Plato – The Socratic Elenchus

- Elenchus =$_{df.}$ cross-examination or refutation

  - 2 objectives:

    - refuting the person and

    - refuting the argument.

Plato – The Socratic Elenchus

- Refuting the Person

  - What we see in the early dialogues is something like this:

    1. Socrates' interlocutor avows proposition p, but he also believes propositions q, r, and s.

    2. Unbeknownst to him, $\neg p$ can be derived from propositions q, r, and s.

    3. Socrates gets his interlocutor to admit to propositions q, r, and s, and then he deduces $\neg p$, thus refuting proposition p on the assumption that the other premises are true.
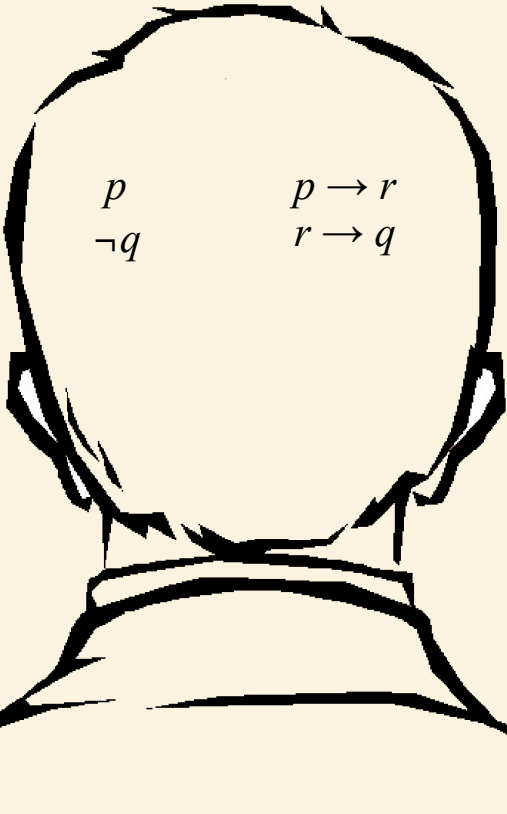
Plato – The Socratic Elenchus

- Refuting the Argument

  - A distinction between different types of knowledge?

    - Avowed knowledge = human knowledge = knowledge that has passed the test of the elenchus.

    - Disavowed knowledge = divine knowledge = scientific and unshakeable.

Socrates' Belief Set

p = virtue is knowledge

q = there are teachers of virtue

r = virtue is teachable

p

$\neg q$

$p \rightarrow r$

$r \rightarrow q$

The Euthyphro: 1st Argument (6e-8a)

P1: "What's loved by the gods is pious, and what's not loved by the gods is impious." (6e)

($\forall x$) (x is pious $\leftrightarrow$ x is god-loved) & ($\forall x$) (x is impious $\leftrightarrow$ x is god-hated)

P2: The gods fight. (7b)

P3: Gods and men only fight over whether x is just/unjust, fine/shameful, good/bad. (7c-d)

C1: So if god y fights god z, over x, then god y must love x and god z must hate x or vice versa. (7e)

C2: So x must be both god-loved and god-hated. (8a)

C3: So x must be both pious and impious. So it is not the case that what's loved by the gods is pious, and what's not loved by the gods is impious. (8a) ¬{($\forall x$) (x is pious $\leftrightarrow$ x is god-loved) & ($\forall x$) (x is impious $\leftrightarrow$ x is god-hated)}.

The Euthyphro: 2nd Argument (9d-11a)

P1: "What all the gods hate is impious while what they all love is pious." (9d) ($\forall x$) (x is pious $\leftrightarrow$ x is loved by <u>all</u> the gods) & ($\forall x$) (x is impious $\leftrightarrow$ x is hated by <u>all</u> the gods) (9d)
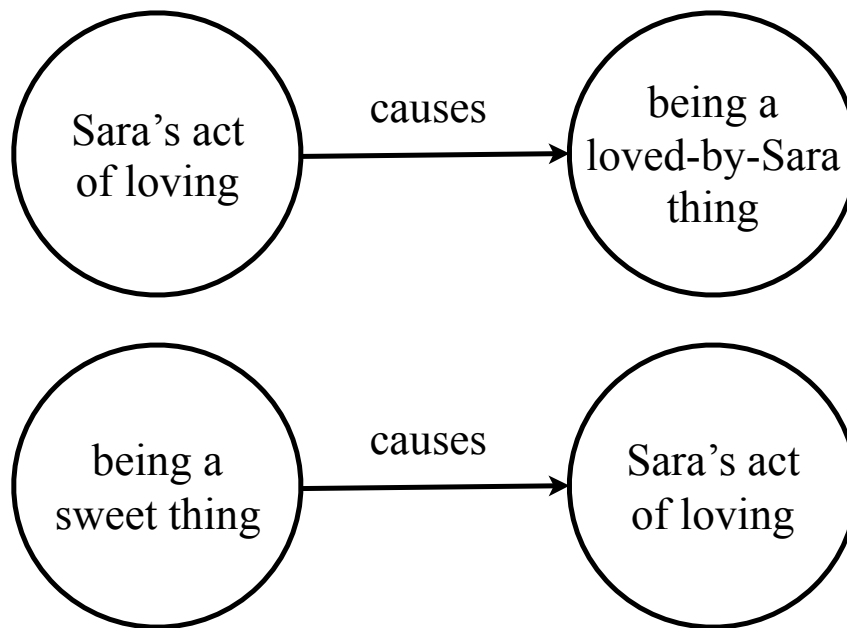
The Essence of Piety (9d-11a)

- Socrates asks "Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?" (10a)

Analogous Example: The Essence of Sweetness

- "Are sweet things loved by Sara because they are sweet, or are they sweet because they are loved by Sara?" Let us assume that:

  1.) Sara loves all and only sweet things.

  2.) Sara loves things because they are sweet. They are not sweet because Sara loves them.

  3.) Things are loved by Sara because Sara loves them. She doesn't love them because they are loved by her.

Analogous Example: The Essence of Sweetness

Sara's act of loving —— **causes** ——▶ being a loved-by-Sara thing

being a sweet thing —— **causes** ——▶ Sara's act of loving

The Euthyphro: 2nd Argument (9d-11a)

P1: "What all the gods hate is impious while what they all love is pious." (9d)

($\forall x$) (x is pious $\leftrightarrow$ x is loved by <u>all</u> the gods) & ($\forall x$) (x is impious $\leftrightarrow$ x is hated by <u>all</u> the gods)

P2: Things are god-loved things because they are loved by the gods, not vice versa, i.e., things are not loved by the gods because they are god-loved things. (10a-c)

P3: Pious things are loved by all the gods because they are pious, not vice versa. (10d)

C1: If to be pious = to be god-loved and P3 is true, then, substituting "god-loved" for "pious" in P3, we conclude that god-loved things are loved by all the gods because they are god-loved things. (10e-11a)

C2: By modus tollens (P2 & C1), we conclude that to be pious is not the same as to be god-loved.

Sidebar: The So-called "Euthyphro Dilemma"

- The two "horns" of the dilemma :

  - Horn 1: "Pious things are loved by (all) the gods because they are pious."

  - Horn 2: "Pious things are pious because they are loved by (all) the gods."

Sidebar: The So-called "Euthyphro Dilemma"

- Consequences of Horn 2:

  - Piety is contingent.

  - The love of the gods is arbitrary.

  - The goodness of the gods is trivial and therefore not praiseworthy.

The Euthyphro: 3rd Argument (12a-14a)

P1: Everything pious is just but not everything just is pious. (12a-d)

$(\forall x)$ (x is pious $\rightarrow x$ is just) & $\neg(\forall x)$ (x is just $\rightarrow x$ is pious)

P2: The pious is a part of the just, i.e., pious things must be just things with some differentia. (12d-e)

$(\forall x)$ (x is pious $\leftrightarrow$ (x is just & x is ψ))

P3: ψ = concerned with tending to the gods. (12e)

P4: Tending to x aims at benefiting x and making x better. (13b)

P5: It is not the case that tending to the gods aims at benefiting the gods and making the gods better. (13c)

P6: Tending to the gods = serving the gods. (13d)

P7: Serving xs aims at producing the ys that xs characteristically produce. So serving gods aims at producing the ys that gods characteristically produce. (13d–14a)

The Euthyphro: 4th Argument (14c-15b)

P1: Piety = some sort of knowledge of sacrificing and praying. (14c)

P2: Sacrificing = giving things to the gods. (14c)

P3: Praying = asking things from the gods. (14c)

C1: Therefore, Piety = knowing how to give things to and ask things from the gods. (14c)

P4: Asking and giving in the right way is asking and giving things that are needed by the recipients. (14d-e)

C2: Therefore, Piety = trading with the gods, i.e., knowing how to give things to the gods that they need and ask things from the gods that we need. (14e)

P5: Gods don't need or benefit from anything that we give them. (15a)

C3: So piety ≠ trading with the gods. (15a)

The Euthyphro: 4ᵗʰ Argument (14c-15b)

P6: Piety = knowing how to give things to the gods that please them and ask things from the gods that we need. (15a)

C4: What is pious is pleasing to the gods. (15b)

($\forall x$) (x is pious → x is pleasing to the gods) [or ($\forall x$) (x is pious ↔ x is pleasing to the gods)]

P7: What is pleasing to the gods is loved by the gods. (15b)

($\forall x$) (x is pleasing to the gods → x is loved by the gods) [or ($\forall x$) (x is pleasing to the gods ↔ x is loved by the gods)]

C5: What is pious is loved by the gods. (15b)

($\forall x$) (x is pious → x is loved by the gods) [or ($\forall x$) (x is pious ↔ x is loved by the gods)]

Torpedo Ray
(*Torpedo fuscomaculata*)

Plato - The Meno

- Meno makes 3 attempts to define virtue:

  1. The virtue of an x is doing y. (71e)

  2. Virtue is being able to rule over people. (73d)

  3. Virtue is to desire beautiful things and have the power to acquire them. (77b)

Plato - The Meno

- Meno asks "can virtue be taught"? (70a) Socrates replies, "If I do not know what something is, how could I know what qualities it possesses?" (71b)

- Does to "know what something is" mean to:

  - be acquainted with a thing?

  - know the essential definition of a thing?

- Does to "know what qualities it possesses" mean to:

  - be acquainted with its properties?

  - know its properties?

Plato - The Meno

- This gives us 4 possible interpretations of Socrates' question:

	1.) how can I be acquainted with its properties?
If I am not acquainted with a thing, …	
	2.) how could I know what its properties are?

	3.) how can I be acquainted with its properties?
If I do not know the essential definition of something, …	
	4.) how could I know what its properties are?

Meno's Paradox

Socrates (paraphrase 71b): "If I do not know the essential definition of something, how could I know what its properties are?"

Meno (paraphrase 80d): "How can one ever know the essential definition of something if we can't first know some of its properties?"

Meno's Paradox – The Solution

- My belief set consists of the proposition p, and the proposition $p \rightarrow q$.

- Since p and $p \rightarrow q$ taken together imply q, it is fair to say that q is implicitly in my belief set, but not explicitly, so I might not be aware of it.

- When I infer q from p and $p \rightarrow q$, I "recollect" it by making it explicit.

- And finally, q becomes an item of knowledge, because we can give an account of how we deduced it from p and $p \rightarrow q$.

Reprise: Can Virtue Be Taught?

Intended Argument:

P1: If virtue is knowledge, then virtue can be taught (87b-c).
P2: Virtue is good (87d).
P3: All good things are knowledge.
C1: Therefore, virtue is knowledge (88c-89a; P2, P3, Modus Ponens).
C2: Therefore, virtue can be taught (P1, C1, Modus Ponens).

Argument for P3:

P4: No good things are separate from knowledge (88a-b).
C3 (= P3): Therefore, all good things are knowledge (89a).

But unfortunately:

P5: If virtue can be taught, there would be teachers of virtue. (89d)
P6: There are no teachers of virtue (89e).
C4: Therefore, virtue can't be taught (89c).