trans. W.R.M. Lamb (1930).  
 50 Trans. Van Hook (1945).  
 51 For the use of such devices in Gorgias and Antiphon see Kuebler (1944), 29-30, 33-35, 43, 45-46, 48, 50.  
 52 Trans. Van Hook (1945), with modifications.  
 53 Cp. Irwin (1995), 8-9, 38-44. The unity of virtue thesis receives its most sustained treatment in the *Protagoras*.  
 54 It is important to note that Socrates mounts precisely the same objection against the eristic duo at *Euthyd.* 286c: their paradoxes of false speaking are just recycled from Protagoras or still earlier thinkers. The parallel demonstrates how in a three way shooting match of competing protreptics (Socratic, eristic, and Isocratean), two opponents may come to resemble each other when they level the same

charge against the third. Socrates (or Plato) however differs from Isocrates in that he actually constructs an argument against the eristic denial of false speaking (287e-288a), whereas Isocrates simply complains that their thesis is false and unoriginal.

55 I take it that the first charge (concerning ἐπιστήμη) is leveled at Socrates, the second (concerning petty things) at the eristics; but it is just possible to read both as levelled indiscriminately at both. In any case, Isocrates' sentiments closely match those expressed by Crito at 304c-304d: there is a limit to the things Crito wants to learn; in particular, he would rather be refuted by the kinds of arguments the eristics employ than use them to refute others.

56 Of course Plato would probably disagree with the idea that opinion is a 'part' of knowledge; but Isocrates is not Plato. We might suppose that Isocrates is operating with an idea of knowledge that is more 'εἰκός' than Plato's, viz., that opining is part of knowing: one who knows that P also opines that P, in addition to other things. However it is not necessary to attribute this thesis to Isocrates in order to maintain the conceptual isomorphism of his argument with T2.

57 *Ad. Dem.* 44-52. Cp. *Ad. Nic.* 3: it is εἰκός that upon studying this wisdom literature a private citizen will become a better man. For a useful discussion of the process whereby in Isocrates' view absorption of such precepts converts a citizen to a life of φιλοσοφία see Collins (2015), 219-228.

58 Cp. n.5, 7-8 for expressions of this sentiment in several of Isocrates' later works.

59 Of course the practitioners of rhetoric and eristic in the *Euthydemus* are not discrete; Euthydemus and Dionysodorus have only recently begun to regard speechwriting as a sideline (*Euthyd.* 273d).

60 Trans. of the *Gorgias* are from Irwin (1979).

61 Alternatively, like Crito he could have no hard and fast distinction between sophistry and Socratic conversation: philosophy is just dialectic, which may be engaged in roughly or politely (n.4, 6). However I prefer to interpret Callicles' protestations at Socrates' hands as exemplifying the defensive posture Socrates tells us in T2 that rhetoricians take at being refuted in the dialectical arena by genuine philosophers. On this posture cp. n.13, 14-15.

62 Note that the goal of having the best reputation for wisdom is explicitly mentioned in T2.

63 In this regard Crito resembles Socrates' more wayward companion Alcibiades (*Symp.* 215d-216c).

64 Indeed Crito's speech in T20 tracks the sentiments of the critic of philosophy so closely that we are left to wonder whether Crito did not mention his name to Socrates at 305c because he wishes to disguise his familiarity with his work. If that is so Crito turns out to resemble Phaedrus, who hides under his cloak (*Phaedr.* 228a-e) the speech of Lysias he claims not to have committed to memory. This possibility raises another which cannot be pursued here: did

- Crito also fib about not being able to hear the conversation between Socrates and the sophists (271a)?
- 65 Yunis (2005), 104.
- 66 It is no accident that the ‘transmission’ model of learning is implicitly criticized in the epilogue, since the problem of how virtue and wisdom is acquired is a core theme of the dialogue.
- 67 For various proposals see Vlastos (1991), 200-232, Annas (1993), Irwin (1995), 56-60, Parry (2003), Scott (2006), 148-9. I do not have space here to defend a particular interpretation of Socrates’ claim that wisdom is good καθ’ αὐτό. I am inclined to think he means that wisdom is the cause of the benefit of the other so-called goods in the sense that (a) wisdom must always be present when this benefit obtains, and (b) wisdom may never be the cause of the opposite of benefit (harm). Cp. Scott (2006), 148-9. (For the somewhat similar position that wisdom is the ‘active principle of happiness’, see Parry (2003), 10-12.) On this interpretation it will not follow that dialectical wisdom will be sufficient just by itself to produce its intended benefit; other background conditions may need to be in place.
- 68 Socrates implies precisely this point about the art of medicine at *Euthyd.* 280a2-3; he identifies health as the product of the art of medicine at 291e4-6.
- 69 Socrates’ ranking does not entail that he thinks either philosophy or politics is superior to the other, but only that these two arts are superior to speechwriting.
- 70 Section §1, 13.
- 71 Section §1, 16-17.
- 72 The objection could be raised that Socrates (or Plato) would allow both Isocrates and the eristic pair a measure of wisdom, since Socrates says at 289e2-3 that speechwriters strike him as surpassingly wise (ὑπέρσοφοι); and he frequently praises Euthydemus and Dionysodorus for their wisdom (in the prologue alone, seven times: 271c5, 272b9, 273c3, 274a8, 274d3, 275c7, 276d2; in the same episode he praises their knowledge (ἐπιστήμην, 273e6) and cleverness (272b4)). As for Isocrates, I argue on the next page that this remark is clearly ironic. It is also important to note that in the *Phaedrus* Socrates’ praise of Isocrates extends only to the latter’s natural ability and promise (279a); but an earlier passage (269d) seems to entail, when taken together with this remark, that Isocrates lacks knowledge of what rhetoric really is. As for the eristics: Socrates clearly implies at 278b5 that learning what the sophists teach does not generate knowledge (εἰδεῖν) of the way things really are. He also mounts two self-refutation arguments at the sophists in the dialogue (287e-288a and 303d-e). It is also highly significant that Plato never permits Socrates to refer to the sophists as ‘philosophers’ in the *Euthydemus*. Finally, Socrates says wisdom never makes a mistake (280a7-8), but Dionysodorus is portrayed as making a mistake in his own eristic argument at 297a. Thus it is more plausible to take Socrates’ praise of the brothers as ironic also.
- 73 Section §1, 13-14.
- 74 Cp. Aeschylus *Eu.* 649; Sophocles’ *Aj.*, 582; Homer *Od.* 19.457; Gorgias *Helen* 10; Plato *Rep.* 426b; *Ch.* 155e.
- 75 *Gorg.* 462d11-462e1, 464d2, 501a-c, 502d-503a, 513d4. Unlike the *Gorgias*, the *Euthydemus* does not tell us directly that rhetoric aims at pleasure. However there is an indirect hint that it does so in Crito’s rejection of Socrates’ proposal to study with Euthydemus and Dionysodorus (304c6-304d1): for he says that while he is a lover of listening (φιλήκοος) and that he takes pleasure (ἡδέωσα) in learning things, he finds he would prefer (ἥδιον) to be refuted by the brothers’ arguments than use them to refute others. Taken together with his attraction to the speechwriters’ defense, this suggests that the sophistic display did not produce a pleasure Crito expected from them, whereas rhetorical displays in his experience reliably do so. Gagarin (2000) argues that antilogues such as Gorgias’ *Helen* did not aim at persuading the audience but rather at producing pleasure and appreciation of the author’s intellectual skill.
- 76 Here it is important to note that the reader of the epilogue will already be aware that Crito declined to help extricate Socrates from the ἀπορία of the second protreptic, even when Socrates explicitly invited him to do (292a-292e). Socrates knows his Crito.
- 77 Section §1, 18-23.
- 78 I am here ignoring the complication that eristic may also imitate certain modes of argument that are proper to true statesmanship. I argued in n.4, 6 that Crito’s use of the term ‘φιλοσοφία’ in the epilogue suggests that dialectic is the ‘base’ activity which is transformed into genuine or false philosophy, depending on who is practicing it. In the next line I also ignore the complication that speechwriting (and ‘ignorant rhetoric’ generally) may also imitate certain modes of argument proper to true philosophy.
- 79 Socrates’ remarks in the *Gorgias* on the kind of oratory that is ‘fine’ (503a-b), when contrasted with his remarks on the true art of rhetoric in the (presumably later) *Phaedrus* (270b-272b), suggest that Plato may have gradually arrived at an assessment of Socratic dialectic as merely partaking of, as opposed to fully instantiating, a genuine art of persuasion. At *Gorg.* 521d6-e2 (T30 below) Socrates declares that his activity instantiates the true political craft (τῆ πολιτικῆ τέχνη), insofar as he aims at the best (which as 503a-b indicates is to aim at making the citizens as good as possible). But in the *Phaedrus* the requirements for instantiating the genuine art of persuasion are higher: the true rhetorician must have a theory of the soul, its different types and what affects it and how it is affected. If I have read

- the partaking argument correctly, the Socrates of the *Euthydemus* displays a talent for knowing what kind of person is affected by what kind of speech, as well as for discerning upon meeting someone what kind of character he has (*Phaed.* 272a). (Of course his gentle approach to Cleinias indicates the same.) He also evinces an awareness of the importance of the nature of the soul and its affections to his protreptic project. For he states it is necessary to ask whether wisdom can be taught or comes to men of its own accord (282c); and he thinks we have knowledge in virtue of the soul (295b-295e). But Socrates does not articulate a theory of the soul in the *Euthydemus*.
- 80 Transl. Reeve-Grube (1992).
- 81 Ibid. That Plato would apply the account of imitation here to Euthydemus and Dionysodorus seems clear from the biographical detail of the sophistic duo he includes at *Euthyd.* 271c-272b (cp. 273c-d): like the bald little tinker of *Rep.* of 495e who marries above his station, the brothers have leapt from the mechanical craft of teaching fighting in armor to the art of fighting in λόγοις (their notion of philosophy).
- 82 This result sheds light on Socrates' denial in the *Gorgias* and elsewhere that eristic and rhetoric are arts at all (465a). However I have continued to describe them as arts in this essay only to avoid burdensome paraphrase and qualification each time I refer to speechwriting and eristic.
- 83 The result that Socrates is portrayed in the *Euthydemus* as partially wise raises an interesting question regarding a potential limitation of Socratic dialectic that is hinted at in the dialogue. In the first protreptic episode Socrates argues that wisdom never makes a mistake (280a-b). If Socrates is partially wise because he only partakes of complete *dialectical* wisdom, then Plato must suppose that Socrates is capable of making mistakes in his practice of dialectic. But what are Socrates' dialectical limitations that would lead him to error? An answer emerges if we assume with Plato that dialectical wisdom consists in the ability both to refute an answerer's thesis involving the predication of kinds, and to defend such a thesis while avoiding being refuted. (Cp. *Tim.* 29b7-c4, 44a1-44c4; *Rep.* V 454a4-9; VI 486a1-6; VII 532a5-532b2; 533b1-3; 534b3-534c5; 537c6-7; *Soph.* 253b-e; *Phaed.* 276e5.) If that is so it is I suggest highly significant that Socrates is portrayed in the dialogue as mounting self-refutation arguments against the sophists' theses that false speaking and thinking and contradiction are impossible (287e-288a); for the self-refutation response does not explain *why* these theses are false or why the arguments for the denial of false speaking or contradiction (283e-284c, 285d-286b) are invalid. This suggests that Socrates does not know enough about the nature of not-being to explain what is wrong with the arguments themselves. It follows that he *could* be refuted in the dialectical arena on the topic of the nature of not-being. This explanation of Socrates' dialectical limitation will apply whether Plato himself knew how to explain the sophists' fallacies or whether he did not at the time he wrote the *Euthydemus*.
- 84 *Apology* 20d6-20e3; cp. 20c1-3. In the *Euthydemus* we are twice reminded of Socrates' profession of ignorance in the *Apology*: once in the Prologue (272e4), where his δαιμόνιον puts in an appearance; and again at 293b8, where Socrates declares that he knows many things, but only small ones (πολλά, μικρά γέ).
- 85 Here I am speaking only of the Socratic protreptic in the interior scenes of the dialogue. But Socrates' entire narrative of his encounter with the eristics, followed by his reaction to the speechwriter whom Crito encounters, is an exercise in the apotreptic branch or counterpart of Socratic protreptic. These scenes aim at turning Crito from the practitioners of Socrates' protreptic rivals, the eristics and the speechwriters.
- 86 Section §1, 13-14.
- 87 In support of this claim we may point to the separation of Socratic activity in *Sophist* (230a-d) from the activity of the Visitor and Theaetetus. The *Parmenides* would seem to constitute an even more extreme example of dialectic shorn of all the variegated aspects (including imitation of protreptic rivals) of Socratic dialectic.
- 88 This reading derives further support from two other allusions to imitation in the dialogue. At 288b7-8 Socrates pretends that the brothers are once again simply unwilling to give a serious demonstration of their wisdom, and are instead imitating the 'Egyptian sophist Proteus' (τὸν Πρωτέα μιμῆσθον τὸν Αἰγύπτιον σοφιστήν). While this is admittedly a joke, it shows that Socrates alludes to an urbane form of play which would involve the imitation by the wise of a sophist. In the second passage (303e7-8) Socrates remarks at the end of their encounter that the sophists' vaunted skill must be easily acquired since he has observed that Ctesippus was easily able to imitate (μιμῆσθαι) it. His description and the put down that accompanies it invites the audience to conceive of Ctesippus' performance as an urbane imitation of a moral or intellectual inferior.
- 89 Most recently by Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi (2014), 9-48. Friedländer (1964) articulates the classic position that Socrates uses eristic arguments for his own ends thus: 'Eristic is indistinguishable from dialectic in form, distinguishable only by beneficial intention', 181.