WORLD HISTORY (to 1300)

UNIT 8

"O, Socrates"

The Love of Wisdom

(Introduction to Greek Philosophy)

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WORLD HISTORY (to 1300)
TERMS LISTS

UNIT 8
The Love of Wisdom

NOTE: *Anything in the documents is fair game. This list should be helpful, but it is only a guide.*

Philosophy and the Sophists	The Allegory of the Cave TEXT
Philosophy **Sophists** *The "3 R's" of Sophism:* Relativism Rhetoric Recompense Sophistry Socrates Plato Aristotle Objective Truth (vs. Relative Truth) **Comparison of Sophists and Platonists**	Students will be expected to be able to explain how the Allegory of the Cave outlines the worldview of Socrates and Plato, as well as their approach to truth. **Theory of Forms** *The physical world does not represent the truest reality.*

The Clouds TEXT READING GUIDE	***Apology*** TEXT READING GUIDE
Aristophanes (Comic Playwright) **Characters:** Strepsiades Pheidippides Socrates Just Discourse Unjust Discourse *How did Aristophanes portray Socrates?* *Did he believe Socrates to be a Sophist?* *Contrast traditional Greek education (represented by the Just Discourse) with the new trends in education (represented by the Unjust Discourse).*	**Characters:** Socrates Meletus Classical Apology vs. Modern Apology Significance of the Oracle at Delphi What is wisdom? What made Socrates wise?
Euthyphro TEXT READING GUIDE	***Crito*** TEXT READING GUIDE
Characters: Socrates Euthyphro **Central Question:** What is **Piety**?	**Characters:** Socrates Crito **Central Question:** When is a citizen justified in breaking the law?

Aristophanes, *The Clouds* (Abridged)

Internet Classics Archive: http://classics.mit.edu/Aristophanes/clouds.html

Document 8.1

Aristophanes *(Ἀριστοφάνης, ca. 446 BC – ca. 386 BC), son of Philippus… was a comic playwright of ancient Athens. Eleven of his 40 plays survive virtually complete. These, together with fragments of some of his other plays, provide the only real examples of a genre of comic drama known as Old Comedy, and they are in fact used to define the genre. Also known as the Father of Comedy and the Prince of Ancient Comedy, Aristophanes has been said to recreate the life of ancient Athens more convincingly than any other author. His powers of ridicule were feared and acknowledged by influential contemporaries — **Plato** singled out Aristophanes' play The Clouds as **slander** contributing to the trial and execution of **Socrates** although other satirical playwrights had also caricatured the philosopher.*

Charactersz

STREPSIADES	SOCRATES	UNJUST DISCOURSE
PHEIDIPPIDES	DISCIPLES OF SOCRATES (2)	CHORUS OF CLOUDS
XANTHIAS	JUST DISCOURSE	

In the background are two houses, that of Strepsiades and that of Socrates, the Thoughtery. The latter is small and dingy; the interior of the former is shown and two beds are seen, each occupied.

[**STREPSIADES** has been complaining about the family's debts and encourages his son, **PHEIDIPPIDES**, who has wasted the family's money on horses, to receive instruction from philosophers so that he may get the family out of debt.]

STREPSIADES Alter your habits immediately and go and learn what I tell you… Look this way. Do you see that little door and that little house?

PHEIDIPPIDES Yes, father. But what are you driving at?

STREPSIADES That is the Thoughtery of wise souls. There they prove that we are coals enclosed on all sides under a vast snuffer, which is the sky. If well paid, these men also teach one how to gain law-suits, whether they be just or not.

PHEIDIPPIDES What do they call themselves?

STREPSIADES I do not know exactly, but they are deep thinkers and most admirable people.

PHEIDIPPIDES Bah! The wretches! I know them; you mean those quacks with pale faces, those barefoot fellows, such as that miserable Socrates and Chaerephon?

STREPSIADES Silence! Say nothing foolish! If you desire your father not to die of hunger, join their company…

PHEIDIPPIDES No, by Bacchus! Even though you gave me the pheasants that Leogoras raises.

STREPSIADES Oh! my beloved son, I beseech you, go and follow their teachings.

PHEIDIPPIDES And what is it I should learn?

STREPSIADES It seems they have two courses of reasoning, the true and the false, and that, thanks to the false, the worst law-suits can be gained. If then you learn this science, which is false, I shall not have to pay an obolus of all the debts I have contracted on your account.

PHEIDIPPIDES No, I will not. I should not dare to look at our gallant horsemen, when I had so ruined my tan.

STREPSIADES Well then, by Demeter! I will no longer support you... Go and hang yourself, I turn you out of house and home!

PHEIDIPPIDES My uncle Megacles will not leave me without horses; I shall go to him and laugh at your anger. (He departs. **STREPSIADES** goes over to **SOCRATES'** house.)

STREPSIADES One rebuff shall not dishearten me. With the help of the gods I will enter the Thoughtery...

[**STREPSIADES** enters the Thoughtery and encounters **A DISCIPLE** of Socrates.]

DISCIPLE (from within) A plague on you! Who are you?

STREPSIADES Strepsiades, the son of Phido, of the deme of Cicynna.

DISCIPLE (coming out of the door) You are nothing but an ignorant and illiterate fellow to let fly at the door with such kicks. You have brought on a miscarriage-of an idea!

STREPSIADES Pardon me; for I live far away in the country. But tell me, what was the idea that miscarried?

DISCIPLE I may not tell it to any but a disciple.

STREPSIADES Then tell me without fear, for I have come to study among you.

DISCIPLE Very well then, but reflect, that these are mysteries. Lately, a flea bit Chaerephon on the brow and then from there sprang on to the head of Socrates. Socrates asked Chaerephon, "How many times the length of its legs does a flea jump?"

STREPSIADES And how ever did he go about measuring it?

DISCIPLE Oh! It was most ingenious! He melted some wax, seized the flea and dipped its two feet in the wax, which, when cooled, left them shod with slippers. These with them measured the distance.

STREPSIADES Ah! great Zeus! what a brain! what subtlety!

[**STREPSIADES** and the **DISCIPLE** enter the Thoughtery.]

STREPSIADES (pointing to a celestial globe) In the name of all the gods, what is that? Tell me.

DISCIPLE That is astronomy.

STREPSIADES (pointing to a map) And that?

DISCIPLE Geometry.

STREPSIADES What is that used for?

DISCIPLE To measure the land.

STREPSIADES But that is apportioned by lot.

DISCIPLE No, no, I mean the entire earth.

STREPSIADES Ah! what a funny thing! How generally useful indeed is this invention!

DISCIPLE There is the whole surface of the earth. Look! Here is Athens.

STREPSIADES Then, woe to you! and who is this man suspended up in a basket?

DISCIPLE That's himself.

STREPSIADES Who's himself?

DISCIPLE Socrates.

STREPSIADES Socrates! Oh! I pray you, call him right loudly for me.

DISCIPLE Call him yourself; I have no time to waste. (He departs. The machine swings in **SOCRATES** in a basket.)

STREPSIADES Socrates! My little Socrates!

SOCRATES (loftily) Mortal, what do you want with me?

STREPSIADES First, what are you doing up there? Tell me, I beseech you.

SOCRATES (POMPOUSLY) I am traversing the air and contemplating the sun.

STREPSIADES Thus it's not on the solid ground, but from the height of this basket, that you slight the gods…

SOCRATES I have to suspend my brain and mingle the essence of my mind with this air, in order to penetrate heaven. I should have discovered nothing, had I remained on the ground to consider from below the things that are above; for the earth by its force attracts the sap of the mind to itself.

STREPSIADES What? Ah! My dear little Socrates, come down to me! I have come to ask you for lessons.

SOCRATES (descending) And for what lessons?

STREPSIADES I want to learn how to speak. I have borrowed money, and my merciless creditors do not leave me a moment's peace; all my goods are at stake.

SOCRATES And how was it you did not see that you were getting so much into debt?

STREPSIADES My ruin has been the madness for horses, a most rapacious evil; but teach me one of your two methods of reasoning, the one whose object is not to repay anything, and, may the gods bear witness, that I am ready to pay any fee you may name.

SOCRATES By which gods will you swear? To begin with, the gods are not a coin current with us.

STREPSIADES But what do you swear by then? By the iron money of Byzantium?

SOCRATES Do you really wish to know the truth of celestial matters?

STREPSIADES Without a doubt.

SOCRATES Then be seated on this sacred couch… Silence, old man, give heed to the prayers. (In an hierophantic tone) Oh! most mighty king, the boundless air, that keepest the earth suspended in space… Come, oh! Clouds, whom I adore, come and show yourselves to this man, whether you be resting on the sacred summits of Olympus, or tarrying in the gardens of Ocean…

(Amidst rumblings of thunder the **CHORUS OF CLOUDS** appears.)

SOCRATES Oh, venerated goddesses, yes, you are answering my call! (To **STREPSIADES**.) Did you hear their voices mingling with the awful growling of the thunder?

…

STREPSIADES By Zeus! Tell me, Socrates, I pray you, who are these women, whose language is so solemn; can they be demi-goddesses?

SOCRATES Not at all. They are the Clouds of heaven, great goddesses for the lazy; to them we owe all, thoughts, speeches, trickery, roguery, boasting, lies, sagacity.

STREPSIADES Ah! that was why, as I listened to them, my mind spread out its wings; it burns to babble about trifles, to maintain worthless arguments, to voice its petty reasons, to contradict, to tease some opponent. But are they not going to show themselves? I should like to see them, were it possible.

SOCRATES Well, look this way in the direction of Parnes; I already see those who are slowly descending.

STREPSIADES But where, where? Show them to me.

SOCRATES They are advancing in a throng, following an oblique path across the dales and thickets.

STREPSIADES Strange! I can see nothing.

SOCRATES There, close to the entrance.

STREPSIADES Hardly, if at all, can I distinguish them.

SOCRATES You must see them clearly now, unless your eyes are filled with gum as thick as pumpkins.

STREPSIADES Aye, undoubtedly! Oh! the venerable goddesses! Why, they fill up the entire stage.

SOCRATES And you did not know, you never suspected, that they were goddesses?

STREPSIADES No, indeed; I thought the Clouds were only fog, dew and vapor...

[**STREPSIADES** continues to take lessons from **SOCRATES** until **SOCRATES** gets fed up with his slowness of mind and kicks him out of the Thoughtery. **STREPSIADES** returns home to kick **PHEIDIPPIDES** out of the house.]

STREPSIADES (coming out of his house and pushing his son in front of him) No, by the Clouds! you stay here no longer; go and devour the ruins of your uncle Megacles' fortune.

PHEIDIPPIDES Oh! my poor father! What has happened to you? By Zeus! You are no longer in your senses!

STREPSIADES Look! "the Olympian Zeus." Oh! you fool! to believe in Zeus at your age!

PHEIDIPPIDES What is there in that to make you laugh?

STREPSIADES You are then a child, if you credit such antiquated rubbish! But come here, that I may teach you; I will tell you something very necessary to know to be a man; but do not repeat it to anybody.

PHEIDIPPIDES Tell me, what is it?

STREPSIADES Just now you swore by Zeus.

PHEIDIPPIDES Sure I did.

STREPSIADES Do you see how good it is to learn? **PHEIDIPPIDES**, there is no Zeus.

PHEIDIPPIDES What is there then?

STREPSIADES The Whirlwind has driven out Zeus and is King now.

PHEIDIPPIDES What drivel! Who says so?

STREPSIADES Socrates... who knows how to measure the jump of a flea.

PHEIDIPPIDES Have you reached such a pitch of madness that you believe those bilious fellows?

STREPSIADES Use better language, and do not insult men who are clever and full of wisdom, who, to economize, never shave, shun the gymnasia and never go to the baths, while you, you only await my death to eat up my wealth. But come, come as quickly as you can to learn in my stead.

PHEIDIPPIDES And what good can be learnt of them?

STREPSIADES What good indeed? Why, all human knowledge. Firstly, you will know yourself grossly ignorant. But await me here awhile. (He goes back into his house.)

PHEIDIPPIDES Alas! Father has lost his wits. Must I have him certificated for lunacy, or must I order his coffin?

*[***STREPSIADES** *finally convinces* **PHEIDIPPIDES** *to become* **SOCRATES'** *pupil.]*

PHEIDIPPIDES You will soon repent of what you ask me to do.

STREPSIADES Oh! now I am happy! He obeys. (loudly) Socrates! Come out quick! I am bringing you my son; he refused, but I have persuaded him.

SOCRATES Why, he is but a child yet. He is not used to these baskets, in which we suspend our minds.

*[***STREPSIADES** *brings* **PHEIDIPPIDES** *to* **SOCRATES**, *who refuses to teach* **PHEIDIPPIDES** *directly; rather,* **SOCRATES** *allows* **PHEIDIPPIDES** *to choose between two teachers, the* **JUST DISCOURSE** *and the* **UNJUST DISCOURSE***]*

SOCRATES The Just and Unjust Discourse themselves shall instruct him. I shall leave you.

STREPSIADES But forget it not, he must always be able to confound the true. (Socrates enters the Thoughtery; the **JUST** and the **UNJUST DISCOURSE** come out; quarrelling violently.)

JUST DISCOURSE Come here! Shameless as you may be, will you dare to show your face to the spectators?

UNJUST DISCOURSE Take me where you will. I seek a throng, so that I may the better annihilate you.

JUST DISCOURSE Annihilate me! Do you forget who you are?

UNJUST DISCOURSE I am Reasoning.

JUST DISCOURSE Yes, the weaker Reasoning.

UNJUST DISCOURSE But I triumph over you, who claim to be the stronger.

JUST DISCOURSE By what cunning shifts, pray?

UNJUST DISCOURSE By the invention of new maxims.

JUST DISCOURSE ....which are received with favour by these fools. (He points to the audience.)

UNJUST DISCOURSE Say rather, by these wise men.

JUST DISCOURSE I am going to destroy you mercilessly.

UNJUST DISCOURSE How pray? Let us see you do it.

JUST DISCOURSE By saying what is true.

UNJUST DISCOURSE I shall retort and shall have the better of you. First, maintain that justice has no existence.

JUST DISCOURSE Has no existence?

UNJUST DISCOURSE No existence! Why, where is it?

JUST DISCOURSE With the gods.

UNJUST DISCOURSE How then, if justice exists, was Zeus not put to death for having put his father in chains?

JUST DISCOURSE Bah! This is enough to turn my stomach! A basin, quick!

UNJUST DISCOURSE You are an old driveller and stupid withal.

JUST DISCOURSE And you a degenerate and shameless fellow.

UNJUST DISCOURSE Hah! What sweet expressions!

JUST DISCOURSE An impious buffoon.

[The verbal exchange continues.]

JUST DISCOURSE It is because of you that the youth no longer attends the schools. The Athenians will soon recognize what lessons you teach those who are fools enough to believe you… Madman! But yet madder the city that keeps you, you, the corrupter of its youth!

UNJUST DISCOURSE It is not you who will teach this young man; you are as old and out of date as Cronus.

JUST DISCOURSE Nay, it will certainly be I, if he does not wish to be lost and to practise verbosity only.

UNJUST DISCOURSE (to **PHEIDIPPIDES**) Come here and leave him to beat the air.

JUST DISCOURSE You'll regret it, if you touch him.

CHORUS-LEADER (stepping between them as they are about to come to blows) A truce to your quarrellings and abuse! But you expound what you taught us formerly, and you, your new doctrine. Thus, after hearing each of you argue, he will be able to choose betwixt the two schools.

JUST DISCOURSE I am quite agreeable.

UNJUST DISCOURSE And I too.

CHORUS LEADER Who is to speak first?

UNJUST DISCOURSE Let it be my opponent, he has my full consent; then I shall follow upon the ground he shall have chosen and shall shatter him with a hail of new ideas and subtle fancies; if after that he dares to breathe another word, I shall sting him with our maxims, which are as keen as the sting of a wasp, and he will die.

CHORUS (singing) Here are two rivals confident in their powers of oratory and in the thoughts over which they have pondered so long. Let us see which will come triumphant out of the contest. This wisdom, for which my friends maintain such a persistent fight, is in great danger.

CHORUS LEADER Come then, you, who crowned men of other days with so many virtues, plead the cause dear to you, make yourself known to us.

JUST DISCOURSE Very well, I will tell you what was **the old education**, when I used to teach **justice** with so much success and when **modesty** was held in **veneration**. Firstly, it was required of a child, that he should not utter a word. In the street, when they went to the music-school, all the youths of the same district marched lightly clad and ranged in good order. At the master's house, …they were taught to sing… in the solemn tones of the ancient harmony. If anyone indulged in **buffoonery** or lent his voice any of the soft inflexions… he was treated as an enemy of the Muses and belaboured with blows. In the wrestling school they would sit with outstretched legs and without display of any indecency to the curious. When they rose, they would smooth over the sand, so as to leave no trace to excite obscene thoughts. Never was a child rubbed with oil below the belt; the rest of their bodies thus retained its fresh bloom and down, like a velvety peach. They were not to be seen approaching a lover and themselves rousing his passion by soft modulation of the voice and lustful gaze.

UNJUST DISCOURSE What antiquated rubbish! …

JUST DISCOURSE Nevertheless by suchlike teaching I built up the men of Marathon-But you, you teach the children of to-day to bundle themselves quickly into their clothes… Hence, young man, dare to range yourself beside me, who follow justice and truth; you will then be able to shun the public place, to refrain from the baths, to blush at all that is shameful, to fire up if your virtue is mocked at, to give place to your elders, to honour your parents, in short, to avoid all that is evil. Be modesty itself, and do not run to applaud the dancing girls; if you delight in such scenes, some **courtesan** will cast you her apple and your reputation will be done for. Do not bandy words with your father, nor treat him as a dotard, nor reproach the old man, who has cherished you, with his age.

UNJUST DISCOURSE If you listen to him, by **Bacchus**! You will be… called mother's big ninny.

JUST DISCOURSE No, but you will pass your days at the gymnasia, glowing with strength and health; you will not go to the public place to cackle and wrangle as is done nowadays; you will not live in fear that you may be dragged before the courts for some trifle exaggerated by quibbling. But you will go down to the Academy to run beneath the sacred olives with some virtuous friend of your own age…

CHORUS (singing) How beautiful, high-souled, brilliant is this wisdom that you practice! What a sweet odor of honesty is emitted by your discourse! Happy were those men of other days who lived when you were honored! And you, seductive talker, come, find some fresh arguments, for your rival has done wonders.

CHORUS LEADER You will have to bring out against him all the battery of your wit, it you desire to beat him and not to be laughed out of court.

UNJUST DISCOURSE At last! I was choking with impatience! If I am called the Weaker Reasoning in the schools, it is just because I was the first to discover the means to confute the laws and the decrees of justice. To invoke solely the weaker arguments and yet triumph is an art worth more than a hundred thousand drachmae. But see how I shall batter down the sort of education of which he is so proud. Firstly, he forbids you to bathe in hot water. What grounds have you for condemning hot baths?

JUST DISCOURSE Because they are baneful and enervate men.

UNJUST DISCOURSE Enough said! Oh! You poor wrestler! From the very outset I have seized you and hold you round the middle; you cannot escape me. Tell me, of all the sons of Zeus... who performed the bravest deeds?

JUST DISCOURSE None, in my opinion, surpassed Heracles.

UNJUST DISCOURSE Where have you ever seen cold baths called 'Bath of Heracles'? And yet who was braver than he?

JUST DISCOURSE It is because of such quibbles, that the baths are seen crowded with young folk, who chatter there the livelong day while the gymnasia remain empty.

UNJUST DISCOURSE Next you condemn the habit of frequenting the market-place, while I approve this... As for the art of speaking, he tells you, young men should not practice it; I hold the contrary. Furthermore he preaches chastity to them. Both precepts are equally harmful. Have you ever seen chastity of any use to anyone?

JUST DISCOURSE To many; for instance, Peleus won a sword thereby.

UNJUST DISCOURSE A sword! Ah! what a fine present to make him! Poor wretch! Hyperbolus, the lamp-seller, thanks to his villainy, has gained more than....do not know how many talents, but certainly no sword.

JUST DISCOURSE Peleus owed it to his chastity that he became the husband of Thetis.

UNJUST DISCOURSE ....who left him in the lurch, for he was not the most ardent; in those nocturnal sports between the sheets, which so please women, he possessed but little merit. Get you gone, you are but an old fool. But you, young man, just consider a little what this temperance means and the delights of which it deprives you- young fellows, women, play, dainty dishes, wine, boisterous laughter. And what is life worth without these? Then, if you happen to commit one of these faults inherent in human weakness, some seduction or adultery, and you are caught in the act, you are lost, if you cannot speak. But follow my teaching and you will be able to satisfy your passions, to dance, to laugh, to blush at nothing. Suppose you are caught in the act of adultery. Then up and tell the husband you are not guilty, and recall to him the example of Zeus, who allowed himself to be conquered by love and by women. Being but a mortal, can you be stronger than a god?

[The debate winds down, now that the **UNJUST DISCOURSE** has gained the upper hand.]

JUST DISCOURSE I am beaten. Debauchees! In the name of the gods, receive my cloak; I pass over to your ranks. (He goes back into the Thoughtery.)

UNJUST DISCOURSE Well then! Are you going to take away your son or do you wish me to teach him how to speak?

STREPSIADES Teach him, chastise him and do not fail to sharpen his tongue well, on one side for petty law-suits and on the other for important cases.

UNJUST DISCOURSE Don't worry, I shall return him to you an accomplished sophist.

PHEIDIPPIDES Very pale then and thoroughly hang-dog-looking.

CHORUS LEADER Take him with you. (The **UNJUST DISCOURSE** and **PHEIDIPPIDES** go into the **THOUGHTERY**.) To **STREPSIADES:** I think you will regret this…

STREPSIADES All my creditors accuse me of bad faith and threaten me with the law. Well then, let them sue me! I care nothing for that, if only **PHEIDIPPIDES** has learnt to speak fluently. I am going to find out; I'll knock at the door of the school. (He knocks.) …

SOCRATES (coming out) Welcome! Strepsiades!

STREPSIADES Welcome! Socrates! But first take this sack; (offers him a sack of flour) it is right to reward the master with some present. And my son... has he learnt this famous reasoning? Tell me.

SOCRATES He has learnt it. You will win as many court cases as you choose.

STREPSIADES Even if I have borrowed before witnesses?

SOCRATES So much the better, even if there are a thousand of them!

STREPSIADES (bursting into song) Then I am going to shout with all my might. "Woe to the usurers, woe to their capital and their interest! You shall play me no more bad turns. My son is being taught there, his tongue is being sharpened into a double-edged weapon; he is my defender, the saviour of my house, the ruin of my foes! His poor father was crushed down with misfortune and he delivers him." Go and call him to me quickly. Oh! My child! Run forward to your father's voice!

SOCRATES (singing) Lo, the man himself!

STREPSIADES (singing) Oh, my friend, my dearest friend!

SOCRATES (singing) Take your son, and get you gone.

STREPSIADES (as **PHEIDIPPIDES** appears) Oh, my son! What a pleasure to see your pallor! You are ready first to deny and then to contradict; it's as clear as noon. What a child of your country you are! How your lips quiver with the famous, "What have you to say now?" How well you know, I am certain, to put on the look of a victim, when it is you who are making both victims and dupes! And what a truly Attic glance! Come, it's for you to save me, seeing it is you who have ruined me…

[Eventually, **STREPSIADES** does come to regret his decision. He and his servant, **XANTHIAS**, decide to burn down the Thoughtery.]

STREPSIADES Oh! what madness! I had lost my reason when I threw over the gods through Socrates' seductive phrases. (Addressing the statue of Hermes) Oh! good Hermes, do not destroy me in your wrath. Forgive me; their babbling had driven me crazy. Be my counselor. Shall I pursue them at law? Order and I obey.-You are right, no law-suit; but up! let us burn down the Thoughtery! May the house fall in upon them… bring me a blazing torch!

DISCIPLE What are you up to?

STREPSIADES What am I up to? Why, I am entering upon a subtle argument with the beams of the house.

2nd DISCIPLE (from within) Hullo! Hullo! Who is burning down our house?

STREPSIADES The man whose cloak you have appropriated.

2nd DISCIPLE You are killing us!

STREPSIADES That is just exactly what I hope…

SOCRATES (appearing at the window) Hi! You fellow on the roof, what are you doing up there?

STREPSIADES (mocking SOCRATES' manner) I am traversing the air and contemplating the sun.

SOCRATES Ah! ah! Woe is upon me! I am suffocating!

STREPSIADES You insulted the gods! [To his companions] Chase them, strike and beat them down! Forward! They have richly deserved their fate-above all, by reason of their blasphemies….

Reading Guide Name: _____

Aristophanes, *The Clouds*

1. What is the problem in the play? How does Strepsiades seek to solve that problem?

_____

_____

_____

2. Socrates was a known intellectual in Athens who was portrayed by Aristophanes for entertainment purposes. How would you describe Aristophanes' portrayal of Socrates?

_____

_____

_____

_____

VOCABULARY

Antiquated
Beseech
Quack (n.)
Rebuff
Confound
Throng
Maxim
Verbosity
Courtesan
Piety
Enervate

You are responsible for all vocabulary.

3. Would you describe Strepsiades as a hero or an anti-hero? Why? Cite specific evidence to support.

_____

_____

_____

4. If you were given the choice to study with the Just Discourse or the Unjust Discourse, which would you choose and why? Cite specific examples from the reading.

_____

_____

_____

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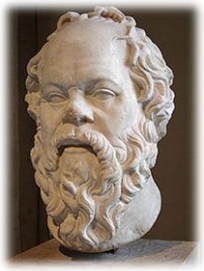
5. Did Aristophanes portray Socrates as a *Sophist*?

THE "THREE R's"	YES / NO	EXPLANATION
R_____		
R_____		
R_____		

Plato, *Euthyphro* (Abridged)

Internet Classics Archive: http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyfro.html

Document 8.2



Persons of the Dialogue
SOCRATES
EUTHYPHRO

Scene
The Porch of the King Archon.

Euthyphro. Why have you left the Lyceum, Socrates? and what are you doing in the Porch of the King Archon? Surely you cannot be concerned in a suit before the King, like myself?

Socrates. Not in a suit, Euthyphro; impeachment is the word which the Athenians use.

Euth. What! I suppose that someone has been prosecuting you, for I cannot believe that you are the prosecutor of another.

Soc. Certainly not.

Euth. Then someone else has been prosecuting you?

Soc. Yes.

Euth. And who is he?

Soc. A young man who is little known, Euthyphro; and I hardly know him: his name is **Meletus** …Perhaps you may remember his appearance; he has a beak, and long straight hair, and a beard which is ill grown.

Euth. No, I do not remember him, Socrates.[1] But what is the charge which he brings against you?

Soc. What is the charge? Well, a very serious charge, which shows a good deal of character in the young man, and for which he is certainly not to be despised. He says he knows how the youth are corrupted and who are their corruptors. I fancy that he must be a wise man, and seeing that I am the reverse of a wise man, he has found me out, and is going to accuse me of corrupting his young friends. And of this our mother the state is to be the judge. Of all our political men he is the only one who seems to me to begin in the right way, with the cultivation of virtue in youth; like a good husbandman, he makes the young shoots his first care, and clears away us who are the destroyers of them. This is only the first step; he will afterwards attend to the elder branches; and if he goes on as he has begun, he will be a very great public benefactor.

Euth. I hope that he may; but I rather fear, Socrates, that the opposite will turn out to be the truth. My opinion is that in attacking you he is simply aiming a blow at the foundation of the state. But in what way does he say that you corrupt the young?

Soc. He brings a wonderful accusation against me, which at first hearing excites surprise: he says that I am a poet or maker of gods, and that I invent new gods and deny the existence of old ones; this is the ground of his indictment.

Euth. I understand, Socrates; he means to attack you about the familiar sign[2] which occasionally, as you say, comes to you. He thinks that you are a **neologian**[3], and he is going to have you up before

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[1] Plato is establishing that Meletus is a man of little account.

the court for this. He knows that such a charge is readily received by the world, as I myself know too well; for when I speak in the assembly about divine things, and foretell the future to them, they laugh at me and think me a madman. Yet every word that I say is true. But they are jealous of us all; and we must be brave and go at them.

Soc. Their laughter, friend Euthyphro, is not a matter of much consequence. For a man may be thought wise; but the Athenians, I suspect, do not much trouble themselves about him until he begins to impart his wisdom to others, and then for some reason or other, perhaps, as you say, from jealousy, they are angry.

Euth. I am never likely to try their temper in this way.

Soc. I dare say not, for you are reserved in your behaviour, and seldom impart your wisdom. But I have a benevolent habit of pouring out myself to everybody, and would even pay for a listener[4], and I am afraid that the Athenians may think me too talkative. Now if, as I was saying, they would only laugh at me, as you say that they laugh at you, the time might pass gaily enough in the court; but perhaps they may be in earnest, and then what the end will be you soothsayers only can predict.

Euth. I dare say that the affair will end in nothing, Socrates, and that you will win your cause; and I think that I shall win my own.

Soc. And what is your suit, Euthyphro? are you the pursuer or the defendant?

Euth. I am the pursuer.

Soc. Of whom?

Euth. You will think me mad when I tell you…

Soc. Who is he?

Euth. My father.

Soc. Your father! my good man?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. And of what is he accused?

Euth. Of murder, Socrates.

Soc. By the powers, Euthyphro! how little does the common herd know of the nature of right and truth. A man must be an extraordinary man, and have made great strides in wisdom, before he could have seen his way to bring such an action.

Euth. Indeed, Socrates, he must.

Soc. I suppose that the man whom your father murdered was one of your relatives-clearly he was; for if he had been a stranger you would never have thought of prosecuting him.

Euth. I am amused, Socrates, at your making a distinction between one who is a relation and one who is not a relation; for surely the pollution is the same in either case, if you knowingly associate with the murderer when you ought to clear yourself and him by proceeding against him. The real question is whether the murdered man has been justly slain. If justly, then your duty is to let the matter alone; but if unjustly, then even if the murderer lives under the same roof with you and eats at the same table, proceed against him. Now the man who is dead was a poor dependent of mine

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[2] Socrates claimed that a "familiar sign," or divine voice, spoke to him on occasion.

[3] From Greek *neo* (new) and *logos* (word); describing anyone who proposes new theological doctrines

[4] Socrates claims to be willing to pay for a listener, as opposed to the sophists, who charged their students.

who worked for us as a field labourer on our farm in Naxos, and one day in a fit of drunken passion he got into a quarrel with one of our domestic servants and slew him. My father bound him hand and foot and threw him into a ditch, and then sent to Athens to ask of a diviner what he should do with him. Meanwhile he never attended to him and took no care about him, for he regarded him as a murderer; and thought that no great harm would be done even if he did die. Now this was just what happened. For such was the effect of cold and hunger and chains upon him, that before the messenger returned from the diviner, he was dead. And my father and family are angry with me for taking the part of the murderer and prosecuting my father. They say that he did not kill him, and that if he did, dead man was but a murderer, and I ought not to take any notice, for that a son is impious who prosecutes a father. Which shows, Socrates, how little they know what the gods think about piety and impiety.

Soc. Good heavens, Euthyphro! and is your knowledge of religion and of things pious and impious so very exact, that, supposing the circumstances to be as you state them, you are not afraid lest you too may be doing an impious thing in bringing an action against your father?

Euth. The best of Euthyphro, and that which distinguishes him, Socrates, from other men, is his exact knowledge of all such matters. What should I be good for without it?

Soc. Rare friend! I think that I cannot do better than be your disciple. Then before the trial with Meletus comes on I shall challenge him, and say that I have always had a great interest in religious questions, and now, as he charges me with rash imaginations and innovations in religion, I have become your disciple. You, Meletus, as I shall say to him, acknowledge Euthyphro to be a great theologian, and sound in his opinions; and if you approve of him you ought to approve of me, and not have me into court; but if you disapprove, you should begin by indicting him who is my teacher, and who will be the ruin, not of the young, but of the old; that is to say, of myself whom he instructs, and of his old father whom he admonishes and chastises. And if Meletus refuses to listen to me, but will go on, and will not shift the indictment from me to you, I cannot do better than repeat this challenge in the court.

Euth. Yes, indeed, Socrates; and if he attempts to indict me I am mistaken if I do not find a flaw in him; the court shall have a great deal more to say to him than to me.

Soc. And I, my dear friend, knowing this, am desirous of becoming your disciple. For I observe that no one appears to notice you- not even this Meletus; but his sharp eyes have found me out at once, and he has indicted me for impiety. And therefore, I adjure you to tell me the nature of piety and impiety, which you said that you knew so well, and of murder, and of other offences against the gods. What are they? Is not piety in every action always the same? and impiety, again- is it not always the opposite of piety, and also the same with itself, having, as impiety, one notion which includes whatever is impious?

Euth. To be sure, Socrates.

Soc. And what is piety, and what is impiety?

Euth. Piety is doing as I am doing; that is to say, prosecuting any one who is guilty of murder, sacrilege, or of any similar crime-whether he be your father or mother, or whoever he may be-that makes no difference; and not to prosecute them is impiety. And please to consider, Socrates, what a notable proof I will give you of the truth of my words, a proof which I have already given to others:- of the principle, I mean, that the impious, whoever he may be, ought not to go unpunished. For do not men regard **Zeus** as the best and most righteous of the gods?-and yet they admit that he bound his father (Cronos) because he wickedly devoured his sons, and that he too had punished his own father (Uranus) for a similar reason, in a nameless manner. And yet when I proceed against my father, they are angry with me. So inconsistent are they in their way of talking when the gods are concerned, and when I am concerned.

Soc. May not this be the reason, Euthyphro, why I am charged with impiety-that I cannot away with these stories about the gods? and therefore I suppose that people think me wrong. But, as you who are well informed about them approve of them, I cannot do better than assent to your superior wisdom. What else can I say, confessing as I do, that I know nothing about them? Tell me, for the love of Zeus, whether you really believe that they are true.

Euth. Yes, Socrates; and things more wonderful still, of which the world is in ignorance.

Soc. And do you really believe that the gods, fought with one another, and had dire quarrels, battles, and the like, as the poets say, and as you may see represented in the works of great artists? … Are all these tales of the gods true, Euthyphro?

Euth. Yes, Socrates; and, as I was saying, I can tell you, if you would like to hear them, many other things about the gods which would quite amaze you.

Soc. I dare say; and you shall tell me them at some other time when I have leisure. But just at present I would rather hear from you a more precise answer, which you have not as yet given, my friend, to the question: **What is "piety"?** When asked, you only replied, Doing as you do, charging your father with murder.

Euth. And what I said was true, Socrates.

Soc. No doubt, Euthyphro; but you would admit that there are many other pious acts?

Euth. There are.

Soc. Remember that I did not ask you to give me two or three examples of piety, but to explain the general idea which makes all pious things to be pious. Do you not recollect that there was one idea which made the impious impious, and the pious pious?[5]

Euth. I remember.

Soc. Tell me what is the nature of this idea, and then I shall have a standard to which I may look, and by which I may measure actions, whether yours or those of anyone else, and then I shall be able to say that such and such an action is pious, such another impious.

Euth. I will tell you, if you like.

Soc. I should very much like.

Euth. Piety, then, is that which is dear to the gods, and impiety is that which is not dear to them.

Soc. Very good, Euthyphro; you have now given me the sort of answer which I wanted. But whether what you say is true or not I cannot as yet tell, although I make no doubt that you will prove the truth of your words.

Euth. Of course.

Soc. Come, then, and let us examine what we are saying. That thing or person which is dear to the gods is pious, and that thing or person which is hateful to the gods is impious, these two being the extreme opposites of one another. Was not that said?

Euth. It was…

Soc. And further, Euthyphro, the gods were admitted to have enmities and hatreds and differences?

Euth. Yes, that was also said.

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[5] Plato believed that the highest form of reality was an idea; therefore, nothing was truly real in Plato's eyes unless the idea could be understood. This is referred to in philosophy as the "theory of forms." Socrates wants to know what the idea of piety is so that he can recognize examples of piety for himself.

….

Soc. Then the same things are hated by the gods and loved by the gods, and are both hateful and dear to them?

Euth. True.

Soc. And upon this view the same things, Euthyphro, will be pious and also impious?

Euth. So I should suppose.

Soc. Then, my friend, I remark with surprise that you have not answered the question which I asked. For I certainly did not ask you to tell me what action is both pious and impious: but now it would seem that what is loved by the gods is also hated by them. And therefore, Euthyphro, in thus chastising your father you may very likely be doing what is agreeable to Zeus but disagreeable to Cronos or Uranus… and there may be other gods who have similar differences of opinion.

Euth. But I believe, Socrates, that all the gods would be agreed as to the propriety of punishing a murderer: there would be no difference of opinion about that.

Soc. Well, but speaking of men, Euthyphro, did you ever hear any one arguing that a murderer or any sort of evil-doer ought to be let off?

Euth. I should rather say that these are the questions which they are always arguing, especially in courts of law: they commit all sorts of crimes, and there is nothing which they will not do or say in their own defence.

Soc. But do they admit their guilt, Euthyphro, and yet say that they ought not to be punished?

Euth. No; they do not.

Soc. Then there are some things which they do not venture to say and do: for they do not venture to argue that the guilty are to be unpunished, but they deny their guilt, do they not?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. Then they do not argue that the evil-doer should not be punished, but they argue about the fact of who the evil-doer is, and what he did and when?

Euth. True.

Soc. And the gods are in the same case, if as you assert they quarrel about just and unjust, and some of them say while others deny that injustice is done among them. For surely neither God nor man will ever venture to say that the doer of injustice is not to be punished?

Euth. That is true, Socrates, in the main.

Soc. But they join issue about the particulars-gods and men alike; and, if they dispute at all, they dispute about some act which is called in question, and which by some is affirmed to be just, by others to be unjust. Is not that true?

Euth. Quite true.

Soc. Well then, my dear friend Euthyphro, do tell me, for my better instruction and information, what proof have you that in the opinion of all the gods a servant who is guilty of murder, and is put in chains by the master of the dead man, and dies because he is put in chains before he who bound him can learn from the interpreters of the gods what he ought to do with him, dies unjustly; and that on behalf of such an one a son ought to proceed against his father and accuse him of murder. How would you show that all the gods absolutely agree in approving of his act? Prove to me that they do, and I will applaud your wisdom as long as I live.

Euth. It will be a difficult task; but I could make the matter very dear indeed to you.

Soc. I understand; you mean to say that I am not so quick of apprehension as the judges: for to them you will be sure to prove that the act is unjust, and hateful to the gods.

Euth. Yes indeed, Socrates; at least if they will listen to me.

Soc. But they will be sure to listen if they find that you are a good speaker.[6] There was a notion that came into my mind while you were speaking; I said to myself: "Well, and what if Euthyphro does prove to me that all the gods regarded the death of the serf as unjust, how do I know anything more of the nature of piety and impiety? for granting that this action may be hateful to the gods, still piety and impiety are not adequately defined by these distinctions, for that which is hateful to the gods has been shown to be also pleasing and dear to them." And therefore, Euthyphro, I do not ask you to prove this; I will suppose, if you like, that all the gods condemn and abominate such an action. But I will amend the definition so far as to say that what all the gods hate is impious, and what they love pious or holy; and what some of them love and others hate is both or neither. Shall this be our definition of piety and impiety?

Euth. Why not, Socrates?

Soc. Why not! certainly, as far as I am concerned, Euthyphro, there is no reason why not. But whether this admission will greatly assist you in the task of instructing me as you promised, is a matter for you to consider.

Euth. Yes, I should say that what all the gods love is pious and holy, and the opposite which they all hate, impious.

Soc. Ought we to enquire into the truth of this, Euthyphro, or simply to accept the mere statement on our own authority and that of others? What do you say?

Euth. We should enquire; and I believe that the statement will stand the test of enquiry.

Soc. We shall know better, my good friend, in a little while. The point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious or holy is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved of the gods.[7]

Euth. I do not understand your meaning, Socrates.

Soc. I will endeavour to explain: we, speak of carrying and we speak of being carried, of leading and being led, seeing and being seen. You know that in all such cases there is a difference, and you know also in what the difference lies?

Euth. I think that I understand.

Soc. And is not that which is beloved distinct from that which loves?

Euth. Certainly….

Soc. And a thing is not seen because it is visible, but conversely, visible because it is seen… Do you not agree?

Euth. Yes….

Soc. And what do you say of piety, Euthyphro: is not piety, according to your definition, loved by all the gods?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. Because it is pious or holy, or for some other reason?

Euth. No, that is the reason.

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[6] Plato takes another jab at the sophists.

[7] In philosophy, this quandary is known as the "Euthyphro dilemma."

Soc. It is loved because it is holy, not holy because it is loved?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. And that which is dear to the gods is loved by them, and is in a state to be loved of them because it is loved of them?

Euth. Certainly.

Soc. Then that which is dear to the gods, Euthyphro, is not holy, nor is that which is holy loved of God, as you affirm; but they are two different things.

Euth. How do you mean, Socrates?

Soc. I mean to say that the holy has been acknowledge by us to be loved of God because it is holy, not to be holy because it is loved.

Euth. Yes.

Soc. But that which is dear to the gods is dear to them because it is loved by them, not loved by them because it is dear to them.

Euth. True.

Soc. But, friend Euthyphro, if that which is holy is the same with that which is dear to God, and is loved because it is holy, then that which is dear to God would have been loved as being dear to God; but if that which dear to God is dear to him because loved by him, then that which is holy would have been holy because loved by him… Thus you appear to me, Euthyphro, when I ask you what is the essence of holiness, to offer an attribute only, and not the essence-the attribute of being loved by all the gods. But you still refuse to explain to me the nature of holiness. And therefore, if you please, I will ask you not to hide your treasure, but to tell me once more what holiness or piety really is…

Euth. I really do not know, Socrates, how to express what I mean. For somehow or other our arguments, on whatever ground we rest them, seem to turn round and walk away from us.

Soc. Your words, Euthyphro, are like the handiwork of my ancestor **Daedalus**[8]; and if I were the sayer or propounder of them, you might say that my arguments walk away and will not remain fixed where they are placed because I am a descendant of his. But now, since these notions are your own, you must find some other gibe, for they certainly, as you yourself allow, show an inclination to be on the move.

Euth. Nay, Socrates, I shall still say that you are the Daedalus who sets arguments in motion; not I, certainly, but you make them move or go round, for they would never have stirred, as far as I am concerned.

Soc. Then I must be a greater than Daedalus: for whereas he only made his own inventions to move, I move those of other people as well. And the beauty of it is, that I would rather not. For I would give the wisdom of Daedalus, and the wealth of Tantalus, to be able to detain them and keep them fixed. But enough of this. As I perceive that you are lazy, I will myself endeavor to show you how you might instruct me in the nature of piety; and I hope that you will not grudge your labour. Tell me, then-Is not that which is pious necessarily just?

Euth. Yes….

Soc. Then, if piety is a part of justice, I suppose that we should enquire what part? If you had pursued the enquiry in the previous cases; for instance, if you had asked me what is an even number,

[8] A mythical craftsman; designer of the labyrinth

and what part of number the even is, I should have had no difficulty in replying, a number which represents a figure having two equal sides. Do you not agree?

Euth. Yes, I quite agree.

Soc. In like manner, I want you to tell me what part of justice is piety or holiness, that I may be able to tell Meletus not to do me injustice, or indict me for impiety, as I am now adequately instructed by you in the nature of piety or holiness, and their opposites.

Euth. Piety or holiness, Socrates, appears to me to be that part of justice which attends to the gods, as there is the other part of justice which attends to men.

Soc. That is good, Euthyphro; yet still there is a little point about which I should like to have further information, What is the meaning of "attention"? For attention can hardly be used in the same sense when applied to the gods as when applied to other things. For instance, horses are said to require attention, and not every person is able to attend to them, but only a person skilled in horsemanship. Is it not so?

Euth. Certainly.

Soc. I should suppose that the art of horsemanship is the art of attending to horses?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. Nor is every one qualified to attend to dogs, but only the huntsman?

Euth. True.

Soc. And I should also conceive that the art of the huntsman is the art of attending to dogs?

Euth. Yes….

Soc. In like manner holiness or piety is the art of attending to the gods?-that would be your meaning, Euthyphro?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. And is not attention always designed for the good or benefit of that to which the attention is given? As in the case of horses, you may observe that when attended to by the horseman's art they are benefited and improved, are they not?

Euth. True.

Soc. As the dogs are benefited by the huntsman's art, and the oxen by the art of the ox herd, and all other things are tended or attended for their good and not for their hurt?

Euth. Certainly, not for their hurt.

Soc. But for their good?

Euth. Of course.

Soc. And does piety or holiness, which has been defined to be the art of attending to the gods, benefit or improve them? Would you say that when you do a holy act you make any of the gods better?

Euth. No, no; that was certainly not what I meant.

Soc. And I, Euthyphro, never supposed that you did. I asked you the question about the nature of the attention, because I thought that you did not.

Euth. You do me justice, Socrates; that is not the sort of attention which I mean.

Soc. Good: but I must still ask what is this attention to the gods which is called piety?

Euth. It is such, Socrates, as servants show to their masters.

Soc. I understand-a sort of ministration to the gods.

Euth. Exactly….

Soc. And now tell me, my good friend, about the art which ministers to the gods: what work does that help to accomplish? For you must surely know if, as you say, you are of all men living the one who is best instructed in religion.

Euth. And I speak the truth, Socrates.

Soc. Tell me then, oh tell me-what is that fair work which the gods do by the help of our ministrations?

Euth. Many and fair, Socrates, are the works which they do.

Soc. Why, my friend, and so are those of a general. But the chief of them is easily told. Would you not say that victory in war is the chief of them?

Euth. Certainly.

Soc. Many and fair, too, are the works of the husbandman, if I am not mistaken; but his chief work is the production of food from the earth?

Euth. Exactly.

Soc. And of the many and fair things done by the gods, which is the chief or principal one?

Euth. I have told you already, Socrates, that to learn all these things accurately will be very tiresome. Let me simply say that piety or holiness is learning, how to please the gods in word and deed, by prayers and sacrifices. Such piety, is the salvation of families and states, just as the impious, which is unpleasing to the gods, is their ruin and destruction.

Soc. I think that you could have answered in much fewer words the chief question which I asked, Euthyphro, if you had chosen. But I see plainly that you are not disposed to instruct me-dearly not: else why, when we reached the point, did you turn, aside? Had you only answered me I should have truly learned of you by this time the-nature of piety. Now, as the asker of a question is necessarily dependent on the answerer, whither he leads-I must follow; and can only ask again, what is the pious, and what is piety? Do you mean that they are a sort of science of praying and sacrificing?

Euth. Yes, I do.

Soc. And sacrificing is giving to the gods, and prayer is asking of the gods?

Euth. Yes, Socrates.

Soc. Upon this view, then piety is a science of asking and giving?

Euth. You understand me capitally, Socrates.

Soc. Yes, my friend; the. reason is that I am a votary of your science, and give my mind to it, and therefore nothing which you say will be thrown away upon me. Please then to tell me, what is the nature of this service to the gods? Do you mean that we prefer requests and give gifts to them?

Euth. Yes, I do.

Soc. Is not the right way of asking to ask of them what we want?

Euth. Certainly.

Soc. And the right way of giving is to give to them in return what they want of us[?] …

Euth. Very true, Socrates.

Soc. Then piety, Euthyphro, is an art which gods and men have of doing business with one another?

Euth. That is an expression which you may use, if you like.

Soc. But I have no particular liking for anything but the truth. I wish, however, that you would tell me what benefit accrues to the gods from our gifts. There is no doubt about what they give to us; for there is no good thing which they do not give; but how we can give any good thing to them in return is far from being equally clear. If they give everything and we give nothing, that must be an affair of business in which we have very greatly the advantage of them.

Euth. And do you imagine, Socrates, that any benefit accrues to the gods from our gifts?

Soc. But if not, Euthyphro, what is the meaning of gifts which are conferred by us upon the gods?

Euth. What else, but tributes of honour; and, as I was just now saying, what pleases them?

Soc. Piety, then, is pleasing to the gods, but not beneficial or dear to them?

Euth. I should say that nothing could be dearer.

Soc. Then once more the assertion is repeated that piety is dear to the gods?

Euth. Certainly.

Soc. And when you say this, can you wonder at your words not standing firm, but walking away? Will you accuse me of being the Daedalus who makes them walk away, not perceiving that there is another and far greater artist than Daedalus who makes them go round in a circle, and he is yourself; for the argument, as you will perceive, comes round to the same point. Were we not saying that the holy or pious was not the same with that which is loved of the gods? Have you forgotten?

Euth. I quite remember….

Soc. Then we must begin again and ask, What is piety? That is an enquiry which I shall never be weary of pursuing… and I entreat you not to scorn me, but to apply your mind to the utmost, and tell me the truth. For, if any man knows, you are he; and therefore I must detain you, like Proteus, until you tell. If you had not certainly known the nature of piety and impiety, I am confident that you would never, on behalf of a serf, have charged your aged father with murder. You would not have run such a risk of doing wrong in the sight of the gods, and you would have had too much respect for the opinions of men. I am sure, therefore, that you know the nature of piety and impiety. Speak out then, my dear Euthyphro, and do not hide your knowledge.

Euth. Another time, Socrates; for I am in a hurry, and must go now.

Soc. Alas! my companion, and will you leave me in despair? I was hoping that you would instruct me in the nature of piety and impiety; and then I might have cleared myself of Meletus and his indictment. I would have told him that I had been enlightened by Euthyphro, and had given up rash innovations and speculations, in which I indulged only through ignorance, and that now I am about to lead a better life.

THE END

Reading Guide

Name: _____

Plato, *Euthyphro*

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

What is piety?
What is holy?
How *does something become holy?*

IDEAS TO CONSIDER: Justice, Kinship, Piety

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Why is Socrates on the King Archon's porch?
How does Socrates speak of himself and of his accuser, Meletus?
What is his *tone* when describing Meletus?

How responsive were the Athenians to new ideas?

What is Euthyphro's accusation against his father?
What would most Athenians think of this action?
How does Euthyphro justify his action?
Do you think that Euthyphro was right to press charges against his father?

What appears to be Euthyphro's profession or area of expertise?

How does Euthyphro define *piety*?
What specific examples does he cite to demonstrate that his action is pious?

How does Socrates respond to Euthyphro's examples? Is he convinced?

How does Euthyphro finally define Piety? _____
What problems does this definition represent?

Can piety and justice be reconciled?

THE EUTHYPHRO DILEMMA: Is something holy because it is loved by the gods or do the gods love something because it's holy?

"Is that not which is pious necessarily just?" What problem is Socrates confronting about the ancient Greek religion?

Does Euthyphro ever give Socrates a definition of piety that he can accept?

"The Allegory of the Cave"
From Plato's *Republic*

Document 8.3

The History Guide: http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/allegory.html

The *Allegory of the Cave* can be found in Book VII of Plato's best-known work, *The Republic*, a lengthy dialogue on the nature of justice. Often regarded as a utopian blueprint, *The Republic* is dedicated toward a discussion of the education required of a Philosopher-King.

… As you read the *Allegory*, try to make a mental picture of the cave Plato describes. Better yet, why not draw a picture of it and refer to it as you read the selection?

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SOCRATES And now… let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened: -- Behold! human beings living in a underground cave, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the cave; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

GLAUCON I see.

SOCRATES And do you see… men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

GLAUCON You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

SOCRATES Like ourselves… and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

GLAUCON True… how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

SOCRATES And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

GLAUCON Yes…

SOCRATES And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

GLAUCON Very true.

SOCRATES And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

GLAUCON No question…

SOCRATES To them… the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

GLAUCON That is certain.

SOCRATES And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive someone saying to him, that what

he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision, -what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them, -will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

GLAUCON Far truer.

SOCRATES And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take and take in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

GLAUCON True…

SOCRATES And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he's forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

GLAUCON Not all in a moment…

SOCRATES He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

GLAUCON Certainly.

SOCRATES Last of he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is.

GLAUCON Certainly.

SOCRATES He will then proceed to argue that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold?

GLAUCON Clearly… he would first see the sun and then reason about him.

SOCRATES And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the cave and his fellow-prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?

GLAUCON Certainly, he would….

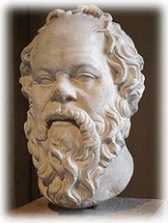
SOCRATES This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed whether rightly or wrongly God knows. But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally, either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.

GLAUCON I agree, he said, as far as I am able to understand you…

Plato, *Apology* (Abridged)

Internet Classics Archive: http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html

Document 8.4



While nearly all of Plato's works were written in the form of dialogues, the Apology *is unique, as it reads in the form of a monologue by Socrates, with the exception of when he briefly questions one of his accusers. Socrates addresses the jury, the members of which hold Socrates' fate in their hands.*

Socrates' Defense

How you have felt, O men of Athens, at hearing the speeches of my accusers, I cannot tell; but I know that their persuasive words almost made me forget who I was - such was the effect of them; and yet they have hardly spoken a word of truth. But many as their falsehoods were, there was one of them which quite amazed me - I mean when they told you to be upon your guard, and not to let yourselves be deceived by the force of my eloquence. They ought to have been ashamed of saying this, because they were sure to be detected as soon as I opened my lips and displayed my deficiency… unless by the force of eloquence they mean the force of truth; for then I do indeed admit that I am eloquent. But in how different a way from theirs! Well, as I was saying, they have hardly uttered a word, or not more than a word, of truth; but you shall hear from me the whole truth: not, however, delivered after their manner, in a set oration duly ornamented with words and phrases. No indeed! but I shall use the words and arguments which occur to me at the moment; for I am certain that this is right, and that at my time of life I ought not to be appearing before you, O men of Athens, in the character of a juvenile orator - let no one expect this of me. And I must beg of you to grant me one favor, which is this - If you hear me using the same words in my defense which I have been in the habit of using, and which most of you may have heard in the **agora,**[9] and at the tables of the money-changers, or anywhere else, I would ask you not to be surprised at this, and not to interrupt me. For I am more than seventy years of age, and this is the first time that I have ever appeared in a court of law, and I am quite a stranger to the ways of the place… Never mind the manner, which may or may not be good; but think only of the justice of my cause, and give heed to that: let the judge decide justly and the speaker speak truly.

And first, I have to reply to the older charges and to my first accusers, and then I will go to the later ones. For I have had many accusers, who accused me of old, and their false charges have continued during many years; and I am more afraid of them than of **Anytus** and his associates, who are dangerous, too, in their own way. But far more dangerous are these, who began when you were children, and took possession of your minds with their falsehoods, telling of one Socrates, a wise man, who speculated about the heaven above, and searched into the earth beneath, and made the worse appear the better cause. These are the accusers whom I dread; for they are the circulators of this rumor, and their hearers are too apt to fancy that speculators of this sort do not believe in the gods…

Well, then, I will make my defense, and I will endeavor in the short time which is allowed to do away with this evil opinion of me which you have held for such a long time; and I hope I may succeed, if this be well for you and me, and that my words may find favor with you… Let the event be as God wills…

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[9] Literally, "the gathering place," an ancient Greek equivalent of a town square. Philosophers would

I will begin at the beginning, and ask what the accusation is which has given rise to this slander of me, and which has encouraged **Meletus** to proceed against me. What do the slanderers say? They shall be my prosecutors, and I will sum up their words in an **affidavit**.[10]

> *"Socrates is an evil-doer, and a curious person, who searches into things under the earth and in heaven, and he makes the worse appear the better cause; and he teaches the aforesaid doctrines to others."*

That is the nature of the accusation, and that is what you have seen yourselves in the comedy of **Aristophanes**; who has introduced a man whom he calls Socrates, going about and saying that he can walk in the air, and talking a deal of nonsense concerning matters of which I do not pretend to know either much or little - not that I mean to say anything disparaging of anyone who is a student of natural philosophy… But the simple truth is, O Athenians, that I have nothing to do with these studies. Very many of those here present are witnesses to the truth of this, and to them I appeal…

As little foundation is there for the report that I am a teacher, and take money; that is no more true than the other. Although, if a man is able to teach, I honor him for being paid… but the truth is that I have no knowledge of the kind.

…Men of Athens, this reputation of mine has come of a certain sort of wisdom which I possess. If you ask me what kind of wisdom, I reply, such wisdom as is attainable by man, for to that extent I am inclined to believe that I am wise; whereas the persons of whom I was speaking have a superhuman wisdom, which I may fail to describe, because I have it not myself; and he who says that I have, speaks falsely, and is taking away my character. And here, O men of Athens, I must beg you not to interrupt me, even if I seem to say something extravagant. For the word which I will speak is not mine. I will refer you to a witness who is worthy of credit, and will tell you about my wisdom - whether I have any, and of what sort - and that witness shall be the god of **Delphi**. You must have known Chaerephon; he was early a friend of mine, and also a friend of yours, for he shared in the exile of the people, and returned with you. Well, Chaerephon, as you know, was very impetuous in all his doings, and he went to Delphi and boldly asked the oracle to tell him whether - as I was saying, I must beg you not to interrupt - he asked the oracle to tell him whether there was anyone wiser than I was, and the Pythian prophetess answered that there was no man wiser…

…When I heard the answer, I said to myself, "What can the god mean? …for I know that I have no wisdom, small or great. What can he mean when he says that I am the wisest of men?" And yet he is a god and cannot lie; that would be against his nature. After a long consideration, I at last thought of a method of trying the question. I reflected that if I could only find a man wiser than myself, then I might go to the god with a refutation in my hand. I should say to him, "Here is a man who is wiser than I am; but you said that I was the wisest." Accordingly I went to one who had the reputation of wisdom, and observed to him - his name I need not mention; he was a politician whom I selected for examination - and the result was as follows: When I began to talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise, although he was thought wise by many, and wiser still by himself; and I went and tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several who were present and heard me. So I left him, saying to myself, as I went away: **Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is - for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows. I neither know nor think that I know…**

[10] A legal document containing a sworn statement

After this I went to one man after another, being not unconscious of the enmity which I provoked, and I lamented and feared this: but necessity was laid upon me - the word of God, I thought, ought to be considered first… When I left the politicians, I went to the poets… And there, I said to myself, you will be detected; now you will find out that you are more ignorant than they are. Accordingly, I took them some of the most elaborate passages in their own writings, and asked what was the meaning of them - thinking that they would teach me something… I am almost ashamed to speak of this, but still I must say that there is hardly a person present who would not have talked better about their poetry than they did themselves… upon the strength of their poetry they believed themselves to be the wisest of men in other things in which they were not wise. So I departed, conceiving myself to be superior to them for the same reason that I was superior to the politicians.

At last I went to the artisans, for I was conscious that I knew nothing at all, as I may say, and I was sure that they knew many fine things; and in this I was not mistaken, for they did know many things of which I was ignorant, and in this they certainly were wiser than I was. But I observed that even the good artisans fell into the same error as the poets; because they were good workmen they thought that they also knew all sorts of high matters, and this defect in them overshadowed their wisdom - therefore I asked myself on behalf of the oracle, whether I would like to be as I was, neither having their knowledge nor their ignorance, or like them in both; and I made answer to myself and the oracle that I was better off as I was.

This investigation has led to my having many enemies of the worst and most dangerous kind… and I am called wise, for my hearers always imagine that I myself possess the wisdom which I find wanting in others: but the truth is, O men of Athens, that God only is wise; and in this oracle he means to say that the wisdom of men is little or nothing; he is not speaking of Socrates, he is only using my name as an illustration, as if he said, He, O men, is the wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth worth nothing. And so I go my way, obedient to the god, and make inquisition into the wisdom of anyone, whether citizen or stranger, who appears to be wise; and if he is not wise, then in vindication of the oracle I show him that he is not wise; and this occupation quite absorbs me, and I have no time to give either to any public matter of interest or to any concern of my own, but I am in utter poverty by reason of my devotion to the god.

There is another thing: - young men of the richer classes, who have not much to do, come about me of their own accord; they like to hear the pretenders examined, and they often imitate me, and examine others themselves; there are plenty of persons, as they soon enough discover, who think that they know something, but really know little or nothing: and then those who are examined by them instead of being angry with themselves are angry with me: This confounded Socrates, they say; this villainous misleader of youth! - and then if somebody asks them, "Why, what evil does he practice or teach?" they do not know, and cannot tell; but in order that they may not appear to be at a loss, they repeat the ready-made charges which are used against all philosophers about teaching things up in the clouds and under the earth, and having no gods, and making the worse appear the better cause; for they do not like to confess that their pretense of knowledge has been detected….

I have said enough in my defense against the first class of my accusers; I turn to the second class, who are headed by Meletus, that good and patriotic man, as he calls himself. And now I will try to defend myself against them… What do they say? … That Socrates is a doer of evil, and corrupter of the youth, and he does not believe in the gods of the state, and has other new

divinities of his own… He says that I am a doer of evil, who corrupt the youth; but I say, O men of Athens, that Meletus is a doer of evil….

Come hither, Meletus, and let me ask a question of you. You think a great deal about the improvement of youth?

Yes, I do.

Tell the judges, then, who is their improver; for you must know, as you have taken the pains to discover their corrupter, and are citing and accusing me before them. Speak, then, and tell the judges who their improver is. Observe, Meletus, that you are silent, and have nothing to say… Speak up, friend, and tell us who their improver is….

The judges, Socrates, who are present in court….

What, all of them, or some only and not others?

All of them.

By the goddess Hera, that is good news! There are plenty of improvers, then. And what do you say of the audience, - do they improve them?

Yes, they do….

Then every Athenian improves and elevates them; all with the exception of myself; and I alone am their corrupter? Is that what you affirm?

That is what I stoutly affirm.

I am very unfortunate if that is true.... But still I should like to know, Meletus, in what I am affirmed to corrupt the young. I suppose you mean, as I infer from your indictment, that I teach them not to acknowledge the gods which the state acknowledges, but some other new divinities or spiritual agencies in their stead. These are the lessons which corrupt the youth, as you say.

Yes, that I say emphatically.

Then, by the gods, Meletus, of whom we are speaking, tell me and the court, in somewhat plainer terms, what you mean… whether you affirm that I teach others to acknowledge some gods, and therefore do believe in gods and am not an entire atheist… Or, do you mean to say that I am an atheist simply, and a teacher of atheism?

I mean the latter - that you are a complete atheist.

That is an extraordinary statement, Meletus. Why do you say that? …. You really think that I do not believe in any god?

I swear by Zeus that you believe absolutely in none at all.

You are a liar, Meletus, not believed even by yourself…. you swear in the **indictment**[11] that I teach and believe in divine or spiritual agencies (new or old, no matter for that); at any rate, I believe in spiritual agencies, as you say and swear in the affidavit; but if I believe in divine beings, I must believe in spirits or demigods; - is not that true? …

Yes, that is true.

[11] A document containing a formal accusation against a person. In this case, Meletus' indictment of Socrates is not consistent with his testimony against Socrates in court.

But this is just the ingenious riddle of which I was speaking: the demigods or spirits are gods, and you say first that I don't believe in gods, and then again that I do believe in gods… You might as well affirm the existence of mules, and deny that of horses and asses. Such nonsense, Meletus, could only have been intended by you as a trial of me. You have put this into the indictment because you had nothing real of which to accuse me…

I have said enough in answer to the charge of Meletus: any elaborate defense is unnecessary; but as I was saying before, I certainly have many enemies, and this is what will be my destruction if I am destroyed; of that I am certain; - not Meletus, nor yet Anytus, but the envy and detraction of the world, which has been the death of many good men, and will probably be the death of many more; there is no danger of my being the last of them.

Someone will say: And are you not ashamed, Socrates, of a course of life which is likely to bring you to an untimely end? To him I may fairly answer: There you are mistaken: **a man who is good for anything ought not to calculate the chance of living or dying; he ought only to consider whether in doing anything he is doing right or wrong - acting the part of a good man or of a bad.** Whereas, according to your view, the heroes who fell at Troy were not good for much, and the son of Thetis[12] above all, who altogether despised danger in comparison with disgrace; and when his goddess mother said to him, in his eagerness to slay Hector, that if he avenged his companion Patroclus, and slew Hector, he would die himself - "Fate," as she said, "waits upon you next after Hector"; he, hearing this, utterly despised danger and death, and instead of fearing them, feared rather to live in dishonor, and not to avenge his friend. "Let me die next," he replies, "and be avenged of my enemy, rather than abide here by the beaked ships, a scorn and a burden of the earth." Had Achilles any thought of death and danger? For wherever a man's place is, whether the place which he has chosen or that in which he has been placed by a commander, there he ought to remain in the hour of danger; he should not think of death or of anything, but of disgrace. And this, O men of Athens, is a true saying.[13]

Strange, indeed, would be my conduct, O men of Athens, if I who, when I was ordered by the generals whom you chose to command me at Potidaea and Amphipolis and Delium,[14] remained where they placed me, like any other man, facing death; if, I say, now, when, as I conceive and imagine, God orders me to fulfill the philosopher's mission of searching into myself and other men, I were to desert my post through fear of death, or any other fear; that would indeed be strange, and I might justly be arraigned in court for denying the existence of the gods, if I disobeyed the oracle because I was afraid of death: then I should be fancying that I was wise when I was not wise. For this **fear of death is indeed the pretense of wisdom, and not real wisdom, being the appearance of knowing the unknown; since no one knows whether death, which they in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good**… And this is the point in which, as I think, I am superior to men in general, and in which I might perhaps fancy myself wiser than other men, - that whereas I know but little of the world below, I do not suppose that I know….

Men of Athens, do not interrupt, but hear me; there was an agreement between us that you should hear me out. And I think that what I am going to say will do you good: for I have something more to say, at which you may be inclined to cry out; but I beg that you will not do this. I would have you know that, if you kill such a one as I am, you will injure yourselves more than you will injure me. Meletus and Anytus will not injure me: they cannot; for **it is not in the**

[12] Achilles

[13] Note how Socrates uses Homer in much the same way that Americans use stories from the Bible today.

[14] Socrates is reminding the jury of his military service during the Peloponnesian War.

nature of things that a bad man should injure a better than himself. I do not deny that he may, perhaps, kill him, or drive him into exile, or deprive him of civil rights; and he may imagine, and others may imagine, that he is doing him a great injury: but in that I do not agree with him; for the evil of doing as Anytus is doing - of unjustly taking away another man's life - is greater [by] far. And now, Athenians, I am not going to argue for my own sake, as you may think, but for yours, that you may not sin against the God, or lightly reject his boon by condemning me. For if you kill me you will not easily find another like me, who, if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly, given to the state by the God; and the state is like a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions owing to his very size, and requires to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which God has given the state and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you. And as you will not easily find another like me, I would advise you to spare me. I dare say that you may feel irritated at being suddenly awakened when you are caught napping; and you may think that if you were to strike me dead, as Anytus advises, which you easily might, then you would sleep on for the remainder of your lives, unless God in his care of you gives you another gadfly. And that I am given to you by God is proved by this: - that if I had been like other men, I should not have neglected all my own concerns, or patiently seen the neglect of them during all these years, and have been doing yours, coming to you individually, like a father or elder brother, exhorting you to regard virtue; this I say, would not be like human nature. And had I gained anything, or if my exhortations had been paid, there would have been some sense in that: but now, as you will perceive, not even the impudence of my accusers dares to say that I have ever exacted or sought pay of anyone; they have no witness of that. And I have a witness of the truth of what I say; my poverty is a sufficient witness….

For the truth is that I have no regular disciples: but if anyone likes to come and hear me while I am pursuing my mission, whether he be young or old, he may freely come. Nor do I converse with those who pay only, and not with those who do not pay; but anyone, whether he be rich or poor, may ask and answer me and listen to my words; and whether he turns out to be a bad man or a good one, that cannot be justly laid to my charge, as I never taught him anything. And if anyone says that he has ever learned or heard anything from me in private which all the world has not heard, I should like you to know that he is speaking an untruth….

Well, Athenians, this and the like of this is nearly all the defense which I have to offer. Yet a word more. Perhaps there may be someone who is offended at me, when he calls to mind how he himself, on a similar or even a less serious occasion, had recourse to prayers and supplications with many tears, and how he produced his children in court, which was a moving spectacle, together with a posse of his relations and friends; whereas I, who am probably in danger of my life, will do none of these things. Perhaps this may come into his mind, and he may be set against me, and vote in anger because he is displeased at this. Now if there be such a person among you, which I am far from affirming, I may fairly reply to him: **My friend, I am a man, and like other men, a creature of flesh and blood, and not of wood or stone, as Homer says; and I have a family, yes, and sons. O Athenians, three in number, one of whom is growing up, and the two others are still young; and yet I will not bring any of them hither in order to petition you for an acquittal. And why not? … my reason simply is that I feel such conduct to be discreditable to myself, and you, and the whole state. One who has reached my years, and who has a name for wisdom, whether deserved or not, ought not to debase himself.** At any rate, the world has decided that Socrates is in some way superior to other men. And if those among you who are said to be superior in wisdom and courage, and any other virtue, demean themselves in this way, how shameful is their conduct! I

have seen men of reputation, when they have been condemned, behaving in the strangest manner: they seemed to fancy that they were going to suffer something dreadful if they died, and that they could be immortal if you only allowed them to live; and I think that they were a dishonor to the state, and that any stranger coming in would say of them that the most eminent men of Athens, to whom the Athenians themselves give honor and command, are no better than women.[15] And I say that these things ought not to be done by those of us who are of reputation; and if they are done, you ought not to permit them; you ought rather to show that you are more inclined to condemn, not the man who is quiet, but the man who gets up a doleful scene, and makes the city ridiculous.

But, setting aside the question of dishonor, there seems to be something wrong in petitioning a judge, and thus procuring an acquittal instead of informing and convincing him. For his duty is, not to make a present of justice, but to give judgment; and he has sworn that he will judge according to the laws, and not according to his own good pleasure; and neither he nor we should get into the habit of perjuring ourselves - there can be no piety in that. Do not then require me to do what I consider dishonorable and impious and wrong, especially now, when I am being tried for impiety on the indictment of Meletus. For if, O men of Athens, by force of persuasion and entreaty, I could overpower your oaths, then I should be teaching you to believe that there are no gods, and convict myself, in my own defense, of not believing in them. But that is not the case; for **I do believe that there are gods, and in a far higher sense than that in which any of my accusers believe in them**. And to you and to God I commit my cause, to be determined by you as is best for you and me.

The jury finds Socrates guilty.

Socrates' Proposal for his Sentence

There are many reasons why I am not grieved, O men of Athens, at the vote of condemnation. I expected it, and am only surprised that the votes are so nearly equal; for I had thought that the majority against me would have been far larger; but now, had thirty votes gone over to the other side, I should have been acquitted…

And so [Meletus] proposes death as the penalty. And what shall I propose on my part, O men of Athens? Clearly that which is my due. And what is that which I ought to pay or to receive? What shall be done to the man who has never had the wit to be idle during his whole life; but has been careless of what the many care about - wealth, and family interests, and military offices, and speaking in the assembly, and magistracies, and plots, and parties. Reflecting that I was really too honest a man to follow in this way and live, I did not go where I could do no good to you or to myself; but where I could do the greatest good privately to everyone of you, thither I went, and sought to persuade every man among you that he must look to himself, and seek virtue and wisdom before he looks to his private interests… What shall be done to such a one? Doubtless some good thing, O men of Athens, if he has his reward; and the good should be of a kind suitable to him… There can be no more fitting reward than maintenance in the Prytaneum,[16] O men of Athens, a reward which he deserves far more than the citizen who has won the prize at Olympia in the horse or chariot race…

Perhaps you may think that I am braving you in saying this, as in what I said before about the tears and prayers. But that is not the case. I speak rather because I am convinced that I never

[15] It is to be remembered that Athenian men, in general, tended to have a rather low opinion of women.
[16] A public building that housed certain officeholders and Olympic champions

intentionally wronged anyone, although I cannot convince you of that… I cannot in a moment refute great slanders; and, as I am convinced that I never wronged another, I will assuredly not wrong myself. I will not say of myself that I deserve any evil, or propose any penalty. Why should I? Because I am afraid of the penalty of death which Meletus proposes? When I do not know whether death is a good or an evil, why should I propose a penalty which would certainly be an evil? Shall I say imprisonment? And why should I live in prison? … Or shall the penalty be a fine, and imprisonment until the fine is paid? … And if I say exile… I must indeed be blinded by the love of life if I were to consider that when you, who are my own citizens, cannot endure my discourses and words, and have found them so grievous and odious that you would fain have done with them, others are likely to endure me. No, indeed, men of Athens, that is not very likely. And what a life should I lead, at my age, wandering from city to city, living in ever-changing exile, and always being driven out…

Someone will say: Yes, Socrates, but cannot you hold your tongue, and then you may go into a foreign city, and no one will interfere with you? Now I have great difficulty in making you understand my answer to this. For if I tell you that this would be a disobedience to a divine command, and therefore that I cannot hold my tongue, you will not believe that I am serious; and if I say again that **the greatest good of man is daily to converse about virtue**, and all that concerning which you hear me examining myself and others, and that **the life which is unexamined is not worth living** - that you are still less likely to believe. And yet what I say is true, although a thing of which it is hard for me to persuade you. Moreover, I am not accustomed to think that I deserve any punishment. Had I money I might have proposed to give you what I had, and have been none the worse. But you see that I have none, and can only ask you to proportion the fine to my means. However, I think that I could afford a mina,[17] and therefore I propose that penalty; Plato, Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus, my friends here, bid me say thirty minae,[18] and they will be the sureties. Well then, say thirty minae, let that be the penalty; for that they will be ample security to you.

The jury condemns Socrates to death.

Socrates' Comments on his Sentence

Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man; for they will call me wise even although I am not wise when they want to reproach you. If you had waited a little while, your desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. For I am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far from death. I am speaking now only to those of you who have condemned me to death. And I have another thing to say to them: You think that I was convicted through deficiency of words - I mean, that if I had thought fit to leave nothing undone, nothing unsaid, I might have gained an acquittal. Not so; the deficiency which led to my conviction was not of words - certainly not. **But I had not the boldness or impudence or inclination to address you as you would have liked me to address you, weeping and wailing and lamenting, and saying and doing many things which you have been accustomed to hear from others, and which, as I say, are unworthy of me.** But I thought that I ought not to do anything common or mean in the hour of danger: nor do I now repent of the manner of my defense, and **I would rather die having spoken after my manner, than speak in your manner and live**. For neither in war nor yet at law ought any man to use every

[17] A unit of currency – a silver mina was worth about $110 in modern American currency.
[18] Thirty pieces of silver… sound familiar?

way of escaping death. For often in battle there is no doubt that if a man will throw away his arms, and fall on his knees before his pursuers, he may escape death; and in other dangers there are other ways of escaping death, if a man is willing to say and do anything. The difficulty, my friends, is not in avoiding death, but in avoiding unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me, and my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness, has overtaken them. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death, and they, too, go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong; and I must abide by my award - let them abide by theirs…

And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and that is the hour in which men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my death punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose: far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained: and as they are younger they will be more severe with you, and you will be more offended at them. For if you think that by killing men you can avoid the accuser censuring your lives, you are mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honorable; the easiest and noblest way is not to be crushing others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure, to the judges who have condemned me.

Friends, who would have acquitted me, I would like also to talk with you about this thing which has happened, while the magistrates are busy, and before I go to the place at which I must die. Stay then awhile, for we may as well talk with one another while there is time. You are my friends, and I should like to show you the meaning of this event which has happened to me. O my judges - for you I may truly call judges - I should like to tell you of a wonderful circumstance. Hitherto the familiar oracle within me has constantly been in the habit of opposing me even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error about anything; and now as you see there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be, the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition, either as I was leaving my house and going out in the morning, or when I was going up into this court, or while I was speaking, at anything which I was going to say; and yet I have often been stopped in the middle of a speech; but now in nothing I either said or did touching this matter has the oracle opposed me. What do I take to be the explanation of this? I will tell you. I regard this as a proof that what has happened to me is a good, and that those of us who think that death is an evil are in error. This is a great proof to me of what I am saying, for the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good.

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good, for one of two things: - either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by the sight of dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man… will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. **Now if death is like this, I say that to die is gain**; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey

to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead are, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If indeed when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and finds the true judges who are said to give judgment there… that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I, too, shall have a wonderful interest in a place where I can converse with Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and other heroes of old, who have suffered death through an unjust judgment; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs. Above all, I shall be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge; as in this world, so also in that; I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise, and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition; or Odysseus… or numberless others, men and women too! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions! For in that world they do not put a man to death for this; certainly not. For besides being happier in that world than in this, they will be immortal, if what is said is true.

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know this of a truth - that **no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death**. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that to die and be released was better for me; and therefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason also, I am not angry with my accusers, or my condemners; they have done me no harm, although neither of them meant to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still I have a favor to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing, - then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways - I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.

Reading Guide Name: _____

Plato, *Apology*

Central Question(s):

Has Socrates committed a crime against the Athenian state?

Vocabulary/ID:

Apology
Agora
Aristophanes
Impetuous
Pretensions
Atheism
Theism

NOTE: While most of Plato's works are written in the form of *dialogues*, this work is a *monologue*, except for a brief portion when he is questioning Meletus. Sometimes, Socrates alludes to crowd noise or what someone else has said, though the words of others are not recorded in the text. Keep this in mind as you read.

Questions to consider as you read:

DAY ONE:

Socrates Begins His Defense (pp. 19-25)

What jabs does Socrates make at the sophists as he begins his speech?

What accusations have been made against Socrates? When did these accusations begin?

What did the Delphic Oracle say about Socrates? What did Socrates think of this?

How did Socrates make enemies in Athens? Why did he continue to behave in this way?

In Socrates' view, what was the source of what little wisdom he had?

Socrates Questions Meletus (pp. 25-29)

What claim does Meletus make against Socrates? How does Socrates respond?
How does Socrates address Meletus?

Socrates Explains Himself (pp. 29-34)

For what purpose does Socrates quote Homer on page 29?

Does Socrates fear death? Why or why not?

If acquitted, does Socrates intend to change his ways?

What purpose does Socrates serve in Athenian society, in his own opinion (30-31)?

Socrates Concludes His Defense, Verdict and Sentencing (34-41)

In what ways does Socrates' defense of himself differ from those traditionally offered in Athenian courts? What does Socrates think of those who employ traditional methods of defense?

When Socrates refutes the charge of atheism at the end of his defense (36), what does he mean to say about his view of the gods versus those of his accusers?

[Sentencing]

In Socrates' opinion, what is the most beneficial thing that people can do for themselves (37-38)?

What penalties does Socrates suggest for himself?

[Post-Sentencing]

In what ways does Socrates *censure* the Athenians – or at least those who voted to condemn him – for putting him to death?

For Socrates, what would be worse than death?

For what reason does Socrates have peace with the death sentence?

How does Socrates view the afterlife, or at least the prospect of it (40)?

What final request does Socrates make of his friends at the end of the *Apology* (41)?

Plato, *Crito* (Abridged)

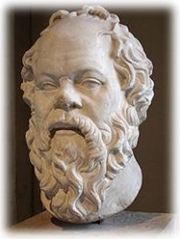
Internet Classics Archive: http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html

Document 8.5

Persons of the Dialogue
SOCRATES
CRITO

Scene
The Prison of Socrates

Themes
Fear of Death
Virtue
Justice (and Injustice)
Citizenship
The Rule of Law



Socrates. WHY have you come at this hour, Crito? it must be quite early.

Crito. Yes, certainly.

Soc. What is the exact time?

Cr. The dawn is breaking.

Soc. I wonder the keeper of the prison would let you in.

Cr. He knows me because I often come, Socrates; moreover, I have done him a kindness.

Soc. And are you only just come?

Cr. No, I came some time ago.

Soc. Then why did you sit and say nothing, instead of awakening me at once?

Cr. Why, indeed, Socrates, I myself would rather not have all this sleeplessness and sorrow. But I have been wondering at your peaceful slumbers, and that was the reason why I did not awaken you, because I wanted you to be out of pain. I have always thought you happy in the calmness of your temperament; but never did I see the like of the easy, cheerful way in which you bear this calamity.

Soc. Why, Crito, when a man has reached my age he ought not to be repining at the prospect of death.

Cr. And yet other old men find themselves in similar misfortunes, and age does not prevent them from repining.

Soc. That may be. But you have not told me why you come at this early hour.

Cr. I come to bring you a message which is sad and painful; not, as I believe, to yourself but to all of us who are your friends, and saddest of all to me.

Soc. What! I suppose that the ship has come from Delos, on the arrival of which I am to die?

Cr. No, the ship has not actually arrived, but she will probably be here to-day… and therefore to-morrow, Socrates, will be the last day of your life.

Soc. Very well, Crito; if such is the will of God, I am willing....

Cr. But, O! my beloved Socrates, let me entreat you once more to take my advice and escape. For if you die I shall not only lose a friend who can never be replaced, but there is another evil: people who do not know you and me will believe that I might have saved you if I had been willing to give money, but that I did not care. Now, can there be a worse disgrace than this- that I should be thought to value money more than the life of a friend? For the many will not be persuaded that I wanted you to escape, and that you refused.

Soc. But why, my dear Crito, should we care about the opinion of the many? Good men, and they are the only persons who are worth considering, will think of these things truly as they happened.

Cr. But do you see. Socrates, that the opinion of the many must be regarded, as is evident in your own case, because they can do the very greatest evil to anyone who has lost their good opinion?

Soc. I only wish, Crito, that they could; for then they could also do the greatest good, and that would be well. But the truth is, that they can do neither good nor evil: they cannot make a man wise or make him foolish; and whatever they do is the result of chance.

Cr. Well, I will not dispute about that; but please to tell me, Socrates, whether you are not acting out of regard to me and your other friends: are you not afraid that if you escape hence we may get into trouble with the informers for having stolen you away, and lose either the whole or a great part of our property; or that even a worse evil may happen to us? Now, if this is your fear, be at ease; for in order to save you, we ought surely to run this or even a greater risk; be persuaded, then, and do as I say.

Soc. Yes, Crito, that is one fear which you mention, but by no means the only one.

Cr. Fear not. There are persons who at no great cost are willing to save you and bring you out of prison; and as for the informers, you may observe that they are far from being exorbitant in their demands; a little money will satisfy them. My means, which, as I am sure, are ample, are at your service, and if you have a scruple about spending all mine, here are strangers who will give you the use of theirs; and one of them, Simmias the Theban, has brought a sum of money for this very purpose… and many others are willing to spend their money too. I say, therefore, do not on that account hesitate about making your escape, and do not say, as you did in the court, that you will have a difficulty in knowing what to do with yourself if you escape. For men will love you in other places to which you may go, and not in Athens only; there are friends of mine in Thessaly, if you like to go to them, who will value and protect you, and no Thessalian will give you any trouble. Nor can I think that you are justified, Socrates, in betraying your own life when you might be saved; this is playing into the hands of your enemies and destroyers; and moreover I should say that you were betraying your children; for you might bring them up and educate them; instead of which you go away and leave them, and they will have to take their chance; and if they do not meet with the usual fate of orphans, there will be small thanks to you. No man should bring children into the world who is unwilling to persevere to the end in their nurture and education. But you are choosing the easier part, as I think, not the better and manlier, which would rather have become one who professes **virtue** in all his actions, like yourself… I beseech you therefore, Socrates, to be persuaded by me, and to do as I say.

Soc. Dear Crito, your **zeal**[19] is invaluable, if a right one; but if wrong, the greater the zeal the greater the evil; and therefore we ought to consider whether these things shall be done or not. For I am and always have been one of those natures who must be guided by **reason**[20], whatever the reason may be which upon reflection appears to me to be the best; and now that this fortune has come upon me, I cannot put away the reasons which I have before given: the principles which I have hitherto honored and revered I still honor, and unless we can find other and better principles on the instant, I am certain not to agree with you… Tell me, then, whether I am right in saying that some opinions, and the opinions of some men only, are to be valued, and other opinions, and the opinions of other men, are not to be valued. I ask you whether I was right in maintaining this?

Cr. Certainly.

Soc. The good are to be regarded, and not the bad?

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[19] Fervor, or passion, for a person or cause

[20] Dispassionate thought; the consideration of arguments based on logic; the opposite of zeal

Cr. Yes.

Soc. And the opinions of the wise are good, and the opinions of the unwise are evil?

Cr. Certainly.

Soc. And what was said about another matter? Was the **disciple**[21] in gymnastics supposed to attend to the praise and blame and opinion of every man, or of one man only- his physician or trainer, whoever that was?

Cr. Of one man only.

Soc. And he ought to fear the censure and welcome the praise of that one only, and not of the many?

Cr. That is clear.

Soc. And he ought to live and train, and eat and drink in the way which seems good to his single master who has understanding, rather than according to the opinion of all other men put together?

Cr. True.

Soc. And if he disobeys and disregards the opinion and approval of the one, and regards the opinion of the many who have no understanding, will he not suffer evil?

Cr. Certainly he will.

Soc. And what will the evil be… in the disobedient person?

Cr. Clearly, affecting the body; that is what is destroyed by the evil.

Soc. Very good; and is not this true, Crito, of other things which we need not separately enumerate? In the matter of just and unjust, fair and foul, good and evil, which are the subjects of our present consultation, ought we to follow the opinion of the many and to fear them; or the opinion of the one man who has understanding, and whom we ought to fear and reverence more than all the rest of the world: and whom deserting we shall destroy and injure that principle in us which may be assumed to be improved by justice and deteriorated by injustice; is there not such a principle?

Cr. Certainly there is, Socrates.

Soc. Take a parallel instance; if, acting under the advice of men who have no understanding, we destroy that which is improvable by health and deteriorated by disease- when that has been destroyed, I say, would life be worth having? …. Could we live, having an evil and corrupted body?

Cr. Certainly not.

Soc. And will life be worth having, if that higher part of man be depraved, which is improved by justice and deteriorated by injustice? Do we suppose that principle, whatever it may be in man, which has to do with justice and injustice, to be inferior to the body?

Cr. Certainly not.

Soc. More honored, then?

Cr. Far more honored.

Soc. Then, my friend, we must not regard what the many say of us: but what he, the one man who has understanding of justice and injustice, will say, and what the truth will say. And therefore you begin in error when you suggest that we should regard the opinion of the many about justice and

[21] student

injustice, good and evil, honorable and dishonorable. Well, someone will say, "But the many can kill us."

Cr. Yes, Socrates; that will clearly be the answer.

Soc. That is true; but still I find with surprise that the old argument is, as I conceive, unshaken as ever. And I should like to know whether **I may say the same of another proposition- that not life, but a good life, is to be chiefly valued?**

Cr. Yes, that also remains.

Soc. And a good life is equivalent to a just and honorable one- that holds also?

Cr. Yes, that holds.

Soc. From these premises I proceed to argue the question whether I ought or ought not to try to escape without the consent of the Athenians: and if I am clearly right in escaping, then I will make the attempt; but if not, I will abstain…

Cr. I think that you are right, Socrates; how then shall we proceed?

Soc. Let us consider the matter together, and do you either refute me if you can, and I will be convinced; or else cease, my dear friend, from repeating to me that I ought to escape against the wishes of the Athenians: for I am extremely desirous to be persuaded by you, but not against my own better judgment. And now please to consider my first position, and do your best to answer me.

Cr. I will do my best.

Soc. Are we to rest assured, in spite of the opinion of the many, and in spite of consequences whether better or worse… that injustice is always an evil and dishonor to him who acts unjustly? Shall we affirm that?

Cr. Yes.

Soc. Then we must do no wrong?

Cr. Certainly not.

Soc. Nor when injured injure in return, as the many imagine; for we must injure no one at all?

Cr. Clearly not.

Soc. Again, Crito, may we do evil?

Cr. Surely not, Socrates.

Soc. And what of doing evil in return for evil, which is the morality of the many-is that just or not?

Cr. Not just….

Soc. Then we ought not to retaliate or render evil for evil to anyone, whatever evil we may have suffered from him.

….

Soc. Ought a man to do what he admits to be right, or ought he to betray the right?

Cr. He ought to do what he thinks right.

Soc. But if this is true, what is the application? In leaving the prison against the will of the Athenians, do I wrong any? or rather do I not wrong those whom I ought least to wrong? Do I not desert the principles which were acknowledged by us to be just? What do you say?

Cr. I cannot tell, Socrates, for I do not know.

Soc. Then consider the matter in this way: Imagine that I am about to play **truant**[22]… and the laws and the government come and interrogate me: "Tell us, Socrates," they say; "what are you about? are you going by an act of yours to overturn us- the laws and the whole State, as far as in you lies? Do you imagine that a State can subsist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law have no power, but are set aside and overthrown by individuals?"

What will be our answer, Crito, to these and the like words? Anyone, and especially a clever rhetorician, will have a good deal to urge about the evil of setting aside the law which requires a sentence to be carried out; and we might reply, "Yes; but the State has injured us and given an unjust sentence." Suppose I say that?

Cr. Very good, Socrates.

Soc. "And was that our agreement with you?" the law would say, "or were you to abide by the sentence of the State?" And if I were to express astonishment at their saying this, the law would probably add: "Answer, Socrates, instead of opening your eyes: you are in the habit of asking and answering questions. Tell us what complaint you have to make against us which justifies you in attempting to destroy us and the State? In the first place did we not bring you into existence? Your father married your mother by our aid and begat you. Say whether you have any objection to urge against those of us who regulate marriage?" None, I should reply. "Or against those of us who regulate the system of nurture and education of children in which you were trained? Were not the laws, who have the charge of this, right in commanding your father to train you in music and gymnastics?" Right, I should reply. "Well, then, since you were brought into the world and nurtured and educated by us, can you deny in the first place that you are our child and slave, as your fathers were before you? … And because we think right to destroy you, do you think that you have any right to destroy us in return, and your country as far as in you lies? And will you, O professor of true virtue, say that you are justified in this? Has a philosopher like you failed to discover that our country is more to be valued and higher and holier far than mother or father or any ancestor, and more to be regarded in the eyes of the gods and of men of understanding? also to be soothed, and gently and reverently entreated when angry, even more than a father, and if not persuaded, obeyed? And when we are punished by her, whether with imprisonment or stripes, the punishment is to be endured in silence; and if she leads us to wounds or death in battle, thither we follow as is right; neither may anyone yield or retreat or leave his rank, but whether in battle or in a court of law, or in any other place, he must do what his city and his country order him; or he must change their view of what is just: and if he may do no violence to his father or mother, much less may he do violence to his country." What answer shall we make to this, Crito? Do the laws speak truly, or do they not?

Cr. I think that they do.

Soc. Then the laws will say: "Consider, Socrates, if this is true, that in your present attempt you are going to do us wrong. For, after having brought you into the world, and nurtured and educated you, and given you and every other citizen a share in every good that we had to give, we further proclaim and give the right to every Athenian, that if he does not like us when he has come of age and has seen the ways of the city, and made our acquaintance, he may go where he pleases and take his goods with him; and none of us laws will forbid him or interfere with him. Any of you who does not like us and the city, and who wants to go to a colony or to any other city, may go where he likes, and take his goods with him. But he who has experience of the manner in which we order justice and administer the State, and still remains, has entered into an **implied contract**[23] that he will do as we command him… Of all Athenians you have been the most constant resident in the city, which, as

[22] To be absent without authorization (e.g., truant from school)

[23] Socrates hints at the idea of a *social contract* between members of a society, which would later be explored in depth by early modern political philosophers, such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.

you never leave, you may be supposed to love. For you never went out of the city either to see the games, except once when you went to the Isthmus, or to any other place unless when you were on military service; nor did you travel as other men do. Nor had you any curiosity to know other States or their laws: your affections did not go beyond us and our State; we were your especial favorites, and you acquiesced in our government of you; and this is the State in which you begat your children, which is a proof of your satisfaction. Moreover, you might, if you had liked, have fixed the penalty at banishment in the course of the trial-the State which refuses to let you go now would have let you go then. But you pretended that you preferred death to exile, and that you were not grieved at death. And now you have forgotten these fine sentiments, and pay no respect to us, the laws, of whom you are the destroyer; and are doing what only a miserable slave would do, running away and turning your back upon the compacts and agreements which you made as a citizen. And first of all answer this very question: Are we right in saying that you agreed to be governed according to us in deed, and not in word only? Is that true or not?" How shall we answer that, Crito? Must we not agree?

Cr. There is no help, Socrates.

Soc. Then will they not say: "You, Socrates, are breaking the covenants and agreements which you made with us at your leisure, not in any haste or under any compulsion or deception, but having had seventy years to think of them, during which time you were at liberty to leave the city… if our covenants appeared to you to be unfair. You had your choice, and might have gone… to some other Hellenic or foreign State. Whereas you, above all other Athenians, seemed to be so fond of the State, or, in other words, of us her laws… that you never stirred out of her…

"Socrates, if you will take our advice; do not make yourself ridiculous by escaping out of the city… Where will be your fine sentiments about justice and virtue then?

"Listen, then, Socrates, to us who have brought you up. Think not of life and children first, and of justice afterwards, but of justice first… For neither will you nor any that belong to you be happier or holier or more just in this life, or happier in another, if you do as Crito bids. Now you depart in innocence, a sufferer and not a doer of evil; a victim, not of the laws, but of men. But if you go forth, returning evil for evil, and injury for injury, breaking the covenants and agreements which you have made with us… we shall be angry with you while you live, and our brethren, the laws in the world below, will receive you as an enemy; for they will know that you have done your best to destroy us. Listen, then, to us and not to Crito."

This is the voice which I seem to hear murmuring in my ears… and prevents me from hearing any other… Yet speak, if you have anything to say.

Cr. I have nothing to say, Socrates.

Soc. Then let me follow… the will of God.

Reading Guide

Name: _____

Plato, *Crito*

If you were in Socrates' situation and a friend offered to help you escape from prison and you were reasonably sure of success, would you accept your friend's help? Explain why or why not.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

According to Socrates, when is a citizen justified in breaking the law?

_____

_____

Do you believe that there are any situations in which a person is justified in breaking the law? Explain using an example to illustrate your point.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____