

Plato's *Euthydemus*

Translated by David Horan

Persons in the Dialogue: Socrates, Crito, Cleinias, Euthydemus, Dionysodorus, Ctesippus

^{271A} **Crito:** Who was it Socrates, you were conversing with in the Lyceum yesterday? There was such a large crowd gathered around you that even though I wanted to listen I was not able to hear anything clearly when I got close. Yet when I popped my head up I got a look, and you seemed to be in conversation with a stranger. Who was he?

Socrates: Which of them are you asking about, Crito; for there were two men, not one?

Crito: I am referring to the man seated two places to your right; Axiochus' boy was between ^{271B} the two of you, and he seemed to me to have really grown up, and to be much the same age as our own Critobolus, who is a slender youth, while that boy looks older than his years and is noble and good in aspect.

Soc: Euthydemus is the man you are asking about, Crito, and the person seated on my left was his brother, Dionysodorus: he gets involved in the discussions too.

Crito: I don't know either of them, Socrates. They ^{271C} are, it seems, more sophists; a new kind. Where are they from, and what is their wisdom?

Soc: Although the family is, I believe, from this part of the world, from Chios, these men went to Thuri as colonists, but after being exiled from there they have, already, spent several years in these regions. As for your question about their wisdom; it is astounding, Crito. These two are almost totally wise; I never knew before, what total athletes are. Yes, they really are a pair of total combatants, not like the two total athletes, the two brothers from Acharnania. For those ^{271D} two are able to fight with the body alone, while these two are, firstly, physically formidable, and able to defeat anyone in combat; for they are both extremely wise in armour-fighting, and they are able to make anyone ^{272A} else wise too, anyone who pays them a fee. Secondly, they are supreme in courtroom combat, both in fighting a case, and in teaching someone else to deliver and to compose the kind of speeches appropriate for law courts. Now, previously they were formidable only in these areas, but of late, they have brought perfection to their skill as total athletes. They have now perfected an aspect of combat they had neglected previously, and so there isn't a single person who can stand up to them, so formidable have they become in verbal combat and in refuting whatever anyone says, ^{272B} whether it be true or false. So I am thinking of placing myself in their hands, Crito, since they also claim that they can, in a short time, make anyone else formidable in these same skills.

Crito: What's this, Socrates, aren't you afraid, at your age, that you may already be too old?

Soc: Not in the least, Crito, I have enough evidence, and encouragement, not to be afraid. For these two were almost old men when they started this wisdom which I am so keen on; the disputatious sort. Last year or the year before, they were not yet wise. ^{272C} No, there is only one thing I am afraid of; that I might draw criticism upon the two strangers, just as I did to the harpist, Connus the son of Metrobius, who still, even now, is teaching me to play the harp. Now when the boys, my fellow pupils, see this they laugh at me and they call Connus an "old man's teacher." So I'm afraid someone may criticise the two strangers in the very same way. And perhaps, fearing this very outcome, they may be unwilling to accept me. Yet, Crito, I have persuaded other old men ^{272D} to attend the class as fellow pupils of mine, and in this case too I shall attempt to persuade some others. Yes, why don't you attend along with

me? And we will bring your sons as bait; since they will want the boys as pupils, I know that they will educate us too.

Crito: There's no reason not to, Socrates, if that's what you think. But first explain to me what the wisdom of the two men is, so that I may know what we are going to learn.

Soc: You shall hear straightaway, as I can't claim that I didn't pay attention to them; no, I attended fully, and I remember, and I shall try to recount ^{272E} everything to you, from the beginning. Indeed by some divine providence, I happened to be sitting there, just where you saw me, alone in the dressing room, and I was already thinking of getting up to leave. But as soon as I stood up the familiar divine sign came. So I sat down again, and a little later ^{273A} these two men entered, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, and others too, pupils of theirs, I think there were a lot of them; and once they arrived they walked about in the covered corridor. They had barely completed two or three circuits when Cleinias came in, and what you say is true; he really has grown up. Behind him was a whole host of admirers, and among them was Ctesippus, a young man from the deme of Paenia, noble and good by nature, except for some arrogance born of youth. ^{273B} Now when Cleinias saw me from the entrance, seated on my own, he came straight over and sat down on my right, just as you say. On seeing him, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus first stood talking to one another, glancing over at us from time to time; yes, I paid close attention to them. Then one of them, Euthydemus, went and sat beside the young man, while the other one sat next to me, on my left, and the others sat where they could.

^{273C} Well I greeted them both warmly as it was some time since I had seen them, and then I said this to Cleinias: Cleinias, these two men, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, are wise, not in trivial matters but in matters of importance. For they know everything there is to know about warfare, whatever anyone who is to be a good general needs to know; the disposition and leadership of armies, and how to fight in armour. And they are also able to make him capable of coming to his own aid in court, should someone do him an injustice.

^{273D} Now when I said this they were contemptuous; so they laughed, exchanged glances, and Euthydemus said: we no longer take these matters seriously, Socrates; no, we treat them as diversions.

I was amazed and I said: your work must surely be exalted if such weighty concerns as these are mere diversions for you. By god, tell me what this exalted concern is.

Excellence, Socrates, he replied, is what we believe we are able to impart, better and more quickly than anyone else.

^{273E} By Zeus, I said, you are making quite a declaration. Where did you discover this god-send? I still thought of you both, as I said just now, as being formidable, for the most part, in armour fighting, so that's what I said about you. For when you visited our city previously, I remember you both proclaiming this. And now, if you truly possess this knowledge, please be gracious, for I am addressing you sincerely as if you were two gods, and I am begging you to pardon ^{274A} me for what I said earlier. But, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, make sure you are speaking the truth: for when you are making such an enormous proclamation, don't be surprised if it is disbelieved.

Well, Socrates, you may rest assured that this is how matters stand.

Then I account you far more blessed for this possession than the great king for his empire. But tell me this: are you thinking of giving a demonstration of this wisdom or what do you intend?

That's the very reason we are here, Socrates; to give a demonstration and to teach, ^{274B} if anyone wishes to learn.

But I do assure you that all those who do not possess this will be willing, beginning with myself, then Cleinias here, and besides us there is Ctesippus and these others, I said, pointing to Cleinias' admirers, who happened to be standing around us already. For Ctesippus, as it happened, had been sitting some distance from Cleinias, and as Euthydemus was conversing with me he leaned forward, and seemed to be blocking Ctesippus' view of Cleinias who was seated between ^{274C} us; and so, Ctesippus, wanting to have sight of his favourite, and also being keen to listen to us, was first to jump up and stand in front of us. And when the others saw him do so, they too stood around us and so did Cleinias' admirers and the companions of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus too. It was to these I pointed when I said to Euthydemus that they were all ready to learn. ^{274D} So Ctesippus agreed very eagerly, as did the others, and together they called upon both men to demonstrate the power of their wisdom.

So, I said: Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, you really should, by all means, gratify these people and give the demonstration; it is for my sake too. Now it is obviously no small task to give a comprehensive demonstration, but you should tell me whether it is only a man ^{274E} who is already convinced that he needs to learn from you two, that you are capable of making good, or can you also do this for the person who is not yet convinced because he does not really believe that the subject, excellence, can be learned, or whether you two are teachers thereof? Come now, is it the work of the same skill or of another one, to persuade the person with such a viewpoint, both that excellence can be taught, and that you two are the people from whom he would best learn it?

Yes, it is the work of the very same skill, Socrates, said Dionysodorus.

So, Dionysodorus, I replied, would you two be better than any man ^{275A} alive at turning him to philosophy and concern for excellence?

Well, we think so anyway, Socrates.

Then defer your demonstration of everything else, to another occasion, I said, and demonstrate just this; convince this young man here that he should practise philosophy and concern himself with excellence, and you will gratify me and all these people too. For the boy's situation is somewhat as follows: myself and everyone here are keen that he turn out as good as possible. He is the son of Axiochus, who is son of the elder Alcibiades, and first cousin ^{275B} of the present Alcibiades; his name is Cleinias. But he is young, so we are afraid for his sake, that as it is likely in the case of the young, someone may get there before us, turn his mind to some other pursuit, and bring him to ruin. So you two have arrived at just the right time, and if it's all the same to you, please test the lad out, and engage him in discourse in our presence.

Now once I had said almost exactly this, Euthydemus responded, in a manner both courageous and confident; that makes no difference, Socrates, ^{275C} he said, as long as the young man is willing to answer.

Well, I replied, he certainly is well accustomed to this, for these people here are constantly coming to him, asking him lots of questions and engaging him in discourse, and so he is quite courageous at answering.

Well, Crito, how may I satisfactorily expound what happened next? Indeed to be able to repeat so much boundless wisdom, in detail, is no small task, and so I should begin my exposition just as the poets ^{275D} do, by calling upon the Muses and upon Memory.

So, Euthydemus, as I recall, began somewhat as follows: Cleinias, who are the people who learn, are they the wise or the unlearned? And the young man, faced with such a significant question, blushed and looked at me in perplexity. And once I realised that he had been upset, I said: take heart, Cleinias, answer ^{275E} courageously, giving whatever answer seems right to you, for this may well confer an enormous benefit upon you.

At this Dionysodorus leaned forward and, with a big smile on his face, he whispered in my ear: in fact, Socrates, he said, I predict that whatever answer the young man gives, he will be refuted. And as he was saying this, Cleinias gave his answer, and so I had no opportunity to warn the lad to be careful ^{276A} and; he answered that those who learn are the wise.

Then Euthydemus said: there are people you refer to as teachers, aren't there?

He agreed.

Aren't the teachers, teachers of those who learn, just as the harpist and grammarian were, presumably, teachers of yourself and the other boys, and you were pupils?

He concurred.

And yet, when you were learning, you did not yet know the things you were learning, did you?

No, he said.

Well, were you wise ^{276B} when you did not know these things?

Of course not, he replied.

So, if you weren't wise, were you unlearned?

Very much so.

Then whilst you were learning what you did not know, you were learning whilst being unlearned.

The young man nodded his head.

Then it is the unlearned who learn, Cleinias, and not, as you believe, the wise.

Now once he had said all this, followers, ^{276C} those accompanying Dionysodorus and Euthydemus laughed and cheered like a chorus at a signal from their teacher. And before the youth had well and truly recovered, Dionysodorus took over. What about this, Cleinias, he said, whenever the grammarian gave dictation to you, which boys learned the dictation, the wise or the unlearned?

The wise, replied Cleinias.

So it is the wise who learn, not the unlearned, and you didn't answer Euthydemus properly just now.

^{276D} With this, the admirers of the two men laughed and cheered loudly in delight at their wisdom, while the rest of us were stunned and fell silent. And Euthydemus, realising that we were stunned, and in order to astound us even more, did not let the young man off: instead he questioned him, and like one of those good dancers, he gave a double twist to his questions on the same topic and asked; now do those who learn, learn what they know or what they do not know?

And Dionysodorus gave me another little whisper: and ^{276E} this, Socrates, he said, will be another one, similar to the previous one.

By Zeus, said I, the previous question definitely turned out well for you too.

All the questions we ask are like this, Socrates, he replied, they allow no escape.

I think that's why you are so highly regarded by your pupils, I said.

With that Cleinias replied to Euthydemus that those who learn, would learn what they do not know, and he subjected him to the ^{277A}same series of questions as before.

What about this, he said, you do know your letters, don't you?

Yes, he replied.

All of them?

He agreed.

Now when anyone dictates anything at all, doesn't he dictate letters?

He agreed.

Doesn't he dictate something you know, if in fact you know them all?

He also agreed with this.

Well then, he said, in that case, are you learning whatever someone dictates, or is it the person who does not know letters who learns?

No, he replied, I am learning.

Therefore you are learning ^{277B} what you know, he said, if in fact you know all the letters.

He agreed.

So you did not answer correctly, he said.

Euthydemus had barely said all this when Dionysodorus took up the argument again as though it were a ball, aimed it at the young man, and said: Euthydemus is deceiving you, Cleinias. Yes, tell me, isn't learning the acquisition of knowledge of whatever one is learning?

Cleinias agreed.

And what is knowing, he asked, except having knowledge already?

He concurred.

So is "not knowing", not yet ^{277C} having knowledge?

He agreed with him.

Now who are those who acquire anything whatsoever, those who already have it or those who do not have it?

Those who do not.

Haven't you agreed that those who do not know are included among those who do not have?

He nodded.

So those who learn are included among those who acquire, not among those who have.

He said, yes.

Then, said he, it is those who do not know, who learn, Cleinias, and not those who know.

^{277D} Well, Euthydemus was rushing in to give the lad a fall for the third time, when I realised the young man was going under. Wanting to give him some respite in case he might turn coward on us, I said, by way of encouragement: Cleinias, do not be surprised if these arguments appear unfamiliar to you. Indeed you are probably unaware of what the two strangers are doing to you. They are doing the same thing as those who are involved in a Corybantic initiation do, whenever they conduct the enthronement of someone they are about to initiate. If you have been initiated, you know that there is some dancing and merriment there too. And these two ^{277E} are now really just dancing around you and having fun with these dance moves; after this they will initiate you. So presume for the moment that you are hearing the preliminaries to the sacred mysteries of the wise. For as Prodicus says, it is first necessary to learn the correctness of words. This is what the two strangers are demonstrating to you; that you did not know that although people use the word “learning” in a situation where someone initially has no knowledge of some matter at all, ^{278A} but subsequently acquires some knowledge of it, they also use the same word whenever someone who already has the knowledge investigates this same matter, in word or in deed, by means of this knowledge; although they refer to this as understanding more so than learning, they do, on occasion, call it learning. And these men are demonstrating that this fact has escaped your notice; that the same word is applied to people in opposite circumstances; to those who know and to those who do not know. The content of their second question was much the same as this, when they asked ^{278B} you whether people learn what they know or what they don’t know.

Well these are the childish aspects of their instructions, and that’s why I say they are playing with you. And I call this child’s play, because even if someone were to learn many or indeed all such devices as these, although he would be no more knowledgeable as to how the matters stand, he would still be able to play games with people, because of differences between the words; tripping people up and upending them, just like those who pull away stools from under those who are about to sit down, and laugh ^{278C} with delight when they see someone sprawling on his back.

So you should regard all of this as being child’s play on their part, after which they will of course demonstrate their serious work to you. Indeed they said they would demonstrate their wisdom in exhortation, but it now seems to me they thought it necessary to play games with you first. So let that be the end of your game playing, ^{278D} Dionysodorus and Euthydemus; that is probably enough. And so, after this you should give a demonstration in which you exhort the youth to devote himself to wisdom and excellence.

But first I shall demonstrate to you both how I understand this, and the sort of thing I am eager to hear. Now if you think I’m doing this without expertise in a comical manner, do not laugh at me; for it is only my eagerness to hear your wisdom that makes me so bold as to extemporise, impromptu, in front of you two. ^{278E} So you yourselves, and your disciples, should show restraint, and listen without laughing, and you, son of Axiochus, should answer me.

Does every one of us wish to do well? Or is this question one of those that will provoke the laughter I was afraid of a moment ago? Yes, it is surely ridiculous even to ask such questions, for what man is there who does not wish to do well?

There is no one who doesn't want that, ^{279A} said Cleinias.

So be it, said I. The next question is; since we wish to do well, how may we do well? Would it be by possessing much that is good? Or is this question even more simple minded than the other one, for I presume it is obvious that this too is the case?

He concurred.

Come then, all things considered, what sort of things are good for us? Or is this not a difficult question either? It does not really take some highly august person to provide an answer. For anyone would tell us that being wealthy is good; is this so?

Very much so, he replied.

Being healthy too and being handsome ^{279B} and endowed, well and truly, with the other bodily features?

He thought so too.

Then again, noble birth, power and esteem in your own city are obviously good.

He agreed.

Well, said I, what goods are still left? What about being sound minded and just and courageous? By Zeus, Cleinias, what do you think? If we were to rank them as good, would we be ranking them correctly or should we rank them as not good? Indeed someone might well dispute the matter with us; how does it seem to you?

They are good, said Cleinias.

^{279C} So be it, said I. And where in the troop shall we situate wisdom? With the good? What do you say?

With the good.

Take care now lest we leave out anything good that is worth mentioning.

I can't think of anything, said Cleinias.

But I thought about it again, and I said, yes, by Zeus, we are in danger of omitting the most important good of all.

What is it? said he.

Good fortune, Cleinias, which according to everyone, even the most base, is the most important good of all.

That's true, said he.

But I changed my mind again, and said, you and I are on the point of becoming ridiculous ^{279D} in the eyes of our visitors, dear son of Axiochus.

Why is that? he asked.

Because having included good fortune in our previous rankings, we were talking about the same thing all over again just a moment ago.

What do you mean by this?

Surely it is ridiculous to propose what has been in front of us for some time, and speak of the same thing twice.

In what sense? he asked.

Surely wisdom is good fortune, I said; yes, a child would realise this.

But he is still so young and simple-minded, that he was astonished. And when I realised that he was astonished, I said, Cleinias, don't you know ^{279E} that when it comes to doing well at flute-music, the flute players are the most fortunate?

He concurred.

And when it comes to the reading and writing of letters, said I, won't it be the writing teachers?

Entirely so.

What about this? Faced with the perils of the sea, surely you don't believe, on the whole, that anyone is more fortunate than a wise pilot?

Of course not.

What if you were on a military campaign, with whom would you prefer to share the peril and the fortune; ^{280A} with a wise general or with an ignorant one?

With a wise one.

What if you were ill; would you prefer to face the danger in the company of a wise doctor or an ignorant one?

A wise one.

And is this because you think you would proceed with more good fortune in the company of the wise than you would in the company of the ignorant?

He concurred.

So, in every case, wisdom brings good fortune to people, for wisdom would not ever fall into error; rather she must act aright and succeed, or else no longer be wisdom.

^{280B} In the end we agreed, I know not how, that the matter may be summarised as follows: once wisdom is present, he to whom it is present needs no additional good fortune. Once we had agreed this, I questioned him once again on the status of what we had agreed previously.

Now we agreed, said I, that if much good was present to us we would be happy, and would do well.

He concurred.

Now would we be happy because of whatever good is present, if it were of no benefit to us, or if it benefitted us?

If it benefitted us, he said. ^{280C}

And would something be beneficial, if we merely had it and did not use it? For instance, if we had a lot of food but did not eat, or plenty to drink but did not drink, would we be benefitted?

Of course not, he replied.

And what if each of the craftsmen had all the equipment appropriate to his own work but did not make use of it, would they do well because of the acquisition, because everything the craftsman needed to acquire had been acquired? For instance, if a carpenter were to be provided with all the tools and enough wood but did not engage in carpentry, would he be benefitted by ^{280D} what he had acquired?

Not at all, he said.

What if someone were to acquire wealth and all the goods we mentioned just now, but made no use of them, would he be happy due to the acquisition of these goods?

Of course not, Socrates.

So, said I, it seems that someone who is going to be happy must not merely acquire such goods as these, but must also make use of them; or else no benefit arises from their acquisition.

That's true.

Well, ^{280E} Cleinias, is this sufficient now to make someone happy; to have acquired the goods and be making use of them?

I think so.

If he uses them rightly or if he does not?

If he uses them rightly.

Well said, I retorted. Yes, I presume it makes a big difference whether someone uses anything incorrectly or leaves it alone. The former situation is bad, while the latter is neither good nor bad. ^{281A} Isn't this what we maintain?

He concurred.

What then? In working and using the wood, is there anything else that brings about correct usage except knowledge of carpentry?

Of course not, he replied.

Then again, in working with what is provided
, presumably knowledge is what brings about the correctness.

He concurred.

Now, said I, in the usage of the goods we first mentioned, wealth, health and beauty, was it knowledge ^{281B} that guided the right usage of everything like this, and corrected the activity, or was it something else?

It was knowledge, said he.

So in the case of any acquisition or any activity, knowledge not only provides people with good fortune but also it ensures they do well.

He agreed.

Well, by heaven, said I, is there any benefit in the other acquisitions in the absence of understanding and wisdom? And would a person derive more benefit if he acquired a lot and did a lot without possessing intelligence, or if he acquired little and did little, while possessing intelligence?¹ Think about it; if he did less wouldn't he make less ^{281C} errors, and in making less errors, wouldn't he do less badly, and in doing less badly, wouldn't he be less wretched?

Entirely so, he replied.

Now who is inclined to do less, someone rich or someone poor?

Someone poor, he said.

Someone weak or someone strong?

Someone weak.

Someone who is respected or someone who is not?

Someone who is not.

Would someone who is courageous and sound minded do less, or would a coward do less?

A coward.

And a lazy person rather than an active person?

He agreed.

And someone slow rather than someone fast, ^{281D} and someone dull of sight and hearing, rather than someone keen?

We agreed with one another on all such examples. And then I said: to sum up, Cleinias, in the case of everything we initially declared to be good, the argument, apparently, is not about how they are naturally good, just by themselves; no, it seems that the situation is as follows: if ignorance rules, then they are more bad than their opposites, to the extent that they are more able to serve their bad ruler, but if understanding and wisdom rule, they are more good, yet just by themselves, ^{281E} neither of them² is of any value.

Apparently, said he, the situation seems to be just as you describe it.

So what conclusions may we draw from what has been said? Is it simply that, none of the others are either good or bad, and of these two, wisdom is good and ignorance is bad?

He agreed.

^{282A} Well, said I, let's consider what's left. Since we are all eager to be happy, and since it turns out that we become like this through using things, and using them correctly, and since knowledge provides the correctness and good fortune; then every man should, it seems, contrive by every possible means, to become as wise as possible. Isn't this so?

Yes, he replied.

¹ Following the MSS here.

² Neither the thing nor its opposite, e.g. slow or fast; under ignorance being fast is worse (more bad) than being slow. Under wisdom being fast is better (more good) than being slow.

And surely if someone believes he should acquire this, rather than any amount of money, from his father, from his guardians ^{282B} too, and from his other friends, and from those citizens or strangers who claim to be his lovers, begging and imploring them to grant him wisdom is no disgrace, Cleinias, nor is there cause for indignation in being a servant or slave to a lover or any person for the sake of this, in being willing to render any noble services out of his eagerness to become wise; or do you think otherwise? I said.

I really think you have spoken ^{282C} rather well, said he.

Yes, Cleinias, said I, if wisdom can be taught and does not come to people of its own accord. For this is a question we have not yet considered and agreed upon.

Well, Socrates, he replied, I think it can be taught.

I was delighted, and I said: best of men, it is good that you say so, and you have done well, by saving me from a lengthy consideration of this very question; whether wisdom can or cannot be taught. So now, since you think, both that it can be taught, and that it is the only thing there is that makes a person ^{282D} happy and fortunate, would you say anything else is needed, apart from the practice of philosophy, and is this what you yourself intend to do?

Yes, certainly, Socrates, he replied, to the best of my ability.

I was pleased to hear this, and I said: Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, this is my own example, perhaps amateurish, laborious and a bit too long, of what I want an exhortatory argument to be like. Now one of you, whoever wishes, should give a demonstration of the same thing, done skilfully. But if you don't want to do that, ^{282E} take up where I left off and demonstrate the next issue to the boy: whether he should acquire all knowledge or whether there is some single knowledge which he should obtain in order to be happy and be a good man too, and what that knowledge is. For as I said at the outset, it is of great importance to us that this youth become wise and good.

^{283A} Now, Crito, that is what I said, and I paid very close attention to what was to happen next, and I was taking note of the manner in which they would handle the argument, and where they might begin the process of encouraging the youth to practise wisdom and excellence. Dionysodorus, the elder of the two, was first to set about the argument and we all looked at him expecting, there and then, to hear some wondrous discourse, and that ^{283B} is exactly what happened to us. Yes, Crito, the man commenced a somewhat wondrous speech which is worth your hearing, as it was such an encouragement towards excellence.

Tell me, Socrates, said he, and you others who say you want this youth to become wise; are you joking when you say this or are you serious, and do you truly want this?

It occurred to me that they must have thought we were joking earlier on, when we asked them to engage the young man in discourse, and that was why they had fun, and were not serious, so with this ^{283C} in mind, I emphasised, even more, that we were extremely serious.

And Dionysodorus said, well, think about this, Socrates, in case you end up denying what you are now saying.

I have thought about it, said I, and I shall never end up denying it.

Well then, said he, are you saying that you want him to become wise?

Yes, we certainly are.

And, at the moment, is Cleinias wise or not?

He is not boastful, said I, and he does not yet make this claim.

But, said he, ^{283D} you want him to become wise, and not be ignorant?

We agreed.

So you want him to become what he is not, and no longer be what he now is.

When I heard this I was confused, and he seized upon my confused state and said, since you want him no longer to be what he now is, it seems you just want him to be dead. Yes, friends and lovers like these would be worth a lot, friends who would do anything to destroy their favourite.

^{283E} When Ctesippus heard this he was angry on behalf of his favourite and said: stranger from Thuri, he said, if it were not such a crude expression, I would say “be it on your head” for presuming to hold such a false notion of myself and the others, and one which, in my view, it is most unholy to express; that I would like this fellow to be utterly destroyed.

What’s this, Ctesippus, said Euthydemus, do you think it is possible to speak falsely?

Yes, by Zeus, he replied, I would be mad not to.

When one is speaking of the matter under discussion or when one is not?

^{284A} When speaking, he said.

Well if he speaks of it, he does not speak of anything else there is, except that of which he is speaking, does he?

Of course, replied Ctesippus.

And what he speaks of is one of the things that are; distinct from the others.

Entirely so.

Doesn’t he who speaks of this, speak of what is?

Yes.

But whoever is speaking of what is, and of things that are, is speaking the truth. So if Dionysodorus is actually speaking of things that are, he is speaking the truth and is saying nothing false about you.

^{284B} Yes, he said, but he who says such things, Euthydemus, is not speaking things that are.

And Euthydemus said: things that are not, simply do not exist, do they?

They do not exist.

And there is simply nowhere that things that are not, are?

Nowhere.

Is it possible for someone to do anything in relation to these things that are not, so that anyone at all might make these things that are not anywhere?

No, I don’t think so, said Ctesippus.

Well now, whenever the orators speak in the assembly, are they doing nothing?

They are doing something, he said.

And if they are actually ^{284C} doing, are they also making?

Yes.

So speaking is doing and making?

He agreed.

So no one speaks of things that are not, he said, for he would then be making something, and you have agreed that no one is able to make what is not. And so, based on your account, no one speaks falsely, and since Dionysodorus is speaking, he is speaking the truth and speaking of things that are.

Yes, by Zeus, Euthydemus, said Ctesippus, in a way he is speaking of things that are, but not as they actually are.

What do you mean, Ctesippus, said Dionysodorus? Are there some ^{284D} people who speak of things as they are?

There are indeed, he replied; the noble and good, and those who speak the truth.

What about this? said he; what's good is well disposed and what's bad, badly so; is this the case?

He concurred.

And you agree that the noble and good people speak of things as they are.

I agree.

So good people speak badly of anything bad, Ctesippus, if they actually speak of it as it is?

Yes, by Zeus, said he, very much so, especially when speaking of bad people, so I advise you, take care not to be included among their number, lest ^{284E} the good people speak badly of you. For, mark my words, the good people speak badly of those who are bad.

And do they speak greatly of those who are great, and warmly of those who are warm? said Euthydemus.

Certainly, said Ctesippus: in any case, they speak coldly of those who are cold, and declare that they converse in a cold manner.

Ctesippus, you are being abusive, said Dionysodorus, abusive.

By Zeus, Dionysodorus, I am not, since I like you, said he, yet I am warning you, as a friend; and I am trying to persuade you, never, in my presence, to state, in this crude manner, that I want ^{285A} people whom I hold in high regard to be utterly destroyed.

Now since I thought they were being aggressive towards one another, I made light of it with Ctesippus and said; Ctesippus, if they are prepared to be generous, I think we should accept anything the strangers say, and not quarrel over a word. For, if they know how to destroy people in such a way as to make worthy and intelligent folk out of those who are degenerate and stupid, and if they have either discovered this for themselves, or learned, from someone else, ^{285B} a kind of ruin and destruction whereby, having done away with someone degenerate, they bring him forth again, a worthy person; yes, if they know this, as they obviously do, since they claimed that their newly discovered skill lies in making good people out of bad ones, then let us make this concession to them: let them destroy the lad for us, and make him

intelligent, and all the rest of us too. But if you younger folk ^{285C} are afraid, then let the danger fall upon me, as if they were practising on some slave. Since I am quite old, I am willing to run the risk and give myself over to Dionysodorus here, as if he were Medea of Colchis. Let him destroy me and if he wants to, let him boil me, or do whatever he wants; just let him bring me forth, a worthy man.

And Ctessipus said, I too am ready, Socrates, to offer myself to the strangers, and if they wish, they may flog me, even more than they are flogging me now, provided my hide ends up, not as a wine-skin, ^{285D} like Marsyas', but as excellence. And yet, Dionysodorus here believes I am angry with him, but I am not angry, I am just contradicting what he said to me, because I thought it improper. But, noble Dionysodorus, do not refer to contradiction as abuse, abuse is something different.

And Dionysodorus replied, you are making these points as if there is such thing as contradiction.

^{285E} Of course I am, he replied, emphatically so; do you think there is not?

Well, at any rate, he said, you could not prove that you have ever heard one person contradicting another.

Is that true? he asked. But I am proving it; I am hearing myself contradicting Dionysodorus right now.

Would you undertake an argument for this?³

Of course, said he.

What about this? He said. Are there descriptions of each of the things that are?

Certainly.

Giving an account of each, as it is, or as it is not?

^{286A} As it is.

Indeed Ctessippus, he said, if you remember we proved earlier that no one speaks of something as it is not, for it turned out that no one speaks of what is not.

What of it? said Ctessippus. Are you and I engaging in contradiction any less?

Well, said he, would we be engaging in contradiction if we were both giving an account of the same thing? Or surely, in that case, we would be saying the same things?

He agreed.

But, said he, whenever neither of us gives ^{286B} an account of the thing, would we then be engaging in contradiction? Or in that case would neither of us be making mention of the thing at all?

He agreed with this too.

But whenever I give an account of the thing, and you deliver another account of something else, are we engaging in contradiction then? Or am I speaking of the thing, while you are not speaking of it at all? But how could someone who does not speak of it contradict someone who does?

³ This phrase has been translated as "render an account", *Protagoras* 338d5.

Ctesippus fell silent, while I was amazed at the argument and asked: Dionysodorus, what do you mean? In fact ^{286C} I have heard this argument from lots of people and, as often as I hear it, I am always amazed; indeed Protagoras' associates make much use of it, as did their predecessors. But to me it always seems to be something amazing, that overturns the other arguments, and itself too, yet I think I shall best learn the truth of it from you. It simply says that there is no false speaking; that's the point of the argument, isn't it? So a speaker must either be speaking the truth or else not be speaking at all?

He concurred.

^{286D} Now although there is no false speaking, is there false thinking, nevertheless?

There is no false thinking either, he replied.

So, said I, there is no false opinion, at all.

There is not, he replied.

So there is no ignorance either, or any ignorant people; or isn't this what ignorance would be, if there was any; falsifying things?

Entirely so, he replied.

But this does not exist, said I.

It does not, said he.

Dionysodorus, are you presenting this argument for the sake of discussion, in order to say something unusual, or do you think, in truth, that there is no such thing as an ignorant person?

^{286E} You should try to refute me, he said.

And based upon your argument, is there refutation when no one speaks falsely?

There is not, said Euthydemus.

Then Dionysodorus did not encourage me to refute him just now? said I.

Indeed, how could someone encourage what is not? Could you encourage that?

I say this, said I, because I do not fully understand these wise formulations and clever devices but I do have a rough sense of them. So I shall, perhaps, ask a rather crude question, but forgive me. You see, ^{287A} if it is indeed impossible either to speak falsely or to think falsely or to be ignorant, is it simply impossible for someone to be in error whenever he does anything? For when he acts it is impossible for him to err in that action: isn't this what you are saying?

Entirely so, said he.

Now here is my crude question: if indeed we do not err either when acting, speaking or thinking then, by Zeus, if this is how matters stand, what have the two of you come here to teach? Or did you not claim earlier, that you are the best people, to impart ^{287B} excellence to someone who wishes to learn it?

Dionysodorus interrupted saying; are you such an old Cronus, Socrates, that you are now reminding me of what I first said, and if I said something last year, would you remind me about it now, and yet, be unable to deal with what is being said at the moment?

The fact is, said I, these are extremely challenging statements, as you would expect when they are spoken by wise men, and the last thing you said is an absolute challenge. Yes, Dionysodorus, what do you mean by “I am unable to deal with ...”? Or does it obviously mean that I am unable ^{287C} to refute the argument? Tell me then, what other sense this phrase, “I am unable to deal with the arguments”, has?

But at any rate, said he, it is not a great challenge to deal with what you said; now answer.

Before you respond to me, Dionysodorus? I asked.

Won't you answer? he replied.

Is it right to do so?

Quite right, said he.

According to what argument? I asked. Or is it obviously on the basis that you are someone totally wise in relation to discourses, who has now arrived among us, and you know when ^{287D} one should give an answer and when one should not? And will you not give an answer at all now, since you realise that you need not?

You are blabbering, said he, and neglecting to give an answer. But, good man, you should heed me and give an answer, since you accept that I am wise.

Well then I should heed you, and it seems that I need to, for you are in control; just ask.

Very well, do things that have sense, have soul, or do soulless things have sense too?

Only those who have soul.

Do you know any phrase that has soul? he asked.

By Zeus, I do not.

^{287E} Then why did you just ask what sense this phrase of mine has?

I simply made a mistake due to my stupidity, said I. Or else I made no mistake and I was right to say that phrases have sense. Are you saying that I made a mistake or not? For, if I did not make a mistake, you will not refute me, in spite of your wisdom, nor are you able to deal with the argument. And if I did make a mistake, then you are not right when you say ^{288A} that it is impossible to be mistaken. And I am not referring to statements you made last year. No, it seems, said I, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, that this argument remains in the same predicament, and still has the old problem; it falls over whilst overthrowing others. And this skill of yours has not yet found out how to prevent this from happening, in spite of its amazing precision with arguments.

And Ctesippus said, men of Thurii ^{288B} or Chios, or wherever you are from, and however you like to be named, your utterances are amazing, so unconcerned are you about talking nonsense.

I was afraid the exchange might get abusive, so appeasing Ctesippus once more, I said; Ctesippus, I am saying to you the very same things I said to Cleinias just now; you do not realise how wonderful the wisdom of these strangers is. But they are unwilling to give us a serious demonstration; instead they imitate the Egyptian sophist, Proteus, and they are beguiling us. So we should imitate Menelaus ^{288C} and not let these two men go until they reveal what they are serious about. Indeed I believe something extremely beautiful in them will manifest once they begin to be serious. So we should beg, implore, and pray to them to

reveal it. Now I think I myself should give guidance, once again, as to the sort of persons I pray they will show themselves to be. Indeed I shall try, as best I can, to continue the previous ^{288D} argument from where I left it earlier, so that I may somehow draw them out; and being merciful, and sympathetic towards my efforts and my seriousness, they may also be serious themselves.

But Cleinias, said I, you should remind me where we left off; as I recall, it was around the stage where we agreed, in the end, that one should practise philosophy; is this so?

Yes, he replied.

And philosophy is the acquisition of knowledge; isn't this the case? I asked.

Yes, said he.

Now what knowledge would we acquire if we were to acquire it ^{288E} in the right way? Or is this quite straightforward; is it the knowledge that will benefit us?

Entirely so, he replied.

Now would it be of any benefit to us if, as we went about, we knew how to recognise, where most gold is buried beneath the earth?

Probably, he replied.

But we refuted this suggestion earlier, said I, because we would be no better off even if all the earth's gold were to be ours, without any trouble or any need to dig. And so, even if we knew ^{289A} how to turn stones into gold, the knowledge would be of no value. For if we did not also know how to use the gold, there turned out to be no benefit in it; don't you remember? I asked.

Entirely so, he replied, I remember.

Nor, it seems, does benefit come from any other knowledge, neither from money-making, nor medicine, nor from any of the others at all, that know how to produce something without knowing how to use what they make; isn't this so?

He agreed.

Even if there is some knowledge ^{289B} of how to make people immortal, without knowing how to use the immortality, it seems there is no benefit in this knowledge either, if we are to conclude anything from what we accepted previously.

We agreed on all this.

So what is needed is knowledge of this kind, my handsome boy, said I: one in which the production, and knowing how to use what is produced, reside together.

Apparently, said he.

Then it seems that we really do not need to be ^{289C} lyre-makers, or to attain any knowledge of that sort. For in that case, the productive skill is one thing, while the user's skill is another; they are distinct, although they are concerned with the same thing. For lyre making and lyre playing differ enormously from one another. Isn't this so?

He concurred.

Nor, of course, is flute-making the knowledge we need, since it is another knowledge of this kind.

He agreed.

Well, by the gods, said I, what if we were to learn the speech-writer's skill; is this the one we need to acquire if we are to be blessed?

I don't think so, Cleinias objected.

^{289D} On what evidence? said I.

I notice, said he, that some speech-writers do not know how to deliver their own speeches, the ones they have composed, just as the lyre-makers are unable to play the lyres. And in this case too, others are able to deliver speeches that the speech-makers have composed, yet the speech-makers themselves are unable to do so.

I think that you are giving sufficient evidence, said I, that the skill of the speech-makers is not the one whose acquisition would result in blessedness. And yet, I thought that the very knowledge ^{289E} we have been seeking all along was somehow going to make an appearance at this stage. The fact is that whenever I associate with these men who compose speeches, Cleinias, they seem extremely wise to me, and this skill of theirs seems superhuman and sublime. And indeed, this is no surprise, for it is a portion of the enchanters' skill, but a little inferior ^{290A} thereto. For the skill of the enchanters consists in charming snakes, spiders and scorpions, wild creatures in general, and diseases too, while the speech-makers' skill involves charming and persuading jurors, assembly members, and large gatherings in general, or do you think otherwise? I asked.

No, he replied, the situation, as I see it, is just as you are describing it.

So where may we turn now? I asked. To what sort of skill?

I do not have a suggestion, he replied.

Well, said I, I think I have found it.

What is it? asked Cleinias.

^{290B} It seems to me that the skill of the general, more than any other, is the one whose acquisition would result in blessedness.

It seems not so to me.

Why not? I asked.

This is, in a sense, a skill in hunting down human beings.

Well, what of it? I asked.

Nothing in the actual skill of hunting goes any further than hunting down and subduing; and whenever hunters subdue whatever they are hunting, they are not able to make use of it: instead the hunters and the anglers hand it over to the cooks. The same goes for geometers, ^{290C} astronomers and calculators, since they too are hunters. For in each of these cases they do not produce their own diagrams, instead they make discoveries. And since they themselves do not know how to make use of them, but only how to hunt them down, they hand over, of course, to the dialecticians to make use of the discoveries; those among them, at any rate, who are not utterly stupid.

So be it, my handsome and wise Cleinias, said I; is this how matters stand?

Yes, certainly, said he. And the same ^{290D} goes for the generals; whenever they capture some city or army, they hand it over to the statesmen, since they themselves do not know how to use what they have hunted down, just as I believe quail-hunters hand the birds over to the quail-keepers. So, he continued, if we need a particular skill which also knows how to make use of that which it acquires, either through making or hunting down, the sort of skill that will also make us blessed, then we must search for something else, said he, rather than the skill of the general.

Crito: ^{290E} What are you saying, Socrates, did that young man make a pronouncement of that sort?

Soc: Don't you believe it, Crito?

Crito: By Zeus, I don't. In fact, if he said all that, I think he needs neither Euthydemus nor anyone else to educate him.

Soc: Well then, by heaven, perhaps it was Ctesippus who said all this and I am being forgetful?

Crito: ^{291A} Is Ctesippus like that?

Soc: In any case, I know quite well that it was neither Euthydemus nor Dionysodorus who said all this; but, blessed Crito, was it perhaps one of the superior beings in the vicinity who made the pronouncement? For I know quite well that I did hear all this.

Crito: Yes, by Zeus, Socrates, I think it was indeed one of the superior beings, very much so. But, after that, did you continue searching for some sort of skill? Did you or did you not find the skill you were searching for?

Soc: ^{291B} Did we find it? Heavens no, but we were quite comical fellows, just like children chasing after larks, constantly believing we were just on the point of capturing each of the kinds of knowledge, while they kept on escaping us. So why would I tell you all the details? Yet once we had arrived at the art of kingship, and we were considering it closely, in case it might be the one that provides blessedness and brings it about, we ended up, at that stage, in a sort of labyrinth: thinking we were already at the end, having turned another corner, we appeared, to be back at the beginning of the search, ^{291C} once more, and just as badly off as we were at the outset.

Crito: How did that happen to you, Socrates?

Soc: I'll tell you. The fact is, we had presumed that the skill of statesmanship and kingship were the same.

Crito: Well, what then?

Soc: The skill of generalship, and the others, hand over to this skill to take charge of the works of which they themselves are the artificers, as it alone knows how to make use of them. So it seemed evident to us that this was what we were looking for, and was the cause of right action in the city ^{291D} and was simply, as the line from Aeschylus says, seated alone at the helm of the city, governing all, in charge of all; making everything useful.

Crito: Well, was your understanding unsound, Socrates?

Soc: You will decide, Crito, if you are willing to hear what happened to us after this. Indeed we reconsidered the matter anew, somewhat as follows. Come on, when it is in charge of all, does the skill of kingship bring about ^{291E} any outcome for us, or is there none? Of course, entirely so; that's what we said to one another; is this what you would say too, Crito?

Crito: I would.

Soc: So, what would you say its outcome is? It's as if I asked you, what outcome is provided by medical skill when it is in charge of all it takes charge of? Wouldn't you say that it is health?

Crito: I would.

Soc: What about your own skill of agriculture? When it is in charge of all that it takes charge of, ^{292A} what outcome does it produce? Wouldn't you say that it provides us with food from the earth?

Crito: I would.

Soc: And what about the skill of kingship? When it is in charge of all that it takes charge of, what does it produce? Perhaps you are not quite so forthcoming in this case.

Crito: No, by Zeus, Socrates.

Soc: Nor were we, Crito. But you do know this much, at any rate, if this really is the skill we are seeking, it must be beneficial.

Crito: Entirely so.

Soc: So shouldn't it confer some good upon us?

Crito: Necessarily, Socrates.

Soc: ^{292B} Yes, but Cleinias and I agreed with one another, that good is, presumably, nothing but knowledge of some sort.

Crito: Yes, that's what you said.

Soc: Now the various outcomes which might be ascribed to the skill of statesmanship, ensuring the wealth, freedom and stability of the citizens, for instance, these would presumably be quite numerous, yet none of them turned out to be either good or bad; yet this skill had to make the citizens wise, and confer knowledge, if it was really going to be the one that benefits ^{292C} them and makes them blessed.

Crito: That's it; so, based upon your report of the discussion this was, presumably, agreed by yourselves at that stage.

Soc: Well then, does the skill of kingship make the people wise and good?

Crito: Is there any reason why not, Socrates?

Soc: But does it make everyone good at everything, and is this the skill that confers all knowledge; shoe-making, carpentry and all the others?

Crito: No, Socrates, I don't think so.

Soc: ^{292D} Well what knowledge does it confer? What use shall we make of it? Now, it should not be the artificer of any of the outcomes that are neither good nor bad, yet it should confer

no knowledge apart from itself. Well then, should we state what precisely it is and what use we shall make of it? Is it acceptable if we say that it is, that by which we shall make others good?

Crito: Entirely so.

Soc: In what respect will they be good and useful for us? Or would we continue to say that they will make others so, and those others will do this too? ^{292E} But it is not at all evident to us in what exact respect they are good, especially since we have discredited the outcomes ascribed to statesmanship; no, it is simply a case of the proverb: “Corinthos, son of Zeus”⁴, and as I said, we were just as badly off, or even worse off, when it came to knowing what the knowledge that will make us blessed actually is.

Crito: By Zeus, Socrates, it seems you ended up in considerable difficulty.

Soc: Now, I myself, Crito, since I had landed in this difficulty, ^{293A} began to exclaim at the top of my voice, as if I was calling upon the Heavenly Twins, begging the two strangers to rescue us, myself and the young man, from the third wave of the argument, to be serious in every way and reveal to us, in all seriousness, what precisely is the knowledge which we should obtain if we are to live out the rest of our lives beautifully.

Crito: Well then, was Euthydemus prepared to reveal anything to you?

Soc: Of course, and he began his account in a very high-minded manner, as follows:

^{293B} Well, Socrates, this knowledge that has perplexed you for so long, shall I teach it to you, or show you that you possess it?

Blessed man, said I, is it within your power to do this?

It certainly is, he replied.

Then show me that I possess it, by Zeus, since, for a man of my age that will be much easier than learning it.

Come on, said he, answer me; is there anything that you know?

Certainly, I replied, there are quite a lot of trivia, at any rate.

That’s enough, said he. Now do you think it is possible for anything at all, not to be ^{293C} just what it happens to be?

By Zeus, I do not.

And you do know something? he asked.

I do.

In that case you are knowledgeable, if you actually know.

Certainly, in relation to that “something”.

That makes no difference; isn’t it necessary that you know everything since you are knowledgeable?

Heavens, said I, even when there is so much else that I do not know?

⁴ This is needless repetition because Corinthos was the son of Zeus.

Well then, if there is something you do not know, you are not knowledgeable.

Not in relation to that matter, at any rate, my friend, said I.

Are you any less not knowledgeable on that account? You just said that you are knowledgeable and, accordingly, you happen to be the very ^{293D} person you are, and then again, at the same time, on the same criteria, you are not that person.

So be it, Euthydemus, said I, yes; “well struck”, as the saying goes. So how do I know this knowledge we have been seeking? Since it is impossible to be the same, and not to be the same, if I actually know one thing, I know all things; for I could not be knowledgeable and not knowledgeable at the same time. But since I know everything, then I also possess that knowledge: well is this what you mean? Is this the wisdom?

^{293E} In any case, Socrates, you yourself, are refuting yourself, he said.

But Euthydemus, said I, are you not in the same predicament? For, I would not be at all troubled at being in this predicament, or any other, in the company of yourself and Dionysodorus here, our dear friend. Tell me this: don’t you both know some things, while there are others you do not know?

Not in the least, Socrates, replied Dionysodorus.

What are you saying? I asked. Do you know nothing, then?

Quite the contrary, said he.

^{294A} So, you know everything, said I, since you know at least something?

Everything, he replied, and the same goes for you, if you actually know even one thing, you know everything.

By Zeus, said I, what a wonder you are describing; great good has come to light. But surely all the rest of the people don’t know either everything or nothing?

Well, presumably, said he, it is not the case that they know some things while not knowing others, and are knowledgeable and not knowledgeable at the same time.

What then? I asked.

Everyone knows everything, said he, if they actually know even one thing.

^{294B} By the gods, Dionysodorus, said I, it is evident to me at this stage that you are both being serious, in response to my repeated exhortation to be so: do both of you really know everything? Carpentry and shoe-making, for example?

Certainly, he replied.

And are you both able to sew?

Yes, and to mend shoes too, by heaven, he replied.

Do you also know, for instance, how many stars there are, and how much sand there is?

Certainly, he replied, do you think we would say no to that?

Then Ctesippus interrupted, by Zeus, Dionysodorus, ^{294C} said he, you should present me with some sort of proof of this, so that I may know that you are speaking the truth.

What shall I present? he asked.

Do you know how many teeth Euthydemus has, and does he know how many you have?

Is it not enough for you to be told that we know everything? He replied.

Not at all, said he: you should tell us this one additional thing, and prove that you are speaking the truth. And if you both state how many teeth you each have, and if we count them and it turns out that you do know, then we will believe you in everything else too.

^{294D} Now because they thought they were being mocked, they were not prepared to do this, but under questioning by Ctesippus, they did accept that they knew everything, case by case. For in the end, there was nothing that Ctesippus did not ask them, quite unashamedly, if they knew, no matter how base it was. Yet the two men met his questions most valiantly, just like boars that are driven towards an onslaught. As a result, I myself, Crito, was compelled in the end to ask, incredulously, if Dionysodorus knew how to dance, ^{294E} and he replied; certainly.

I do not suppose, said I, that at your age, you have attained such advanced wisdom that you can also somersault over swords and be spun about on a wheel?

There is nothing I cannot do, he replied.

And is it only now that you know everything, I asked, or has this always been the case?

Always, he replied.

And when you were children, even at the moment you were born, did you know everything?

They both said yes, simultaneously.

^{295A} Now this seemed unbelievable to us, and Euthydemus asked; do you not believe us, Socrates?

I wouldn't believe you, were it not for the likelihood that you are both wise.

Well, said he, if you will consent to answer my questions, I will prove that you accept these amazing propositions too.

Very well, said I, on this matter I would very gladly accept refutation. For if I have overlooked the fact that I myself am wise, and you are going to prove that I know everything, and that I always have, what greater boon could I encounter in my whole life than this?

Then answer me, he said.

^{295B} Ask; I am ready to answer.

Now Socrates, said he, are you knowledgeable in relation to something or are you not?

I am.

And do you know by means of that whereby you are knowledgeable, or by means of something else?

By means of that whereby I am knowledgeable, for I presume you are referring to the soul; or are you not referring to this?

Socrates, said he, are you not ashamed at asking a further question when you are being questioned?

So be it, said I, but what am I to do? I shall do this in whatever manner you tell me to do it.

Whenever I do not know what you are asking, are you telling me to answer nevertheless, and not to ask a further question?

^{295C} Well I presume you understand something of what I am saying?

I do, said I.

Then answer in relation to what you understand.

Well what if you ask a question with one thing in mind, but I understand it with something different in mind, and I then answer in relation to that, will it be enough for you if I do not answer in relation to the point?

Yes, he replied, that will be enough for me, but not, I presume, for you.

Then I shan't answer, said I, until I have first understood the question.

You won't answer in relation to what you understand all the while, because you persist in talking nonsense and you are senile before your time.

^{295D} Now I realised that he was angry with me for expanding upon the various statements when he wanted to hunt me down and encircle me with words. In fact I was reminded of Connus; because he too is often angry with me whenever I do not give in to him; he then pays me less attention because I am an ignoramus. So since I also had it in mind to be a pupil of this man, I thought I should give in to him in case he might regard me as awkward, and not accept me as his pupil. So I said, well Euthydemus, ^{295E} if you think this is the way to proceed, so we should proceed. For presumably you know how to engage in discourse, far better than I do; I who possess only the skill of an ordinary person. So question me once more, from the beginning.

Then answer me once more, said he, do you know what you know, by means of something, or is this not the case?

I do, said I, by the soul.

^{296A} This man, he said, keeps on giving answers beyond what he is asked. I am asking, if you know by means of something, I am not asking, by means of what?

I answered more than I should, once again, on account of my uneducated condition. Please forgive me, and I shall now answer, simply, that I know what I know, by means of something.

Do you always know by this same means, he asked, or do you sometimes know by means of this and at other times by means of something else?

Whenever I know, said I, I always know by means of this.

Won't you stop constantly being overelaborate? he asked.

But it is only for fear that this word "always" may trip us up.

^{296B} It won't do that to us, said he, only to you, if to anyone. Just answer; do you always know by means of this?

Always, said I, since I have to withdraw the word "whenever".

So you always know by means of this, and since you always know, do you know some things by means of this and others by means of something else, or do you know all things by this?

I know all things by this, I replied, whatever I know at any rate.

There it is, said he; the same over-elaboration turns up.

Then I withdraw the phrase “whatever I know at any rate”.

No, said he, don’t withdraw a single word, for I am asking nothing of you. ^{296C} Just answer me; would you be able to know all things, if you did not know everything?

Well that would be bizarre, I replied.

Well then, he said, add on whatever you like at this stage, for you accept that you know all things.

It seems that I do, said I, particularly since my phrase “whatever I know”, has no force, and I do know everything.

Now you have also accepted that you always know by means of that whereby you know, whether you add “whenever you know”, or whatever else you add, for you have accepted that you always know, and that you know everything at the same time. So it is obvious that you knew ^{296D} even as a child, even when you were being born, and even when you were being conceived. Even before you yourself were born, even before heaven and earth came into being, you knew all things, since you always know. And by Zeus, said he, you yourself always will know and will know all things, if it so pleases me.

Well I pray that it may please you, most revered Euthydemus, said I, if you really are speaking the truth. But I am not entirely convinced that you are up to the task, unless your brother Dionysodorus here gives his advice; in that case you probably will be up to it.

But tell me, said I, ^{296E} for, in general, I do not know how to argue with men of such prodigious wisdom as you, and make the case that I do not know everything, when you both say that I do; but tell me how I may say that I know such things, Euthydemus, as that good men are unjust? Come then, tell me; do I know this or do I not know this?

You know, indeed, he replied.

What? said I.

That good men are not unjust.

^{297A} Yes, I’ve always known that, said I. But that’s not what I am asking: I am asking where did I learn that the good are unjust?

Nowhere, replied Dionysodorus.

Then I do not know this, said I.

You are ruining the argument, said Euthydemus to Dionysodorus, and this fellow will turn out not to have known this, and to be knowledgeable and not knowledgeable, at the same time. Dionysodorus blushed.

But what are you saying, Euthydemus, I asked. Do you think your ^{297B} brother, who knows everything, is not speaking aright?

Dionysodorus interrupted immediately and asked, am I a brother of Euthydemus?

And I said; let that question alone, good man, until Euthydemus teaches me how I know that good men are unjust; do not begrudge me that lesson.

Socrates, you are running away, said Dionysodorus, and you are refusing to answer me.

Quite reasonably, said I, for I am a lesser man than either of you, and so I have no hesitation in running away from the two of you. Indeed I am certainly inferior ^{297C} to Heracles who was not able to do battle with the hydra, a sophistical creature, so clever that if someone cut off one head of the argument, she sent forth many more in its place. He could not do battle with her, and with some other sophistical crab, recently emerged from the sea and, I believe, come ashore, who so pained Heracles by talking, and biting from his left hand side, that he called for the help of his nephew Iolaus, who gave him ample ^{297D} assistance. But if my Iolaus were to arrive, he would just make matters worse.

When you have finished this hymn of yours, please answer me this; was Iolaus, any more the nephew of Heracles than you are?

Well, Dionysodorus, said I, it is best that I answer you. Indeed I am well-nigh convinced that you won't desist from asking questions, out of ill-will and obstructiveness, so that

Euthydemus may not impart that piece of wisdom to me.

Then answer, said he.

Then my answer is, said I, that Iolaus was Heracles' nephew, but in no way whatsoever, in my opinion, was he mine. ^{297E} For his father was not Patrocles, my own brother, although Heracles' brother, Iphicles, had a name that sounded quite similar.

And is Patrocles your brother? he asked.

Certainly, I replied, we have the same mother, at any rate; not the same father though.

So he is your brother and not your brother.

Not by the same father, at any rate, best of men, said I: his father was Chaeredemus, while mine was Sophroniscus.

Then, said he, Sophroniscus was a father, and so was Chaeredemus.

Certainly, I replied: ^{298A} one was mine and the other was his.

In that case, said he, was Chaeredemus other than a father?

Other than mine, anyway, said I.

So was he a father whilst being other than a father? Or are you the same as a stone?

My fear, said I, is that you are going to show that I am the same, even though I think otherwise.

Aren't you other than a stone? he asked.

Yes, other.

Now, being other than stone you are not stone, and being other than gold you are not gold?

This is the case.

Then, Chaeredemus, being other than a father, is not a father, said he.

It seems he is not a father, said I.

^{298B} And presumably, interjected Euthydemus, if Chaeredemus is a father, then Sophroniscus, for his part, being other than a father, is not a father, and so you, Socrates, are fatherless.

Then Ctesippus took up the argument and said; and isn't your father also in the same predicament? Is he other than my father?

Far from it, replied Euthydemus.

What, said he, is he the same?

The same indeed.

I wouldn't agree with you there. But, Euthydemus, ^{298C} is he my father only, or is he the father of everyone else too?

Of everyone else too, he replied, or do you think the same man, being a father, is not a father?

Yes, I did think so, replied Ctesippus.

What about this? he asked. Do you think the same thing, being gold, is not gold, or being a person, is not a person?

Euthydemus, said Ctesippus, could it be, as the saying goes, that you are not combining flax with flax, for you are describing an astounding prospect, if your father is the father of all.

But he is, said he.

Of all humans? said Ctesippus, or of horses and all other living creatures too?

Of all, he replied.

And is your mother, their mother?

^{298D} Yes, their mother too.

So said he, is your mother also the mother of sea urchins?

Yes, and so is yours, he replied.

Then you are brother to gudgeons, puppies and piglets.

And so are you, he retorted.

Then you have a boar and a dog as your father.

And so do you, he retorted.

And yet, said Dionysodorus, you will accept all this quite readily, Ctesippus, if you will answer my questions. So tell me, do you have a dog?

Yes, a very nasty one, replied Ctesippus.

^{298E} Now does he have puppies?

Yes, and they are very like himself, he replied.

So the dog is their father?

Yes, he replied, I saw him covering the bitch myself.

Well now, isn't the dog yours?

Certainly, he replied.

In that case, he is a father and he is yours, and so he turns out to be your father, and you turn out to be the brother of puppies.

And Dionysodorus quickly interrupted once again, in case Ctesippus might get a word in first: answer this little question for me, said he, do you beat this dog?

And Ctesippus laughed and said; yes, by the gods, since I can't do it to you.

Aren't you beating your own father then? he asked.

^{299A} Yet I would be far more justified in beating your father, said he, for having the wit to beget sons who are so wise. But I presume, Euthydemus, that your father, who is also the father of the puppies, derived numerous benefits from this wisdom of yours.

But he has no need of numerous benefits, neither he nor you.

Nor you, yourself, Euthydemus? he asked.

No, nor has any other person either. Indeed, tell me, Ctesippus, ^{299B} whether you regard it as a benefit for a sick person to drink medicine when he needs to, or do you think it is not a benefit? When he goes to war, is it better to go wearing armour or without armour?

I think these are benefits, said he, yet I expect you are about to utter one of your beauties.

You will know full well, said he, if you answer me. Indeed since you accept that it is a benefit for a man to drink medicine when necessary, shouldn't he simply drink this beneficial substance as much as possible and, in that case, would it be an advantage if someone were to grind and blend a wagon-load of hellebore for him?

And Ctesippus replied: Very much so, Euthydemus, particularly if the man who drinks ^{299C} it is the size of the big statue at Delphi.

Well, in battle, since it is a benefit to wear armour, should we carry as many spears and shields as possible since it is actually a benefit?

Yes, of course, replied Ctesippus, but do you think otherwise, Euthydemus, that we should have one shield and one spear?

I do.

And would you also arm Geryon and Briareus in this way? he asked. I thought you were cleverer than that, since yourself and your companion here are both armour-fighters.

At this Euthydemus was silent and Dionysodorus questioned Ctesippus in relation to his initial ^{299D} answers. Don't you also think it a benefit, he said, to possess gold?

Certainly, replied Ctesippus, and a lot of it too.

What about this; don't you think we should have benefits at all times and in all places?

Emphatically so, he replied.

Don't you also accept that gold is a benefit?

Yes, I have accepted that, he replied.

So shouldn't we have it at all times, and in all places, and especially in ourselves? And would a person be supremely blessed ^{299E} if he were to have three talents of gold in his stomach, a talent in his skull, and a stater of gold in each eye?

Well, at any rate, Euthydemus, said Ctesippus, they say that the most blessed of the Scythians, and their very best men, are the ones who have a lot of gold in their own skulls⁵, in the same sense that you stated, just now, that my father is a dog. And what is still more wonderful is that they drink from their own gilded skulls, and peer into them, holding their own head in their hands.

^{300A} But, said Euthydemus, do the Scythians, and other people too, see what is capable of vision, or what is not capable?

What is capable, I presume.

And so do you?

Me too.

Now do you see our cloaks?

Yes.

So these are capable of vision.

Emphatically so, said Ctesippus.

Of what? he asked.

Of nothing: but perhaps you think they do not have vision; so sweet and innocent are you.

But to me, Euthydemus, you seem to have fallen asleep, without being asleep, and, if it is possible to speak yet say nothing, that is just what you are doing.

^{300B} Well, said Dionysodorus, is it not possible that there be a speaking of what is silent.

Not at all, said Ctesippus.

So there isn't a silence of speaking either?

Even less so, he replied.

Now whenever you speak of stones or wood or iron, don't you speak of what is silent?

Well, not if I pass by a blacksmith's premises, he said; there the iron exclaims and cries aloud, they say, if anyone touches it: and so, in this case, on account of your wisdom you were unwittingly saying nothing. But you should still explain the other point to me; how, on the other hand, there may be a silence of speaking.

^{300C} I thought that Ctesippus was making an extra effort because his favourite was present.

When you are silent, said Euthydemus, are you silent in relation to all things?

I am, he replied.

Aren't you also silent in relation to whatever speaks, if this is included in all things?

⁵ Herodotus, iv.65, describes the Scythians as gilding the skulls of their enemies and drinking from them.

What, said Ctesippus, are all things not silent?

Of course not, said Euthydemus.

So in that case, best of men, do all things speak?

Yes, those that do speak, at any rate.

But, said he, that is not what I asked you; are all things silent or do they speak?

^{300D} Dionysodorus jumped in and said; neither and both, yes, I know quite well that you will not be able to deal with this answer.

And Ctesippus, in his usual way, broke into very loud laughter and said, Euthydemus, your brother has led the argument into a contradiction, and he has perished and been defeated.

Now Cleinias was extremely pleased, and he laughed, with the result that Ctesippus grew in stature, tenfold, or even more. But since Ctesippus is a rogue, I think he had overheard these very arguments from the men themselves, for there is no wisdom of this sort in evidence these days amongst any other people.

^{300E} And, I said, Cleinias, why are you laughing at matters that are so serious and beautiful?

Well Socrates, said Dionysodorus, have you ever yet seen a beautiful matter?

Yes, I have, lots of them, I replied.

^{301A} So, are they different from the beautiful or the same as the beautiful?

And I became utterly perplexed, but I thought my predicament was well deserved because I had opened my mouth, nevertheless I said they were different from the beautiful, although some beauty is present with each of them.

So, if an ox is present with you, you are an ox, and because I am present with you now, you are Dionysodorus?

What a thing to say, said I.

But what way, said he, could the different be different, just because difference is present with difference?

^{301B} So, are you perplexed over this? I asked. At that stage I was so eager for the wisdom of these two men that I was imitating it.

Well, said he, how could I help being perplexed, either myself or anyone else, over that which is not?

What are you saying, Dionysodorus? said I. Is the beautiful not beautiful, or the base not base?

If it seems so to me, said he.

Well, does it seem so?

Entirely so, he replied.

And isn't the same, the same, and the different, different? For the different is surely not the same, no, ^{301C} I did not imagine that even a child would be perplexed by this question of whether the different is different. But, Dionysodorus, you must have passed over this point,

deliberately, since, in general, the two of you seem to me to bring the process of dialectic to fruition, just like craftsmen who bring their appropriate work to fruition.

Well, said he, do you know what is appropriate to each of the craftsmen? Firstly, to whom is brass-working appropriate? Do you know?

I do; to the brass-workers.

What about making pots?

To the potters.

What about slaughtering and skinning and then boiling or roasting the portions of meat once they have been cut up?

^{301D} That is appropriate to the cook, I replied.

Now, if someone enacts what is appropriate, isn't he acting aright?

Certainly.

And yet, you say that cutting up and skinning is appropriate to the cook? Have you agreed with this or not?

I agreed, said I, but please judge me kindly.

Then, presumably, said he, if someone slaughters the cook, cuts him up and boils and roasts him, he will be acting aright? And if someone processes the brass-worker, like brass, or turns the potter into a pot, he too will be behaving appropriately.

^{301E} By Poseidon, said I, at this stage you are putting the finishing touches to your wisdom. I wonder if it will ever be mine, and become my own?

Socrates, he asked, would you recognise it once it had become your own?

Of course, I replied, if it were your will, at any rate.

What's this, said he, do you think you recognise what is your own?

Unless you say otherwise, for you must be my source of wisdom, and Euthydemus here its culmination.

Well now, said he, do you think that things you control, and are allowed ^{302A} to use as you wish, are yours; an ox, or a sheep, for instance; do you think they are yours when you can sell them or give them away or sacrifice them to any god you please? And are those that are not in this situation not yours?

Because I knew that something worthwhile would emerge from their questioning, and because I also wished to hear it as quickly as possible, I just said; yes, certainly, this is the case, only such things as these are mine.

What about this, said he, do you refer to things that possess soul, as living creatures?

^{302B} Yes, I replied.

So, do you agree that the only living creatures that are yours are the ones you are allowed to use in the manner I just described?

I agree.

Then he made a great pretence of pausing, as though considering something important, and he said: tell me, Socrates, do you have an ancestral Zeus?

Now suspecting that the argument was going to end up where it did, and in an effort to escape, like a man trapped in a net, I tried a despairing twist; I said: no, Dionysodorus, I do not.

Then you are a wretched person ^{302C} and no Athenian; possessing neither ancestral gods, nor shrines, nor anything else that is noble and good.

Enough, said I, show some respect, and do not set about instructing me in such a harsh manner. For, I do indeed have altars, shrines too, both domestic and ancestral, and anything else of that sort that other Athenians possess.

In that case, said he, do the other Athenians not possess an ancestral Zeus?

That is not his title, I replied, among any of the Ionian peoples, neither among those who have emigrated from this city, nor among ourselves. ^{302D} But we have an ancestral Apollo because of Ion's birth from him. And we do not refer to Zeus as ancestral, but as domestic or tribal, and we have a tribal Athena.

Well that is sufficient, at any rate, said Dionysodorus, for you have, it seems, an Apollo, a Zeus and an Athena.

Certainly, I replied.

So these gods would be yours, wouldn't they? He said.

Yes, said I, they are my ancestors and my masters.

But they are yours in any case, said he, or have you not accepted that they are yours?

I have accepted that, said I; what will befall me now?

Well, said he, aren't these gods ^{302E} also living creatures? Indeed you have agreed that whatever possesses soul is a living creature; or do these gods not possess soul?

They possess it, said I.

In that case, aren't they also living creatures?

Yes, living creatures, I replied.

And you have agreed that whatever living creatures you are allowed to give away, sell, or sacrifice to any god you please, are yours.

I have agreed, said I; there is no going back now, Euthydemus.

Come on then, said he, tell me, here and now; since you have agreed that Zeus and the other gods ^{303A} are yours, are you allowed to sell them, or give them away, or treat them as you wish, just like any other living creatures?

Well, Crito, while I lay there, speechless, as though I had been felled by the argument, Ctesippus came to my aid, saying; bravo Heracles, what a good argument.

And Dionysodorus asked, is Heracles a bravo, or a bravo Heracles?

And Ctesippus responded; by Poseidon, what formidable arguments; I give up; the two men are invincible.

^{303B} With that, dear Crito, I must say that there was no one present who did not heap praises upon the two men, and their argument; indeed they almost died laughing, clapping and rejoicing. Now, each and every one of the previous arguments had been applauded well and truly, but only by Euthydemus' admirers, whereas now, even the very columns of the Lyceum came close to applause, and delight at these two men. As for myself, I was reduced to admitting ^{303C} that no one had ever before beheld any people who were as wise as they were, and being utterly captivated by the wisdom of the pair, I took to praising and eulogising them both, saying; you are two blessed men, possessed of a wondrous nature, who have perfected such a subject so readily, in such a short period of time. Now although these arguments of yours, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, possess various fine features aplenty, the most exalted of them is that you have no concern for most of humanity, nor indeed for important people, or those with a reputation, ^{303D} but only for those who are similar to yourselves. For I know quite well that there are very few people, similar to yourselves, who would be content with these arguments, while everyone else is so unappreciative of them that, I'm convinced, they would be more ashamed to refute others by such arguments, than to be refuted themselves. What's more, there is also an appealing and kindly aspect to your arguments; whenever you declare that there is nothing beautiful, nothing good, or white, and so on, and that nothing is at all different from anything else, ^{303E} you simply stitch up peoples' mouths, well and truly, as you say yourselves. Yet because you don't just do this to others but you seem also to do it to your own mouths, this is entirely delightful, and it takes away the offensive aspect of the arguments. And yet, what is most significant is that you have arranged matters, and contrived them so skilfully, that anyone at all can learn this in a short period of time. I realised this myself by paying attention to Ctesippus, and how quickly he was able to imitate you, without any preparation. ^{304A} Now the fact that this business of yours is readily imparted is all very well, but it is not appropriate for discussion before a general audience, and if you take my advice you will be careful not to speak before crowds in case they learn quickly from you, but give you no thanks. It is best, rather, that the two of you conduct your discussions only with one another. Failing that, if you are in front of someone else, it should be someone who is paying you a fee. And if you are sensible, ^{304B} you will also give the selfsame advice to your pupils; never to conduct a discussion with anyone else apart from yourselves and themselves. For, whatever is scarce is valuable, Euthydemus, while water is cheapest, although it is the best, as Pindar says. But come on, said I; see if you can accept myself and Cleinias here as your pupils.

Having discussed all this, Crito, and some other issues that took less time, we departed. Now you should consider how you are going to join us, as a pupil of these two men ^{304C} who claim to be able to teach anyone who is willing to pay them, and who say that neither a person's nature nor his age prevents anyone at all from easily acquiring their wisdom. And it is most important for you to hear that, according to them, this wisdom is not an impediment to making money.

Crito: Well, Socrates, although I myself love listening to discussions, and would be pleased to learn something, I fear that I too am one of those people who are not similar to Euthydemus, but one of the people you mentioned, ^{304D} who would prefer being refuted by such arguments as these, rather than refuting someone else. Now although it seems ridiculous to be giving you a warning, I want to report what I heard, nevertheless.

The fact is that one of the people coming from your gathering approached me as I was out and about; a man who regards himself as extremely wise; a formidable figure when it comes to writing speeches for use in law courts.

Crito, said he, are you taking no lessons from these wise men?

No, by Zeus, I replied, for when I was standing near them I was unable to hear clearly because of the crowd.

And yet, said he, it was worth hearing, at any rate.

^{304E} What was it? I asked.

You would have heard the discourses of men who are, nowadays, the wisest men of all, when it comes to discussions of this sort.

What was your overall impression? I asked.

It was just the sort of thing you always hear from people like this; babbling and making a useless fuss about nothing of any consequence. This is, more or less, how he spoke.

And I said: but surely philosophy is an accomplishment?

What sort of an accomplishment, ^{305A} blessed man? he asked: why, it is of no value! And had you actually been there, I think you would have been utterly ashamed on behalf of your own friend, so strangely did he behave; willing to surrender himself to men who care not what they say, and fasten upon every word that is spoken. And these fellows, as I just said, are counted among the most influential people of this day and age. But the fact is, Crito, that the subject itself, and the people who devote their time to the subject, are worthless and ridiculous.

Now, Socrates, it did not seem right ^{305B} to me, for him or anyone else to criticise the subject. However, it did seem right to apportion blame for your willingness to engage in discourse with such people as these, in front of a large audience.

Soc: Crito, men like these are marvels. However, I do not yet know what I am to say to you.

What sort of person was he, who approached you and apportioned blame to philosophy? Was he one of the formidable combatants from the law courts; a rhetorician? Or was he one of the people who sends them into battle; a composer of speeches with which the rhetoricians engage in combat?

^{305C} **Crito:** By Zeus, he is not a rhetorician at all, nor do I think he has ever appeared in court; yet, they say he understands the business, yes, by heaven, and that he is formidable, and composes formidable speeches.

Soc: Now I understand; I was just about to speak about these people myself. For although they are, according to Prodicus, on the boundary between the philosopher and the statesman, they think that they are the wisest men of all, and as well as being so, they believe they are also regarded as such by a vast number of people, and that the only thing preventing ^{305D} them from being well regarded by everyone, are people who engage in philosophy. So they believe that if they reduce the reputation of these people, and make them seem worthless, the victory prize will, indisputably, be theirs, immediately; a reputation for wisdom in the eyes of all.

So they maintain that they are, in truth, the wisest, and whenever they get tangled up in arguments of a private nature, that they are being worsted by Euthydemus and his followers. Yet they believe, quite plausibly, that they are extremely wise, for they possess a measure of philosophy, and a measure of statesmanship, according to the very plausible ^{305E} argument that they partake of both, to the extent that is necessary; so, remaining aloof from danger and conflict, they reap the harvest of wisdom.

Crito: What of it, Socrates? Do you think they have a point, since their argument does have a certain neatness at least?

Soc: Yes indeed, Crito, it does indeed possess neatness, rather than truth.^{306A} For it is not easy to persuade them that a person, or anything else that is in between two things, and partakes of both, becomes worse than one and better than the other, if it comes from good and bad. Any that come from two that are good, but not in the same respect, are worse than both components, with respect to the purpose they each serve; while any that are constituted from two that are bad, but not in the same respect, are in-between the two, and these alone ^{306B} are better than either of the two things they partake of.

Now if philosophy is good, and so too is the activity of the statesman, each in a different respect, and these fellows are in between those two, as they partake of both, then they do not have a point, since they are inferior to both. And if one is good and the other bad then they are better than one group and worse than the other, but if both are bad, in that case, and in no other, they would be speaking the truth, to an extent.

Now I do not think they ^{306C} would agree that both of these are bad, or that one is bad while the other is good. But the fact of the matter is that these fellows, although they partake of both, are inferior to both, with respect to what is of value in statesmanship, and what is of value in philosophy, and despite being, in truth, in third place, they are ambitious to be regarded as first. So we should forgive this ambition of theirs and not be troubled, yet still recognise that they are the sort of people they are. For, we ought to admire any man whatsoever who says anything that conforms ^{306D} to good sense, and takes the trouble to pursue it, courageously.

Crito: Yes indeed, Socrates, and I myself, as I am always telling you, am perplexed over my sons, and how I should deal with them. Now one of them is still young and little, but Critobulus is now at an age where he needs someone who will do something for him. Now whenever I am in your company, you always have the same effect; I think that it is madness to have taken such trouble, in so many different ways, for the sake of my children: trouble in relation to marriage to ensure noble birth on their mother's side, and trouble over making money, so that they would be as wealthy as possible; whilst I neglected their education. Yet whenever I look at any of those people who profess to educate humanity, I am shocked, and each one of them seems to me, on reflection, to be utterly outlandish; ^{307A} to tell you the truth, between ourselves. And so I do not know how I am to turn the young man towards philosophy.

Soc: Crito, my friend, don't you realise that in every activity the inferior practitioners are numerous and of no value, while the serious ones are few, and valuable beyond measure? And don't you think that gymnastics is a worthy activity, money-making too, and rhetoric and generalship?

Crito: Entirely so, of course I do.

Soc: Well then, in each of those cases, don't you know that most people are comical exponents of the particular ^{307B} role?

Crito: Yes, by Zeus, that is certainly true.

Soc: So will you yourself shun all of these activities, on account of this, and refuse to direct your son towards them?

Crito: That wouldn't be right, Socrates.

Soc: Then do not do what you should not do, Crito, rather bid farewell to the exponents of philosophy, whether they be worthy or base, and having tested the subject itself, well and truly, turn not just your sons but every man away from it, if it ^{307C} proves, in your eyes, to be unworthy. However, if it proves to be as I think it is, then pursue it and practise it with all your heart, both you and yours, as the saying goes.

End