

"The dying Socrates.— I admire the courage and wisdom of Socrates in everything he did, said—and did not say. This mocking and enamored monster and piper of Athens, who made the most overweening youths tremble and sob, was not only the wisest chatterer of all time: he was equally great in silence. I wish he had remained taciturn also at the last moment of his life,—in that case he might belong to a still higher order of spirits. Whether it was death or the poison or piety or malice—something loosened his tongue at that moment and he said: "Oh Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster." [Asklepios: Greek god of medicine.] This ridiculous and terrible "last word" means for those who have ears: "Oh Crito, life is a disease." Is it possible! A man like him, who had lived cheerfully and like a soldier in the sight of everyone,—should have been a pessimist! He had merely kept a cheerful mien while concealing all his life long his ultimate judgment, his inmost feeling! Socrates, Socrates suffered life! And then he still revenged himself—with this veiled, gruesome, pious, and blasphemous saying! Did a Socrates need such revenge? Did his overrich virtue lack an ounce of magnanimity?— Alas, my friends, we must overcome even the Greeks!"

-Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*

Plato & Socrates

- Plato (429-347 B.C.E.) was the student of Socrates (469–399 B.C.E.) and the founder of the Academy in Athens.
- Historical vs. Fictional Socrates

Plato & Socrates

- Aristotle has given us rough criteria for recognizing the historical Socrates:
 - Socrates only asked questions. He didn't reply, since he claimed he knew nothing.
 - Socrates concerned himself only with ethics, and not with nature or metaphysics.
 - Socrates was the first to argue "inductively".
 - Socrates was the first to search systematically for universals and definitions.
 - Socrates did not separate universals as Plato did.

The Dialogues of Plato

Early dialogues

Hippias Minor
Charmides
Laches
Protagoras
Euthyphro
Apology
Crito
Ion
Lysis
Euthydemus
Menexenus
Hippias Major
Republic Book 1

Transitional dialogues

Gorgias
Meno

Middle dialogues

Phaedo
Philebus
Symposium
The Republic

Late dialogues

Theaetetus
Critias
Parmenides
Phaedrus
Sophist
Statesman
Timaeus
Laws

Plato - The Apology

- Socrates answers the formal charges with two arguments:
 - An incoherence argument against Meletus.
 - An *eikos* argument, i.e., one that relies on perceived likelihood to establish its conclusion.

“*Eikos*” means 1.) verisimilar 2.) probable. *Eikos* arguments were a mainstay of ancient Greek rhetoric. Cf. the Speech of Lysias and Socrates’ Palinode in the *Phaedrus*, the Mytilenean debate in Thucydides’ *The Peloponnesian War*, Gorgias’ *Encomium of Helen* and *Defense of Palamedes*, Antiphon’s *Defense* and the *Tetralogies*.

Socrates' Disavowal of Knowledge

- Socrates claims only to have a sort of “human wisdom”, insofar as he recognizes that he knows nothing. But he also appears to “know” a great many things:
 - There is a potential for some level of wisdom in everyone.
 - Knowledge is built on definitions.
 - Everyone has a soul.
 - The soul or psyche is the carrier of aretê (= excellence or virtue). In *Republic* Book 1, Socrates argues that a soul with aretê is a soul that lives well:

P1 Everything has a function. (352d-353a)

P2 Something is an excellent X if it performs the function peculiar to Xs well. (353b-c)

P3 The function of the soul is living. (353d)

C1 Therefore, an excellent soul is a soul that lives well. (353e)

Socrates' Disavowal of Knowledge, cont'd.

- Moral *arête*, like physical *arête*, is achieved through a sort of exercise.
- Socratic intellectualism: the view that knowledge is sufficient for virtue, and the corollaries that vice is sufficient for ignorance and that no one voluntarily does wrong.

Plato – The Crito

- Socrates refute 2 claims:
 - One should help one's friends and hurt one's enemies (or at least keep one's enemies from winning (45c)). (cf. *Rep.* Book 1 334b, p. 338)
 - It is just to use bribery to evade a penalty that has been assessed under the law. (48c-d)

Plato – The Crito

- Possible methods of deciding that it is not just to use bribery to evade a penalty that has been assessed under the law:
 - Deliberation (euboulia).
 - Custom.
 - Technê.
 - Elenchus (cross examination)

The Argument of The Crito

- Corruption premise (50a-b)
- Tacit agreement (50c)
- Just agreement rule (49e)
- Assumed mutual benefit
- Speech of the laws

Argument Summary:

- If Socrates has benefited from his agreement with RL, then Socrates has tacitly agreed not to do anything destructive of RL.
- Socrates has benefited from his agreement with RL.
- Therefore, Socrates has tacitly agreed not to do anything destructive of RL.
- Since it is unjust to break an agreement if that agreement is itself just, Socrates would be unjust if he broke this agreement.
- Using wealth to evade a penalty assessed under law is destructive of the rule of law (RL), so, if Socrates uses wealth to evade a penalty assessed under law, he will be unjust.