

1. Antithesis in the *Euthydemus*

Surprisingly, Socrates' envoi to Crito in the *Euthydemus* receives scant attention in scholarly literature.¹

ἀλλ' ἔασας χαίρειν τοὺς ἐπιτηδεύοντας φιλοσοφίαν, εἴτε χρηστοί εἰσιν εἴτε πονηροί, αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα βασανίσας καλῶς τε καὶ εὖ, ἐὰν μὲν σοι φαίνηται φαῦλον ὄν, πάντ' ἄνδρα ἀπότρεπε, μὴ μόνον τοὺς υἱεῖς· ἐὰν δὲ φαίνηται οἷον οἶμαι αὐτὸ ἐγὼ εἶναι, θαρρῶν δίωκε καὶ ἄσκει, τὸ λεγόμενον δὴ τοῦτο, αὐτός τε καὶ τὰ παιδιά.

. . . but dismiss those practicing philosophy, whether useful or whether good for nothing, but rather weigh well and truly the thing itself (*sc.* the science and practice of philosophy), and if it should seem to you a paltry thing, turn everyone away from it, not only your sons. But if it seems such as I consider it to be, boldly pursue and practice it, as the saying goes, you and your sons (*Euth.* 307b6–c4).²

Crito enjoys hearing philosophical discussions, as he says (*Euth.* 304c6), and seems to have no trouble following their arguments. But Crito chooses not to participate in Socrates' philosophical inquiries with Kleinias,³ although Socrates, punning on his name, urges him to do so.⁴ Now, at the end of their conversation, Socrates urges Crito to dismiss both useful and good for nothing philosophers. Aside the unsurprising dismissal of the bad λόγοι [speeches] of bad philosophers of the previous day, without explanation Socrates expresses

Gifford (1905) 74 and Hawtrey (1981) 196 correctly read αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα as referring to philosophy, but do not comment on the *problématique* of the preceding clause.

² Translations are my own. I follow the text of J. Burnet, *Platonis opera* (Oxford 1901–06).

³ Crito repeatedly distances himself from Socrates' and Kleinias' inquiries by the use of the second person plural: Πῶς δὴ τοῦτο ὑμῖν συνέβη; (291c3), Οὐκοῦν καλῶς ὑμῖν ἐδόκει, ὦ Σώκρατες; (291d4), Νῆ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰς πολλήν γε ἀπορίαν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀφίκεσθε (292e6–7). Crito's non-participation in the inquiries is noted by Canto (1987) 164.

⁴ *Euth.* 291d5: Σὺ κρινεῖς, ὦ Κρίτων.

dissatisfaction also with the λόγοι of good philosophers among whom he is presumably numbered. Possibly the good philosopher Socrates is now dismissive of some of his own λόγοι expounded the day before. Of course, a strict division between good and bad philosophers is misleading, for human fallibility makes it impossible that one or more philosophers *invariably* produce useful philosophical observations. That fact is exploited in the *Euthydemus*.

Few of Socrates' λόγοι have gone unexamined. A considerable literature addresses Socrates' odd equation at *Euth.* 279d8 of σοφία and εὐτυχία.⁵⁶ Kleinias is surprised to hear that wisdom is good happenstance (*pace* Gifford,⁷ εὐτυχία translates easily into English). The negative fact that εὐτυχία in Plato's other dialogues is never associated with σοφία is not considered pertinent.⁸ At *Phdr.* 245b7 and *Laws* 7.798b1, εὐτυχία is a gift of the gods. At *Men.* 72a6, the swarm of ἀρεταί [excellencies] that Meno produces in place of the single ἀρετή he was ordered to search for is sarcastically referred to as a stroke of good luck befalling Socrates and Meno in encountering so many ἀρεταί. At *Laws* 1.692a, fits of anger and bouts of fear befall souls owing to misfortune (δυστυχία). Εὐτυχία is named as the avoidance (ἀποφυγαί) of δυστυχία. In that good and bad happenstance in these passages are accidental externalities that befall individuals, and σοφία is not, Socrates' equation of those two things in the *Euthydemus* is a philosophical observation that one may suspect is a good for nothing λόγος.

Aside the merit or lack of it of his εὐτυχία-σοφία equation, Socrates expounds an indisputably good for nothing λόγος at *Euth.* 292b5–6: a listing of three conditions that may be good or bad terminates with "civic peace." In fact, civic peace, unlike wealth, freedom, quick-wittedness, bravery, and σωφροσύνη,⁹ but like justice and reverence for the gods, is a

⁵ Aristotle cites and rejects Socrates' εὐτυχία-σοφία equation at *Eth. Eud.* 8.1247b11–15.

⁶ Cf. Rider (2012) 210: "McPherran thinks that Socrates really means to defend the *identity* of wisdom and good fortune, while Reeve 1989 and Irwin 1995 claim that he means only to show that wisdom entails good fortune. I am following the latter interpretation."

⁷ Cf. Gifford (1905) 21–22.

⁸ Aristotle cites and rejects Socrates' εὐτυχία-σοφία equation at *Eth. Eud.* 8.1247b11–15.

⁹ Cf. *Men.* 87b2–90a1.

condition that *cannot* turn to harm in any conceivable situation. With one exception,¹⁰ commentators do not attempt to explain how civic peace may turn to harm.

In light of Socrates' good for nothing truth-claim about civic peace at *Euth.* 292b5–6 and his seemingly good for nothing εὐτυχία-σοφία equation, Plato's favored rhetoric of antithesis suggests looking for one or more instances of the contrary in the mouths of the brothers.

I read Dionysodorus' remark at *Euth.* 301a8–9 to be a useful philosophical observation. It occurs in the course of exchanges that commence at *Euth.* 300e3 where Socrates characterizes the brother's activities (πράγματα) as serious and fine (καλά). Seizing on a word, as is his wont, Dionysodorus asks Socrates how beautiful particulars relate to the transcendent entity Beauty: "Then are those καλὰ πράγματα (*sc.* that you mentioned) other than Beauty or the same as Beauty?" His use of the term τὸ καλόν indicates that Dionysodorus has somehow become conversant with Socrates' theory of transcendental entities.¹¹ Socrates replies that καλὰ πράγματα are other than Beauty itself. He goes on to say that there is yet something of Beauty present in them. Seizing now on the term παρεῖναι [to be present], Dionysodorus jokes that, on the same principle, were an ox present (oxen are castrated male bovids and docile¹²), a stubborn¹³ Socrates would be docile. The hitherto overlooked fact that oxen are docile provides

¹⁰ Cf. Hawtrey (1981) 136: "The tremendous emphasis in the *Republic* on political unity shows that Plato considered the lack of στάσις to be a great blessing: yet even this could be put to wrong use. (Hitler's Germany, which was effectively without στάσις, might be an informative modern parallel)." Socrates speaks of wealth, freedom and civic peace turning to harm for *individuals* enjoying those conditions; individual ethnically German civilians under Hitler enjoyed civic peace. The fact that civic peace was instrumentally useful to their malevolent ruler does not imply that the lack of στάσις that obtained for ethnically German civilians during twelve years (1933–45) turned to harm for those individuals.

¹¹ See Guthrie (1962–75) 4, 279, n. 1, for a survey of opinions on whether or not the theory of the Ideas is present in the *Euthydemus*. Cf. *Gorg.* 497e1-3: ἄθρει δέ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς οὐχὶ ἀγαθῶν παρουσίᾳ ἀγαθοὺς καλεῖς, ὥσπερ τοὺς καλοὺς οἷς ἂν κάλλος παρῆ;

¹² Cf. <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ox> (retrieved 2/1/2019)

¹³ Dionysodorus is irate at Socrates' stubborn resistance to the brothers' wisdom at *Euth.* 295b6, 295c10–11, 296a8, 297b7–8 and 297d3–4. Plato knew of that paedological syndrome. Cf. Socrates'

the key for deciphering the first part of Dionysodorus' joke. Further, that Socrates, being in the company of Dionysodorus, would be Dionysodorus, by virtue of the brother's wisdom rubbing off on him. Those conditions are realized right after Dionysodorus' next remark: "Then in what way in the case of a thing that is other, in company with another thing that is other, would the (*sc.* initial) thing that is other retain its otherness?" ([. . .] ἑτέρου ἑτέρῳ παραγενομένου τὸ ἕτερον ἕτερον ἂν εἴη;). The received interpretation of those words (Gifford, Sprague, Hawtrey, Mohr, Chance, Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi¹⁴) is that Dionysodorus is

anecdote at *Euth.* 395d3–5: "I was reminded of Konnos (*sc.* Socrates' cithera instructor) how he always gets angry with me when I don't yield to him and subsequently cares less about me." For Socrates' irascibility towards his student Meno's intransigence, cf. this author's "καλοὶ λόγοι in Plato's *Meno*," 2018, 1–16 https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3258673 mirrored at <http://www.charlesumlauf.com/kalos.htm>

¹⁴ Gifford (1905) 60 parsing *Euth.* 301a8–9 writes "For example, how must beauty be present to a stone that it may be beautiful"; Sprague (1965) 54–6, n. 95: "What he (*sc.* Dionysodorus) has done is to substitute the one expression, 'the different,' for *both* (original emphasis) the beautiful things (which are different from the beautiful) *and* the beautiful (which is different from the beautiful things). Thus his question in its full form should probably read 'but in what way can the beautiful things be different (from the beautiful) just because the beautiful is present with the beautiful things?' In Guthrie's opinion (1962–75) 4, 278, n. 2, Sprague's reading, reproduced above, "makes no sense." Cf. also Hawtrey (1981) 177: "It (*sc.* *Euth.* 301a8–9) may be glossed as follows: 'In what way can the different [A] (the particular thing) be different [B] (beautiful) just because the different [C] (the Form of the beautiful) is present with the different [A]?' This question is not as absurd as it sounds; properly understood it poses the problem of participation [. . .]"; Mohr (1984) 298: "The sentence (*sc.* *Euth.* 301a8–9) then means: 'Well, Socrates, you have claimed that the beautiful is different from the beautiful things (301 a3), but if the beautiful (the one thing, ἑτέρου) is exclusively immanent in the beautiful particulars (the other thing, ἑτέρῳ), how can you consistently maintain that the beautiful (τὸ ἕτερον) is in fact different (ἕτερον) from the other things you claim it is different from, namely, the many beautiful things. Socrates, your two (*sic*) descriptions of the relation of Form to particular contradict each other"; Chance (1992) 176: "In this way (*sc.* in propounding *Euth.* 307a8–9), then, Dionysodorus imagines that he has demolished Socrates' solution to the relationship between beauty itself and the many beautifuls"; Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi (2014) 99: "Dionysodorus (*sc.* in propounding *Euth.* 307a8–9) has essentially

continuing to address the relationship of beautiful things to Beauty. According to that reading, the missing term τὸ καλόν is to be inferred. I note that Wilamowitz,¹⁵ Friedländer¹⁶ and Guthrie,¹⁷ in their discussions of the passage in which it occurs, pass over Dionysodorus' remark at *Euth.* 301a8–9 in silence.

Despite some acquaintanceship with the theory of transcendental entities, Dionysodorus' focus is on phenomena in the real world. After his joke, Dionysodorus observes that the condition "to be present" would affect the specific relational characteristic "other (*sc.* than something)." The initial ἕτερον thing is a particular assigned the relational characteristic "other (*sc.* than something)." A second particular is present, also assigned the relational characteristic "other (*sc.* than something)." It does not matter whether the particulars are other than the same thing or not, for the focus is on the commonality of their otherness. In that both are other, they lose their otherness in one another's presence by being the same as one another. In like wise, Socrates in the *Charmides* addresses the operational paradoxes of a number of relational characteristics. At *Chrm.* 167c8–168d1, he questions whether the δυνάμεις [powers] of the senses and the affects may be applied to themselves. Socrates goes on to observe that it is logically impossible for relational characteristics such as μείζον, διπλάσιον, πλέον, βαρύτερον and πρῶτον¹⁸ to act on themselves, because in exercising their powers on themselves, they would be the contrary of themselves. Thus μείζον would be ἔλαττον than itself, διπλάσιον ἡμισυ of itself, etc. Dionysodorus' remark about the fugitive relational characteristic "other" seems no less a useful philosophical observation than the *dicta* cited above expounded by Socrates in the *Charmides*.

At this juncture, Plato realizes Dionysodorus' joke. To Dionysodorus' remark at *Euth.*

repeated his original question in a more perplexing way: how might a beautiful particular be different from the Beautiful by the presence of the Beautiful by the beautiful particular?"

¹⁵ Wilamowitz (1920) 2, 157–9.

¹⁶ Friedländer (1958) 2, 192–3.

¹⁷ Guthrie (1975) 4, 278–9.

¹⁸ I.e. "greater," "double," "more," "heavier," and "older." The operational paradox of the relational characteristic "double" is reprised by Aristotle in *Categoriae*, *Physica*, and *Sophistici Elenchi*.

301a8–9 Socrates makes no answer, for no cogent objection may be laid against a useful philosophical observation. Socrates abandons a stubborn resistance against the brothers' wisdom that so angered Dionysodorus for a docile acceptance of it. Adopting the brothers' style of posing ambiguous questions, he asks Dionysodorus "Then will you be at a loss regarding this?" Socrates parses that remark by recalling that "I was already attempting to imitate the brothers' wisdom inasmuch as I was then desirous of it."

Laughter and the risible are often represented in the *Euthydemus* and elsewhere. However, in Plato, only philosophers smile, typically upon hearing someone philosophize. At *Phd.* 86d6 and 102d2, Socrates smiles at Simmias philosophizing; at *Parm.* 130a6–7, Parmenides and Zeno smile at Socrates philosophizing; at *Tim.* 21c3, Critias the Elder was very pleased by praise of Solon and smiled (*sc.* at the thought of Solon philosophizing). Dionysodorus smiles broadly (πάνυ μειδιάσας τῷ προσώπῳ [*Euth.* 275e4]) as he whispers in Socrates' ear the prediction that his brother was about to overthrow an interlocuter's opinion.

Just as only a genuine missionary may convey faith to another and convert her by example, only a philosopher philosophizing may turn another to philosophy. A non-philosopher cannot convert another to philosophy for lack of example. For that reason, the non-philosopher Crito complains that he is unable to turn his son Critoboulos to philosophy (*Euth.* 301a2–3). Socrates urges the brothers to turn Kleinias to philosophy because he reckons them to be of the tribe of philosophers.

2. Antitheses spanning the *Euthydemus* and the *Lysis*

Antitheses grounded in speech, bad and good λόγοι expounded by good and bad philosophers in the *Euthydemus*, have been examined above. Plato also composed antitheses grounded in fictional events spanning two dialogues, the *Euthydemus* and the *Lysis*. I note these examples. In the *Euthydemus*, a pair of sophists interrogate one beautiful boy. In the *Lysis*, Socrates interrogates a pair of beautiful boys. In the *Euthydemus*, Kleinias makes a beeline for Socrates to sit down with and talk to. In the *Lysis*, Socrates must strategize a way to gain access to Lysis. In the *Euthydemus*, a καλός [beautiful] Ktesippos is represented as insistent on keeping in sight the boy he is courting who is indifferent to his attentions. In the *Lysis*,

Hippothales, rejected by Lysis, hides himself from the view of his ἐρώμενος [beloved] who cannot bear the sight of him. In the *Euthydemus*, Ktesippos is erotically unsatisfied. In the *Lysis*, Ktesippos is the ἐραστής [lover] of his beautiful young cousin Menexenus.¹⁹ In the *Euthydemus*, Ktesippos learns Euthydemean philosophy on the fly. In the *Lysis*, he has already taught his ἐρώμενος an eristic philosophy that permits Menexenus to exercise argumentive dominance over his friend Lysis. The *Euthydemus* commences with Socrates in stasis sitting alone in the dressing room of a gymnasium. The *Lysis* commences with Socrates in motion on the way outside the city wall from the Lyceum to the Academy gymnasium. In the *Euthydemus*, events impose themselves on Socrates. In the *Lysis*, Socrates is the instigator and agent of the dramatic action. At the end of the *Euthydemus*, Socrates anticipates enrolling in a school of two teachers. At the end of the *Lysis*, Socrates anticipates teaching a class of two students.

Unlike antitheses grounded in λόγοι, antitheses grounded in dramatic events possess no intrinsic philosophical significance because they are fortuitous events. Socrates at one time in stasis and Socrates at another time in motion does not constitute or provoke philosophical insight,²⁰ still less Ktesippos' forwardness and Hippothales' self-effacing behavior or the beeline Kleinias makes for Socrates and the social situation at Mikkos' gymnasium that requires Socrates to strategize a way to gain access to Lysis. On the other hand, noticing antitheses provides a philosophical training that would have contributed to the εὐτροφία [good nurture] of souls²¹ that characterized teaching at Plato's Academy. One may speculate that the *Euthydemus* and the *Lysis* were assigned reading and that Plato's students

¹⁹ That their liaison endured is established by the pair being named together in the listing of the friends of Socrates present at the prison in the *Phaedo*.

²⁰ Cf. *Gorg.* 468b: "Then it is in pursuing the good that we walk when we walk, considering it the better course, and the opposite standing when we stand for the sake of the same thing, the good: is it not so?" (τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἄρα διώκοντες καὶ βαδίζομεν ὅταν βαδίζωμεν, οἰόμενοι βέλτιον εἶναι, καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον ἔσταμεν ὅταν ἐστῶμεν, τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἕνεκα, τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ: ἢ οὐ;).

²¹ Cf. *Prt.* 351b1–2

subsequently sat viva voce examination including listing the antitheses grounded in dramatic events spanning the two dialogues.

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