

In Pursuit of Piety: A Translation and Interpretation of Plato's Euthyphro

by

Maureen A. Eckert

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2004

UMI Number: 3115245

Copyright 2004 by  
Eckert, Maureen A.

All rights reserved.

### INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

**UMI**<sup>®</sup>

---

UMI Microform 3115245

Copyright 2004 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.


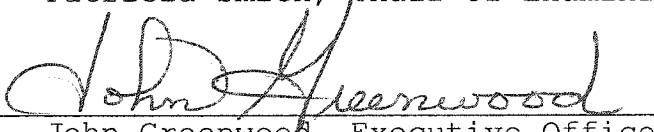
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company  
300 North Zeeb Road  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© 2004  
Maureen Eckert  
All Rights Reserved

## Approval Page

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

<u>1-13-04</u>	
Date	Patricia Smith, Chair of Examining Committee
<u>1/13/04</u>	
Date	John Greenwood, Executive Officer

Steven M. Cahn

Nikolas Pappas

Frederick Purnell

William Earle

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

## Dissertation Abstract

In Pursuit of Piety: A Translation and Interpretation of Plato's Euthyphro

By Maureen A. Eckert

Advisor: Steven M. Cahn

This dissertation presents a new translation of Plato's Euthyphro that emphasizes the literary qualities of the dialogue and also clarifies controversial philosophical passages. The translation assists a holistic interpretation of the dialogue. Main features of the commentary include attention to Euthyphro's case at the start of the dialogue. Its significance is intertwined with the whole of the work, as Euthyphro's case exemplifies a dilemma already present in Athenian religious thinking. This case intensifies the need to discover a standard notion of piety against which any innovation about the gods—the charge of impiety against Socrates—can be decided. I defend a causal interpretation of the Euthyphro Dilemma, which succeeds when the ancient Greek is carefully translated, and then show how this dilemma sets the stage for a definition of piety that can succeed. The dialogue's fourth definition of piety as service (hypertike) to the gods appears again in the Apology as the way in which Socrates describes and defends his philosophical mission. I examine the structure of this proposed definition and relate it to the comments found in the Apology. I propose that the Delphic Dictum, "Know Thyself," is the task with which humans serve the gods, and this notion best accounts for Socratic Piety. Moreover, if Socratic Piety regards the Delphic commandment, Socrates' view of piety is less innovative than might appear. Pious actions are situated within a religious context that respects the gods and also the gulf between human and divine wisdom.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Steven Cahn, my dissertation supervisor, for his support, encouragement and sound advice on this project and throughout my graduate student career. Steve is the Platonic Form of a mentor. I also wish to thank the members of my dissertation committee, Nick Pappas (especially for giving me the courage to follow my intuitions), Fred Purnell, Patricia Smith and William Earle, for their supportive, helpful questions and ideas. My colleagues Eric Steinhart and Robert Talisse gave me much encouragement, for which I am quite grateful. And I must thank my Mom and Dad, who have been there for me with their love and high hopes from the start.

I also would like to give a very special thank you to Philip A. Metzidakis, to whom I dedicate this dissertation. Through our abiding, indescribably wonderful friendship and inspired conversations, I've gained many insights into Plato and somehow along the way became more Socratic in the process. I owe Phil much gratitude for that awakening and I love him without quotation marks.

## Table of Contents

I. Introduction.....	1
II. Plato's <u>Euthyphro</u> .....	7
III: Interpretation.....	42
IV: Bibliography.....	180

## Introduction

Plato's Euthyphro dramatizes the pursuit of a definition of piety. The significance of the dialogue as a whole has been too often reduced to a background for the famous "Euthyphro Dilemma" argument it contains (10a-11b). This argument is typically understood as showing that the concept of piety cannot be theistically defined, yet the quest for a definition of piety throughout the dialogue brings much to light with respect to what it may actually be. The dramatic context explains Socrates and Euthyphro's situations and why having a definition of piety is meaningful—not simply from a theoretical standpoint, but for pressing practical matters at hand: The entire journey matters.

My interpretation covers the whole of the dialogue, beginning with Euthyphro's seemingly casual greeting to Socrates on the porch of the King Archon in which the question of "innovation" arises, a concept relevant to the charge of impiety Socrates faces as well as Euthyphro's case against his father. The interpretation concludes with Socrates' final evocative words when his interlocutor flees, abandoning their investigation. I fully explore Euthyphro's case that inspires Socrates to ask the self-proclaimed prophet and religious expert what piety is. The significance of Euthyphro's case is intertwined with the whole of the work, as Euthyphro's reasoning with respect to this difficult case exemplifies a dilemma already present in Athenian religious thinking. Euthyphro's case intensifies the need to discover a standard notion of piety against which any "innovation" about the gods—impiety—can be decided. I show how the Euthyphro Dilemma works, defending a causal interpretation, which I believe succeeds when the ancient Greek is carefully translated, then continue on to show how this dilemma sets the

stage for a definition of piety that can succeed. The dialogue's fourth definition of piety as service (hypertike) to the gods appears again in the Apology as the way in which Socrates describes and defends his philosophical mission. Socrates states at Euthyphro 14c that Euthyphro had come close to defining piety, but "turned away." The commentary on these passages examines the structure of this proposed definition and relates it to the comments found in the Apology. I make the case that Socratic Piety can be better understood when the information given in the Apology is combined with that given in Euthyphro. I explore what Socratic Piety might be, further fleshing out the task with which humans serve the gods as the Delphic Dictum, the commandment "Know Thyself." A main concern of this exploration is to show that Socrates' disappointment over leaving behind this attempt to define piety is not ironic and that there is a philosophically interesting clue in the dialogue. Moreover, if Socrates' view of piety regards the Delphic command, such a view is significantly less innovative than might appear. Pious actions, like philosophical questioning, are situated within a religious context that respects the gods and the gulf between human and divine wisdom.

The task of creating a new translation of Plato's Euthyphro goes hand in hand with that of developing a holistic interpretation. Many standard translations of the dialogue fail to capture details that provide clues about the characters involved, and, making matter worse, sometimes fail to clarify the difficult philosophical passages. My translation brings out the significant contextual details, while at the same time decodes the philosophical arguments in a way that will be helpful to the reader. For example, I gave a great deal of attention to the translation of the passive voice and passive participle constructions that are used throughout the Euthyphro Dilemma section. My main concern

was to indicate how Plato clarifies the way in which the passive construction can be misleading with respect to the “What is X?” question. The Euthyphro Dilemma is very much a problem about language, and Socrates’ examination of the problem demonstrates how ways of speaking about things can mislead one to misidentify properties and misconstrue their nature. In the least, I hope to present both a translation and interpretation of the Euthyphro Dilemma that shows the sophistication of Plato’s argument. I also hope to show that it is correct, that there are no missteps. The value of the Euthyphro Dilemma in philosophy depends upon its soundness, and I hope to lend support to its valuation.

The Euthyphro is an outstanding example of Plato’s skill as a writer and dramatist. In translating the dialogue I have tried my best to express in English as many of Plato’s punning and literary allusions as possible. While I sought to turn impossibly beautiful Attic Greek into reasonably good English, I have also strived to preserve places in the dialogue that are repetitive and uninteresting. These places occur in Euthyphro’s replies, and only when Socrates’ reasoning has become complicated and, seemingly, far too advanced for Euthyphro. I found that when Euthyphro has something to say, he does so in a verbose and self-aggrandizing manner. At other times he is left speechless, repeating the same assent to whatever Socrates says. Instead of treating such repetitions in such a way that they have marginally more style, as other translators have, I have left these statements as they are, with the idea that Plato wished them to be as repetitious and dull as he wrote them. To the best of my ability I have also tried to preserve much of the humor that I found in the dialogue. Socrates is often so quick with a remark in the midst of a complex explanation that we miss these humorous moments.

A conversation transpires between Euthyphro and Socrates--not merely a highly theoretical philosophical analysis or purely eristic philosophical debate between a questioner and answerer. All the frustrations that come along with conversing with another human being are very much alive throughout the Euthyphro. The idiosyncrasies of the conversing characters are skillfully brought to light alongside philosophical discussion. Such character traits are not incidental to the philosophical discussion, but help drive it forward. In a very short amount of dialogue, we learn about Euthyphro's vanity, how little he pays attention to any external indications that he is not respected as a prophet, and how he feels superior to the many. Plato shows us all the ways in which Socrates works his pedagogical magic with respect to Euthyphro's character throughout the dialogue. He pretends to become Euthyphro's student, hoping to learn from him what piety is. Socrates maintains this pretense throughout the dialogue, and Plato even indicates points at which this pretence becomes difficult for the master teacher. Socrates never completely loses his temper, and is willing to teach Euthyphro the rudiments of philosophical argument—despite the seriousness of his own case that he confronts. In the Euthyphro it only appears that Socrates wishes to learn what piety is from Euthyphro in order to help his own case. The reality is that the lesson is for Euthyphro's sake. We find Socrates often supplying the ideas for Euthyphro's definitions, yet he consistently attributes whatever has been said to Euthyphro. Socrates' strategy shows the generosity involved in good pedagogy. He is able to maintain his supposed "teacher's" interest in the subject matter, and this is no small feat. Euthyphro is quite clearly inexperienced in rigorous thinking, and at every point would be happy to accept statements as they are. Although Euthyphro attempts to back out of Socrates' questioning, claiming that

knowledge of piety takes a long and hard effort, it seems clear that talking with Socrates and thinking rigorously about important concepts takes even more effort and time.

Euthyphro runs away at the end of the dialogue once Socrates reveals that they have come full circle and must start over again from the beginning. The miracle, perhaps, is how Socrates managed to get him to stay as long as he did. Plato's vivid characterization of Socrates and Euthyphro's pedagogical relationship is enlightening about the hazards and difficulties of teaching. The Euthyphro provides a portrait of Socrates as a master of this art, of connecting a life situation to learning, of bringing out a recalcitrant student and maintaining his connection to the material as best he can. Plato's depiction of Socrates' teaching skill strongly commemorates him.

The methods I employ in my commentary follow a "by any means necessary" approach. This is to say that where historical information assists unpacking the meaning of passages, I provide it. Where methods of analysis provide insight into arguments and technical points, I utilize them. Where comparative literary texts reveal important beliefs held by the Ancient Greeks, I provide such source material. I have done my best to remain neutral about differing approaches to Plato's works—the famous problem of "reading Plato." Scholarship that emphasizes the historical and literary components of Plato's dialogues has much to offer, and these approaches demonstrate the brilliance of Plato's achievement as a writer in the Western literary tradition. But I believe it would be a mistake to reduce the Platonic Corpus to literature, no matter how great the dialogues are as literary achievements. Analytic approaches to particular arguments in the dialogue also have much to offer, and keep alive what I find to be an important component of the philosophical value of Plato's work. The dialogues provide us with examples of

philosophical discussion, raising questions, which can lead us to further exploration and discussion. Plato's work dramatizes this constant conversation. Insight into and expansions of the arguments in the dialogue are legitimate and appropriate responses to the powerful initial subject matter.

Euthyphro

Socrates, what innovation's happened to make you leave your usual place in the Lyceum 2  
and now be wasting time waiting here in the King Archon's porch? I dare say you can't  
be prosecuting a lawsuit before the judge as I am.

Socrates

The Athenians call it an indictment, Euthyphro—not a prosecution.

Euthyphro

You don't say. It seems likely someone has brought a lawsuit against you. I wouldn't B  
dare suggest you have indicted someone.

Socrates

Certainly not.

Euthyphro

So, someone has indicted you?

Socrates

Precisely.

Euthyphro

Who's this opponent?

Socrates

I don't know the man well, myself, Euthyphro. He seems to me to be young and  
unknown. I believe he is called Meletus. He's from the Pitthean district—if you recall  
someone from that district named Meletus, with long, straight hair, not much of a beard  
and a somewhat hooked nose.

Euthyphro

I haven't considered him, Socrates. But, what charge has he written you up for? C

Socrates

What charge? Not an ignoble charge, I suppose, for it's no small thing for a man so young to have knowledge about such an important subject. He says he knows how our young men are corrupted and the one who corrupts them. He is most likely a wise man, and, seeing my ignorance corrupting his contemporaries, he goes to tell on me to the city, like a boy to his mother. It seems to me that he is the only one of our politicians beginning in the right way; the 'right way' meaning his foremost care is that the young D should be as good as possible, just as a good farmer is likely to care first about the young plants and the others later. So, I suppose, Meletus also first weeds out those of us who, as 3 he says, corrupt the young shoots, and then afterwards, clearly, he will take care of the older ones and become a source of the greatest blessings for the city. Anyway, that's what you'd expect to happen to someone with such a beginning.

Euthyphro

I wish that were so, Socrates, but I fear the opposite may happen. It seems to me that he starts out ruining the heart of the city in trying to injure you. But tell me, what does he say you do to corrupt the youth?

Socrates

Absurdities, my admirable friend, at first hearing. He says that I am a maker of gods, and B because I invent new gods while not acknowledging the old ones, as he claims, he is indicting me.

Euthyphro

I understand, Socrates. It's because you say that your divine sign always comes to you. So he has indicted you as one who is an innovator about the gods, and he goes to court to slander you, knowing that it is easy to misrepresent such things to the many. Why, they even scornfully laugh at me in the Assembly as if I were crazy whenever I speak about the C gods and predict things to come in the future; yet I've never proclaimed anything that has not come true. But, all the same, they envy all people who do this. It's not necessary to worry about them, but tackle them head-on.

Socrates

My dear Euthyphro, maybe being laughed at is not too big of a deal. It seems to me that the Athenians don't care much about anyone whom they think is clever, as long as he does not teach his wisdom. But if they think he makes others as clever as himself, they D get angry, whether through jealousy, as you say, or for some other reason.

Euthyphro

I'm not terribly anxious to test just how they feel about me in this matter.

Socrates

Well, perhaps they think that you make yourself scarce and are unwilling to teach your wisdom. I fear they believe my love for people makes me talk freely to all men, and without payment, but I would gladly pay people myself if they'd be willing to listen to me. Then if, as I just now said, they were only going to laugh at me as you say they laugh at you, it would not be an unpleasant way to pass the day in court, joking and laughing. E But, if they are going to be serious, here we come to an unclear matter of which only prophets like you will grasp the outcome.

Euthyphro

Most likely, Socrates, nothing will come of it, except that you will carry your case as you think best and I will do so with mine.

Socrates

Well then, what's this case of yours, Euthyphro? Are you the hunter or the hunted?

Euthyphro

Prosecutor.

Socrates

Whom are you indicting?

4

Euthyphro

One they think I'm even more crazy to be prosecuting.

Socrates

What? Are you chasing a winged flight risk?

Euthyphro

He's not much for flying, he happens to be quite advanced in age.

Socrates

Who is he?

Euthyphro

My father.

Socrates

My good friend—your own father!

Euthyphro

Indeed.

Socrates

What's the accusation—and the case?

Euthyphro

Murder, Socrates.

Socrates

Heracles! Surely, Euthyphro, most men would not know what way to do this and grasp where the right is. I suppose not just anybody could do this, but only someone who is far **B** advanced in wisdom.

Euthyphro

Very far advanced, by Zeus, Socrates.

Socrates

Well then, is the man killed by your father a kinsman? Clearly, because you wouldn't proceed against your own father for the murder of a stranger.

Euthyphro

How amusing it is, Socrates, for you to think it makes a difference whether the victim is a stranger or relative, and not bear in mind one thing, whether the killer acted justly. If he acted justly, let him go, but if not, one should prosecute, if the killer shares your hearth **C** and eats at the same table with you. The pollution is the same if, aware of what's right, you keep company with such a man and do not purify yourself and that man from pollution by bringing him to justice. The one who was killed was a hired day laborer of mine. When we were farming in Naxos he worked there for us. He cut the throat of one of our household slaves in a drunken fit of anger, so my father bound his hands and his feet together, threw him in some ditch, and then sent a man here to inquire from the head **D** seer what needed be done. During that time he made little account

of—and even completely neglected—the bound man, it being no matter, as he was a murderer, whether he suffered. Hunger, cold and the bonds caused his death before the messenger returned from the seer. Both my father and my other kinsmen are angry with this, as I am prosecuting my father for murder on behalf of a murderer when he hadn't really killed him, so they say. And even if it were true he had killed him, the dead man, being a murderer, doesn't need consideration because it is impious for a son to prosecute E his father for murder. But, Socrates, they wrongfully perceive what the divine law holds in regard to piety and impiety.

Socrates

With Zeus as witness, Euthyphro, you believe you understand what divine law holds and what is pious and impious so accurately that, when those things took place as you say, you're not afraid that you happen to be doing an impious thing in bringing your father to trial?

Euthyphro

I should be of no use, Socrates, and Euthyphro would not surpass common men, if I did 5 not accurately know all such things.

Socrates

Admirable Euthyphro, then wouldn't the best thing be for me to become your student? And so challenge Meletus for his very indictment, saying that in times before I always thought divine matters were very important, and now, since he says that I improvise unadvisedly and am wrong about these issues, I have become your student. I should say, B "Meletus, if you agree that Euthyphro is wise about these things, then it follows that I hold the right beliefs, so don't indict me. Otherwise, obtain leave to bring a suit

against this teacher of mine for corrupting the elderly, me and his own father, by teaching me and admonishing and punishing him.” And if he’s not persuaded and doesn’t discharge the lawsuit against me or bring a suit against you in my place, could I say the same things in court, which I just said in my challenge to him?

Euthyphro

Yes, indeed, by Zeus, Socrates, and, if he should attempt to indict me, I believe I would discover his weak spot and the talk in the court would sooner be a question about him than about me. C

Socrates

I see this, my dear companion, and have set my heart on becoming your student. I know that neither other people nor this Meletus appear to notice you, whereas he sees through me so sharply and easily that he’s indicted me for irreverence towards the gods. So tell me now, by Zeus, what you just now claimed so confidently that you clearly knew: what kind of thing do you say that reverence and irreverence towards the gods are, with respect D to both murder and other things? Is the pious not the same with itself in every action, and the impious is the very opposite of all that is pious and the same with itself, everything that is impious possessing some single characteristic in so far as it is impious?

Euthyphro

It must really be so, Socrates.

Socrates

Tell me then, what do you say the pious and the impious are?

Euthyphro

Well then, I say that the pious is what I am doing now, to prosecute the wrongdoer, be it for committing murder or temple robbery or any other such thing, whether the wrongdoer happens to be your father or your mother or anyone else; not to prosecute is impious. For E behold, Socrates, that I will proclaim a great proof from the law to you—which I have told others already, that such actions are right if they happen this way—that we not release and tolerate the irreverent, whoever they happen to be. Men themselves happen to believe that Zeus is the best and most just of the gods, yet they agree that he bound his 6 father because he unjustly swallowed his sons, and that he, in turn, castrated his father for similar reasons. They are angry with me because I am prosecuting my father for wrongdoing, but, in this way, they say things that contradict themselves about the gods and about me.

Socrates

Indeed, Euthyphro, it's on account of this that I'm trying to escape my indictment, because whenever such things are said about the gods I find how unendurable they are to accept; and it seems that because of this I will be told that I do wrong. Now then, if you also think the same, knowing full well about these things, it seems we're forced to B accede. For what can we say, we who agree that we do not know them? But tell me, by the god of friendship, do you believe these things happened in this way, truthfully?

Euthyphro

And even more amazing things than these, Socrates, which the many do not know.

Socrates

So you believe that there is a war of the gods, between one another, in reality—and terrible enmities, strife, and many other such things—as are told by the poets, and are on other sacred objects elaborately ornamented by good painters and also the robe of the great Panathenaea, fully embroidered with things like this, which is carried up the Acropolis? Are we to say these things are true, Euthyphro?

Euthyphro

Not only these things, Socrates, as I was saying just now, but if you wish, I will describe many other things about the gods which I certainly think will shock you when you hear them.

Socrates

I would not be surprised. But you can tell me these things some other time at leisure. D Right now, try to tell me more clearly what I was just asking you about. Because, my friend, you did not teach me sufficiently before when I asked you what the pious was, but you told me that this happens to be pious, what you are doing now, prosecuting your father for murder.

Euthyphro

And I spoke the truth, Socrates.

Socrates

Perhaps. But, you say, however, that many other things are pious.

Euthyphro

It's so.

Socrates

Remember, then, that I didn't exhort you to teach me one or two of the many pious actions, but that aspect itself by which all pious things are pious? You said, at some point, all the impious and all the pious are impious and pious by single characteristics, or E don't you remember?

Euthyphro

Indeed, I did.

Socrates

Well then, teach me what this aspect itself is, in order that I may look upon it and use it as a model, so I may say that anything of this kind, which you or someone else does is pious, or if it's not, I may say that it isn't.

Euthyphro

If you wish, Socrates, I will show you in that way.

Socrates

Well, I do wish this.

Euthyphro

What the gods love is pious, and accordingly what is not loved is impious. 7

Socrates

Very good, Euthyphro. Now you've answered in the way I asked you to answer. I don't know yet if this answer is true, but clearly you'll teach me that what you say is true.

Euthyphro

By all means.

Socrates

Come then, let us examine what we say. The god-loved thing and man are pious, and the god-hated thing and man are impious. They are not the same, but are exact opposites, the pious and the impious. Is this not so?

Euthyphro

It's this way, indeed.

Socrates

And it appears to be correctly said?

Euthyphro

I think so, Socrates.

**B**

Socrates

Very well, have we said this, Euthyphro, that the gods disagree and differ with each other and there is hatred between them?

Euthyphro

We said this.

Socrates

What about the difference, noble friend, causes hatred and anger? Let's look at it this way. If you and I were to differ about number as to which is greater, would this difference make us enemies and angry at each other, or could we quickly get rid of our difference about this through counting?

**C**

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

And then again, if we were to differ about a thing being larger or smaller, would we cease to disagree by proceeding to measure it?

Euthyphro

That's so.

Socrates

And we would come to a decision about a heavy or lighter thing by proceeding to weigh it, I suppose?

Euthyphro

How could it not be so?

Socrates

What would a difference be about, about which we could not decide, and which would make us angry and cause hatred between each of us? Perhaps, you do not have an answer ready at hand, but examine what I say—if the matters here are the just and unjust, the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad. Then aren't these differences about which we are unable to come to a satisfactory decision those that cause you and I and all other men to become enemies with each other whenever we do become enemies?

Euthyphro

That is the difference, Socrates, about them.

Socrates

What about the gods, Euthyphro? If they have differences, wouldn't they differ about these same things?

Euthyphro

Quite necessarily.

Socrates

Then according to your argument, high-minded Euthyphro, different gods contend that E different things are just, beautiful, ugly, good, and bad; for they wouldn't fight with one another unless they differed about these matters, would they?

Euthyphro

You speak correctly.

Socrates

Then each god contends that the very things, which they love, are beautiful, good, and just, and hates the opposites of these?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

But you say that the same things are considered just by some gods and unjust by others, and disputing about these things, they are in a state of discord and enemies with each 8 other. Is this not so?

Euthyphro

It is.

Socrates

Then, as it seems, the same things are both hated and loved by the gods and the same things would be both god-hated and god-loved.

Euthyphro

So it seems.

Socrates

Then both the impious and the pious would be the same thing, Euthyphro, on this view.

Euthyphro

It's possible.

Socrates

So then you did not answer my question, admirable man. I did not ask what happens to be both pious and impious—and, as it seems, what is both god-loved and also god-hated. **B** It wouldn't be surprising, then, Euthyphro, if that which you're doing now, punishing your father, were loved by Zeus, but hated by Cronus and Ouranos, loved by Hephaestus, but hated by Hera, and so on as to any other of the gods, if they disagree about this with any other gods.

Euthyphro

But, Socrates, I think that none of the gods differ with the others about this, or not believe it's necessary that whoever has killed anyone unjustly must pay the penalty.

Socrates

Well then, Euthyphro, speaking of men, did you ever hear any man arguing that someone **C** who has killed a man or done anything else unjustly should not pay the penalty?

Euthyphro

They never cease arguing about these things in the courts of justice and elsewhere, for when they've done numerous wrong things, they say and do anything to avoid the penalty.

Socrates

Do they agree, Euthyphro, they've done wrong, yet agreeing to this, nevertheless say it's not necessary to pay the penalty?

Euthyphro

In no way do they say this.

Socrates

So then there's at least one thing they don't say and do. For I believe they don't dare say or dispute this, that even if they really have done wrong they must not pay the penalty, but I believe they say they've not done wrong. Is this so?

Euthyphro

You speak the truth.

Socrates

Then they do not dispute that the wrongdoer must be punished, but, perhaps, they disagree about this; who the wrongdoer is, what he did and when.

Euthyphro

You speak the truth.

Socrates

Very well, then, isn't it just the same way for the gods, if indeed they really are in a state of discord about the just and unjust, as you claim, some saying that others have acted unjustly while others say they have not? Whereas, admirable friend, it may be that no one among the gods or men dares to claim that the wrongdoer must not pay the penalty. E

Euthyphro

Yes, you speak the truth about this, Socrates, which is the chief concern.

Socrates

But I believe, Euthyphro, that those disagreeing over what will be a penalty, whether men or gods, if the gods really disagree, disagree about each action. Some of those

disagreeing about the action say that what had been done was just and others say that it was unjust. Is this not so?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

Come now, dear Euthyphro, and teach me in order that I may become wiser, what proof 9  
you have that all the gods hold that man had been killed unjustly, the laborer who became  
a murderer, having been bound by the master of the man he killed, and first died before  
the one who bound him hand and foot was told by the interpreter of oracles what was  
necessary to do--and it is right for a son to prosecute and denounce his father for murder  
in defense of such a man. Come, try to prove to me by argument clearly about this, that  
beyond a doubt all the gods find this action right, and if you can demonstrate this B  
sufficiently to me, even I would never cease praising you for your wisdom.

Euthyphro

Yet, perhaps the task is not small, Socrates, although I could indulge showing you quite  
clearly.

Socrates

I perceive that you imagine me slower at learning than the jurors since you will clearly  
demonstrate that these actions are unjust and all the gods hate them.

Euthyphro

By all means clearly, Socrates, if only they will listen to what I say.

Socrates

They will listen if they think you speak well. But this occurred to me at the same time you C were speaking, and so I contemplate it within myself: “Even if, above all, Euthyphro should teach me that all the gods find such a death to be unjust, what more have I learned from Euthyphro about the pious and the impious? For this action, so it seems, would be god-hated. But it was just now shown that this did not define the pious and impious, for it was shown to be both god-hated and god-loved.” But, I can let you go about this, Euthyphro; if you wish, all the gods might hold this action unjust and hate it. But now we D can revise the definition to this effect— that all the gods hate the impious and that they love what is pious. And what some love and some hate is neither or both—however, is this the correction we are making in our discussion, that what all the gods hate is impious and what they all love is pious, and that what some gods love and others hate is neither or both? Is this the way you wish to define the pious and the impious now?

Euthyphro

What prevents this, Socrates?

Socrates

Nothing from me, Euthyphro, but you look to yourself, if with this proposal you can easily teach me what you promised.

Euthyphro

Well, I, at least, would say this is the pious, what all the gods love, and the opposite, what E all the gods hate, is impious.

Socrates

Surely, then let us examine this again, Euthyphro, if it is well put, or should we concede and so accept our definition and those of others, and if someone should say "it is so," then we should agree that it is so? Should one consider what something said means?

Euthyphro

One should consider this, but I certainly think, at the moment, this is well stated.

Socrates

Soon we'll know better, good friend. Consider this: Notice--Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods? 10

Euthyphro

I don't understand what you're saying, Socrates.

Socrates.

I'll try to explain more clearly: We speak of something being carried and someone carrying, of something being led and someone leading, of something being seen and someone seeing--and you understand that all these are different from one another and how they are different?

Euthyphro

I believe that I understand.

Socrates

Very well, then there is something being loved, and there is someone loving that's a different thing.

Euthyphro

How could it not be so?

Socrates

So, tell me then whether something which is being carried is being carried because B  
someone carries it or for some other reason?

Euthyphro

No, that's it.

Socrates

And something being led is this way because someone leads it, and something being seen  
is this way because someone sees it?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

Well, something is not seen because it has the quality of being seen, but because someone  
sees it, it has this quality of being seen. Nor is something led by someone because it has  
the quality of being led, but because someone leads it, it has this quality of being led; nor  
does someone carry something because it has the quality of being carried, but it has this  
quality of being carried because someone carries it. Well, is what I want to say clear,  
Euthyphro? I want to say this, if someone produces something or someone affects C  
something, someone does not produce something on account of its having the quality of  
being produced, but because someone produces something it has the quality of being  
produced. Nor does someone affect something because it has the quality of being  
affected. But because someone affects something it has the quality of being affected. Or  
do you not agree with this?

Euthyphro

I do.

Socrates

All right, then. Is what is loved either something that has the quality of being produced or being affected by someone?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

Well, then this is like the preceding things; isn't it that something is not loved by those who love it because it has the quality of being loved, but it has this quality of being loved because they love it?

Euthyphro

Necessarily.

Socrates

What do we say about the pious, Euthyphro? So, it is loved by all the gods, as you say? **D**

Euthyphro

Yes.

Socrates

Because of this it is pious, or for some other reason?

Euthyphro

No, because of this.

Socrates

Okay. So, is it loved because it is pious, but it is not pious because it is loved?

Euthyphro

So it seems.

Socrates

So then, because it is loved by the gods, it has the quality of being loved and is god-loved.

Euthyphro

How could it not be so?

Socrates

The god-loved is not the pious, Euthyphro, nor is the pious god-loved, as you say it is, but one is different from the other.

Euthyphro

How so, Socrates?

E

Socrates

Because we agree that the pious is loved for the reason that it is pious, but it is not pious because it is loved. Is this so?

Euthyphro

Yes.

Socrates

So, something god-loved is god-loved, meaning it is loved by the gods because of this fact of its being loved, but it is not loved because it is god-loved.

Euthyphro

You speak the truth.

Socrates

So, if, dear Euthyphro, the god-loved and the pious were the same thing, then the pious would be loved because it was pious, and then the god-loved would be loved because it 11 was god-loved, if the god-loved was god-loved on account of being loved by the gods. And thus, the pious would be pious because it was loved by all the gods; yet now you see that they are opposite to one another, being completely different from each other. For one has the quality of being loved simply because it is loved, while the other is a kind of thing that is loved because it is loveable. I venture to guess, Euthyphro, that when you were asked what piety is, you did not wish to make its essential nature clear to me, but told me some incidental quality it has, because the pious is affected like this, it is loved by all the B gods, but you have not yet said what it is. Therefore, as a friend, do not keep this hidden, but once again from the beginning explain what piety is at some time. Whether it is loved by the gods or has another state—we shall not quarrel about that—but eagerly tell me what the pious and the impious are.

Euthyphro

But Socrates, I have no way of saying what's on my mind to you, for what we put forward always goes around in any which way and is unwilling to stand fast in the place where we establish it.

Socrates

Euthyphro, the things you say appear to pertain to my ancestor, Daedalus. If I were the C one saying these things and putting them forward, perhaps you would make fun of me and say that on account of my relationship with him, the artifacts of my speech run away and are unwilling to stand fast in the place where they are put. But as it is, the proposals

are yours. There's need of another joke, for they will not stay put for you, as you yourself suppose.

Euthyphro

It seems to me this off-hand joke is what these statements call for, Socrates, as I am not the one who makes them go around and not stand fast in the same place. You create this, not me. But, it seems to me that you are the Daedalus; whereas if it depended on me they **D** would remain fixed.

Socrates

Well, I dare suggest, my friend, I am a cleverer man than him in my skill, insofar as he could only make the things he himself made move, but it seems I make other men's move as well as my own. Indeed, the cleverest thing about my skill is that I am unwillingly clever, for I would prefer if my statements stood fast and were more firmly established than possess the skill of Daedalus and the wealth of Tantalus. But enough of that. Since **E** you seem to me to be so dainty about it, I myself will help you that you may teach me about piety, and do not give up before your work is done. See if it seems to you that all that is pious is necessarily just.

Euthyphro

It seems so to me.

Socrates

Well, then is all that is just pious? Or is all that is pious just, but not all that is just pious, **12** but some of it is pious and some is another thing?

Euthyphro

I do not follow what you say, Socrates.

Socrates

And yet you are younger than I, as much as you are no less wiser. But, as I say, you live softly because of your wealth of wisdom. But, blessed man, pull yourself together, for what I'm saying isn't hard to understand. I say the opposite of what the poet wrote who said:

You do not wish to name Zeus, the creator, who brought about all things;

For where there is fear there is also reverence. B

I really disagree with the poet about this. Should I tell you in what way?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

It doesn't seem to me that "where there is fear there is also reverence," for, to me, many people seem to fear sickness, poverty and many other such things, but not to revere these things, which they fear. Does it not seem so to you?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

But where there is reverence there is also fear. Since is there anyone who feeling reverence and shame about some action, doesn't at the same time also dread and fear C appearing cowardly?

Euthyphro

He is certainly afraid.

Socrates

Then it isn't right to say where there is fear there is also reverence, but that where there is reverence, there is also fear, as reverence is not everywhere that fear is; I think that fear is greater in scope than reverence. Reverence is a part of fear just as the odd is a part of number, so that it is not the case that where there is number there is also oddness, but where there is oddness there is also number. I suppose you follow me now?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

It was something of that sort I meant before when I asked if where there is justice there is also piety? Whether or not if where there is piety, there is also justice, and if justice isn't D greater in scope than piety and piety is a part of justice? Should we say this or do you think otherwise?

Euthyphro

No, not otherwise, because what you say seems right to me.

Socrates

See this next point. If the pious is a part of justice, it is necessary for us, so it seems, to discover what part of justice the pious is. Then, if you asked me about something we were just now saying, such as what makes a part of number even, and what happens to be this kind of number, I'd say "that which is not unequally divisible, but can be divided into two equal parts." Does it seem this way to you?

Euthyphro

It does to me.

Socrates

So attempt in this way to teach me the part of justice piety is in order that we may tell E  
 Meletus to no longer wrong us nor charge me with impiety, since I've already sufficiently  
 learned from you what's reverence and piety and what is not.

Euthyphro

It seems this way to me then, Socrates, that the part of justice that is reverence and piety  
 concerns attending to the gods, and the remaining part of justice concerns attending to  
 men.

Socrates

You seem to me to state that very well, but I am still lacking a little something. I don't 13  
 know yet what you mean by 'attention.' For you cannot mean the same kind of attention  
 to the gods as attention to other things--we usually say--for example, that not everyone  
 understands how to care for horses, but the horseman does, is this so?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

So horsemanship is attending to horses.

Euthyphro

Yes.

Socrates

Nor does everyone understand how to attend to dogs, but the hunter does.

Euthyphro

That's so.

Socrates

So the art of hunting includes attending to dogs.

Euthyphro

Yes.

B

Socrates

And cattle raising is attending to cattle.

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

And piety and reverence is attending to the gods, Euthyphro? Do you mean this?

Euthyphro

I do.

Socrates

Does attention accomplish the same thing in every case? Like this, for example; it is for the good and the benefit of something that it is attended to, as you might see that horses given attention through horsemanship are benefited and become improved. Or it doesn't seem so to you?

Euthyphro

It seems so to me.

Socrates

So dogs, likewise, are benefited through the art of hunting, cattle by cattle raising, and all C else in the same way. Or do you think that attention is supposed to harm what is being attended?

Euthyphro

No, by Zeus, I don't.

Socrates

But it benefits it?

Euthyphro

How could it not be so?

Socrates

Then piety, which is attending to the gods, is what helps the gods and makes them better?

So you would grant that when you do something pious you make some one of the gods better?

Euthyphro

No, by Zeus, I don't.

Socrates

Nor do I think that this is what you mean—far from it—but I asked you before what you meant by attention to the gods, because I did not believe you meant anything of this sort.

Euthyphro

Quite right, Socrates, I didn't mean anything of that sort.

Socrates

Very well, but what kind of attention to the gods would piety be?

Euthyphro

The kind of attention, Socrates, which slaves give their masters.

Socrates

I understand. It is something like a kind of service to the gods.

Euthyphro

Precisely.

Socrates

Could you say for what result does a physician's service aim at producing? Is it not health, do you think?

Euthyphro

I do.

Socrates

What is the shipbuilders' service? What is the result it aims at producing?

E

Euthyphro

Clearly, Socrates, a ship.

Socrates

And the house-builders' service is surely building a house?

Euthyphro

Yes.

Socrates

Tell me then, best friend, what result does the service to the gods aim at producing? It's clear that you know, since you say that you possess more perfect knowledge of the gods than ordinary men.

Euthyphro

And I speak the truth, Socrates.

Socrates

Tell me then, by Zeus, what is that very excellent result that the gods produce, using us as their servants?

Euthyphro

Many fine things, Socrates.

Socrates

And so do generals, dear friend. But, nevertheless, you could easily explain their chief 14  
concern, which is to produce victory in war, is it not?

Euthyphro

Of course.

Socrates

The farmers also produce many fine things, I believe, but, nevertheless, their chief  
concern is producing food from the earth.

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

So, what are the many fine things that the gods produce? What is the chief concern of  
their work?

Euthyphro

I told you a little earlier, Socrates, that all these things necessarily take a long effort to B  
learn accurately; nevertheless, I can say this to you simply, that if one knows how to say  
in prayer and do in sacrifice what is pleasing to the gods, this is piety, and maintaining  
these things in individuals' private homes as well as publicly in the states. The opposite  
of these pleasing things is impiety, which overturns and destroys everything.

Socrates

If you wished, Euthyphro, you could have answered the main point of my question much more briefly. But you're not eager to teach me, it's clear. And just now when you were C so close, you turned away. Had you answered, I would have sufficiently learned what piety is from you. Now it's necessary that the questioner follow the one questioned in whatever direction that he takes. What do you say the pious and piety are? Weren't they knowing how to sacrifice and pray?

Euthyphro

I think so.

Socrates

Then, to sacrifice is to make a gift to the gods, and to pray is to beg from the gods?

Euthyphro

Well put, Socrates.

Socrates

Then the knowledge of begging from and giving to the gods would be piety, according to D this statement.

Euthyphro

You understand quite well what I said, Socrates.

Socrates

That is because I'm so desirous of your wisdom, and I concentrate my mind on it, so that no word of yours may fall to the ground. But won't you tell me what is this service to the gods? Do you say it is to beg from them and give to them?

Euthyphro

I do.

Socrates

Then wouldn't the right way to beg be to ask them for the things we need from them?

Euthyphro

What else?

Socrates

So, similarly again, the right way to give to them is succeeding to present to them what they need from us? Somehow, it wouldn't be skillful to bring presents, which aren't needed at all.

Euthyphro

You say the truth, Socrates.

Socrates

Then piety would be a sort of trading skill between gods and men?

Euthyphro

Trade, if you enjoy calling it that.

Socrates

Nothing is enjoyable to me, unless it happens to be true. Explain to me, what profit the gods gain from the gifts they take from us? What they give is clear to all. There is nothing good, which they don't give to us. But what profit do they gain from what we 15 give them? Or do we have such a greater advantage over them in this commerce that we get all the good things from them while they get nothing from us?

Euthyphro

But do you believe, Socrates, the gods profit from these things, which they get from us?

Socrates

What in the world could those gifts from us to the gods be, Euthyphro?

Euthyphro

What else, do you think, than esteem, honor and what I just said, gratitude?

Socrates

Then the pious, Euthyphro, is gratifying to the gods, but it isn't profitable or loved by them? **B**

Euthyphro

I believe, of all things, it is most loved.

Socrates

So once again, it seems, the pious is that which is loved the gods.

Euthyphro

Most certainly.

Socrates

Then will you marvel at saying this, because your words don't appear to stand fast, but walk around and will you accuse me of being a Daedalus and making them walk, while you are much more skillful than Daedalus, making them move around in a circle? Or don't you see that our definition has come back, going around and returning once more to C the starting point? I suppose you remember that before this the pious and god-loved were shown to us not to be the same but different from each other. Or don't you remember?

Euthyphro

I do.

Socrates

Then haven't you considered that you are now saying that what is loved by gods is piety?

And this is what the god-loved turns out to be? Or is it not?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

Then, certainly, our earlier agreement wasn't right, or, if it was right at that time, our reasoning is not right now.

Euthyphro

So it seems.

Socrates

Then we must consider again from the beginning what the pious is, since I will not flinch until I learn anything that concerns it. Don't hold me in low esteem, but in every way **D** focus your mind and, above all, now speak the truth. You know, if any man does, and must not be released, like Proteus, until you speak. For if you hadn't clearly known the pious and the impious, it's impossible that you would have attempted to indict your elderly father for murder on behalf of a hired day laborer. And you would have been afraid of the gods to venture this desperately, in case you weren't doing the right thing, and would have been ashamed before men as well. But now I know that you clearly **E** believe that you know what's pious and what isn't. So tell me, most excellent Euthyphro, and don't conceal what you believe.

Euthyphro

Some other time then, Socrates; now I must hurry somewhere, and it's time for me to go.

Socrates

What are you doing, my friend! You leave casting me down from the great hope I had that I would learn from you what piety is and what is not, and so will be acquitted from Meletus' indictment, showing him that I have become wise through Euthyphro with respect to the gods, that I no longer speak unadvisedly in ignorance and make innovations about them, and I will live both another and, above all, a better life.

Searching for Piety: A Translation and Interpretation of Plato's Euthyphro

Interpretation

Euthyphro

Socrates, what innovation's happened to make you leave your usual place in the Lyceum and now be wasting time waiting here in the King Archon's porch? I dare say you can't be prosecuting a lawsuit before the judge as I am.

Socrates

The Athenians call it an indictment, Euthyphro—not a prosecution.

Euthyphro

You don't say. It seems likely someone has brought a lawsuit against you. **B I** wouldn't dare suggest you have indicted someone.

Socrates

Certainly not.

Euthyphro

So, someone has indicted you?

Socrates

Precisely.

Socrates meets up with Euthyphro at the porch (stoa) of the King Archon (not to be confused with a king since the Athenians did not have one). The "King Archon" Euthyphro refers to was one of nine Athenian judges, the one whose job was to oversee lawsuits involving religious matters.<sup>1</sup> The Athenians did not have an official public prosecutor. Citizens made both private and public lawsuits against each other and they did so frequently. Athenian citizens did this so often because it was the best way for them to begin and maintain their political careers. After successfully trying a number of cases, a citizen could gain a good reputation and then might be elected to public office. The judge (archon) would first hear the merits of a case in the way a grand jury in our legal system does. Then he would decide if the case would be tried in front of a jury. Both Socrates and Euthyphro are going to see this judge in order to find out if their cases will go before the Athenian jury.<sup>2</sup>

The setting of their meeting, the porch of the King Archon (Stoa Basileus), is a remarkable place for the dialogue to unfold because the two interlocutors are surrounded by stele, stone tablets upon which the laws of Athens were inscribed. The laws of Solon were inscribed in stone on this porch by official inscribers, anagrapheis (appointed in 410 B.C.), who later inscribed Drakon's Laws (409/8). The official religious sacrificial calendar was also inscribed in stone on the stoa during this time. This "public works" project was finished at the time of the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.). It expressed the view that no unwritten laws could be enforced according to the Athenian legal system. This view was taken a step further with the stele at the Stoa Basileus, as the laws and religious obligations were made public and accessible to all citizens.<sup>3</sup> It is on this important site where the laws and religious customs are made public that Euthyphro and Socrates meet and converse.

Euthyphro's very first words to Socrates, his question "What innovation's happened?" name the issue at stake in the charge of impiety that Socrates faces, which he will soon describe to Euthyphro. Innovation (neoteron) is an important theme throughout the dialogue. Both men's cases concern piety (hosion), which will become the topic of their discussion, but each case also concerns "innovation." Socrates is accused of innovation with respect to the gods—of not believing in the gods of the city and establishing new ones. Euthyphro wishes to try a case that innovates with respect to the tradition of honoring one's parents, prosecuting his father for murder. From the very start of the dialogue we are given a clue about why piety and impiety are so significant for both interlocutors. "Innovation" about the law, piety or any other matter, presupposes that there is a well-established manner of doing something or considering something,

which serves as a point of departure for any innovation about it. For example, if one stands accused of innovating with respect to the gods, it stands to reason that one can ask what is the “standard,” non-innovative view of the gods. Likewise, if one wishes to innovate with respect to the religious law, one can ask how this innovation improves upon the previous law, and how one can justify a change one believes should be made. If there is no real standard or orthodoxy with respect to a practice or a belief, it is difficult to tell just what counts as an innovation or why an innovation improves a state of affairs.

We will see two movements with respect to innovation in the dialogue. Euthyphro will have to justify his departure from what others take to be right (about respecting his father). Meanwhile, Socrates will openly discuss his differences with what others believe to be right (about the gods). The question, “What is piety?” that Socrates and Euthyphro will attempt to answer over the course of the dialogue is important for both interlocutors’ “innovations.” On the one hand, an innovation with respect to a traditional piety such as honoring one’s father may serve no purpose if we are unsure of what piety truly entails. On the other hand, an accusation of impiety based upon the idea of innovation with respect to the gods may be indefensible if we are unsure about what piety and impiety are. Moreover, if we closely follow the pursuit of piety through the dialogue, we may discover that Socrates appears to have some insight into what piety is. He may not be guilty of the charge.

We can see that Euthyphro and Socrates are not strangers, but are already acquainted with each other, if not very good friends. Euthyphro is surprised to see Socrates because he usually spends his time talking with people in the Lyceum (and also marketplace--agora). In his first words to Euthyphro, Socrates appears to be correcting

Euthyphro's use of the term 'prosecution'. In Plato's Cratylus, Euthyphro is mentioned as a person famous for pretentiously expounding the meanings of names,<sup>4</sup> so the manner in which Socrates greets him might be considered a jab at a well-known characteristic of his. At the same time, Socrates is also breaking some serious news to his acquaintance. He is at the court because he is being indicted. Euthyphro is surprised to hear this because Socrates, unlike most Athenians, has never sued anyone or been brought to trial. In the Apology, he speaks of being a "stranger" to the courts (17d). He has avoided a political career entirely and any of the legal involvements that come with it.

Although the "facts" concerning Socrates' trial seem to be well supported by Euthyphro's comments, it nevertheless might be mistaken to view the Euthyphro as a piece of historical writing on Plato's part. This is because the setting of the Euthyphro is historically inaccurate, Athens having lost control over the island of Naxos five years prior to Socrates' trial in 404 B. C. Euthyphro would not have come to Athens to make an indictment under the actual historical conditions existing in 399 B.C.<sup>5</sup> We have no way to know for certain if a man named 'Euthyphro' existed with the qualities that Plato ascribes to him.<sup>6</sup> We have only Plato's dialogues as the sources for this information.<sup>7</sup> There simply are no independent means to be answer questions concerning any actual exchange between Euthyphro and Socrates on the subject matter of piety. It may be more helpful to consider Plato's "dramatic compression" of temporal events, placing Euthyphro and Socrates together just before Socrates' trial, as reflecting philosophical and literary interests. The historical details in the dialogue, as in many other Platonic dialogues, are subordinate to larger themes. Those found in the Euthyphro aid the theme of defining

and understanding piety, both in terms of a general philosophical investigation as well as the theme's relation to Socrates' trial depicted in the Apology.

Euthyphro

Who's this opponent?

Socrates

I don't know the man well, myself, Euthyphro. He seems to me to be young and unknown. I believe he is called Meletus. He's from the Pitthean district—if you recall someone from that district named Meletus, with long, straight hair, not much of a beard and a somewhat hooked nose.

Euthyphro

I haven't considered him, Socrates. But, what charge has he written you up for?

Socrates reveals to Euthyphro that a young, unknown man, Meletus, is indicting him. Socrates emphasizes Meletus' youth (he's not yet a fully bearded man), as well as his status as a newcomer to public, political Athenian life. Meletus is the head litigant in the suit against Socrates, but he has two partners, Anytus and Lycon. These two men had considerable reputations in Athens, Anytus being influential in the restoration of the Athenian democracy and Lycon being a well-known professional orator. Scholars have suggested that Meletus was a poet, or a son of a poet, and this is what Socrates suggests in the Apology (23e), but his historical identity is not completely certain.<sup>8</sup>

Socrates

C What charge? Not an ignoble charge, I suppose, for it's no small thing for a man so young to have knowledge about such an important subject. He says he knows how our young men are corrupted and the one who corrupts them. He is most likely a wise man, and, seeing my ignorance corrupting his contemporaries, he goes to tell on me to the city, like a boy to his mother. It seems to me that he is the only one of our politicians beginning in the right way; the 'right way' D meaning his foremost care<sup>9</sup> is that the young should be as good as possible, just as a good farmer is likely to care first about the young plants and the others later. So, I suppose, Meletus also first 3 weeds out those of us who, as he says, corrupt the young shoots, and then afterwards, clearly, he will take

care of the older ones and become a source of the greatest blessings for the city. Anyway, that's what you'd expect to happen to someone with such a beginning.

Meletus has singled out Socrates as the person who corrupts the youth of Athens. It seems quite clear that Socrates is speaking tongue in cheek about this young man, his "knowledge" and the great political career that he can anticipate someday. However, Socrates first states that the charge is not trivial or ignoble (*agenne*). It is important to recognize that Socrates is making fun of the man, Meletus, and not the charge itself, or even the policy of placing priority on education and the moral upbringing of young people. Plato's portrait of Socrates throughout the early dialogues consistently portrays him as an individual deeply interested in understanding the moral virtues. We find Socrates depicted as carrying out the philosophical mission he describes in the Apology, seeking out those who are reputed to be wise about some matter, and asking them to explain it. Later in Plato's career, The Republic defends an entire, ideal system of education. The theme of education and its importance does not lapse as Plato develops as a thinker, but improves upon Socrates' dedication to the pursuit of the examined life. Moreover, in the Apology, the crux of Socrates' defense lies in his claim that it is through the examination of values that citizens become improved. There was great controversy over education in Athens at the time of the setting of this dialogue. The Sophists were also accused of corrupting the youth. They were professional teachers, paid to help young Athenian boys learn the skills they needed to lead successful political careers, rhetoric and eristic argument.<sup>10</sup> The old manner of education, through familial mentorship, was not able to compete with the success of the sophists. The Athenians nostalgically considered this traditional educational method a better way to educate young men and

attributed the moral decline of the youth, in part, to the influx of professional teachers. Socrates makes it clear in the Apology that he has been frequently mistaken for a Sophist (as well as a natural philosopher), and later in the Euthyphro he also makes clear the difference between them and himself. Meletus' charges against Socrates exploit this confusion and the general controversy over education present at Athens.

Thus, it should not surprise us that Socrates suggests the charge against him relates to an important subject. He is very much concerned with improving the youth. At the age of seventy, he has spent nearly his entire adult life exclusively pondering questions about the nature of the virtues and how they can be taught. An ironic aspect of this passage is that Meletus, being very young and politically ambitious, cannot be someone who has thought much about the nature of education. The one Athenian who cares the most about this complex issue, Socrates, stands accused of ruining the very people he seeks to help through his questioning on the matters of important ethical ideas. The root of the name 'Meletus' (melet-) means 'to care' and 'take thought for'. In this dialogue, as well as in the Apology, Socrates frequently uses words with this root when he speaks about Meletus, as if to suggest that care and thoughtfulness are probably the least of his motivations, yet they are the most essential attitudes for anyone to take in order to improve young people.

#### Euthyphro

I wish that were so, Socrates, but I fear the opposite may happen. It seems to me that he starts out ruining the heart of the city in trying to injure you. But tell me, what does he say you do to corrupt the youth?

#### Socrates

**B** Absurdities, my admirable friend, at first hearing. He says that I am a maker of gods, and because I invent new gods while not acknowledging the old ones, as he claims, he is prosecuting me.

Euthyphro seems very concerned with the situation he learns about, likening Socrates to the “heart of the city,” which Meletus is attacking with his charges. He appears to think that Socrates’ philosophical work is a good thing, but then, it is likely that he has never been the target of his questioning (at this point). Socrates is charged with impiety, specifically for not believing in the official gods of the city. Meletus claims he invents new ones. This part of the written charge becomes important in the Apology, when Socrates cross-examines Meletus. There he claims that Socrates is an atheist, not someone who makes theological innovations, a technical difference in the way one might be charged with impiety. Although Socrates demonstrates that Meletus has contradicted himself, stating one thing in his written indictment and another in the cross-examination, there is something unsatisfying about his tactic, if only because he does not directly address the formal charge of believing in gods different from those of Athens. Socrates exploits Meletus’ intellectual weakness logically, but fails to discuss the details involved in his ideas about the gods. He believes in “divine activities” so he cannot fail to believe in divinities, he argues (Apology 27c-28a). Later on in the Euthyphro, it appears that Socrates does, in fact, have some different ideas about the nature of the gods. If it is the case that Socrates’ view of the gods is substantially different than those of his city, the charge of impiety that he faces is, prima facie, reasonable. However, if it turns out that traditional religion has no clear concept of piety and impiety, there is simply no case at all. The analysis of piety in the Euthyphro is of great importance when we want to consider whether or not Socrates is guilty of the charge of impiety—and, more importantly, if we wish to understand how Socrates “innovations” about the gods may have led to misunderstanding, but that he was sincerely religious.<sup>11</sup>

### Euthyphro

I understand, Socrates. It's because you say that your divine sign always comes to you. So he has indicted you as one who is an innovator about the gods, and he goes to court to slander you, knowing that it is easy to misrepresent such things to the many. Why, they even scornfully laugh at me in the Assembly C as if I were crazy whenever I speak about the gods and predict things to come in the future; yet I've never proclaimed anything that has not come true. But, all the same, they envy all people who do this. It's not necessary to worry about them, but tackle them head-on.

Socrates has a divine sign, a daimonion, which he describes more fully in the Apology as a voice that comes to him (31c-d, 40b). This sign appears and prevents him from taking a wrong course of action, but on Plato's account, never tells him to do things. As unusual as such a voice appears to be to the modern reader, it was not in itself sufficient evidence of impiety. The Pythia at Delphi (the oracle), for example, was thought to hear Apollo's voice and speak for him. The Maenads, worshippers of Dionysos, would experience trance-like, ecstatic states, 'ecstatic' meaning to stand outside oneself. It was thought that when one stood outside oneself, the god, Dionysos, could then step inside. In Ancient Greece, religious life included extraordinary mental states, and Socrates' divine voice in this context was not extremely unusual.<sup>12</sup> Athenians consulted professional seers as a matter of course when they had moral/legal troubles (we will see this occurs in Euthyphro's case against his father later on). These seers would predict the outcomes of events and make suggestions as to what religious law required them to do. Following their recommendations was not compulsory, but fear of miasma and impiety kept the practice alive. In the Apology, Socrates notes that Meletus ridiculed his divine sign (daimonion) in the deposition against him. Euthyphro's suggestion that this might be the evidence backing Meletus' charge of impiety is correct, but it should be

understood that Meletus' claim is controversial. We can see from this detail that interpreting the significance of Socrates' daimonion posed a problem. Meletus sees it as evidence of impiety, but Euthyphro is not in agreement about the meaning of such a trait. What constitutes evidence for impiety is unclear in an extraordinary case like Socrates'.

Euthyphro reveals that the Athenians laugh at him when he prophesizes to the Assembly. His confidence in his abilities as a prophet seem clear, yet we might wonder why the Athenians laugh at him. As with Socrates' daimonion, there was nothing particularly strange or comical about the practice of prophecy to the Athenians. It was a respectable practice, and there was a head seer at Athens who was consulted about moral matters, in addition to the professional seers who took on smaller cases. We will see that this head seer plays a role in Euthyphro's case later on. Athenians would not laugh at a prophet, unless the prophet was not particularly good at it. Nevertheless, Euthyphro does not appear discouraged by derision. It is not terribly plausible that the Athenians envy someone they laugh at in the assembly, yet he does not perceive that implausibility and, on the contrary, appears quite encouraged by the ridicule. It is becoming clear that Euthyphro is quite vain, going so far as to misperceive situations to suit his self-image and believing he can tackle the scoffing assembly head-on like a Homeric hero.

#### Socrates

My dear Euthyphro, maybe being laughed at is not too big of a deal. It seems to me that the Athenians don't care much about anyone whom they think is clever, as long as he does not teach his wisdom. But if they think he makes others as clever as himself, **D** they get angry, whether through jealousy, as you say, or for some other reason.

Euthyphro suggests that there is some similarity between himself and Socrates, and Socrates attempts to distinguish their situations clearly to him. Another part of the charge against him is that he also teaches his beliefs (in new gods) to others. This part of the charge casts Socrates as a Sophist. Although Socrates does not explicitly mention the Sophists, when he remarks that the Athenians are displeased when someone makes people as clever as himself, the promotion of cleverness with no mind to the morality of a matter was what troubled the Athenians about the Sophists. They promised to teach students to be able to make the weaker argument the stronger, basically to win lawsuits at any cost. It is most likely that Socrates thinks he is being charged “for some other reason,” and not on account of the “jealousy” that Euthyphro suggests.

Euthyphro

I'm not terribly anxious to test just how they feel about me in this matter.

Socrates

Well, perhaps they think that you make yourself scarce and are unwilling to teach your wisdom. I fear they believe my love for people makes me talk freely to all men, and without payment, but I would gladly pay people myself if they'd be willing to listen to me. Then if, as I just now said, they were only going to laugh at me as you say they laugh at you, it would not be an unpleasant way **E** to pass the day in court, joking and laughing. But, if they are going to be serious, here we come to an unclear matter of which only prophets like you will grasp the outcome.

Euthyphro

Most likely, Socrates, nothing will come of it, except that you will carry your case as you best think and I will do so with mine.

Socrates politely suggests that Euthyphro has nothing to be anxious about, if only for the reasons that he is not present at Athens all that much and has no followers. Of course, a prophet without any public support whatsoever would have nothing to worry about, too, but Socrates does not overtly attack Euthyphro. Unlike him, Socrates is easily

found in public places, as Euthyphro had noted at the start of the dialogue, and he has many followers—young men who like to imitate him and enjoy listening to his conversations. As noted earlier, Socrates makes it clear that he is not a Sophist, refusing payment, going so far as to joke that he would pay people to hear him out (unlikely, given his poverty). Socrates' position is quite different from Euthyphro's. If only the Athenians did laugh at Socrates the way they do at Euthyphro. However, if Socrates were perceived this way, it just as well might indicate that his questioning meant very little to anyone, the way Euthyphro's prophesies mean nothing to them. Socrates' suggestion that his day in court might be spent joking and laughing is most likely ironic. He has been brought up on serious charges. His ironic tone with Euthyphro suggests that the outcome of his trial is not at all certain to him. Euthyphro takes this opportunity to foretell that both of their cases will go well for them. Although he has claimed that nothing he foretells fails to come true, he is certainly off the mark with respect to Socrates' trial. At the end of this dialogue, we might also speculate about the success of Euthyphro's case. Even though Socrates never attacks Euthyphro directly about his abilities as a seer, the course of their conversation and the outcome of Socrates' trial suggest that Euthyphro is not a reliable prophet.

Socrates

Well then, what's this case of yours, Euthyphro? Are you the hunter or the hunted?

Euthyphro

Prosecutor.

Socrates

4 Whom are you indicting?

Euthyphro

One they think I'm even more crazy to be prosecuting.

Socrates

What? Are you chasing a winged flight risk?

At this point we find the first instance of allusion to the myth of Icarus with Socrates' remark regarding Euthyphro's cases. Twice, later on, the artificer Daedalus is discussed with respect to the moving sculptures he invents.

	Euthyphro
He's not much for flying, he happens to be quite advanced in age.	Socrates
Who is he?	Euthyphro
My father.	Socrates
My good friend—your own father!	Euthyphro
Indeed.	Socrates
What's the accusation—and the case?	Euthyphro
Murder, Socrates.	Socrates
Heracles! Surely, Euthyphro, most men would not know what way to do this and grasp where the right is. I suppose not just anybody could do this, but <b>B</b> only someone who is far advanced in wisdom.	Euthyphro
Very far advanced, by Zeus, Socrates.	Socrates
Well then, is the man killed by your father a kinsman? Clearly, because you wouldn't proceed against your own father for the murder of a stranger.	

Euthyphro explains to Socrates that he is prosecuting someone he's thought crazy to be prosecuting, his own father. Socrates is understandably taken aback by this admission. Just as it would be a shocking situation today if someone were to charge a parent with a crime, so it was for the Ancient Greeks. The crime would have to be quite serious for such a situation to transpire. Family members were not expected to testify

against each other in court, and when this happened, the crime usually involved family members, as Socrates mentions. There is no Athenian law that explicitly prohibits prosecuting a parent for a crime, yet tradition strongly binds people to honor their parents. This tradition, while not without exceptions, would place the burden of justifying prosecuting a parent or kinsman squarely on the shoulders of someone who wanted to break with it. Athenian religious “law” did not have a commandment, “honor thy father and mother,” yet Ancient Greek mythology conveys this message.

In fact, the allusion Socrates makes to the defendant having wings in this section of the dialogue (an allusion which also appears later on in the dialogue) immediately brings to mind one such myth, the myth of Icarus. Icarus was the son of the legendary artificer, Daedalus. He was trapped with his father in the labyrinth of the Minotaur. They both flew to freedom on wings fashioned by Daedalus, who warned his son not to fly too low or too high. Icarus did not heed this warning, and fell to his death because he flew too close to the sun. One message of this myth is to follow the advice of one’s elders, to stay the “middle course” between excess and deficiency as laid out by one’s elders who know better. The myth also warns against the ambition of trying to surpass one’s father. We may find that Euthyphro has a great deal in common with the ambitious Icarus of the famous myth.

The comic playwright, Aristophanes, uses the ideal of honoring one’s father as a means to criticize Socrates in his play, The Clouds. The philosopher in this critical-comedy, Socrates, is not only a parody of the Socrates that we find in Plato’s work, being a Sophist, natural philosopher and atheist, but also a corrupting influence on his young pupil, Pheidippides. Aristophanes’ Socrates encourages his pupil to beat his own father,

which he does in the climax of the play. Plato's Socrates, as opposed to Aristophanes', questions how Euthyphro, a son, could know how he can prosecute his father with impunity. In the "Clouds," Socrates gives naturalistic explanation of the powers of Zeus, the creation of thunder and lightening—attributing them to the clouds. Zeus no longer exists, according to Aristophanes' Socrates, and he is replaced by "Vertigo."

Aristophanes portrays Socrates as a naturalistic philosopher, such as Anaxagoras<sup>13</sup> whom Meletus also confuses for Socrates (Apology, 26d-e). Moreover, at Socrates' "Thinkery," those under his guidance learn to question the existence of justice. In a section of the play that identifies Socrates with the Sophists, The Worse Argument contends with the Better Argument:

Worse Argument

And I'll refute it with hot air!

I say that Justice does not exist!

Better Argument

Oh no?

Worse Argument

Then tell me where she is.

Better Argument

Among the gods does Justice dwell.

Worse Argument

Zeus locked his father in a cell.

With impunity: How so pray tell?

Better Argument

Yuk! This is getting worse and worse;

Give me a basin, I'm nauseous!<sup>14</sup>

We will see later on that Euthyphro regards Zeus' treatment of his father Cronus, as a model for his own action in prosecuting his father. Unlike Aristophanes' Socrates, Plato's Socrates questions the justice and piety of Euthyphro's behavior. Although it is hard to claim for certain that the Euthyphro comments directly upon Aristophanes' portrait of Socrates, we can see that the "Worse Argument" in Aristophanes' play reflects Euthyphro's ideas and his case against his father. Plato's Socrates in the Euthyphro supports the traditional value, and it is Euthyphro who must try to justify his action. The value of honoring one's parents was supported in the myths that formed the basis of Ancient Greek religion, yet it was a value that was considered under attack by the influence of the Sophists and Socrates' philosophical questioning during his lifetime, as evidenced by Aristophanes' Clouds.

Euthyphro appears to believe that he is someone as "advanced in wisdom," as Socrates suggests, replying affirmatively that he does know how he can prosecute his father and be doing the right thing. He is quite sure that he is not in any danger of acting impiously in trying this case. His certainty about being right in his case is the most pressing dramatic concern of the dialogue, as we will see. Being right about prosecuting one's father is, in itself, not a small matter to the Ancient Greeks at the time of the setting of this dialogue, but a controversial issue that relates to the social atmosphere that had brought about the charges against Socrates. Euthyphro's motivations for prosecuting his father may include more than the exclusive concern for doing what is right. His certainty about the situation may be considerably less secure than he believes at this point. We have already seen the suggestion that Meletus' motivation to prosecute Socrates stems

from ambition to promote his political career. Euthyphro may have more in common with him than appears at first glance.

#### Euthyphro

How amusing it is, Socrates, for you to think it makes a difference whether the victim is a stranger or relative, and not bear in mind one thing, whether the killer acted justly. If he acted justly, let him go, but if not, one should prosecute, if, the killer shares your hearth and eats at the same table with you. C The pollution is the same if, aware of what's right, you keep company with such a man and do not purify yourself and that man from pollution by bringing him to justice. The one who was killed was a hired day laborer of mine. When we were farming in Naxos he worked there for us. He cut the throat of one of our household slaves in a drunken fit of anger, so my father bound his hands and his feet together, threw him in some ditch, and then sent a man here to inquire from the head seer what needed be done. During that time D he made little account of--and even completely neglected--the bound man, it being no matter, as he was a murderer, whether he suffered. Hunger, cold and the bonds caused his death before the messenger returned from the seer. Both my father and my other kinsmen are angry with this, as I am prosecuting my father for murder on behalf of a murderer when he hadn't really killed him, so they say. And even if it were true he had killed him, the dead man, being a murderer, doesn't need consideration because it is impious E for a son to prosecute his father for murder. But, Socrates, they wrongfully perceive what the divine law holds in regard to piety and impiety.

Euthyphro's explanation of his case against his father contains a great deal of information in a short amount of space. His father appears to have unintentionally, through neglect, caused the death of a laborer who had killed a slave. While waiting for the head seer at Athens to determine what to do with the laborer, he died. Euthyphro has decided that the laborer's death was wrongfully caused and his father needs to be brought to justice. As a point of law in Athens, only relatives could charge a suspected killer for the murder of a kinsman, so, in this sense the identity of the victim does matter in a murder trial, contrary to what Euthyphro says.<sup>15</sup> He indicates that the servant whom his father killed was a dependent of his, most likely part of his future inheritance, yet we can

see that Euthyphro's move to prosecute a case on his behalf is something of a stretch under Athenian law.<sup>16</sup>

However, it seems that Euthyphro is making both a legal claim and a moral one—he is concerned with justice (dike) as well as pollution (miasma). Unjust murders are wrong (cause pollution). A murderer should be prosecuted, regardless of who he or she is or whom he or she kills. Justice should be blind, in other words. Even if tradition holds that it is impious to prosecute, injure or dishonor a parent, Euthyphro believes that this tradition is not the right way to achieve justice. What can we make of Euthyphro's claim, at least initially?

It seems that Euthyphro wishes to uphold a moral principle, wrongdoers must be brought to justice regardless of their personal relationships, and to apply this moral principle in his own case.<sup>17</sup> Conventional wisdom or tradition holds that it is wrong to cast aside the bonds of kinship in this manner. His father and relatives feel that Euthyphro is not right to disregard this convention. They believe Euthyphro is acting impiously. The details of the case suggest that the situation is far from clear, that his father may be guilty of manslaughter, unintentionally killing the murderer. This case is far from a clear-cut murder case. Why would Euthyphro be as intent on pursuing it, despite its obvious weaknesses?

Hidden in Euthyphro's description of the situation is the detail that his father sent to Athens to find out from the head seer what was to be done. If Euthyphro is an expert on religious matters, as he claims to be, then why does his father need to ask the Athenian priest what religion requires? Euthyphro has already indicated that the Athenians laugh at him when he predicts the future in the assembly. Perhaps he is not taken seriously at

home in Naxos, either. If Euthyphro wishes to be taken seriously, it is likely that, like Meletus, he, too, needs to establish his reputation at court through a sensational trial. This detail regarding the head seer at Athens (a detail repeated later in the dialogue) suggests that Euthyphro is, in the least, a son at odds with his father. His motivation to prosecute him may be woven with strands of ambition and revenge, as well as the certainty that he is a religious expert he, unlike others, perceives what is right. His motivations are thus in keeping with the sophistry of “the Worst Argument” from Aristophanes’ Clouds, if, indeed, he seeks recognition before the assembly through the prosecution of his father.<sup>18</sup> It is not clear that he recognizes the full scope of his own motivations, but the details in the dialogue suggest that there is more involved with his case than Euthyphro explicitly claims. In any case, he is highly motivated to make his point publicly, traveling by sea and land to Athens.

Euthyphro’s attack on conventional wisdom even appears to have a fairly good justification. Isn’t doing wrong, committing murder, simply wrong no matter who the killer is? Wouldn’t it be right to bring a murderer to justice simply because that person has committed murder? What justifies a convention that holds personal relationships may get in the way of doing justice? What view is correct, Euthyphro’s or conventional wisdom?<sup>19</sup> Euthyphro’s description of his case contains an argument:

- 1) The identity of some who is killed makes no difference.
- 2) Whether the killing is just or not is at stake.
- 3) If the killer acted justly, he must be let go.
- 4) If the killer acted unjustly, he must be prosecuted.

Euthyphro then refines (4):

4\*) If the killer acted unjustly he must be prosecuted on account of his pollution and his pollution of the household.

5) Pollution is the same (for all parties) if you keep company with someone who has killed unjustly.

Therefore:

6) You are obligated to prosecute someone from your household if you know that they have killed unjustly on pain of your own pollution. It would be impious not to do so.

Pollution (miasma) is a concept from Ancient Greek religion (as well as many others). A wrongdoer must be cleansed on account of their crime, usually murder, or he or she will remain “polluted.” Pollution can be understood as a kind of contagion, or invisible disease. It is something like the Judeo-Christian idea of sin, except that miasma is not quite as metaphysically mysterious. Its effects were considered physically real, and did not alter the state of a wrongdoer’s soul, as sin does, so much as alter the social interactions of the wrongdoer. Sharing food and participating in religious rituals with an unclean, polluted person were considered dangerous acts because other people would “catch” their miasma, becoming unclean as well. Spilling blood, through murder, was considered the worst polluting act. Blood, being a vital fluid, was thought to have “magical” or special properties that required a murderer to make up for the very act of spilling it, either through direct revenge, religious ritual or prosecution. A single person, a household and even a city could become polluted by acts that were not properly cleansed. Greek religion required that miasma be cleansed for a person to participate fully in community life, so the matter of pollution was a matter of piety (hosion).<sup>20</sup>

Euthyphro's argument for prosecuting his father is innovative in his use of the concept of miasma to show, not that we are generally obligated to prosecute unjust wrongdoers (surely an uncontroversial, if not trivial claim), but that one is obligated to prosecute one's family members. Thus, his claim, that we are obligated to prosecute wrongdoers, regardless of their relationship to us (6) is backed up by the premises that a unjust killers must be prosecuted on account of their miasma (4\*) and that a wrongdoer's miasma will affect everyone in one's household equally (5). Beliefs about miasma support premises (4\*) and (5). The first premise (1) is controversial from the point of view of Athenian law, although premises (2), (3), (4) are not. However, beliefs about miasma being a "universal contagion" would support the first premise and cover the three that follow. Indeed, the "logic of miasma" seems to support Euthyphro's argument, leading to its radical conclusion (6). He believes this reasoning justifies over-riding the traditional convention that demands respect of one's parents, as well as the conventions of Athenian law. The force of the obligation, in this case, regards piety, doing what is demanded of one's religion and is morally right. The logic of miasma, a component of traditional religion, which Euthyphro has exploited in reasoning about his case, suggests that prosecuting his father could be considered a pious action. Yet, this line of reasoning does not easily convince Socrates for good reasons, since miasma is may be much less easily "contained" in an argument than Euthyphro supposes.

Socrates

With Zeus as witness, Euthyphro, you believe you understand what divine law holds and what is pious and impious so accurately that, when those things took place as you say, you're not afraid that you happen to be doing an impious thing in bringing your father to trial?

Euthyphro

I should be of no use, Socrates, and 5 Euthyphro would not surpass common men, if I did not accurately know all such things.

Socrates points out that Euthyphro must have some special insight into the nature of piety to make the argument he does. Socrates appears to be the advocate of conventional wisdom, or at least not convinced that prosecuting one's father is not itself an act of impiety. While Euthyphro is sure of his reasoning about the effects of miasma, why is Socrates not so easily swayed?

In Ancient Greek mythology we find a case much like Euthyphro's in the story of Orestes.<sup>21</sup> Orestes faces a critical dilemma concerning miasma. Briefly put, Orestes' mother, Queen Clytemnestra, murders Orestes' father, King Agamemnon. She murders him on account of his sacrifice of their daughter, Iphagena, in order to win the Trojan War. Orestes is then faced with the problem of seeking justice for the murder of their father. It would be impious to ignore the murder of his father as it has brought pollution upon their household. Orestes murders his mother to achieve this justice, but then is placed in the impossible situation of committing an impious and polluting act, the murder of his mother, in order to expiate the bloodguilt of her impious and polluting act of murder. He is driven insane and chased by the Furies, until, as Aeschylus tells it, the Goddess Athena appears to finally free Orestes from this vicious cycle of pollution that has fallen on the House of Atreus.

With this classic myth in the background, we can see that Euthyphro's view that it is pious to prosecute his own father is not easily established. A god or goddess might clearly perceive what is pious (as Athena does to some extent in the Eumenides), but the "logic" of miasma supports both prosecuting criminals and respecting one's parents.

Orestes' fate placed him in the dilemma of choosing between the impiety and pollution of ignoring a murderer in his household, and the impiety and pollution of committing a murder to expiate that impiety. Euthyphro is in a similar, although less dramatic, situation. He has argued that in order to avoid miasma, it is right to prosecute one's parents, but he has entirely ignored the other horn of this dilemma, the one that concerns Socrates so much. Euthyphro would need to know his way out of Orestes' dilemma and what piety truly demands. As far as the Ancient Greeks (and Socrates) are concerned, this kind of knowledge is something that is not obvious to human beings, but is the subject of tragedy. Euthyphro's claim to be superior to other people and possess accurate knowledge about religion has the marking of hubris—the character trait of putting oneself forward in a way that oversteps and overlooks the real limitations one has. It is hubris, for example, that causes Icarus to fall to his death. This particular formulation of hubris, in a claim to “know,” typically serves as a spur to philosophical discussion in the early dialogues of Plato. In the Apology, we find that Socrates has discovered that he is the wisest of men insofar as he does not claim to know what he does not truly know. His mission, as he describes it, has been to speak with people who claim to be knowledgeable, and cure them of their epistemic hubris. He has engaged in philosophical dialogue with politicians, poets and craftsmen, and Euthyphro represents someone claiming expertise in religion, declaring himself an open target for the Socratic investigation into his wisdom.

Socrates

Admirable Euthyphro, then wouldn't the best thing be for me to become your student? And so challenge Meletus for his very indictment, saying that in times before I always

thought divine matters were very important, and now, since he says that I improvise unadvisedly and am wrong about these issues, I have become your student. I should say, “Meletus, if you agree that Euthyphro B is wise about these things, then it follows that I hold the right beliefs, so don’t indict me. Otherwise, obtain leave to bring a suit against this teacher of mine for corrupting the elderly, me and his own father, by teaching me and admonishing and punishing him.” And if he’s not persuaded and doesn’t discharge the lawsuit against me or bring a suit against you in my place, could I say the same things in court, which I just said in my challenge to him?

Euthyphro

Yes indeed, by Zeus, Socrates, and, if he should attempt to indict me, C I believe I would discover his weak spot and the talk in the court would sooner be a question about him than about me.

Here we find Socrates engaging in a great amount of irony with respect to Euthyphro. This irony is lost on imperceptive Euthyphro, much as the significance of the derision of the assembly is. Socrates is clearly not serious about becoming Euthyphro’s student, however, it is important to note that Socrates’ strategy is well suited to his interlocutor. The notion of “becoming a student” is consistent with Socrates’ famous claim not to know, yet at the same time serves to gratify Euthyphro, encouraging him to speak. This is just one of a number of distinctive pedagogical strategies Socrates uses in this dialogue.<sup>22</sup> It is also clear that if Euthyphro were a stronger thinker, capable of following an argument through to its conclusion, he would not be enticed by Socrates’ suggestion. He would realize that Socrates is suggesting that he, Euthyphro, might possibly be charged with impiety instead (the alternatives are dropping the charges or charging Euthyphro). Yet, Euthyphro is confident that he could face these charges and stand up to Meletus, and seems intrigued by the prospect of the gossip being about someone else besides him. He is oblivious to just how unappealing Socrates’ comment really is.

Socrates

I see this, my dear companion, and have set my heart on becoming your student. I know that neither other people nor this Meletus appear to notice you, whereas he sees through me so sharply and easily that he's indicted me for irreverence to the gods. So tell me now, by Zeus, what you just now claimed so confidently that you clearly knew: what kind of thing do you say that reverence and irreverence to the gods are, with respect to both murder and other things? **D** Is the pious not the same with itself in every action, and the impious is the very opposite of all that is pious and the same with itself, everything that is impious possessing some single characteristic<sup>23</sup> in so far as it is impious?

Euthyphro

It must really be so, Socrates.

Socrates presents Euthyphro with a request for definitions of the pious and the impious, first employing the synonyms 'eusebeia' and 'asebeia' in couching his question. The difference between these terms and 'hosion' and 'anhosion' is small, but not insignificant. 'Eusebeia' means both reverence towards the gods and also reverence towards one's parents, 'asebeia' meaning irreverence towards the gods and also towards one's parents. These terms appear to capture the very connection between religious reverence and respect for parents that Euthyphro is questioning. 'Hosion' is a more general word for 'piety' or 'holiness,' applying to a wide variety of religiously sanctioned behaviors. Plato's switch between the terms is intriguing and can be considered in a number of respects. The proximity of the terms itself is noticeable, and seems to underscore the connection between piety and reverence for one's parents. A dialogue analyzing the concept of 'eusebeia' instead of 'hosion' would, hypothetically, have landed very quickly upon this connection. Such a connection between piety and filial reverence would not have been lost on an ancient Greek audience. Yet, the switch to 'hosion' has philosophical significance, as it is a more general term that still incorporates the idea of reverence to the gods. Moreover, 'hosion' represents a neutral choice in terminology regarding the subject matter; one that avoids question begging with respect

to discovering the piety (or impiety) of Euthyphro's case. One of Socrates' goals is to find out how Euthyphro can justify his irreverence towards his father while claiming it is a pious action. A dialogue on 'eusebia' would have been a very short one and would not have covered Socrates' case.

In this passage, Socrates also instructs Euthyphro about the kind of explanation of piety and impiety he seeks—that there must be one quality or essential characteristic that all pious things have in common.<sup>24</sup> Such a quality is “the same with itself,” or identical in every instance in which it is found. Such a quality does not need to be considered a “form,” an idea appearing in Plato's middle dialogues, but can be considered a well-stated explanation of the property that pious actions and things all share in common. Socrates makes no mention of the metaphysical status of such a property above and beyond its usefulness in individuating actions and things in everyday life. There is significant controversy as to whether or not Plato's later notions of the “forms” should be associated with Socrates' demand for a definition of piety in this dialogue.<sup>25</sup> The dialogue makes clear, however, that whatever the answer to this question is, the lack of philosophical sophistication Socrates' interlocutor precludes a deep examination of the metaphysical aspects of definition. At this moment in the dialogue, Socrates has introduced a relatively simple philosophical idea, that of stating a definition, but, as we will see, Euthyphro does not grasp this idea immediately despite the way in which he agrees that this must be how one goes about defining something.

Euthyphro's reply to Socrates, “pantos depou,” an idiomatic form of heartily agreeing to a point, does not entail that he truly understands the points the Socrates makes. We will see these kinds of replies from Euthyphro throughout the dialogue. In

fact, the more sophisticated Socrates' explanations are, the more simple and repetitious Euthyphro's replies become ("panu ge"—"certainly", "pos gar oun"—"how couldn't it be so?"). While Euthyphro has been capable of digressing at length upon subjects he cares about, his own case, he is barely able to keep up with Socrates' philosophical inquiry. In this instance, he does not understand what he has agreed to regarding essential definitions, and Socrates will not only need to teach him once more, but will also easily trap him in contradiction.

Socrates

Tell me then, what do you say the pious and the impious are?

Euthyphro

Well then, I say that the pious is what I am doing now, to prosecute the wrongdoer, be it for committing murder or temple robbery or any other such thing, whether the wrongdoer happens to be your father or your mother or anyone else; E not to prosecute is impious. For behold, Socrates, that I will proclaim a great proof from the law to you-- which I have told others already, that such actions are right if they happen this way—that we not release and tolerate the ungodly, whoever they happen to be. Men themselves happen to believe that Zeus is the best and most just of the gods, 6 yet they agree that he bound his father because he unjustly swallowed his sons, and that he, in turn, castrated his father for similar reasons. They are angry with me because I am prosecuting my father for wrongdoing, but, in this way, they say things that contradict themselves about the gods and about me.

Euthyphro makes his first attempt at defining piety in this passage, claiming that what he is doing, prosecuting a wrongdoer, defines piety. His "defensiveness" is noticeable, as he interjects the very issue Socrates is questioning, that a wrongdoer must be prosecuted even if it is one's own parent. As we will see, Socrates will need to show Euthyphro that he has not provided a definition, but only examples of what might be pious and impious actions. Additionally, Euthyphro has also provided what he takes to be a justification for his answer, examples from the ancient Greek creation story. Much

as one might quote stories from the bible to explain why one should or should not do something, Euthyphro relies on sacred texts to support his action. (Examples of the myths he refers to can be found in Hesiod's Theogony.) The actions of the gods are models for human actions, according to this sort of defense. If a god has done something, that action is justified on this line of reasoning. Euthyphro has, naturally, found examples of Zeus' actions that parallel his own. Those who criticize him, he further reasons, are thereby critical of Zeus. They cannot say that Zeus is just, and not also say that Euthyphro is unjust without contradicting themselves.

The difficulty in using the anthropomorphic Greek pantheon of deities as a model for consistent behavior and desires will become clear quite soon, once Socrates begins to explore Euthyphro's second attempt at defining piety. This passage is also significant with respect to understanding Euthyphro's beliefs. His first attempt at formulating his ideas reveals his familiarity with traditional myths, which he relies upon for justifying moral matters. Foreshadowing the later discussion of the "divine command" conception of morality in the "Euthyphro Dilemma" section of the dialogue, this passage contains a version of something like a "divine action" theory: What is pious or right is what the gods do. A problem Euthyphro fails to recognize, much like that of his reasoning regarding miasma, is that his relatives (Socrates, or anyone else) also could make recourse to myths to support their view about the impiety of his actions. Oretes, mentioned earlier, might be a case in point, but even worse for Euthyphro are the numerous examples from myths that depict human beings punished for aspiring to be gods and eschewing the difference between gods and men. The story of Prometheus, found in the same creation myth that Euthyphro refers to, tells of a demigod who believes he can outwit Zeus. The presence

of evil in the world is ascribed to Prometheus' challenges to Zeus. The sacred stories Euthyphro regards as a source of his knowledge show that mortals are no matches for the gods, and those with the hubris to emulate them are punished. The discussion does not reach these conclusions at this point, though, if only because this first try is not a well-formulated definition from the outset. The inconsistencies in the gods' behaviors return to undermine Euthyphro's second attempt to define piety. In the meantime, he believes that it is his relatives who contradict themselves given that a just god like Zeus punishes his father.

#### Socrates

Indeed, Euthyphro, it's on account of this that I'm trying to escape my indictment, because whenever such things are said about the gods I find how unendurable they are to accept; and it seems that because of this I will be told that I do wrong. Now then, if you also think the same, **B** knowing full well about these things, it seems we're forced to accede. For what can we say, we who agree that we do not know them? But tell me, by the god of friendship, do you believe these things happened in this way, truthfully?

#### Euthyphro

And even more amazing things than these, Socrates, which the many do not know.

This passage indicates that Socrates does, in fact, disagree with commonly held beliefs about the gods. He does not seem to be an atheist, nor does he deny that the gods of the Greek pantheon exist, but only that some of their qualities differ. The commonly believed stories about their activities are what he finds "unendurable." This is to say that Zeus, for example, may be a just god, and Socrates believes that he is, but he does not believe the mythology attributing unjust actions to him (e.g., the murder of his father Cronos), or any of the mythology at all. To what extent does this represent "innovation" about the gods? The answer to this question may lie in discerning to what degree Zeus

remains 'Zeus' without the mythology attributed to him. On the one hand, it might be that Socrates is suggesting that Greek religion should be purified of the inconsistencies that the dialogue makes apparent. Yet, unless we take all Socrates' remarks about the gods as irony, it would seem that Socrates believes in the gods, that these gods bear the same names as the traditional gods. But do these "improved" gods amount to new gods? Is this a case of "new and improved" gods? An interesting way to look at this problem is to consider it through identity. Two things are identical if and only if they share all of their properties in common (Leibniz' Law). The attributes of Athenian Zeus and Socrates' Zeus must have the same properties. Both, for example, would be said to be just. Technically speaking, Zeus is portrayed in Hesiod as the father of justice. When humans act unjustly, she tells Zeus who then meets out punishment.<sup>26</sup> Yet, injustices (murder, rape, adultery) are attributed to Zeus in myths.<sup>27</sup> It would seem that the Athenian Zeus and Socratic Zeus are not identical. Zeus' kinship with justice conflicts with myths attributing him with injustices. He would be in a position of having to punish himself for his own injustices—and this is never the case. Hesiod warns: "He does mischief to himself who does mischief to another, and evil planned harms the plotter most. The eye of Zeus, seeing all and understanding all, beholds these things too, and fails not to mark what sort of justice is this that the city keeps within it" (Works and Days, 264-269). We have a case then, of "Who watches the watchman?" How can a god so intimately tied to justice commit unjust actions? Socrates would be in a position then to claim that either the Athenians must reject the mythology that attributes injustices to Zeus as they are incompatible with his more fundamental property, justice, or give up the belief that Zeus is just. Insofar as traditional beliefs hold that Zeus is just, it is open for

Socrates to claim that myths attributing injustices to him must be false, and that he has not tampered with the fundamental understanding of the god.

This represents only an extrapolation of what Plato's Socrates may have in mind in terms of his comments in the Euthyphro and Apology. In these two dialogues he appears to want it both ways, denying the truth of traditional myths while claiming he is not doing anything impious, and appearing to believe in the gods of the city. He never goes so far as to claim he does not innovate about the gods. But it might be the case that, from Socrates' point of view, myths about the gods are inconsistent "innovations." The simple reasoning regarding essential characteristics, which he teaches Euthyphro, may provide a clue with respect to understanding why Socrates finds the stories about the gods unbelievable.

Socrates has found talk about the gods "unendurable," as he says, and this is the cause of his indictment (or one of them). But he finds that Euthyphro is one of the many who do not share his view about traditional mythology. He appears to indicate with some irony that he is forced to concede on this point, using the second person plural to do so. Does the "we who know nothing" that must concede in this passage represent a group of people who agree with Socrates, his followers, perhaps? It is difficult to tell. The rhetorical strategy, however, is clearer, as the phrasing elevates Euthyphro above the "common man" and places the onus of explanation once again onto Euthyphro, the designated teacher, perhaps not only of Socrates, but anyone else agreeing with him or following him. Yet this digression need not be literally understood, as Socrates continues pressing Euthyphro regarding his true beliefs about the gods. Euthyphro once again assures Socrates that he not only knows many things about them, but he has exclusive,

specialized insight into the matter. Euthyphro continues asserting that he believes the traditional myths regarding the enmities between the gods, and that he can provide Socrates with shocking information about them.

Socrates

So you believe that there is a war of the gods, between one another, in reality--and terrible enmities, strife, and many other such things—as told by the poets, C and are on other sacred objects elaborately ornamented by good painters and also the robe of the great Panathenaea, fully embroidered with things like this, which is carried up the Acropolis? Are we to say these things are true, Euthyphro?

Euthyphro

Not only these things, Socrates, as I was saying just now, but if you wish, I will describe many other things about the gods which I certainly think will shock you when you hear them.

Socrates

I would not be surprised. But you can tell me these things some other time at leisure. Right now, try to tell me more clearly what I was just asking you about. Because, D my friend, you did not teach me sufficiently before when I asked you what the pious was, but you told me that this happens to be pious, what you are doing now, prosecuting your father for murder.

Euthyphro

And I spoke the truth, Socrates.

Socrates

Perhaps. But, you say, however, that many other things are pious.

Euthyphro

It's so.

Socrates

Remember, then, that I didn't exhort you to teach me one or two of the many pious actions, but that aspect itself by which all pious things are pious? You said, at some point, all the impious and all the pious are impious and pious by single characteristics, E or don't you remember?

Euthyphro

Indeed, I did.

Socrates

Well then, teach me what this aspect itself is, in order that I may look upon it and use it as a model,<sup>28</sup> so I may say that anything of this kind, which you or someone else does is pious, or if it's not, I may say that it isn't.

Socrates reins in the conversation, avoiding Euthyphro's digression regarding the feats of the gods. He returns to Euthyphro's first try at defining piety, restating Euthyphro's words: Piety is what Euthyphro is doing now, prosecuting his father for murder. Socrates notes that there are many other pious and impious things, as Euthyphro had mentioned earlier, such as prosecuting someone for temple robbery, and Euthyphro recalls this and agrees that there are. Socrates then corrects his try at defining piety, reminding him that he had not asked for examples of pious actions, but for a single characteristic that all pious things have in common.<sup>29</sup> Such a definition serves as a model (paradeigmata) for individuating actions, he explains.

Euthyphro

If you wish, Socrates, I will show you in that way.

Socrates

Well, I do wish this.

Euthyphro

What the gods love<sup>30</sup> is pious, and accordingly what is not 7 loved is impious.

Socrates

Very good, Euthyphro. Now you've answered in the way I asked you to answer. I don't know yet if this answer is true, but clearly you'll teach me that what you say is true.

Euthyphro

By all means.

Socrates

Come then, let us examine what we say. The god-loved thing and man are pious, and the god-hated thing and man are impious. They are not the same, but are exact opposites, the pious and the impious. Is this not so?

Euthyphro

It's this way, indeed.

Socrates

And it appears to be correctly said?

Euthyphro

B I think so, Socrates.

Euthyphro's second attempt to define piety and impiety is much more to Socrates' liking, as he has finally understood that he needs to provide Socrates with the common characteristic shared by pious actions. He is able to do so without assistance from Socrates beyond the general instructions regarding definition, and this is the only case in which he is able to complete a formulation of a proposition on his own in the dialogue.<sup>31</sup> Socrates provides him with clarifications and ideas for the definitions of piety that follow. Euthyphro suggests that piety is what the gods love—"tois theois prospheiles," "prospheiles," meaning 'dear,' 'loved,' 'agreeable' or 'pleasing.' Impiety is what is not dear to them—"To de me prospheiles anosion." The alternative meaning of 'loved' will be significant towards the end of the dialogue, when Socrates questions distinguishing between piety as what is gratifying to gods (kecharismenon) and what is loved (philon). At this early point, the sense of 'prospheiles' as something the gods love appears to be the sense of the term Socrates wishes to pursue as he sharpens Euthyphro's wording into "theophiles" (god-loved) and "theomises" (god-hated). These two terms are, as Socrates says, opposite one another and 'theomises' seems correctly translated as something the gods hate or intensely dislike. Euthyphro agrees to this reformulation, that piety is what is god-beloved and impiety is what is god-hated, and he does not object to the increased specificity of the terminology. The adjective Socrates employs is noticeably less vague in meaning, as 'prospheiles' can describe actions and things loved by any kind of agent in addition to the gods, while 'theophiles' and 'theomises' pertain specifically to anything loved or hated by the gods.

The idea of piety being god-loved and impiety being god-hated avoids Euthyphro's initial manner of relying on the gods as models for pious human behavior—

Zeus' actions, for instance, are pious and should be imitated. The new proposition regarding piety regards their likes and dislikes (noticeably, not their moral choices). Their idea is consistent with the idea of a distinction between the gods and human beings. The gods' preferences are what make an action pious or impious. In this case, the gods love and approve of pious actions, and, implicitly, such actions are performed for the sake of this love and approval from them.

Socrates is pleased with Euthyphro's new idea about piety, yet insists that they examine "episkespometha" ("let us examine") the definition. In the passages that follow, Socrates refers back to Euthyphro's earlier comments regarding the strife and enmity between the gods and his commitment to these myths.

Socrates

Very well, have we said this, Euthyphro, that the gods disagree and differ with each other and there is hatred between them?

Euthyphro

We said this.

Socrates

What about the difference, noble friend, causes hatred and anger? Let's look at it this way. If you and I were to differ about number as to which is greater, would this difference make us enemies and angry at each other, or could we quickly get rid of our difference about this through counting? C

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

And then again, if we were to differ about a thing being larger or smaller, would we cease to disagree by proceeding to measure it?

Euthyphro

That is so.

Socrates

And we would come to a decision about a heavy or lighter thing by proceeding to weigh it, I suppose?

Euthyphro

How could it not be so?

Socrates sets up the examination of the definition, “piety is what is dear to the gods,” first reminding Euthyphro of his commitment to the idea that the gods disagree. He first makes clear the nature of disagreement, explaining how people typically settle them through the use of objective standards. Disagreements between people regarding a quantity can be settled through counting, those about size are settled through measurement and those about weight are settled through weighing. In each case, a conflict in opinion dissipates when there is an objective standard in place, which can be referred to in order to decide the fact of the matter. These examples relate to Socrates’ request for a definition of piety, and finding a single common characteristic that he may “look upon” in order to determine what particular actions are pious and what are not. Such a definition, if found, would provide a standard to resolve disagreement.

Once again, Socrates avoids a deep metaphysical analysis of the objective status of measurement and number. In his explanation to Euthyphro, ordinary kinds of standards are useful in deciding between opinions, establishing who is right or wrong in disputes. The basic point Socrates is developing, though, regards the causes of disagreement that cannot be resolved. The ordinary cases he mentions explain disagreements that can be settled and the way in which they are resolved.

#### Socrates

What would a difference be about, about which we could not decide, and which would make us angry and cause hatred between each of us? Perhaps, you do not have an answer ready at hand, but examine what I say—if the matters here are the just and unjust, the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad. Then aren’t these differences about which we are unable to come to a satisfactory decision, those that cause you and I and all other men to become enemies with each other whenever we do become enemies?

Euthyphro

That is the difference, Socrates, about them.

Differences in opinion that are not easily decided do not seem to have external standards readily available for reference. Socrates suggests that subjects like justice, beauty and goodness present this problem, and constant enmity results from conflicting views about them. Noticeably left off this list is piety, although it, too, has obviously caused much conflict for Euthyphro and himself. Here, as earlier, Socrates avoids question begging in developing his example, and perhaps he also avoids irritating his interlocutor. The subject matters Socrates mentions are the “classic” topics of philosophical inquiry, those that he questions citizens and strangers about on his philosophical mission. These passages imply that Socrates’ quest for definitions aims at settling disputes about these important matters of unresolved disagreement, and that philosophy has, or could have, this social purpose.<sup>32</sup>

Socrates

What about the gods, Euthyphro? If they have differences, wouldn’t they differ about these same things?

Euthyphro

Quite necessarily.

Socrates suggests an analogy between human disputes and those of the gods. If human differences about justice, beauty and goodness are the typical causes of unresolved disagreement and hatred, the hatred and disagreement between the gods, which Euthyphro believes exists, must be about the same subjects. As below, so above. Socrates’ use of analogy, in this instance, is well taken as the disputes among the gods were attributed to

their different views of what is just, beautiful and good. He is simply describing the anthropomorphism found in traditional myths of the gods. At the same time, we can see that there is an increase in the sophistication of the descriptions of the gods' preferences. In Euthyphro's first attempt at defining piety the actions of the gods were under consideration—what Zeus does is a model for human action. In the second attempt, what is loved and what is hated, the gods' emotional comportment is under discussion. When we arrive at the third attempt, we will discover that the explications of the gods preferences in non-moral terms (actions and emotional preference) will be undermined and an ethical judgment or assessment will be what is required.

Socrates

Then according to your argument, high-minded Euthyphro, E different gods contend that different things are just, beautiful, ugly, good, and bad; for they would not fight with one another unless they differed about these matters, would they?

Euthyphro

You say it rightly.

Socrates

Then each god contends that the very things, which they love, are beautiful, good, and just, and hates the opposites of these?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

But you say that the same things are considered just by some gods and unjust by others, and disputing about these things, 8 they are in a state of discord and enemies with each other. Is this not so?

Euthyphro

It is.

The gods prefer different things, Socrates claims, and so the same action can be just, beautiful or good according to some gods, but the very opposite to others. In the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, we find the description of just such a situation:

Yet there are three hearts that she [Aphrodite] cannot bend or ensnare. First is the daughter of Zeus who holds the aegis, bright-eyed Athene; for she has no pleasure in the deeds of golden Aphrodite, but delights in wars and in the work of Ares, in strife and battles and in preparing famous crafts. (Homeric Hymns, 407)

Artemis, one of the other two gods mentioned, loves archery and hunting and Hestia loves the hearth and household. These three find Aphrodite's interest in eros repugnant and are immune from her power to create erotic desire. The argument that Socrates pursues here—that the same thing or action can be both god-hated and god-beloved—is well known. Euthyphro's idea of defining piety as what is dear to the gods is not very well considered, given the abundance of instances available regarding disagreement between the gods concerning the spheres of interests ascribed to them. Each god controls or oversees particular domains, and unlike monotheistic deities, their powers do not extend universally with respect to each other. Even the chief god, Zeus, is not immune from Aphrodite's power to create erotic desire, although he, in turn is able to manipulate Aphrodite into desiring a mortal man. Gods sometimes share common or complimentary values, like Athene and Ares, but by design their alliances cannot be unanimous. The value of virginity, for example, quite directly opposes eros. Legendary human conflicts such as the Trojan War were believed to reflect and have been caused by the fundamental oppositions between the gods (Paris' judgment favoring Aphrodite incurs the wrath of Athene, Hera and Poseidon against Troy<sup>33</sup>).

Socrates

Then, as it seems, the same things are both hated and loved by the gods and the same things would be both god-hated and god-loved.

Euthyphro

So it seems.

Socrates

Then both the impious and the pious would be the same thing, Euthyphro, on this view.

Euthyphro

It's possible.

Socrates

So then you did not answer my question, admirable man. I did not ask what happens to be both pious and impious—and, as it seems, what is both god-loved and also god-hated. **B** It wouldn't be surprising, then, Euthyphro, if that which you're doing now, punishing your father, were loved by Zeus, but hated by Cronus and Ouranos, loved by Hephaestus, but hated by Hera, and so on as to any other of the gods, if they disagree about this with any other gods.

As Socrates has gotten Euthyphro to agree that the gods disagree about fundamental issues, and that, given this state of conflict, the same thing may be both god-beloved and god-hated, he returns to the issue of piety. Under the definition they are investigating, identifying piety with the god-beloved and impiety with what is god-hated, the same action may be both god-beloved and god-hated. At first, Euthyphro does not seem to realize fully that this contradiction undermines his definition. Socrates reiterates the problem and then uses Euthyphro's own action as an example; some gods might love this action, while other gods might not. Instead of clarifying the matter, Socrates' words cause Euthyphro to become defensive. An interlude concerning punishment ensues. Their divergent discussion about punishment and "paying the penalty" for a crime leads to a revision of the definition they are examining.

Euthyphro

But, Socrates, I think that none of the gods differ with the others about this, or not believe it's necessary that whoever has killed anyone unjustly must pay the penalty.

Socrates

Well then, Euthyphro, speaking of men, did you ever hear any man arguing that someone who has killed **C** a man or done anything else unjustly should not pay the penalty?

Euthyphro

They never cease arguing about these things in the courts of justice and elsewhere, for when they've done numerous wrong things, they say and do anything to avoid the penalty.

Socrates

Do they agree, Euthyphro, they've done wrong, yet agreeing to this, nevertheless say it's not necessary to pay the penalty?

Euthyphro

In no way do they say this.

Socrates

So then there's at least one thing they don't say and do. For I believe they don't dare say or dispute this, that even if they really have done wrong they must not pay the penalty, **D** but I believe they say they've not done wrong. Is this so?

Euthyphro

You speak the truth.

Socrates

Then they do not dispute that the wrongdoer must be punished, but, perhaps, they disagree about this, who the wrongdoer is, what he did and when.

Euthyphro

You speak the truth.

Upon hearing that the pious would be both god-loved and god-hated under the definition "piety is what the gods love," Euthyphro asserts that all of the gods would find his action pious. Additionally, he asserts that they would agree that whoever has murdered (unjustly killed) someone must be punished. When Socrates shows him that his definition contains a contradiction and fails, Euthyphro falls back upon defending his particular action, struggling, perhaps, to save face. The idea of unanimous agreement of the gods will figure in the reformulation of their definition of piety, but before this, Socrates must tackle the "red-herring" Euthyphro has raised. In defense of his action, he claims that all the gods find his actions agreeable because a murderer must be punished. However true this claim is, it is beside the point and adds nothing to the discussion of piety, but Socrates needs to demonstrate to him that this is the case.

Socrates asks Euthyphro if people disagree about whether or not a murderer should be punished, and Euthyphro describes the courts being filled with people seeking

to avoid punishment. Socrates proceeds to clarify the issue for him, as the primary consensus supporting a legal system is the agreement that wrongdoers must be punished. He explains that people in court attempt to prove that they have not done wrong. They do not deny the basic premise that someone guilty of committing a crime must be punished. Disputes in the court center on the identity of a wrongdoer and the nature and context of the actions committed in order to prove that no wrong has been committed, so punishment can be avoided. Euthyphro is initially confused about this point, claiming that avoidance of punishment is the whole of the matter.

These passages provide us with a sense of the pervasiveness of legal actions at Athens, and how pervasive sophism was, as Euthyphro describes people saying and doing anything in court to prove their cases—a jest which Socrates returns, there being perhaps just one thing they do say and do. Euthyphro finally appreciates the point that people do not disagree about punishing the guilty criminal. People say and do anything in court to prove they are not guilty.

Socrates

Very well, then, isn't it just the same way for the gods, if indeed they really are in a state of discord about the just and unjust, as you claim, some saying that others have acted unjustly while others say they have not? Whereas, admirable friend, it may be that no one among the gods or men dare to claim that the wrongdoer must not pay the penalty.

Euthyphro

Yes, you speak the truth about this, Socrates, which is the chief concern.

Socrates

But I believe, Euthyphro, that those disagreeing over what will be a penalty, whether men or gods, if the gods really disagree, disagree about each action. Some of those disagreeing about the action say that what had been done was just and others say that it was unjust. Is this not so?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates creates an analogy between the gods and men regarding disputes about punishment. He suggests that just as humans do not dispute the principle that a wrongdoer must be punished, but instead disagree about whether or not someone has done something wrong, the gods likewise agree with this principle, yet disagree about the nature of an action. He has returned to his earlier point regarding disputes that are not easily reconciled, those concerning justice, beauty, and goodness, and the earlier analogy he drew between the gods and men about such sorts of disagreements. It is possible to disagree with a fundamental legal or moral principle such as “wrongdoers must be punished,” but Socrates does not pursue this option. He avoids challenging the Athenian legal system even in this brief discussion regarding law and punishment, and this attitude of his is consistent in the early dialogues surrounding his trial and execution. In the Crito, Socrates explains that it is not Athen’s laws that have wronged him, but men implementing those laws in his case (54b-c). Laws protecting the youth from corruption and punishing impiety are not wrong, in his view, but they can be misapplied in particular cases. However, if it turns out that key concepts used in the laws are not well understood or are indefinable, this would be a problem for those laws. But Socrates claims that his actions are pious in the Apology and avoids challenging the legal system at Athens. The apparent tension between the search to define piety in the Euthyphro and Socrates’ claims about piety in the Apology will be discussed in detail later on. As we will see again at 9b/9c, Socrates is critical of the way that Athenians go about their legal proceedings; that they are so taken with persuasion and value “speaking well” over speaking truthfully.<sup>34</sup> The jokes he makes with Euthyphro about this are clearly aimed at the men involved and not the idea of having a system in place to achieve justice.

Socrates

Come now, dear Euthyphro, and teach <sup>9</sup> me in order that I may become wiser, what proof you have that all the gods hold that man had been killed unjustly, the laborer who became a murderer, having been bound by the master of the man he killed, and first died before the one who bound him hand and foot was told by the interpreter of oracles what was necessary to do--and it is right for a son to prosecute and denounce his father for murder in defense of such a man. Come, try to prove to me by argument clearly about this, that beyond a doubt all the gods <sup>B</sup> find this action right, and if you can demonstrate this sufficiently to me, even I would never cease praising you for your wisdom.

Euthyphro

Yet, perhaps the task is not small, Socrates, although I could indulge showing you quite clearly.

Socrates

I perceive that you imagine me slower at learning than the jurors since you will clearly demonstrate that these actions are unjust and all the gods hate them.

Euthyphro

By all means clearly, Socrates, if only they will listen to what I say.

Socrates

They will listen if they think you speak well. <sup>C</sup> But this occurred to me at the same time you were speaking, and so I contemplate it within myself: "Even if, above all, Euthyphro should teach me that all the gods find such a death to be unjust, what more have I learned from Euthyphro about the pious and the impious? For this action, so it seems, would be god-hated. But it was just now shown that this did not define the pious and impious, for it was shown to be both God-hated and god-loved." But, I can let you go about this, Euthyphro; if you wish, all <sup>D</sup> the gods might hold this action unjust and hate it. But now we can revise the definition to this effect—that all the gods hate the impious and that they love what is pious. And what some love and some hate is neither or both---however, is this the correction we are making in our discussion, that what all the gods hate is impious and what they all love is pious, and that what some gods love and others hate is neither or both? Is this the way you wish to define the pious and the impious now?

Euthyphro

What prevents this, Socrates?

In an interesting manner, Socrates appears to change his mind in the above passages, first exhorting Euthyphro to prove to him that, beyond all doubt, all the gods hold that Euthyphro's father killed the day laborer unjustly; that all of them hate this action. If Euthyphro can do this, Socrates grandly suggests that he will never cease

extolling the young prophet's wisdom. But after Euthyphro stalls for time, appearing to be much more aware of the difficulty involved in meeting Socrates' demands, Socrates revises his request. As Euthyphro was speaking, it occurs to him that even if Euthyphro could show that all the gods hate that Euthyphro's father's action, the definition of piety and impiety that stands needs to be rethought. This seems to be a matter of clarification on Socrates' part. An example of something that all the gods hate would not necessarily provide the essence or one common characteristic of impiety, it would simply return them to their first failed attempt at a definition. Socrates seems to realize that such a hypothetical example provides a clue for the next definition of piety, which he himself puts forward—that what all the gods love is pious and what all the gods hate is impious, and whatever is loved and hated is “neither or both” (“both” in this case would be a contradiction as the examination of the second definition has shown, so it is quite likely that Socrates would discount such instances altogether in the way he suggests they are “neither” pious or impious). The example is hypothetical as Socrates uses the optative voice to express that if Euthyphro wishes, all the gods might hold the action unjust (“pantes auto egeisthon theoi adikon”). The hypothetical example cannot be proven until a hypothesis is provided. After Socrates suggests one, all Euthyphro must do is agree to it.

Socrates

Nothing from me, Euthyphro, but you look to yourself, if with this proposal you can easily teach me what you promised.

Euthyphro

Well, I, at least, would say this is E the pious, what all the gods love, and the opposite, what all the gods hate, is impious.

This assertion begins an argument famously called “the Euthyphro Dilemma” (10a-11b), a dilemma posed for Euthyphro’s third attempt to define piety as what all the gods love at 9e. It is arguably this dialogue’s most significant contribution to philosophy, especially in the areas of philosophy of religion and moral philosophy. If the dilemma Socrates poses to Euthyphro succeeds in undermining their definition of piety, then it proves that piety, and any value we might be tempted to similarly define, such as what is right or good, must be defined independently from the command of god/s.<sup>35</sup> What is pious or morally right, cannot be so simply because it is loved or commanded by God. That is—if this argument is sound. There is considerable debate over the mechanics of Socrates’ argument, and it remains a challenge to interpret, not only because of difficulties in translating the Ancient Greek, but also because it is presented in dialogue form and not as a formal argument.

Euthyphro’s claim that “the pious is what all the gods love, and the opposite, what all the gods hate, is impious” (9e) is an improvement over his last attempt, as he has grasped (with considerable prodding from Socrates) that the definition of piety must eliminate cases of contradiction—disagreement between the gods—and has added “all” to do so. Socrates then presents “The Euthyphro Dilemma.”

Socrates

Surely, then let us examine this again, Euthyphro, if it is well put, or should we concede and so accept our definition and those of others, and if someone should say “it is so,” then we should agree that it is so? Should one consider what something said means?

Euthyphro

One should consider this, but I certainly think, at the moment, this is well stated.

Socrates

Soon we’ll know better, good friend. 10 Consider this: Notice--Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?

The first horn of the dilemma is, “is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious?” The second horn is, “is it [piety] pious because it is loved by the gods?” From an initial reading of the dilemma, it seems apparent that choosing the first horn will render Euthyphro’s definition of piety superfluous. If all the gods love piety because it is pious, the quality of piety causes or creates the gods’ love for a pious action, but the quality itself is not determined by their love. The second horn suggests that the gods’ love for an action is what makes it pious. However, this option at first glance renders piety arbitrary, or seemingly so, as there is no reason, cause or explanation of piety beyond the love of the gods. The pious is pious because of the gods’ love of it. If there were another cause or explanation, we would find ourselves back contending with first horn of the dilemma. For the dilemma to succeed neither horn can be acceptable, and this is what Socrates sets out to prove.

Euthyphro

I don’t understand what you’re saying, Socrates.

Socrates.

I’ll try to explain more clearly: We speak of something being carried and someone carrying, of something being led and someone leading, of something being seen and someone seeing--and you understand that all these are different from one another and how they are different?

Euthyphro

I believe that I understand.

Here, Socrates distinguishes between an agent doing an action and an object receiving that action. A participle denotes that a noun is the recipient of an agent’s action or some other active state, indicated by the verb. “A carried book” or “a book being carried,” for example, is a phrase that tells us a book is in the state of being carried by someone. These types of phrases are much clearer in Ancient Greek as the general

avoidance of the passive voice in English makes it appear awkward when rendering the Greek.

To pheromenon =something being carried, what is carried (passive participle)

Pheretai=it is carried (by someone); can be translated actively as “somebody carries it” (passive verb)

Pheromenon estin= something is being carried (passive participle with periphrastic copula: denotes a characteristic brought about by the continued action indicated by the verb, pheretai)—can be translated as “something has the quality/is in the state of being carried.”

Likewise, Phileitai—it is loved (passive verb)

To philoumenon =something being loved (passive participle)

To philoumenon estin= something is being loved, has the quality of being loved<sup>36</sup>

Socrates

Very well, then there is something being loved, and there is someone loving that’s a different thing.

Euthyphro

How could it not be so?

Socrates

So, tell me then whether something which **B** is being carried is being carried because someone carries it or for some other reason?

Euthyphro

No, that’s it.

Socrates

And something being led is this way because someone leads it, and something being seen is this way because someone sees it?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

Well, something is not seen because it has the quality of being seen, but because someone sees it, it has this quality of being seen. Nor is something led by someone because it has the quality of being led, but because someone leads it, it has this quality of being led; nor

does someone carry something because it has the quality of being carried, but it has this quality of being carried because someone carries it. Well, is what I want to say clear, Euthyphro? C I want to say this, if someone produces something or someone affects something, someone does not produce something on account of its having the quality of being produced, but because someone produces something it has the quality of being produced. Nor does someone affect something because it has the quality of being affected. But because someone affects something it has the quality of being affected. Or do you not agree with this?

Euthyphro

I do.

Socrates

All right, then. Is what is loved either something that has the quality of being produced or being affected by someone?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

Well, then this is like the preceding things; isn't it that something is not loved by those who love it because it has the quality of being loved, but it has this quality of being loved because they love it?

Euthyphro

Necessarily.

Something has the quality of "being loved" because it is loved by someone. It is not being loved because it is loved.

P causes Q

Being loved by an agent causes something to have the quality of being loved or be in the state of being loved.

Q does not cause P

The quality of being loved does not cause this thing to be loved.

Q is an effect of P, not its cause. Effects don't cause their causes. In other words, an agent's loving, seeing or carrying something allows us to say that this something is in a state of being loved, seen or carried. This state cannot be confused with what causes the agent to love, see, or carry something.

An important and helpful distinction one can make here is between ways that qualities can be caused. While an agent's action "causes" something to be in a certain state, and we can correctly say that my loving pizza allows me to say the pizza slice is being loved by me (as well as being eaten), this state of being loved is not identical to the qualities that make the pizza slice what it is, and cause me to love it. Its qualities of having a tangy sauce, crispy crust and creamy cheese are the significant qualities that account for my love for it. This distinction corresponds to those between ousia—an essential quality pertaining to something's being—and pathos an externally caused condition or characteristic of something, although, in the Euthyphro, Socrates does not pursue this technical distinction explicitly in terms of substance, essences and accidental qualities. Their discussion remains on the level of more "ordinary" language use. 'hoti' (because, on account of) is the typically used connective in these passages, and even then, he does not go too far into a philosophical discussion of cause and effect. His use of examples better suits the level of his non-philosophical interlocutor.

This is said in the way of clarifying a main point of confusion in the passages concerning the Euthyphro dilemma, namely that the quality of "being loved by all the gods," while correctly describing piety, is not a fully explanatory description.<sup>37</sup> Such a description of piety can have a further explanation in whatever properties of an object cause the agents (the gods) to love it. What is most confusing is that when something is in a state of being loved, it is so-called or described, yet this description merely names this state and does not further explain the cause of its being in that state. The state of "being loved by the gods" cannot be confused with whatever intrinsic properties of an object, if any, are responsible for causing love for it. Piety is being loved (by the gods)—

“philoumenon estin,” a state of an object that is the recipient of continual action caused by an agent. This kind of state is grammatically described by the passive participle with a periphrastic copula. Euthyphro must come to realize that the difference between a manner of speaking about piety and the explanation of what causes an agent to be related in some manner to an object (in this case the relation of love). An interesting way to clarify this distinction is to look at the different identity statements involved:

Piety is being loved by all the gods.

Taken at face value, the identity in this statement is between piety and the state of being loved. Yet Socrates has explained that the state of being loved presupposes the distinction between agent and object, piety and all the gods. The state of the object, expressed in “being” depends on the action of the agent, their love. The statement ‘Piety is being loved by the gods’ is another way of stating:

Piety is loved by all the gods.

And this is another way of stating:

All the gods love piety.

The identity disappears in this transformation. As Socrates explains, the state of “being loved by all the gods” is accounted for in terms of the agent’s action, the gods’ love, and not in terms of the object. In this respect, Socrates prevents a category mistake arising from the passive verb construction, “Piety is loved by all the gods.”<sup>38</sup> The passive voice suggests identity between predicate and object, but this identity is misleading. When we say, “Piety is loved by all the gods,” what this means is “All the gods love piety.” Piety is a direct object of the ‘love’, but this is not an identity statement. The passive participle with periphrastic copula construction, is likewise misleading. The statement that “Piety is

being loved by all the gods” simply further specifies a condition of the object, but this condition is still one that pertains to the love of the gods—all the gods love an object and their love causes this kind of state. The correction Socrates makes is subtle, since he does not deny that these sorts of phrases can be correctly or truthfully used. Although it is not incorrect to say, “Piety is being loved by the gods,” Socrates tries to show that this sort of predication is not equivalent to an informative identity. While piety is spoken of “being loved by the gods,” this manner of speaking about piety is not about ‘piety,’ but about ‘love.’ The discussion of piety requires clarity regarding the language used to describe it. The grammar of these passive constructions creates the impression that “being loved by all the gods” is an essential property piety, but this impression is false.

Socrates

What do we say about the pious, **D** Euthyphro? So, it is loved by all the gods, as you say?

Euthyphro

Yes.

Socrates returns to the definition Euthyphro had asserted. At this time, he has clarified the problem inherent in this definition’s use of the verb ‘to love.’ Even if it is the case that piety is loved by all the gods, this is not the cause of their love for it. While the pious is in a state of being loved by the gods, like the pizza slice is in a state of being loved by me, the qualities that cause this love are not to be mistaken for this condition. Socrates explains this in the next few passages, and we can begin to identify the premises involved in the Euthyphro Dilemma.

1. Euthyphro’s definition of piety: The pious is loved by all the gods.

Socrates

Because of this it is pious, or for some other reason?

Euthyphro

No, because of this.

Socrates

Okay. So, is it loved because it is pious, but it is not pious because it is loved?

Euthyphro

So it seems.

2. Something is loved because it is pious. It is not pious because it is loved.

Note: The pious causes all the gods to love it; their love does not cause the pious.

In these exchanges, Euthyphro has agreed to reject the second horn of the dilemma, is piety 'pious' because it is loved by the gods—this is to say that the gods' love of piety is what causes it to be pious. The previous discussion of the way in which something is in a state of being loved because people or gods love it, but at the same time they do not love it because it has this state. At this point, no reasons or argument have been provided beyond this previous explanation for rejecting the second horn of the dilemma. It is not at all clear that Euthyphro actually has the philosophical sophistication to understand fully why this horn should be rejected despite Socrates' explanation of why, although we say things are in a condition or state of being loved, these states are not the reasons we love them. It's quite likely that his assent is not much more than a conversational platitude. At the conclusion of the dialogue he fails to recall the problems involved in defining piety as what the gods love and god-loved (15c). Yet we are in a position to understand why the second horn needs to be rejected in these passages. Besides identifying piety with an accidental quality, the claim that something is in a "state of being loved" because it is "in a state of being loved" amounts to a tautology. The

substitution argument that follows shows that identifying piety with the quality of being loved by the gods (being “god-loved”) is inconsistent with the first horn of the dilemma, but is also an uninformative path to define piety.

Socrates

So then, because it is loved by the gods, it has the quality of being loved and is god-loved.

Euthyphro

How could it not be so?

3. Piety has the quality of being loved because it is loved by all the gods.

4. The quality of being loved by all the gods is identical to “god-loved”

Socrates

The god-loved is not the pious, Euthyphro, nor is the pious god-loved, as you say it is, but one is different from the other.

12. Piety is not god-loved (and vice-versa). (Conclusion of the argument.)

Euthyphro

How so, E Socrates?

Socrates

Because we agree that the pious is loved for the reason that it is pious, but it is not pious because it is loved. Is this so?

Euthyphro

Yes.

Socrates

So, something god-loved is god-loved, meaning it is loved by the gods, because of this fact of its being loved, but it is not loved because it is god-loved.

Euthyphro

You speak the truth.

5. Something is god-loved because it has the quality of being loved by all the gods.
6. Something is not loved because it is god-loved.

Socrates

So, if, dear Euthyphro, the god-loved and the pious were the same thing, then the pious would be loved because it was pious, and then the god-loved <sup>11</sup> would be loved because it was god-loved, if the god-loved was god-loved on account of being loved by the gods. And thus, the pious would be pious because it was loved by all the gods; yet now you see that they are opposite to one another, being completely different from each other. For one is a sort of thing that is loved merely meaning it has 'the quality of being loved,' while the other has the quality of being loved because it is a kind of thing that is loveable.

7. If the pious = god-loved = the quality of being loved by all the gods

Then:

8. The pious would be loved because it is pious. (2)
9. The god-loved is god-loved because it has the quality of being loved by the gods. (5)  
(The pious is god-loved because it has the quality of being loved by the gods; the god-loved is loved because it is pious.)
10. The god-loved would be loved because it is god-loved.  
(Something is god-loved because it is loved by all the gods.)
11. The pious would be loved because it is loved by all the gods.
12. Piety is not god-loved (and vice-versa).

10 and 6 are inconsistent; 11 is inconsistent with 2,8

The pious cannot be identified with that which is loved by all the gods, as Euthyphro's definition holds (1).

The substitutions in this passage show that piety cannot be identified with the god-loved. The first horn of the Euthyphro Dilemma, which states that piety is loved because it is pious, cannot be maintained under this identity because something is "god-loved" on account of its being loved by all the gods. The attribute of being loved by the gods isn't bestowed on piety because it is pious, but refers to a condition caused by the agent's relationship to it. Even if piety is loved by all the gods, this accidental attribute is not identical with it. Neither horn of the dilemma is acceptable, and Euthyphro's definition fails on this account. The pious remains undefined. Moreover, this argument establishes that piety must be defined independently of the love (command or will) of the gods. The Euthyphro Dilemma succeeds because Socrates has shown that there is a crucial difference between accidental and essential properties—a pathos, a term that means "quality" or "characteristic" in a non-technical sense, is externally caused. The state of being loved by the gods, an accidental, externally caused property, cannot be identified with whatever essential property (being—ousia) piety has. This claim is more controversial than is often given credit.<sup>39</sup>

If the gods' relation to piety is only accidental, piety's essential properties are wholly unrelated to their direct interest. It is difficult to imagine what piety would mean at all in terms of traditional religious beliefs. If the gods' interest/relationship to piety is only accidental—and piety's essence exists independently of them—then piety might persist, for instance, in terms of deities that are not anthropomorphic or directly involved

in human life, willing or loving human actions, or even in the case that they do not exist. It does not seem, however, that Socrates upholds an “irreligious” view of morality.<sup>40</sup> The gods are quite real to him, and pious actions cannot be wholly divorced from the gods’ interest.

The Euthyphro Dilemma presents us with a tacitly radical idea about piety, as it proves that whatever manner it needs to be defined must not make recourse to the love or will of god/gods. Socrates’ idea of piety—whatever it is—must be something very different from the ideas of his society, for religious practices were typically understood as activities that pleased the gods. The gods were understood as protecting cities and communities and failure to worship them properly was thought to undermine that protection. Religion was understood as supporting the state (city), and, for this reason, criminal actions like murder were not only against the law but also against religion. The wrong and impious were inseparable—hence Euthyphro’s indictment of his father is taken as a matter of pollution before the King Archon. If religion and pious actions are not understood as reflecting the commands of the gods, the relationship between piety, religion and divine deities is quite different in Socrates’ view. In the least, as far as Euthyphro dilemma suggests, the relationship must be indirect. That is to say, there are pious actions, but they are not done for the sake of the love or will of the gods. Once again, we find a tension between Socrates’ view of the gods, piety and religion and those of his city. At a second glance instead of a first glance, one of the “absurdities” Meletus accuses him of—of innovation with respect to the gods—does not seem very absurd. We will later see an option for understanding the relationship between piety and the gods as indirect, which may represent an alternative that resolves this tension.

## Socrates (continued)

I venture to guess, Euthyphro, that when you were asked what piety is, you did not wish to make its essential nature clear to me, but told me some inessential quality it has,<sup>41</sup> because the pious is affected like this, it is loved by all **B** the gods, but you have not yet said what it is. Therefore, as a friend, do not keep this hidden, but once again from the beginning explain what piety is at some time. Whether it is loved by the gods or has another state—we shall not quarrel about that—but eagerly tell me what the pious and the impious are.

Euthyphro

But Socrates, I have no way of saying what's on my mind to you, for what we put forward always goes around in any which way and is unwilling to stand fast in the place where we establish it.

Socrates

Euthyphro, the things you say appear to pertain to my ancestor, Daedalus. **C** If I were the one saying these things and putting them forward, perhaps you would make fun of me and say that on account of my relationship with him, the artifacts of my speech run away and are unwilling to stand fast in the place where they are put. But as it is, the proposals are yours. There's need of another jest, for they will not stay put for you, as you yourself suppose.

Euthyphro

It seems to me this off-hand jest is what these statements call for, Socrates, as I am not the one who makes them go around and not stand fast in the same place. You create this, not me. **D** But, it seems to me that you are the Daedalus; whereas if it depended on me they would remain fixed.

At the conclusion of the Euthyphro Dilemma we find what has been termed the “Daedalus Interlude.” Socrates has shown that piety cannot be defined as what all the gods love, and accuses Euthyphro of concealing his knowledge. Yet, Euthyphro has not been concealing his knowledge—and Socrates is aware of this, but does not confront Euthyphro about his ignorance. Instead, he keeps up his strategy of being Euthyphro's student and appealing to Euthyphro's supposedly superior knowledge. This strategy, however, has become frustrating for Euthyphro, who complains that he cannot say what's on his mind to Socrates without his statements moving around. Euthyphro has been

brought to a state of perplexity, similar to that of Meno in Plato's dialogue Meno, who complains during this examination of virtue (arete):

Socrates, before I even met you I used to hear that you are always in a state of perplexity and that you bring others to this same state, and now I think you are bewitching and beguiling me, simply putting me under a spell, so that I am perplexed. Indeed if the joke is in order, you seem in appearance and every other way, to be like the broad torpedo fish, for it too makes anyone who comes close and touches it feel numb, and you too have that effect on me, for both my mind and my tongue are numb, and I have no answer to give you. (Meno, 79e-80b, Grube)

The state of perplexity, aporia, Euthyphro experiences is common for Socrates' interlocutors in the early dialogues. Concepts they initially claim to know or believe are clear are shown to be unclear under examination. Euthyphro has the impression that their examination of their claims moves them "any which way," and he is unable to perceive that there has been a pattern in their examination, a development in the method of examination, as well as content. Although he has reached perplexity like interlocutors such as Meno, his perplexity fits his character. Socrates associates Euthyphro's complaint with Daedalus, the legendary artificer who made moving statues—Euthyphro does not make this association by himself. Socrates makes this association with Daedalus only to turn it on Euthyphro, claiming that it is the proposals Euthyphro makes which move, and the fault lies with Euthyphro for making them. Euthyphro, however, finds that it is Socrates' fault, because he would like the definitions to stand fast (menein). Meno, too, would like to have something to say about arete, but has the sophistication to recognize that he is the one who has been rendered speechless; his ideas have "given out." He jokes that Socrates is at fault metaphorically for this speechlessness, but Meno's aporia contains the seeds of recognition of his own ignorance. Euthyphro's brush with

aporia during the Daedalus Interlude is not nearly so productive, and it is interesting to note how much more positive philosophical ground is covered in the Meno, than is in the Euthyphro (anamnesis, the distinction between knowledge and opinion).<sup>42</sup> While these are dialogues concerning different subject matters, it is not as though there is less to say about piety or that it is much less significant of a concept than *arête*. The point is that Euthyphro is an interlocutor whose knowledge of a subject is not taught by professional teachers like the sophists who have trained Meno, but comes from Greek culture itself, from the family, participation in religious festivals and possibly more esoteric sources like the mystery cults. Add to this Euthyphro's vanity, and we find a much more recalcitrant interlocutor than Meno. Euthyphro represents a religious point of view that eschews questioning its own grounds. Euthyphro's aporia is an obstacle to the philosophical pursuit of truth, and Socrates must bring him out of it, helping him establish another definition. At the same time, Socrates' insistence that they continue their investigation into piety demonstrates the risk he willingly undertakes in the face of conventional ideas about piety. Socrates' pursuit of dialectic encompasses piety, even when he is being charged with impiety and these charges have arisen from this pursuit of his.<sup>43</sup>

Socrates

Well, I dare suggest, my friend, I am a cleverer man than him in my skill, insofar as he could only make the things he himself made move, but it seems I make other men's move as well as my own. Indeed, the cleverest thing about my skill is that I am unwillingly clever, for I would prefer if my statements stood fast and were more firmly established than possess the skill of Daedalus and the wealth of Tantalus. But E enough of that. Since you seem to me to be so dainty about it, I myself will help you that you may teach me about piety, and do not give up before your work is done. See if it seems to you that all that is pious is necessarily just.

Euthyphro

It seems so to me.

Socrates

Well, then is all that is just pious? Or is all that is pious 12 just, but not all that is just pious, but some of it is pious and some is another thing?

Euthyphro

I do not follow what you say, Socrates.

This fourth attempt to define piety begins with Socrates' wondering if all that is pious is necessarily just. This definition differs from the past two attempts to define it, as any reference to the gods is absent. We might expect this to be the case, as the Euthyphro Dilemma has shown that reference to the gods and their direct interests (love, will) does not work and that even if all the gods love piety, and it is god-beloved, such a property is not an essential characteristic of piety. Socrates' association of piety with justice is thus a very clever means of respecting the conditions that their investigation has imposed upon further attempts to define piety. However, it should be noted that the connection between piety and justice is not arbitrary. *Hosion* is not only a term with religious significance, but also moral significance. As mentioned earlier, there is a connection between piety and morality, as impious actions are prosecuted and held to be morally wrong. Euthyphro is prosecuting his father for murder, bringing him to justice to avoid pollution. Achieving justice is the way to avoid impiety. Thus, Socrates' suggestion reflects the interconnection existing in the concepts of *orthos* (right), *hosion* (piety) and *dike* (justice).

Euthyphro quickly agrees to the proposal that all that is pious is just, as this would be commonsense, yet he is unprepared for further rigorous thinking about the matter. Socrates asks him if all that is just is also pious, or if all that is pious is just, but not all that is just is also pious. Euthyphro clearly admits that he does not understand this reasoning. Socrates has basically asked him if piety is a subset of the set of justice (or

vice-versa), if one set is larger and contains the other as a part. Just as Euthyphro did not initially understand Socrates' explanation of a definition, here he does not grasp the idea of classes and their relationships.

Socrates

And yet you are younger than I, as much as you are no less wiser. But, as I say, you live softly because of your wealth of wisdom. But, blessed man, pull yourself together, for what I'm saying isn't hard to understand. I say the opposite of what the poet wrote who said:

You do not wish to name<sup>44</sup> Zeus, the creator, who brought about all things;

**B** For where there is fear there is also reverence.

I really disagree with the poet about this. Should I tell you in what way?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates explains his thoughts to Euthyphro, but first treats the matter with irony, suggesting that his interlocutor is “younger” and “wiser”—reminiscent of his remarks about Meletus' youth and wisdom at the start of the dialogue. Euthyphro has not demonstrated much wisdom at all, and his “blessed” status seems just like the glorious future Socrates foresees for Meletus. Socrates tells Euthyphro that what he says about classes and subsets is not hard to understand, yet proceeds to explicate the problem in a complex manner. He says he means the opposite of what the poet of the Cypria means (the authorship of the Cypria was uncertain, even in Plato's time). The lines come from the Cypria, a poem from the Homeric period describing events that occurred in the early part of the Trojan War. Material regarding this war, including Homer's poems were canonical works in Ancient Greek culture, widely accepted as describing real events that defined Greek identity. It seems apparent that Socrates' manner of explicating his point would challenge someone already quite confused. The pretence of being Euthyphro's

student has become a difficult role to maintain as the teacher has continually shown that he does not have a clear idea about what piety is. It seems unlikely that Socrates ever thought Euthyphro truly possessed this knowledge to begin with, but Euthyphro's skills as a thinker are rudimentary at best. The dialogue demonstrates that Socrates must continually work to fill in these kinds of gaps along with their investigation of the concept of piety. The particle 'ara' sometimes appears in Socrates' replies to Euthyphro, indicating a mild state of impatience with his interlocutor. Here, in these passages we find a continuous thread of irony and teasing, which seems to become quite pointed, hinting strongly at Socrates' frustration. The pedagogical art of drawing out propositions from Euthyphro appears to be a fragile balance between appealing to Euthyphro's vanity while instructing him in the basics of argument. This balance is not always perfect, and Plato shows us that Socrates is not completely unaffected by the effort.

It is also interesting to note that the lines from the poem Socrates quotes suggest his disagreement with those who believe the stories told about the gods mentioned earlier in the dialogue. The lines from the Cypria regard calling upon (naming) or, in an alternative version, striving with Zeus, the most powerful of the gods, because he is revered and feared, yet Socrates "really" or "heartily" disagrees with the poet. His reverence of Zeus does not include revering the poet's words. Even this small detail suggests that Socrates refuses to accept what is commonly said about the gods. Although he does not indicate he does not believe in Zeus, or that Zeus is the most powerful of the gods, he finds the poet is not a good thinker.

Socrates

It doesn't seem to me that "where there is fear there is also reverence," for, to me, many people seem to fear sickness, poverty and many other such things, but not to revere these things, which they fear. Does it not seem so to you?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

But where there is reverence there is also fear. Since is there anyone who feeling reverence and shame about some action, doesn't at the same time also dread C and fear appearing cowardly?

Euthyphro

He is certainly afraid.

Socrates

Then it isn't right to say where there is fear there is also reverence, but that where there is reverence, there is also fear, as reverence is not everywhere that fear is; I think that fear is greater in scope than reverence. Reverence is a part of fear just as the odd is a part of number, so that it is not the case that where there is number there is also oddness, but where there is oddness there is also number. I suppose you follow me now?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates disagrees with the poet's suggestion that where there is fear there is reverence. The poet, according to Socrates, has reversed the class and its subset. He explains to Euthyphro that we fear many things that are bad, like sickness and poverty, simply because they are bad and feel no reverence or respect for these states. Yet when we revere something, setting it apart and holding it in high esteem, we also find the emotion of fear, he says, dreading the appearance of being cowardly. We fear the consequences of irreverence, in other words. Part of the motivation behind reverence involves fear. Socrates' example may not seem all too clear upon examination, but if we consider the case at hand, Euthyphro's, we can see what he means. Revering one's father involves fearing that one would be considered irreverent and cowardly in not upholding this value. (Later on, Socrates claims that Euthyphro must know what piety is or else he would be afraid of the gods and ashamed before men in pursuing his case). In any case,

after challenging the poet, and attempting to show that where there is reverence there is fear, but that there are counterexamples to claiming that where there is fear there is also reverence, Socrates further clarifies the matter using mathematics. Just as reverence is a subset of fear, fear being larger in scope or a larger set, oddness is a subset of the set of numbers. An odd number is also a number, but not all numbers are odd. Numbers are the larger set containing odd numbers. These examples serve to illustrate the way in which Socrates wishes to try to define piety as a part or subset of justice.

Socrates

It was something of that sort I meant before when I asked if “Where there is justice there is also piety?” **D** Or whether or not if where there is piety, there is also justice, and if justice isn’t greater in scope than piety and piety is a part of justice? Should we say this or do you think otherwise?

Euthyphro

No, not otherwise, because what you say seems right to me.

Socrates

See this next point. If the pious is a part of justice, it is necessary for us, so it seems, to discover what part of justice the pious is. Then, if you asked me about something we were just now saying, such as what makes a part of number even, and what happens to be this kind of number, I’d say that which is not unequally divisible, but can be divided into two equal parts. Does it seem this way to you?

Euthyphro

It does to me.

Socrates

So attempt **E** in this way to teach me the part of justice piety is in order that we may tell Meletus to no longer wrong us nor charge me with impiety, since I’ve already sufficiently learned from you what’s reverence and piety and what is not.

Euthyphro

It seems like this way to me then, Socrates, that the part of justice that is reverence and pious concerns attending<sup>45</sup> to the gods, and the remaining part of justice concerns attending to men.

Socrates returns to the problem he posed, asking Euthyphro if where there is justice there is piety—if all just actions are also pious—or if where there is piety there is

justice. He suggests that justice is greater in scope and that the latter formulation is correct. Pious actions are also just; piety is a subset or part of justice. Euthyphro agrees that this is the case and Socrates immediately raises the next question, what part of justice is it? He provides a model for answering this question using mathematics to illustrate the kind of definition they seek. The part of the set of numbers consisting of even numbers can be defined as those numbers that can be equally divided. He hopes that Euthyphro can likewise define the part of justice that piety is, reminding him that he stands to confront Meletus and his accusations with the results of their investigation. However abstract their discussion of piety is, Socrates is careful to establish that their theorizing has a practical aim in terms of the cases at hand, Euthyphro's and his own.

The kind of definition Socrates has set up for Euthyphro is interesting because the set-subset relation provides an explanation of the subset without there being an explanation of the set containing it. That is to say that the definition of even numbers proceeds without one of numbers. Such a definition is assumed, and is implicit in the individuation of the set, but does not need to be made explicit in the definition of the subset. The definition of piety, according to this model, does not require having an explicit definition of justice. With a view to Plato's later work, the Republic, we find that justice, as well as the other forms, are subsets of the proper class, the form of the Good. The Good is a proper class in that Plato conceives it as not being a subset of any other class. The forms contained within this ultimate class are sets, groupings, which can fall under other classes. Piety, then, might be a subset of the set of justice, or might be considered a set falling under the Good. This is speculative, as the text of the Euthyphro suggests the set-subset relationship between justice and piety with a bare minimum of

evidence and no uncontroversial association of piety or justice with the theory of forms found in Plato's middle dialogues. The Euthyphro merely makes evident that Socrates has some degree of mathematical reasoning at his disposal, which he makes use of even when seeking a definitional essence with a low-level interlocutor like Euthyphro. Socrates employs mathematics in the Meno as well and later in the Republic mathematical reasoning (dianoia) is a significant part of philosophical training.

Euthyphro appears to comprehend the model Socrates has proposed and suggests that the part of justice that is pious concerns attending to the gods, while the other part concerns attending to men. This is a fairly good attempt on Euthyphro's part to identify what distinguishes piety as a part of justice. He has considered that the larger set, justice, can be divided between actions that have religious significance and those that have only secular significance. The whole of justice has not been carefully defined, but in Euthyphro's thinking is some form of attention. His thinking in these passages marks a change from the start of the dialogue and his explanation of his case against his father. There, Euthyphro had connected justice and piety, believing that justice demanded that someone who has killed unjustly must be prosecuted (on account of pollution). In this proposal, the concept of justice returns unencumbered by the concept of miasma, and divided between concerns about men and gods.

The idea of justice in Plato's later work is more complex than that found in the Euthyphro by far, and is analyzed in the ten books of the Republic. In the Republic we find justice to be a harmony of the proper parts of the soul/state and attention to the proper division and harmony of these parts is the point of the training of the soul/rulers. Yet, there is too little evidence in the Euthyphro to suggest that Euthyphro has thought

much about the nature of justice. His reply reflects Socrates' suggestion that justice is the larger class, and the division he makes between religious and secular attention is in keeping with the view that there are religious matters that have moral significance, such as those like his own case that he is taking before the King Archon or Socrates' case, and other kinds of matters such as civil suits regarding property, inheritance and such that were commonly brought to trial without consulting a religious expert. Athenian "commonsense" would supply this sort of division between matters of justice.

Socrates

You seem to me to state that very well, but 13 I am still lacking a little something. I don't know yet what you mean by 'attention.' For you cannot mean the same kind of attention to the gods as attention to other things--we usually say--for example, that not everyone understands how to attend to horses, but the horseman does, is this so?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

So horsemanship is attending to horses.

Euthyphro

Yes.

Socrates

Nor does everyone understand how to attend to dogs, but the hunter does.

Euthyphro

That's so.

Socrates

So the art of hunting includes attending to dogs.

Euthyphro

B Yes.

Socrates

And cattle raising is attending to cattle.

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

And piety and reverence is attending to the gods, Euthyphro? Do you mean this?

Euthyphro

I do.

Socrates acknowledges that Euthyphro has risen to the challenge of this definition, making a reasonable, although provisional statement. However the idea of 'attention' in the definition must be fleshed out. Even numbers are those that can be divided into equal parts, for example, and the operation of division and notion of equality must be clear in order for the definition to be acceptable. The ideas of 'division' and 'equality' are foundational in mathematics, and understanding them is required to engage in the practice. Euthyphro does not have the benefit of anything like mathematical practice in the background supporting his suggestion about piety. His use of the term 'attention' must be made unambiguous. Attention to the gods, Socrates remarks, cannot have the same significance as the way it is commonly understood. Socrates employs his typical examples of expertise to demonstrate this point. The expert on horses knows how to care for them, in contrast to those without such knowledge and experience. The art of horsemanship is that of attending to horses. He draws parallel cases with expert attention to dogs and cattle. Skill in these areas amounts to knowing how to attend to their objects. Euthyphro still wishes to claim that piety is attending to the gods, despite the way that Socrates' commonplace examples suggest that the gods are, somehow, on the level of horses, dogs and cattle. Being a self-proclaimed expert on religious matters, Euthyphro has not caught on to this not very subtle hinting on Socrates' part. Euthyphro may simply see himself as an expert skilled in attending to the gods, projecting himself into the analogies Socrates provides. It takes further examination for him to discover the difference between the common uses of the term 'attention' as applied to ordinary examples and the implications its use has in a religious context.

This potential definition reintroduces the gods in relation to piety, and, as noted earlier, the Euthyphro Dilemma has constrained how this relationship can be construed. Piety cannot be identified with what the gods love, will or command. At the same time, the notion of piety has religious significance. It is hard to imagine how to define piety without any reference to religious concerns or the gods whatsoever. This fourth attempt at a definition seems to be set up so that it may meet these competing and seemingly incompatible constraints. Piety is identified first as a part of justice, and then as that part that concerns attending the gods. This potential definition noticeably changes the ‘level’ at which piety is considered, shifting from discussing piety in terms of the gods and their activities and interests to discussing it at the level of human interests. This is to say that piety regards human intentions (and actions) that concern the gods. The gods are not left out, but—at least *prima facie*—the gods’ interests have been rendered secondary. Certainly, if it proves to be the case that “attending to the gods” is merely acting in accord with what they will, the Euthyphro Dilemma will not permit this conception of piety as attending to the gods. The question is whether ‘attention to the gods’ can be explained without ultimately identifying the attention with the will of the gods.

Socrates

Does attention accomplish the same thing in every case? Like this, for example; it is for the good and the benefit of something that it is attended to, as you might see that horses given attention through horsemanship are benefited and become improved. Or it doesn’t seem so to you?

Euthyphro

It seems so to me.

Socrates

So dogs, likewise, are benefited through the art of hunting, cattle by cattle raising, C and all else in the same way. Or do you think that attention is supposed to harm what is being attended?

Euthyphro  
 No, by Zeus, I don't.

Socrates  
 But it benefits it?

Euthyphro  
 How could it not be so?

Socrates  
 Then piety, which is attending to the gods, is what helps the gods and makes them better? So you would grant that when you do something pious you make some one of the gods better?

Euthyphro  
 No, by Zeus, I don't.

Socrates  
 Nor do I think that this is what you mean—far from it—but I asked you before **D** what you meant by attention to the gods, because I did not believe you meant anything of this sort.

Euthyphro  
 Quite right, Socrates, I didn't mean anything of that sort.

Socrates further examines the ordinary activity of attending to things. One attends to something to benefit or improve its condition. The experts attending to horses, dogs, and cattle with their skills intend to benefit them. This relationship between agent and object in this kind of attention cannot parallel that between men and the gods. Socrates returns to the problem of piety. Given what has been noted about attention, if piety is the part of justice that pertains to attending to the gods, a pious action would then make the gods or one of the gods better, improving them. Euthyphro emphatically disagrees with this reasoning. Socrates indicates that he had known all along that the term 'attention' (therapeian) was going to create problems. This was not obvious to Euthyphro initially, but the examples provided by Socrates are clear enough. The experts implicitly stand in an intellectually superior position with respect to the objects of their interests. Horses, dogs and cattle are not the sort of beings that improve themselves. The expert possesses knowledge and skill inaccessible to the animals they attend. Moreover, the expert applies

his skill with particular intentions and goals. Horses, dogs and cattle are trained and improved for human purposes. Trainers restrain the natural inclinations of their animals, domesticating them so that they become instruments for human endeavors. If the gods are considered superior to humans in intelligence and purpose and humans are considered beholden in any way to them, piety cannot mean ‘attention’ in the ordinary sense Socrates’ has established. Humans do not train the gods to use them for their purposes.

Socrates

Very well, but what kind of attention to the gods would piety be?

Euthyphro

The kind of attention, Socrates, which slaves give their masters.

Socrates

I understand. It is something like a kind of service<sup>46</sup> to the gods.

Euthyphro

Precisely.

Euthyphro reframes what he means by “attending to the gods,” recognizing that this ‘attention’ needs to respect the special, higher status that the gods have over human beings. He finds a better analogy in the case of the sort of attention that slaves give their masters. Socrates responds with approval, noting that this kind of attention is a kind of service to the gods, changing the term Euthyphro has been using, ‘therapeian,’ to ‘hypertike,’ a word for ‘service’ with menial undertones. Performing a pious action is the kind of attention to the gods that serves them in some manner. Socrates has, at this point clarified the sense of ‘attention’ in their provisional definition, supplying a new, more precise term that better captures the relationship between humans and the gods. Gods are above humans, as masters are above their slaves and the service slaves provide is instrumental. ‘Hypertike’ fixes the problem we saw with the previous term ‘therapeian’

as it is most commonly used to describe a relationship that presupposes the superiority of the one who attends to something. That which is attended to is not merely improved by this attention, but this improvement is done for the sake of a human goal or purpose.

'Hypertike' also presupposes that the service is performed for a goal or purpose, but that the one performing the service stands in an inferior relationship to whomever is served.

This definition of piety as the part of justice that serves the gods is the most promising one in the dialogue so far. The Euthyphro dilemma has constrained the manner in which piety may be defined; any definition of piety may not identify it with the love, will, or command of all the gods. Piety cannot be piety because the gods say so, because the gods love it or have willed it to be pious. In any of these permutations, what is pious has no definition. The gods love of piety has made it pious, and it is pious because the gods love it. Likewise, the gods command that something is pious is pious because the gods command it. No other reason or explanation is available, and the pious is pious by fiat ("just because"). But we also find that it would be difficult to discuss piety without any reference to religious concerns and the gods. Piety is a religious concept, if ever there was one. One could imagine a notion of piety that corresponds to a very different conception of the gods and religion, but this, too, would pose a great difficulty in the context of the dialogue. Socrates is charged with innovating about the gods, of not believing in the gods of the city. We have seen evidence in the dialogue that suggests that Socrates does not believe the traditional stories told about the gods, so this is true to some extent. Yet, he does not claim to be an atheist or to not believe in the gods. The question is just how far Socrates' innovations about the gods extend.

A provisional analysis of the definition of piety as a service (hypertike) to the gods has a revealing structure. Firstly, in this dialogue we have no definition of justice, we have only the idea that justice is a set that contains both the subset of actions that concern men and the subset of those that concern the gods. The definition proposes that this latter subset contains actions or things that serve the gods. The order of the definition suggests that the scope of justice and its subset, piety, is that of actions based on human intentions. It is a “bottom up” approach to the problem. This is to say that just actions and pious actions are being individuated at the human level. Service to the gods tells us first and foremost about what a human being does in relation to the gods, but this relation to the divine does not necessarily presuppose their command or love. The analogy of a master-slave relation is important in this respect. While one might be tempted to think of the slave as following the commands of a master, the most significant idea presupposed in hypertike is that of a purpose or goal for which service is performed. The master has a goal, and his servants share it (slaves or servants being conceived instrumentally). The ‘good’ servant, sharing his master’s goal, helps achieve it. Considering the case of piety, the gods wish to achieve a goal, and this is their primary interest or will. If human beings are ‘good’ servants their actions assist this primary goal. X is commanded, and actions Y achieve X. The definition of piety as service to the gods thereby avoids defining actions as directly commanded by the gods. They are indirectly commanded insofar as a good servant shares the goals of his master and helps achieve them.<sup>47</sup> The distinction is important as it leaves open the possibility of claiming: The gods love, will or command X, but X is not identical to piety. Pious actions (Y) are human actions that achieve X. Human beings perform Y for the sake of X. We might wish to say Y is also commanded,

but, importantly, even if this is the case, the commandment for Y is not identical to the commandment for X. The gods might command and love both X and Y, but these commandments cannot be identified. In the least, Y would be commanded for the sake of the commandment of X. If the problem of the Euthyphro Dilemma were to reemerge in this case, it would do so for X and not Y, but this is not a given. There may be a reason for X, it might not simply be what it is because it is loved or commanded. The point is that this definition is structured so as to avoid any initial conflict with the Euthyphro Dilemma, at least on the level of piety.

Furthermore, there has been no assertion that Y is a part or subset of X. Y is a subset of J (justice). For argument's sake, using material from the Republic, if Justice is a subset of the Good, the gods might wish to achieve the Good as X, but J and Y are not identical to X. Even if the gods love or command X and therefore all its subsets, each subset still requires some feature or function that individuates it as a subset. Piety (Y) although loved or commanded by the gods as a subset contained in X, has to have other individuating features besides being loved or commanded by the gods. That is to say, there must be some additional defining feature for it to be a subset at all. Without such a feature the set-subset relationship collapses. Perhaps, "it's all Good," but this is not what Plato holds precisely. The metaphysical structure of reality, as described in the Republic, has a set-theoretic formulation. If we consider piety along the lines of Plato's later work, such an analysis must respect the manner in which Plato theorizes.

In any case, the definition of piety as a part of justice that serves the gods has the potential of meeting the constraint of the Euthyphro Dilemma, not identifying piety with the love or command of all the gods, while, at the same time, maintaining an indirect

relationship between piety and the gods. This latter element further avoids creating the impression that Socrates has an idea of piety that is utterly idiosyncratic, an idea of piety that has no connection with the gods.

While we can see the strength of this formulation of the definition of piety, Socrates must get Euthyphro to explore and see its merits. He must be able to make the next move and specify the goal of the gods, the masters in their analogy, in order to explain the manner in which human beings serve them.

Socrates

Could you say for what result a physician's service aims at producing? Is it not health, do you think?

Euthyphro

I do.

Socrates

What is the shipbuilders' service? What is the result E it aims at producing?

Euthyphro

Clearly, Socrates, a ship.

Socrates

And the housebuilders's service is surely building a house?

Euthyphro

Yes.

Socrates

Tell me then, best friend, what result does the service to the gods aim at producing? It's clear that you know, since you say that you possess more perfect knowledge of the gods than ordinary men.

Euthyphro

And I speak the truth, Socrates.

Socrates

Tell me then, by Zeus, what is that very excellent result that the gods produce, using us as their servants?

Euthyphro

Many fine things, Socrates.

Socrates

And 14 so do generals, dear friend. But, nevertheless, you could easily explain their chief concern, which is to produce victory in war, is it not?

Euthyphro

Of course.

Socrates

The farmers also produce many fine things, I believe, but, nevertheless, their chief concern is producing food from the earth.

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates immediately follows up their agreement that piety is a kind of service to the gods with questions about various examples of service in the sense of hypertike. In each case he wishes to identify the goal behind these services. The service of a physician has the goal of producing health, a shipbuilder's service aims at producing a ship, and a housebuilder's service aims at making a house. One hires a physician, shipbuilder or housebuilder in order to assist one with these respective goals. These examples of typical services, while not examples of a master-slave relation, bring out the important element of purposive activity implicit in the initial analogy. A slave assists a master with his purposes, just as a physician's service assists one in achieving health. Socrates remarks that Euthyphro must know what goal the gods have, which we assist them with, as servants or hired assistants do. "Many fine things," Euthyphro replies, a comically evasive and indefinite answer from someone who has just sworn to his "perfect knowledge" about the gods. The humor does not seem to be lost on Socrates, who is ready with a quick reply. Many goals can be defined as "fine," yet they can still be characterized quite specifically. A general aims to achieve many fine things, but their main goal is victory in war. Socrates continues playing out this point, noting that farmers' aims may be described as fine, yet their chief aim is growing food. "Many fine things" will simply not inform us about the goal of the gods, and it seems clear enough

that Euthyphro has no idea how to describe this goal, or if he has even gone so far as to consider the gods and their ultimate purposes in this way.

Socrates

So, what are the many fine things, which the gods produce? What is the chief concern of their work?

Euthyphro

I told you a little earlier, Socrates, that **B** all these things necessarily take a long effort to learn accurately; nevertheless, I can say this to you simply, that if one knows how to say in prayer and do in sacrifice what is pleasing to the gods, this is piety, and maintaining these things in individuals' private homes as well as publicly in the states. The opposite of these pleasing things is impiety, which overturns and destroys everything.

Euthyphro appears to have had more than enough of the line of questioning Socrates has been pursuing. He resorts to defending himself, hand waving at the complexity of the matter, and still clinging to the idea that he has the knowledge he has claimed to know. It is a matter that takes long efforts to learn, he says, and then changes the account of piety altogether, dodging the question about the gods' goal.

He proposes a new definition of piety: Piety is knowledge of what is pleasing to the gods in prayer and in sacrifice. Maintaining these practices in public and in private preserves the city, while their neglect, impiety, overturns the home and the city. This explanation of piety and impiety is truly "standard" with respect to the Athenian and Greek attitude towards the purpose of piety and the effects of impiety. Euthyphro's explanation does not inform Socrates what piety is in relation to the gods' goals, but tells him what people believe the effects of pious and impious actions are. Piety is maintained out of fear of the consequences of impiety, as it is thought that impiety and irreverence contribute to the decline and fall of a city and turn father against son, destroying familial

bonds. For example, Oedipus' impiety, despite being unintentional, causes a plague and famine at Thebes. It is common even in modern times to attribute the decline of order and justice of a city or nation to lack of morality and religion on the part of its people.

The Ancient Greeks were no different in their thinking, in fact, as mentioned before matters of impiety were legal matters, and the separation of religion and the state did not exist, even in the more "rational" 5<sup>th</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> century Athens. The charge of impiety against Socrates has been interpreted by some historians as reflecting political frustrations in the uncertain times that followed the end of the Peloponnesian War and restoration of democracy after the oligarchy of the Thirty Tyrants in 403/2.<sup>48</sup> Some of the Athenian political frustration stemmed from the amnesty granted to all citizens for crimes committed under the Thirty (the amnesty did not extend to the Thirty). Socrates, perceived as supporting the oligarchy, was tried for impiety as a means to vent this general frustration. Yet, moreover, even before the restoration of the democracy, during times of political turmoil at the end of the war, there was nostalgia for earlier times when education was not influenced by the presence of professional teachers, the Sophists, and the extended family (Deme system) was stronger, not only in terms of educating young, free-born men, but also in terms of social and religious ties that were left intact through familial education. The motives for prosecuting Socrates were, apparently, quite complex and worthy of study in their own right. However, the political context under which he was charged with impiety reflects very precisely what Euthyphro expresses in this definition of piety and impiety. Impiety was regarded as overturning the order of things, and in a time when nostalgia for order and security was paramount in the minds of Athenians, the case against a complicated public figure like Socrates was made and

successfully tried. Euthyphro's fifth attempt at defining piety tells us a great deal about the Athenian attitude towards piety, and strong clue as to why Socrates was targeted with the charge of impiety, although, as we will see, it does not explain piety.

Socrates

If you wished, Euthyphro, you could have answered the main point of my question much more briefly. But you're not eager to teach me, it's clear. And just now when you were so close, you turned away. Had you answered, I would have sufficiently learned what piety is from you. Now it's necessary that the questioner follow the one questioned in whatever direction that he takes. What do you say the pious and piety are? Weren't they knowing how to sacrifice and pray?

Euthyphro

I think so.

Socrates

Then, to sacrifice is to make a gift to the gods, and to pray is to beg from the gods?

Euthyphro

Well put, Socrates.

Socrates

Then the knowledge of begging from and giving to the gods would be piety, according to this statement.

Euthyphro

You understand quite well what I said, Socrates.

Socrates ironically accuses Euthyphro of deliberate evasiveness in answering his question. The irony, of course, is that Euthyphro is not deliberately concealing his knowledge, but, instead, revealing his ignorance about piety and the gods. In this passage Socrates also makes an important comment. He states that Euthyphro had been close to defining piety, but turned away. This comment highlights the previous definition of piety as service to the gods as something significant to Socrates. Why does he think Euthyphro was so close to success? What's so interesting about this definition?

We have already explored some of the reasons why the proposed definition of piety as service to the gods potentially meets the constraints of the Euthyphro Dilemma,

while, at the same time maintains a conceptual link between piety and the gods. It is a good candidate in terms of its structure. Piety is not identified with the love or will of the gods when construed as ‘service’ to the gods. It regards a goal or aim of the gods, but pious actions cannot be identical to that aim. Yet, there is a further reason that this understanding of piety, if not a definition, is significant. In the Apology, Socrates defends himself against impiety claiming that his philosophical activities are a “service to the gods.” The Euthyphro is linked to the Apology through this idea about piety. The discussion regarding Meletus as well as comments regarding Socrates’ charges, which appear throughout the Euthyphro, link the two dialogues thematically in terms of dramatic content—events, figures, characters and their motivations. The idea that piety is service to the gods links the dialogues more strongly, in terms of philosophical content. The analysis of the concept of piety as service in the Euthyphro, even though it is not fully unpacked and tested, is put to use in the Apology. We are in the position of having to understand why Socrates confidently relies on this idea of piety—despite the fact that it is not fully unpacked in the Euthyphro. This position invites us to think through the proposed definition. Euthyphro had been so close, but turned away. Socrates thought something was right about it, and did not want the discussion to change. Perhaps, we should not either.

In the Apology, Socrates explains that there have been two groups of accusers and two corresponding sets of accusations. His recent accusers, Meletus, Anytus and Lycon, accuse him of impiety, of not believing in the gods of the city and establishing new gods, and corrupting the youth by teaching his beliefs to others. They are relying on the old prejudices of his early accusers, Athenians who have misunderstood his ideas and

mistaken his teachings for those of the Sophists and the Natural Philosophers. Aristophanes' play, the Clouds, mentioned in the Apology, is an example of this misunderstanding. Socrates explains that these accusations of the early accusers, the public at large, will be difficult to dispel in one day. He has been doing something that has brought about the misunderstandings that he confronts at trial, and must explain what it is. To do so, he recounts the start of his "mission," the trip his friend Chairephon makes to Delphi. Chairephon asks the oracle, "Who is the wisest man?" and the oracle replies, "No one is wiser than Socrates." Socrates says that he does not understand the oracle, for he doesn't believe he is wise. He proceeds to test the truth of the oracle,<sup>49</sup> going to politicians, poets, and craftsmen, asking them about what they claim to know. In each case, his questioning reveals that they do not know much about what they claim to know if anything at all, and each group makes the mistake of believing that some small area of knowledge they possess amount to much more knowledge than they actually have. Socrates sees that his wisdom lies in not claiming to know what he really does not know. Human wisdom, he says, is worth little or nothing, and the only true wisdom lies in recognizing one's own state of ignorance. The process of questioning, inspired by the oracle, has led people to dislike him and misunderstand his intentions. But this same process, inspired by the god, became his mission in life—to serve the god through philosophical questioning, revealing people's ignorance to them.

Given what is said in the Apology, we find that "Socratic Piety" is a service to the gods. Socrates' philosophical practice is the way that he claims he serves them. We have, then, an example of piety, practicing philosophical dialectic. Furthermore, the practice of philosophy leads to the wisdom of knowing that one does not know. The

pious activity of philosophical dialectic helps people achieve the wisdom of knowing that they do not know. It seems that the Apology suggests that philosophical dialectic is a religious activity, replacing traditional religion, and, perhaps, Socrates deifies the dialectic itself. Perhaps, Socrates is guilty of establishing a new god.

Given the evidence of the Apology, however, Socrates does not innovate with respect to the gods in this manner. When Socrates claims that his philosophical mission is a service to the gods, he is providing an example of such service. It is a very detailed and richly suggestive example, but at no point in the Apology does Socrates say anything more than what he is doing is pious. If we recall Euthyphro's first try at defining piety, his claim that what he's doing is pious, we know that Socrates himself would not mistake this for defining piety. The move to infer that his example, and what can be inferred about it, is piety is not legitimate. Even if, for argument's sake, piety is pursuing philosophy or knowing that one does not know, we cannot make these inferences with the information given in the Apology.

In the Euthyphro, we are given much more with respect to the notion that piety is service to the gods. At the very least, we know that what is missing that would complete this definition is an explanation of the gods' goal or aim that all pious actions assist them with. If the goal or aim of the gods is indescribable, and all we know is that they aim to achieve "many fine things," then there simply is no way to claim anything concrete about Socratic Piety. But we have more to go on than the text of the Euthyphro.

One way is to find a good candidate for an explanation of the gods' goal by way of the Apology. A strong clue to this effect would be the Delphic dictum, inscribed on the temple at Delphi, "Know thyself" (gnothi sauton). The Delphic Oracle inspires

Socrates' mission, and the inscription at Delphi was widely known and taken for a commandment from the god, Apollo, a god whom Socrates claims to serve.<sup>50</sup> Piety, then would be serving the god for the sake of their commandment to know oneself. Pious actions help us achieve self-knowledge.

“Know thyself” works nicely in this instance, as it represents an aim that the gods were believed to have posed for human life in general.<sup>51</sup> It also preserves an important element of the master-slave analogy, as it is a command to humans that comes from “above” and reflects the idea that the gods, superior beings with superior knowledge, look upon human knowledge as something that is inferior and needs improvement in this respect. If we recall, it cannot be the case that our “attending the gods” improves them or makes them better, as in the case of therapeian. Hypertike suggests the opposite idea; our service assists an aim that the gods have. But, if it turns out that our help means that the gods' lives are somehow incomplete, we can very well imagine Socrates determining that such a deficiency would amount to the idea that our assistance improves them. He has already ruled out this kind of assistance. Yet, if the gods have an aim, but their aim regards human beings and their lives, no such trouble arises. We assist the gods with respect to a goal they have set for humans.<sup>52</sup>

Moreover, the link between the Delphic oracle, the god Apollo's commandment to know ourselves and philosophical dialectic does not suggest that Socrates deifies the practice of philosophy as a new god.<sup>53</sup> In fact, it is barely an “innovation” at all. The Delphic oracle was a respected religious authority, a seer (mantis) whose prophecies were not laughed at like Euthyphro's, but thought to be instrumental in the history of Greek society. Socrates does not believe the myths told about the gods, but his “irreverence” is

incomplete. Socrates describes testing the riddle of the oracle in the Apology (21b-c), and we might be tempted to think this suggests some irreverence in his philosophical mission, yet it is misleading to assume that testing an oracle for its meaning implies irreverence. In mundane matters we have records of the oracle speaking directly and clearly, but in the literary tradition the oracle speaks in riddles, the meanings of which are unclear.<sup>54</sup> Socrates' oracle is classified as a "gnomic" oracle—responses that are proverbial, metaphorical or ethical commands.<sup>55</sup> Part of gnomic and legendary tales involving the Delphic oracle involve a recipient having to uncover its 'true' meaning, and Socrates' description of his investigation of its meaning follows this traditional pattern.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, if we consider that in Socrates' view his oracle amounted to a divine sanction of his practices we find this is, in fact, the most common way oracles were used. Legitimate historical oracles from 450 B.C. onwards tend to be pronouncements most often concerning the sanctions of law, proposals, particularly on religious subjects and the prescriptions of cult acts. Numerous examples of these types of oracles can be found sanctions making up the majority of historical responses (but occur in Legend as well).<sup>57</sup>

Hypothetically, then, the gods' aim with respect to human life is "Know thyself." Actions that contribute to achieving this goal are pious, and those that hinder it would be impious. Practicing philosophy thus might be one action that counts as pious, but other activities could also count as pious insofar as they assist the goal of self-knowledge.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, Socrates' pious practice of philosophical questioning assists self-knowledge in that it can cause people to become awakened to their lack of secure knowledge—cure them of epistemic hubris. But the definition allows for the possibility that there can be other pious practices that help people know themselves. Actions, such as praying, for

example, might contribute to self-knowledge in some way, and as such actions appear in Plato's dialogues, we need not rule this out as an additional candidate for a type of pious action. Self-examination might also be pious with respect to self-knowledge—for example, Socrates advises Euthyphro to “look into himself,” although he is not capable of doing so. Remembering (*anamneis*) might also prove to be a pious activity, although the main point here is simply that pious actions produce self-knowledge and we have not been provided with enough evidence to claim that philosophical questioning is the exclusive pious activity.

An apparent problem for this interpretation lies in the fact that the god Apollo has commanded self-knowledge, so it appears that the Euthyphro Dilemma must be avoided for the goal set out by the gods, the commandment to “know thyself.” Yet this is not the problem that it appears to be. What occurs is a “forking path” between fact and value. What piety is can be explained in terms that do not involve the gods or moral values, at least in principle. Why the gods command self-knowledge is a question about value, but this question stands over and above that of what piety is. If we return to the Euthyphro Dilemma we can clearly see how this “forking” arises.

The form of the Euthyphro Dilemma emerges for the proposed definition that “Piety is what is loved by all the gods” because there is an ambiguity in how passive verb constructions like ‘is loved’ or ‘is willed’ are used. For example, when we assert, “The pious is loved” or “The pious is willed,” the next step the Dilemma takes is to separate out the reasons why something is in this state. Is something loved because it is pious? Or is it pious because it is loved? Self-knowledge does not follow the same pattern. For

example: Is self-knowledge 'self-knowledge' because it is loved by the gods or do the gods love it because it is self-knowledge?

Self-knowledge is the kind of state that pertains only to a particular individual and his or her state of mind. An external force can help someone achieve this state, but it "belongs" to the individual. Self-knowledge is the state of an individual, and is not something that we might think arises by fiat, as in the case of piety or moral goodness. In other words, we might consider whether the gods' love for piety is what makes it pious, whereas it does not make sense to wonder if the gods' love for self-knowledge causes it to be self-knowledge. The difference can be explained grammatically, leaving aside questions about what self-knowledge is. The object of the passive verb employed in the Euthyphro dilemma is a noun, the pious/piety, and this creates the impression that an agent's activity bestows an essential property on the object through the activity. In the case of self-knowledge, the presence of a reflexive pronoun specifies the agencies involved. In any permutation, "self-knowledge" or "knowing oneself," the agency of the gods who will or love it meets with a noun and reflexive pronoun (or participle phrase) that further distinguishes an activity and its agent, an individual self and its knowledge or state of knowing. Even if we do not know exactly what self-knowledge is, it is not like piety. It is a state of affairs, not a moral value, and states of affairs may be valued in some manner, but their being valued does not make them what they are. While the question, "What is piety?" concerns the essential nature of a value, the question "What is self-knowledge?" concerns a matter of fact or state of affairs.

The term 'self-knowledge' may not pose intractable difficulties in explanation, although this topic merits its own examination.<sup>59</sup> Provisionally speaking, it may be

characterized as the mental state of an agent in which the agent is aware of the mental content (beliefs, perceptions, emotions, volitions) that he or she experiences. Socrates' own example of pious activity through philosophical discourse is one way of concretely grasping something of what is meant by self-knowledge. His questioning can cause an interlocutor to become aware of his false beliefs. This is to say that an interlocutor can then assert, "I believe that my former idea about X is false." Hence, "I don't know what I have claimed to know about X." Self-knowledge need not be considered anything more than a particular mental state or belief that regards another mental state or belief, and that the agent is aware of both states. Such a belief might count as knowledge for Plato insofar as it is a justified, true belief. A full explanation of self-knowledge may be more complex than this, but Socrates' example suggests the minimal conditions involved in self-knowledge.

Now, we may wish to know why the gods command self-knowledge. Why is it morally valuable? We find ourselves confronting the "Self-knowledge Dilemma." Do the gods command self-knowledge because it is good, or is it good because they command it? We serve the gods in achieving this commandment, achieving self-knowledge, so what does this service mean with respect to them? It would seem that the first horn of this dilemma would be the acceptable horn, given the earlier reasoning with respect to piety. The gods would have to command self-knowledge because it is good. (It would be unlikely for Socrates/Plato to suddenly accept the second horn and the arbitrary valuing of the command.) We must then understand why it is good, noticing that in investigating this horn of the "Self-knowledge Dilemma" the question as to what self-knowledge is has dropped out. The gods command it because it is good, so its

goodness is what must be clarified. There are two ways to approach this task, given what we can glean from Plato's dialogues. First, granted that we can know what self-knowledge might be, it may be the case that we simply do not have access to the sort of knowledge that the gods possess about the good. The value of the gods' command does not pertain to what we know and can do with respect to self-knowledge, but what the gods know about it—their reason for commanding it. We have moved up a level. Our understanding of piety is one thing, but the gods' is another. Socrates' example of his philosophical mission in the Apology reveals something of this kind of thinking. There he asserts that he attaches the greatest importance to the oracle and that he is certain that the god does not lie. It seems, at least to some extent, that Socrates accepts the oracle and the god's commandment to know himself through faith. Piety serves the gods through bringing about self-knowledge, but why we should do this—why this is valued by them—is not knowable, but a matter of faith. Thus, what piety is can be explained in practical terms through unpacking the idea of self-knowledge, but its value is a religious matter. One could, conceivably, go about achieving self-knowledge without faith in the gods and without the idea that it serves them, but this is not Socrates' position, at least if we are to take his comments regarding his piety in the Apology as sincere. Human wisdom is scanty in comparison with the gods, and that gulf is properly expressed in accepting the command to know ourselves without knowing what the gods know—their wisdom with respect to the goodness of their commands. While piety can be understood as the achievement of self-knowledge on the human level, its ultimate value lies in the gods' hands.

Yet, if we look ahead to the Republic, we find that the form of the Good is, in fact, what would motivate the gods to command self-knowledge. The cosmos, or organization of the whole of the real universe is such that a value, Goodness, characterizes that whole. The gods are beholden to this fundamental organization of all things and their wisdom is such that their command for human self-knowledge would situate human life harmoniously within that whole if it were to be achieved. The Good is metaphysically primitive in the Republic—it has no explanation, but surpasses the forms in scope, standing at the top of the divided line. The metaphysical view of the Republic supports the idea that self-knowledge would be commanded because it is good, and that such a command would assist bringing about the harmony of the tripartite souls of individuals, a just, harmonious state, and not merely assist the gods for no reason whatsoever.<sup>60</sup>

The missing explanation of the gods' goal, I believe, is accounted for by the famous commandment, "Know Thyself." Thus, one of the aims of the gods is for human beings to come to know themselves. Piety serves the gods in helping achieve this aim. The indirect association of piety with the command "Know Thyself" has the benefit of deferring the question of the value of that command to the level of the gods. At the human level, self-knowledge, a state of affairs, is the goal of piety. My aim here is to indicate that an account of self-knowledge could be provided—there is nothing that bars its development in principle—and the missing component, the aim of the gods, can be much more fully understood in light of the Apology and its clue regarding the Delphic Oracle and the origin of Socrates' mission. Socrates' disappointment when Euthyphro turns away from explaining the goal of the gods is not ironic, because he has turned away

from a promising direction. I have tried to indicate just how promising this direction could be.

Euthyphro, however, does turn away from the idea that piety is service to the gods. Socrates, in a tone of disappointment, says that he must now follow the one questioned in any direction he takes. The direction Euthyphro has taken is the proposal that piety is knowledge of prayer and sacrifice. This is his fifth attempt at defining piety. Socrates immediately rephrases this idea. He suggests that “to sacrifice is to make a gift to the gods,” and “to pray is to beg from the gods.” Euthyphro agrees this is the case, and Socrates proceeds, substituting these definitions of sacrifice and prayer into the proposition. Piety is knowledge of begging from and giving to the gods. Euthyphro approves of Socrates’ formulation of the proposition, believing that Socrates has fully understood him. Socrates continues investigating their new idea about piety, now seemingly joking about Euthyphro’s wisdom.

Socrates

That is because I’m so desirous of your wisdom, and I concentrate my mind on it, so that no word of yours may fall to the ground. But won’t you tell me what is this service to the gods? Do you say it is to beg from them and give to them?

Euthyphro

I do.

Socrates

Then wouldn’t the right way to beg be to ask from them the things we need from them?

Euthyphro

What else?

Socrates

So, similarly again, the right way to give to them E is succeeding to present to them what they need from us? Somehow it wouldn’t be skillful to bring presents, which aren’t needed at all.

Euthyphro

You say the truth, Socrates.

Socrates

Then piety would be a sort of trading skill between gods and men?

Euthyphro's proposal that piety is knowledge of prayer and sacrifice in actuality shows much less creativity than his previous proposals. The idea that piety is prayer and sacrifice, and that these are kinds of trading skills, reflects a common understanding of piety. Athenian religious law regarding activities at public religious festivals held individuals accountable for proper forms of worship. We may recall the official religious calendar inscribed on the stone stele on the porch of the King Archon where Euthyphro and Socrates speak. Proper worship insured the city against the wrath of the gods, giving them the sacrifices they demanded, and in return the gods would protect individuals and the city and return the favors asked of them in prayer. It is what Socrates makes of this common understanding that is remarkable, as his interpretation of prayer and sacrifice as a trading skill seems to show that he takes these practices as somehow deficient in intention.<sup>61</sup> Euthyphro, meanwhile, does not see the practices as business transactions as Socrates takes them to be.

We should note that this definition of piety undergoes an important change of form as Socrates and Euthyphro have discussed it so far. Initially, Euthyphro claims that piety is knowledge of how to sacrifice and pray. This proposal identifies piety with a special form of knowledge. Socrates had substituted the terms of begging and giving for prayer and sacrifice, reformulating the proposition so that piety is knowledge of begging from and giving to the gods. He then proceeds to ask what the right (orthos) way of giving to and begging from them are. The implicit step in this question is one that describes knowledge of piety. Socrates' position in the early dialogues is that knowledge entails doing the right thing (Crito 49a, Apology, 25d-26e). If one knows, one cannot

willingly do otherwise. Wrongs are ascribed to ignorance. This view of Socrates may help explain why he asks what the right way of begging and giving are. The proposition doesn't merely identify piety with prayer and sacrifice, but the knowledge of these actions. He continues his questions, determining that the right way to beg from the gods must be for us to ask for what we need. Prayer, or begging from the gods, is asking for what we need. The right way to give to the gods, to offer sacrifice, is to give them what they need from us. He comments that it would not be skillful (*techne*) to offer gifts that are not needed. The right way of begging and giving to the gods, begging and giving done with skill and the knowledge this skill entails, is a trading skill, he determines.

Euthyphro will not see that there is a problem with this description of prayer and sacrifice. If prayer and sacrifice are reducible to "trading skills," the relationship between god/s and human beings is likewise reduced to that of barterers or parties in a contract. Prayer is a means for individuals to get things, and sacrifice a means to pay for what they get: "Do ut des"—"I give so that you give." Religion is reduced to a practice of manipulating the gods for our own purposes. But Socrates does not focus on this side of the problem, as the other side of the bartering arrangement is even worse. The god or gods are in a position of demanding things from human beings in return for what they receive. This presupposes a lack or deficiency that they use human offering to fulfill. Yet, this conflicts with the idea that the gods simply do not have deficiencies. Trade implies that two parties come together in an exchange for what they need for their mutual benefit. It is a reciprocal relationship. Yet the relationship between gods and humans is supposedly unequal. Gods simply would not be gods (or humans, humans) without this inequality. The view of piety and prayer and sacrifice as "trade" violates this basic

conceptual understanding of the gods and humans. Socrates' further discussion of the profits that result from pious trading between gods and men further captures the problematic notion of the gods that it presumes.<sup>62</sup>

Euthyphro

Trade, if you enjoy calling it that.

Socrates

Nothing is enjoyable to me, unless it happens to be true. Explain to me, what profit the gods gain from the gifts they take from us? What they give is clear to all. There is nothing good, 15 which they don't give to us. But what profit do they gain from what we give them? Or do we have such a greater advantage over them in this commerce that we get all the good things from them while they get nothing from us?

Euthyphro

But do you believe, Socrates, the gods profit from these things, which they get from us?

Socrates

What in the world could those gifts from us to the gods be, Euthyphro?

Socrates proposes that while it is easy to see that everything good comes from the gods, and hence they do give to humans, it is unclear what kind of profit they gain from our gifts to them. This is to say that the bargaining appears to be one-sided. Trading assumes reciprocity, but no such reciprocity is apparent in prayer and sacrifice. He suggests that we even might have an advantage in the commerce, as we appear to get everything, while they get nothing in return. At this point, Euthyphro asks his very first question in response to one of Socrates' statements. "But do you believe, Socrates, the gods profit from these things, which they get from us?" This question is somewhat of an improvement for Euthyphro, for by asking it he demonstrates that he has actually followed Socrates' reasoning. He has recognized that Socrates' questions about the gods' profit imply that one needs to hold that there is a profit involved. He reveals that he is unsure about this. He also reveals that he does not understand that Socrates is

entertaining this case hypothetically for the purpose of philosophical investigation. He seems to think that Socrates may believe there is such a profit. Socrates has been entertaining the idea that the gods profit from our gifts, but what he wants to know is what this profit could be. Euthyphro does not see through this strategy, so, keeping things on track, Socrates answers his question with the real question he has been asking all along in these passages: What could these gifts from us to the gods be?

Euthyphro

What else, do you think, than esteem, honor and what I just said, gratitude?

Socrates

Then the pious, Euthyphro, is gratifying **B** to the gods, but not profitable to them or loved?

Euthyphro

I believe, of all things, it is most loved.

Socrates

So once again, it seems, the pious is that which the gods love.

Euthyphro

Most certainly.

Euthyphro tells Socrates that the gifts we give to the gods are our esteem (time), honor (gera) and what he thinks one of these is identical to—gratitude (charis). (“What I just said” is either a non sequitur, or refers back to esteem or honor, but most likely esteem.) Socrates, upon hearing what our gifts are, determines that piety is what is gratifying (kecharismenon), but is not profitable (ophelimon) or loved (philon). Gratitude, esteem and honor are the kinds of “gifts” that one would give to benevolent superiors, and Euthyphro appears to have correctly considered the type of gifts prayer and sacrifice must be with respect to divine beings who do not need gifts from us that fill some lack they have. Socrates appears to pose his interpretation of these gifts in such a way as to make the next step of their discussion inevitable. He calls these things

pleasing, but then says that they are not profitable or loved. They are not profitable, perhaps, in any literal sense of profit implied in trading, but the trade has now been characterized fully. The gods give us all good things and in return we give them honor, esteem and gratitude. The gods do not need these things in the sense that if they lacked them their powers and positions would be incomplete in some way. Our gifts show our appreciation of the gods, and this appreciation pleases them.

Socrates' suggestion that what pleases them might not be dear to them seems to be a clever way of forcing Euthyphro back to his earlier definition of piety as what is dear to the gods. The suggestion that what gratifies someone is not also loved puts Euthyphro in the position of having to think that things that are gratifying might not also be loved, and this is a difficult move for him to make conceptually. Loved things, intuitively speaking, are also gratifying. Not all gratifying things may be loved, but it seems that loved things are also pleasing. If something loved is taken away, this is typically not a gratifying experience. Loved ones are mourned when they die, loved friends are missed when they go away, and loved objects are enjoyed while they last and pursued when absent. In any case, it seems that Socrates' question of whether the pious is gratifying but not loved is reminiscent of the considerations he made earlier in the dialogue with respect to sets and their subsets. At this point in the dialogue, however, Euthyphro sees that what gratifies the gods is also loved. He takes Socrates' bait, not recognizing that this step will bring their discussion back to the second definition of piety, that it is what the gods love. His emphatic assent to Socrates' restatement of the definition shows that he is unaware that his fifth proposal has turned into a variation of his second one.

Socrates

Then will you marvel at saying this, because your words don't appear to stand fast, but walk around, and will you accuse me of being a Daedalus and making them walk, while you are much more skillful than Daedalus, making them move around in a circle? Or don't you see that our definition has come back, going around and returning once more to the starting point? C I suppose you remember that before this the pious and god-loved were shown to us not to be the same but different from each other. Or don't you remember?

Euthyphro

I do.

Socrates

Then haven't you considered that you are now saying that what the gods love is piety? And this is what the god-loved turns out to be? Or is it not?

Euthyphro

Certainly.

Socrates

Then, certainly, our earlier agreement wasn't right, or, if it was right at that time, our reasoning is not right now.

Euthyphro

So it seems.

Socrates returns to the theme of Daedalus. Socrates had referred to this legendary figure at the end of the Euthyphro Dilemma section (11c). Euthyphro had accused him of making his words move around each time he spoke. In return Socrates accused him of making this reference on account of Socrates' ancestry, but that, as the statements are Euthyphro's, the reference better suits him instead. Socrates repeats the joke in this passage, saying that Euthyphro may again accuse him of being a Daedalus, but that Euthyphro's skills are greater since his statement has moved in a circle. Socrates explains how this is the case, asking Euthyphro if he recalls the starting point of their discussion. This starting point is not the example that Euthyphro had first supplied, but the first claim that piety is what is dear to the gods. Socrates jumps ahead in his explanation, reminding Euthyphro of the results of the Euthyphro Dilemma, which showed that what is pious

cannot be identical to what is god-loved (theophiles). When Euthyphro agrees that he remembers this, Socrates works backwards, reminding him that they had agreed that the god-loved was identical to what the gods love. The whole line of questioning and propositions concerning piety that began with identifying it as what the gods love and then what all the gods love, has now been tied to Euthyphro's proposal that piety is knowledge of prayer and sacrifice.

This line of questioning excludes the proposal that piety is the part of justice concerned with attending to the gods and piety as service to the gods. This line of questioning marked a new start after the Euthyphro Dilemma and Daedalus Interlude. The complete circle made in the dialogue regards only the second, third and fifth propositions. The question of piety being a part of justice concerning attending to the gods stands outside the circle. This line of questioning was cut short, and is incomplete, but stood as a good candidate for a potential definition of piety, as was explored earlier. The fact that this particular version of a definition is not condemned to circularity along with the other proposals further highlights its significance.

Socrates has explained to Euthyphro that the definition they have been exploring has led them back to the beginning of their inquiry. Circularity in a definition of a term is not acceptable to Socrates. That is to say, if in defining X, the definiens turns out to rely on a term that is equivalent to the definiendum, X, such a definition of X is unacceptable. The kind of circularity that Socrates is speaking of in this case differs, as it is a circular argument. The steps are as follows:

- (1) Piety failed to be defined as "what the gods love" on account of contradiction.

(2) To avoid this contradiction the definiens was refined: “Piety is what all the gods love.”

The addition of ‘all’ in (2) acknowledges the problem of contradiction in the first formulation, and limits the set of loved (and pious) things to only those that are universally loved by all the gods. In this definition, piety was identified with the god-loved. The Euthyphro Dilemma undermined this definition of piety, showing that piety is not identical to the god-loved. It must be defined independently of the love of the gods.

The circle made in the dialogue thus concerns a repetition of a definiens that had failed to define piety under two permutations. The proposal that piety is knowledge of prayer and sacrifice, while apparently very different, proves to amount to the claim that piety is what the gods love. Thus, the Euthyphro’s circularity is not a repetition of the definiendum in the definiens, but a circularity of an uninformative definiens.

Socrates makes an interesting suggestion as to how this circularity can be investigated. He proposes a disjunction to Euthyphro: Perhaps, their earlier reasoning was wrong (disjunct A), or their present reasoning (about prayer and sacrifice) is wrong (disjunct B). The only way to reject the circle is if either A or B or both A&B are the true. (“The earlier reasoning was wrong” is true, “The Present reasoning is wrong” is true, or both statements are true.) Euthyphro simply agrees to Socrates’ disjunction—humorously affirming a disjunctive question—not recognizing that disjunction suggested entails that in order for him to reject the circle he must either accept that both disjuncts are true, or determine that one of the two of the disjuncts are false. The worst outcome remains that if one accepts the circle, piety remains undefined. Either they must re-examine what has been said to find a misstep in all the reasoning involved, or they must

continue in some new way. Every option available regarding a response to the circle they have discovered requires continued investigation into the nature of piety.

Socrates

Then we must consider again from the beginning what the pious is, since I will not flinch until I learn anything that concerns it. **D** Don't hold me in low esteem, but in every way focus your mind and, above all, now speak the truth. You know, if any man does, and must not be released, like Proteus, until you speak. For if you hadn't clearly known the pious and the impious, it's impossible that you would have attempted to prosecute your elderly father for murder on behalf of a hired day laborer. And you would have been afraid of the gods to venture this desperately, in case you weren't doing the right thing, and would have been ashamed before men as well. But now I know that you clearly **E** believe that you know what's pious and what isn't. So tell me, most excellent Euthyphro, and don't conceal what you believe.

Euthyphro

Some other time then, Socrates; now I must hurry somewhere, and it's time for me to go.

Aware of the implications of the circle they've traveled, Socrates tells Euthyphro that they must start their investigation of piety again from the beginning. He describes the situation in colorful terms: He will not flinch until he learns what it is, and Euthyphro must also remain brave in the fight. Socrates likens Euthyphro to Proteus, a minor god of the sea, who had prophetic abilities. Proteus was unwilling to speak the truths he knew, and had the ability to change his shape. He would only speak to those able to capture him. Socrates' allusion to Proteus is a clever way to describe Euthyphro's supposed prophetic abilities and the changing shape of their discussion of piety. The reference also contrasts Euthyphro, a prophet who is not taken seriously, with one who is—at least as far as myths about the gods can be taken seriously. Socrates is clearly well versed in the traditional stories about the gods, which he says he does not believe. It would seem that he does not necessarily agree with the stories, but always has them ready at hand for the purpose of clarifying a point in an effective way.

Socrates returns to the facts of Euthyphro's case, driving home the point that without knowledge of piety, Euthyphro could not be secure about bringing his father to trial. Socrates claims that if Euthyphro did not know, he would be afraid of the gods and ashamed before men to try such a case against his father. Since Euthyphro was not afraid or ashamed, he therefore must know what it is. Socrates' statements and the inferences he makes appear to be ironic, as he has seen quite clearly that Euthyphro did not know what piety is and, at the same time, was not afraid or ashamed.<sup>63</sup> However, Socrates states that he knows that Euthyphro clearly believes that he knows what is pious and impious. This appears to have been true all along. Euthyphro believed he knew what piety was, and hence was not afraid or ashamed to pursue his case. It is a matter of Euthyphro not knowing that he did not know what piety is. Socrates' method of questioning has revealed that his interlocutor has extrapolated beliefs about piety from whatever wisdom he had, if not invented and innovated beliefs about it.

It was suggested earlier in this commentary that Euthyphro's explanation of his case relies on his understanding of miasma, an understanding that was not entirely wrong. He had not thought the matter through entirely, stopping at a point that appeared to support his case. Had he considered the case further, he might have recognized that even if miasma is a general kind of contagion that entails purification for any wrongful killing this does not demonstrate that showing irreverence towards his father does not also produce miasma and is an impious action. One would need to know how to prioritize these two sorts of impious actions that bring about miasma. Euthyphro does not possess this knowledge, and Greek mythology portrays heroes caught in this kind of dilemma. No one knows how to resolve it, except the gods. In this way, Euthyphro has applied an

extremely limited piece of knowledge or wisdom to suit his own needs, perhaps to exact revenge upon his father and/or establish himself as an important prophet in the eyes of the Athenians. Partial wisdom, in Euthyphro's case, has led him down the path to a very questionable course of action.

The manner in which Socrates describes Euthyphro's case in this passage suggests that Socrates disagrees with his course of action. Instead of stating his disagreement explicitly, he presses the idea that Euthyphro would be afraid and ashamed of his actions, if he didn't know what piety is. Through to the end, Socrates wants his interlocutor to recognize the nature of the problem for himself. The ironic tone of the passages seems to suggest Socrates' disapproval, but keeps open an honorable way out for Euthyphro. It is up to him to admit the truth—he does not know what he claimed to know—and take up the matter again from the beginning.

Euthyphro does not choose this course of action. He suddenly realizes that he has to hurry somewhere and it is time for him to go. The place is deliberately unspecified—the enclitic adverb poi is used—and Euthyphro's sudden realization that he has somewhere else to hurry to seems suspicious. The reason he met up with Socrates in the first place was his meeting with the King Archon regarding his case. Instead of proceeding to this meeting, he had gotten caught in conversation with Socrates. The Euthyphro in its entirety has been a diversion from his intended course of action. He hurries off somewhere, diverted from prosecuting his father, perhaps because he recognizes what Socrates hoped he would all along. He does not know what piety is, and should not try his case.<sup>64</sup> If this is the case, their discussion has had important practical moral consequences. Euthyphro has avoided impiety, or, in the least, a potentially great

failure, in recognizing that he does not know what he claimed to know. The case he wished to try most likely would have raised questions about his piety and reverence for his father. It most likely would not have gone to trial, since he was not a relative of the day laborer. Moreover, it most likely would not have gone on to trial, as his father did not appear to have intended to murder the murderer he had detained. Unintentionally killing a murderer would have been something like an “even steven” situation with respect to religious law and miasma. Euthyphro has been saved from wasting his time and that of others, and showing irreverence to his father in the process. We find that Socrates’ role as a gadfly, attached to the city by the god Apollo, is, as far as Euthyphro is concerned, much more like Socrates’ own daimonion, which prevents him doing wrong actions. Socrates’ “service” was to provide a daimonion to someone without this special power of divination that Socrates claims to have.

From Socrates’ point of view, even if he has prevented Euthyphro from doing something wrong, he has not helped Euthyphro achieve an explicit recognition of the fact that he does not know what piety is. Running away is an admission of defeat, not the important admission of ignorance that Socrates believes counts as wisdom. The philosophical lesson Socrates desires to teach, that of honesty about the extent of one’s knowledge, is incomplete in the Euthyphro. Euthyphro runs off unwilling to continue trying to understand piety and also unwilling to reflect openly on the consequences of their discussion. We can only hypothesize about the effects of this discussion with Socrates on him. It is possible that he will think differently about his expertise in religious matters. It is also possible that he will avoid reflecting about it and will continue claiming to have special insight into religion. It is also possible that his first

hand experience with Socrates and his philosophical questioning was not a positive experience. At the start of the dialogue, Euthyphro not only believed that he knew what piety was, but also that Socrates was the very heart of the city, a misunderstood person much like himself. He began in a state of ignorance about his own wisdom, but this ignorance also extended to being involved in a philosophical discussion with Socrates. He runs away from Socrates, perhaps more aware of his own ignorance, perhaps not, but well aware of what its like to be shown that he does not know what he claims to know. According to Socrates in the Apology, the people he shows are not wise often do not appreciate this. He states, "I know very well that this conduct makes me unpopular, and this is proof that what I say is true, that such is the slander against me and its causes. If you look into this either now or later, this is what you will find" (24a-b). It is possible that Euthyphro has been a casualty of the Socratic Mission. We have no way to determine the truth of any of these possibilities, but the image of Euthyphro running off "somewhere" does not evoke the impression that Euthyphro has been gladdened or encouraged by their discussion of piety.

#### Socrates

What are you doing, my friend! You leave casting me down from the great hope I had that I would learn from you what piety is and what is not, and so will be acquitted from Meletus' indictment, showing him that I have become wise through 16 Euthyphro with respect to the gods, that I no longer speak unadvisedly in ignorance and make innovations about them, and I will live both another and, above all, a better life.

While Euthyphro avoids further discussion of piety with Socrates as well as his visit with the King Archon about his case, Socrates remains on the porch and must proceed with the hearing about Meletus' case against him. Was the great hope he speaks

of in this passage sincere? On the one hand, given the nature of his “mission,” it is hard to imagine that he takes any claim to know seriously, especially one like Euthyphro’s claim to be an expert and possess superior (in the third person). The entire dialogue may enact an example of Socratic Piety, if this piety is understood as assisting the gods with their commandment for human beings to “know themselves.” The dialogue demonstrates the sort of wisdom Socrates claims he assists bringing to people. In the Apology he states: “So even now I continue this investigation as the god bade me—and I go around seeking out anyone, citizen or stranger, whom I think wise. Then if I do not think he is, I come to the assistance of the god and show him that he is not wise (23b).” On the other hand, Socrates very well could be sincere in his hopes. Leaving aside the issue of Socratic Piety, there is just as much reason to find that Socrates’ investigation of piety is incomplete. More could be said, as he was forced to follow his interlocutor in any direction he took, and this led them away from a promising line of thought. The level of experience and motivation of a Socratic interlocutor limits the discussion. Euthyphro is a clear case of an interlocutor whose lack of sophistication and motivation to pursue philosophical inquiry constrains Socrates. Whether or not piety could be defined, the pursuit of its definition demonstrated in the dialogue was, perhaps, not all that Socrates had hoped for.

Socrates faces the charge of impiety and has not become “wise through Euthyphro.” It is hard to imagine that Socrates ever seriously believed that he would learn piety from Euthyphro and then proceed to shift the burden of the charge he faces onto his “teacher.” It is hard to imagine that Socrates would do such a thing, even if Euthyphro had taught him the nature of piety. In the Apology, Socrates explicates the

nature of the accusations he faces with awareness that the charges against him were the result of long-standing prejudices. According to Socrates, Meletus' accusations take advantage of the prejudices of the jury, and not solid evidence of impiety. A definition of piety accredited to the mocked young prophet, Euthyphro, would not have amounted to very much in his defense weighed against the accusations and their history that Socrates describes. How would the Athenians have responded to an argument from Euthyphro's authority?

Socrates' request for a definition of piety for use at his trial has been a pedagogical technique. Teacher and student have been brought together through a common concern about their cases. The "student," Socrates, needed to know the definition of piety as much as his "teacher," Euthyphro. Insofar as Euthyphro believed in his own knowledge of piety, he also believed he could assist his friend Socrates, and in the process, perhaps, show off his knowledge. The real teacher, Socrates, has played upon Euthyphro's vanity, but if the point of philosophical questioning is to reveal that an interlocutor does not know what he believes he knows, philosophical questioning aims to cure this kind of vanity. Euthyphro's vanity, or self-love, stood in the way of his perceiving the nature of the charge he was making against his father. The allusions to Daedalus, to the "winged one" Euthyphro pursues, create the impression that dialogue depicts a willful son intemperately seeking his place in the sun (public life). Euthyphro's vanity masked the impending disaster he was headed towards through his "innovative" case against his father. Socrates may have diverted this disaster, but can do nothing about the one he faces alone at the end of the dialogue.

Socrates evocatively concludes that had he learned from Euthyphro what piety was, he will “no longer speak unadvisedly in ignorance and make innovations” about the gods, and “will live both another and an especially better life.” Throughout the dialogue, Socrates has revealed that he does have different ideas about the gods than those of his fellow Athenians. It was suggested that Socrates might believe in the gods and their essential attributes, while he rejects the myths concerning the strife and disagreement between them. These myths attribute human qualities to the gods and the disagreements that arise between the gods reflect, on analogy, human disagreement. This was the crux of Socrates’ argument against Euthyphro’s notion that piety is what is dear to the gods. Socrates’ innovation about the gods may be a matter of rejecting this analogy. The gods are not anthropomorphic in the way that myths depict them. If they are essentially wise, and actually know what is good, true and beautiful, unlike human beings, then the gods could not disagree about values the way that humans do. The question is whether such an “innovation” represents an impious understanding of the gods. The only way to know for certain is to know what piety and impiety are. Meletus, or anyone else, may claim that Socrates makes impious innovations, but any claim like this presupposes knowledge of what piety is. Socrates claims or pretends to claim that he does not know what it is. In either case, his “innovations” cannot be determined pious or impious. They can be determined consistent or inconsistent in the same way that the myths about the gods can be examined for consistency. In this respect, Socrates may have the upper hand in his views about the gods. The rejection of anthropomorphism creates a view of the gods in which their most significant powers, wisdom and justice, do not conflict with other human and imperfect attributes like anger and jealousy.

Our “clue” at the start of the dialogue with respect to innovation returns in Socrates final words. We are reminded that, in failing to have a standard of piety, Socrates’ impiety is not decidable. I have tried to show that he does have a strong view about piety available to him, and this view is situated within Athenian views about the god, and particularly about the god Apollo. But Socrates’ view, however well taken, is not available to the public in the same way as the laws of Athens and religious calendar inscribed upon the stele on the porch of the King Archon are available. His views have been publicly available, but in the form of spoken words (Apology 33a-b). But the spoken word is subject to interpretation, forgotten, and misrepresented. His views were available in his presence, in the life he led, but this proves insufficiently persuasive at his trial.

Had the nature of piety been easily revealed over the course of the dialogue, Socrates might very well have gone on to live another and an especially better life. Yet, the counterfactual nature of his final words in the dialogue suggests that nothing like this is the case. Socrates must confront his charges and carry on his case as he thinks best, as Euthyphro had prophesized (3e). Euthyphro also prophesized that “nothing will come of it,” a false prophesy if ever there was one. It seems highly likely that the Euthyphro was written after the Apology and the historical events reflected in that work, so it is hard to avoid suspecting that Plato placed the detail of Euthyphro’s false prophesy as a means to comment upon Euthyphro’s prophetic abilities—or lack thereof. Euthyphro claimed at the start of the dialogue that nothing he has foreseen has failed to come true. Readers of the dialogue know that at least one thing he has predicted did not come true. While Socrates proceeds in his defense as he thinks best—a trivial prediction, especially for

anyone familiar with Socrates—something comes of the matter. We were not meant, it seems, to think that Euthyphro's abilities as a prophet were real, or that he possessed knowledge of the divine laws above the common person. The ideas he presents throughout the dialogue represent commonly held understandings piety and impiety.<sup>65</sup> None of the claims he makes are unusual or uncommon, besides his short-lived insight that pious actions might serve the gods as slaves serve their masters. His vanity regarding his knowledge of the gods masks the ordinary nature of the ideas he has. Euthyphro, in this respect, has been a mouthpiece for the ideas of piety possessed by "the many." Had Euthyphro clearly understood piety and impiety, it is likely that "the many" would also. But this is not the case. The Athenians have no standard available by which to determine difficult cases of impiety. Clear-cut cases murder and temple robbery were mentioned as examples of impiety. Yet, Socrates' case is by no means clear, and Plato has developed the idea throughout the Euthyphro that there is "something" innovative about Socrates' religious views. Without a clear idea of piety readily available to all, Socrates can only pursue his case as he sees best, asserting that his activities have been pious all along. He does not go on to live another and an especially better life, but stands determined to defend the one he has lived and is willing to die on account of it. Only a very different world, in which concepts like piety were well understood by all, would be a world in which Socrates' final words were true. Socrates' effort to create this kind of world in the city he was attached to by the god, Apollo, brought about his trial and execution in the Athens Plato depicts.

Commentary Notes

---

1. The hereditary monarchy at Athens, rule by a king (basileus) died out by the 7<sup>th</sup> century B. C. The duties of the basileus were primarily religious and ceremonial. By the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Athens had set up a system of nine archons, which had developed out of increasing specialization of the roles of basileus, archon, polemarch and six thesmothetai (lawgivers). The archons were first appointed by election, but later in the fifth century they were chosen by lot. Euthyphro has come to see the archon whose role was basileus, the one who over saw religious cases, matters of impiety, disputes about duties to perform sacrifices or claims to the priesthood as well as homicide and injury. The archon (as distinct from the basileus archon) oversaw cases regarding inheritance, guardianship and family matters. The polemarch oversaw cases involving people who were not Athenians. Thesmothetai oversaw cases in specialized areas like military or commercial matters. A complete history of the functions of the nine archons can be found in Douglas M. MacDowell, The Law in Classical Athens, Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1978, pp. 24-33.

2. Juries at Athens were large and consisted of 201, 401, or 501 citizens. Rare cases in the fifth century were said to be as large as 6,000. Socrates case was tried before a jury of 501 citizens. Douglas M. MacDowell, The Law in Classical Athens, Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1978, pp. 35-40.

3. Ibid. pp. 46-48.

4. We have no way to be certain if the character of Euthyphro in the Euthyphro is the same one mentioned in the Cratylus, yet textual considerations suggest that they may be identical—see Debra Nails, The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2002, p.152. The Cratylus is a discussion regarding the significance of names between Socrates, Cratylus and Hermogenes (Cratylus' brother). Cratylus was a follower of Heraclitus and believed in metaphysical flux to such an extent that he did not believe that words (logoi) can name the same thing twice. At a point in the dialogue in which Socrates expounds upon the appropriate meanings of the names of the gods, Hermogenes calls him a mantis (prophet) and Socrates accredits his inspiration to Euthyphro.

Hermogenes

You seem to me, Socrates, to be quite like a prophet newly inspired, and to be uttering oracles.

Socrates

Yes, Hermogenes, and I believe that I caught the inspiration from the great Euthyphro of the Prospaltian deme, who gave me a long lecture which commenced at dawn: he talked

---

and I listened, and his wisdom and enchanting ravishment has not only filled my ears but taken possession of my soul, and to-day I shall let his superhuman power work and finish the investigation of names- that will be the way; but to-morrow, if you are so disposed, we will conjure him away, and make a purgation of him, if we can only find some priest or sophist who is skilled in purifications of this sort.(397a)

Although the Cratylus was written later than the Euthyphro, it is not so distant that no association between the dialogues can be made. Although a middle dialogue, its portrait of Socrates and aporetic conclusion are in keeping with the early dialogues. The Cratylus comes earlier in dramatic order, and, perhaps, explains more about the relationship between Socrates and Euthyphro and their familiarity in the Euthyphro. We find that here, too, as in the dialogue bearing his name, Euthyphro is not taken very seriously. The effects of his ideas about the names of the gods must be purged, as if they are “polluting.” Euthyphro’s understanding of his case against his father rests on his ideas about pollution (miasma).

5. Debra Nails, The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2002, pp. 152-3. Nails notes that it is likely that Euthyphro’s father was a cleruch at Naxos, a member of a group of Athenian citizens sent by Pericles I around 447 to colonize the island. The practice helped establish Athenian power in conquered lands and prevent rebellion. Cleruchs retained Athenian citizenship, as is evidenced by Euthyphro’s comment that he speaks in the Athenian Assembly, a privilege only open to citizens.

6. The dialogue bears the title, the name “Euthyphro,” which in Ancient Greek can be understood as meaning “sincere” and “whole hearted” (euthyphron) and also “straight thinker” (euthus- straight or direct and phroneo- thinking, understanding). The thinking demonstrated in the dialogue is anything but straight and direct. This may be an irony on Plato’s part, although the question of Euthyphro’s sincerity or insincerity would require a complex answer. The title may reflect both ideas. It is possible that Euthyphro is sincere, despite his inability to think straight. He may also be insincere, and there are details and literary allusions throughout the dialogue that support viewing him as motivated by ambition and revenge to pursue an unusual case against his father.

7. In Xenophon’s Memorabilia, VI, 1-4, Socrates’ method of interrogating his companions is described, including an example of an analysis of piety. The interlocutor in this exchange is Euthydemus, a Sophist from Chios and the protagonist of Plato’s dialogue, Euthydemus. The brief exchange Xenophon describes differs greatly from Plato’s Euthyphro, and simply associates piety with knowledge of how to worship the gods and

---

the pious man is considered one who knows how to do this. The relevant passages are provided below:

VI.[1] I will try also to show how he encouraged his companions to become skilled in discussion. Socrates held that those who know what any given thing is can also expound it to others; on the other hand, those who do not know are misled themselves and mislead others. For this reason he never gave up considering with his companions what any given thing is. To go through all his definitions would be an arduous task. I will say only enough to indicate his method of analysis.

[2] His analysis of Piety -- to take that first -- was more or less as follows:

“Tell me, Euthydemus, what sort of thing is Piety, in your opinion?”

“A very excellent thing, to be sure,” he replied.

“Can you say what sort of man is pious?”

“He who worships the gods, I think.”

“May a man worship the gods according to his own will and pleasure?”

“No, there are laws to be observed in worshipping the gods!”

[3] “Then will not he who knows these laws know how he must worship the gods?”

“I think so.”

“Then does he who knows how he must worship the gods think that he must do so according to his knowledge, and not otherwise?”

“He does indeed.”

“And does everyone worship the gods as he thinks he ought, and not otherwise?”

“I think so.”

[4] “Then will he who knows what is lawful about the gods worship the gods lawfully?”

“Certainly.”

“Then does not he who worships lawfully worship as he ought?”

“Of course.”

“Yes, but he who worships as he ought is pious?”

“Certainly.”

“Shall we therefore rightly define the pious man as one who knows what is lawful concerning the gods?”

“I at any rate think so.”

Xenophon’s account of Socrates’ discussion of piety strongly reflects the fifth and final definition of piety in the Euthyphro: Piety is knowledge of prayer and sacrifice. This definition is proven unsatisfactory in Plato’s dialogue. This disagreement between Xenophon and Plato could reflect a difference between the historical Socrates and Plato’s Socrates regarding piety, or could reflect differences between Xenophon and Plato’s philosophical sophistication. Any inferences about this matter of difference, which presuppose that either or both writers attempted to reproduce an “authentic” account of what Socrates actually said, may mislead us. It may just as well be the case that all authors who produced Socratic Logoi (Socratic Dialogues), took liberties with whatever Socrates actually said in order to commemorate him in the manner they thought best. For a complete discussion of the Socratic Logoi as a literary genre and catalogue of its known participant writers, see Charles Kahn, Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of Literary Form, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 1-35.

8. Debra Nails, The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2002, p. 202.

9. Note the use of consecutive words with the root ‘melete’—‘care’ (epimelethevai and epimeletheis) in Socrates’ discussion of Meletus. Ironic punning with Meletus’ name, which means ‘one who cares,’ and verbs of caring also appear in the Apology throughout Socrates’ cross-examination of Meletus, 24c, 25c and 26b.

10. Gilbert Ryle in, “Dialectic in the Academy,” New Essays on Plato, ed. R. Bambrough, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965, pp. 41-46, discusses the pejorative view of eristic dialectic as practiced by the Sophists for “Prize-fighting” purposes. The sophists would attract students through public display of the question and answer form of argument.

11. Gregory Vlastos, in his article “Socratic Piety,” in Plato II, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 56-77, argues that as far ahead of his time as Socrates was with respect to critical thinking, he was, at the same time, a “man of his time.”

He subscribes unquestioningly to the age old view that side by side with the physical world accessible to our sense, there exists another, populated by mysterious beings, personal, like ourselves, but unlike ourselves, having the power to invade at will the causal order to which our own actions are confined, effecting in it changes of incalculable extent. How they act upon us we cannot hope to understand. But the fact is that they do and their communications to us

---

through dreams and oracles is one of the inscrutable ways in which they display their power over us. (57)

Vlastos, as well as Mark L. McPherran, "Socratic Piety in the Euthyphro," Journal of the History of Philosophy, 23 (1985), pp. 283-309, and C.D.C. Reeve, "Socrates the Apollonian?" in Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 24-39, to name a few, make cases to establish the ways in which Socrates' beliefs cohered with traditional Greek religion. Laslo Versenyi, in Holiness and Justice: An Interpretation of Plato's Euthyphro, New York: (1982), makes the opposing case that Socrates does not seriously accept the supernatural and opposes religion. The strongest view seems to be that Socrates, while revising some aspects of the accounts of the gods, nevertheless accepts them.

12. It is not entirely clear to scholars precisely what the function of Socrates' daimonion plays in his viewpoint—whether it is a rational or irrational force. Thomas Brickhouse and Nicholas Smith, in "Socrates' Gods and the Daimonion," in Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy, eds. N. Smith and P. Woodruff, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 74-87, emphasize its negative function—stopping actions after reasoning and deliberation. They claim that Socrates' religious views were not out of keeping with those of his time, and that his innovations about the gods were not true reasons for his indictment. The daimonion, according to them, is not wholly rational and "trumps" reason. In the same volume, Paul Woodruff in his paper, "Socrates and the Irrational," pp. 130-150, argues that the daimonion is a product of rationality, and Socrates' places something like moral conscience in the place of the traditional gods. My point is that Socrates' unique claims about his daimonion do not necessarily render him impious. The rationality or irrationality of the daimonion's role may not be as crucial in settling this question. For instance, even if the daimonion is a product of reason and is akin to a moral conscience that is independent of the gods, this does not entail that Socrates is an atheist. The Euthyphro Dilemma is not an argument against the existence of the gods, but shows that Socrates rejects a divine command theory of morality. Socrates' assertion that his mission is a service to the god and he was attached to the city by the god, Apollo (Apology, 30e), seems to indicate that he believed rejecting a divine command view about piety did not conflict with the religious source of his mission or belief in the gods. The nearly spilt jury that convicts him in the Apology (he loses by 30 votes) appears to indicate that the Athenians were divided with respect to the charge of impiety and corrupting the youth. It is, in my view, an understandable outcome as the extent to which Socrates has innovated about the gods and substantially revised traditional religious beliefs is very difficult to decide. The daimonion is a small component of this larger issue and it is equally hard to decide whether it amounts to an innovation that challenges traditional religion to an extent that it renders Socrates truly guilty of the charges against him.

13. Anaxagoras lived from 500-428 B.C. His views were popular during Pericles' rule. He was tried for his impious views about the sun and moon being "stones" and Pericles intervened, commuting his death sentence to exile from Athens. Meletus and Aristophanes' association of Socrates with this philosopher was quite likely a good strategy as his case was among the precedent cases for successfully trying philosophers for impiety. Protagoras, who lived from 481-411, was a sophist that taught at Athens, also during Pericles' rule. He, too, was convicted of impiety for his atheistic views, and died after fleeing Athens.

14. Aristophanes, Clouds, trans. J. Henderson, Newburyport: The Focus Classical Library, 1992.

15. R.K. Sinclair in Democracy and Participation in Athens, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, notes that slaves could not expect justice in the same way citizens could:

A slave in Athens was almost completely dependent on the good will of his master. For the owner could treat slaves like any other item of property... a master who killed a slave seems to have been required no more than a ritual act of purification. (28)

Of course, it is this idea that Euthyphro is challenging in his case.

16. D.M. MacDowell in The Law in Classical Athens, Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1978, p. 60, describes the fact that there was no written law regarding the problem Euthyphro's father faced in the death of the hired servant. In cases like this, in which there was no written law to consult, the jurors' oath was to decide according to the most just opinion. MacDowell uses Euthyphro's case as an illustration of this situation. There was no law that decided whether or not leaving someone bound in a ditch counted as a homicide, so a jury would need to decide the matter. There were laws forbidding homicide, but they did not extend to the particular instance given in the Euthyphro.

17. Arlene Saxonhouse, in her article, "The Philosophy of the Particular and the Universality of the City: Socrates' Education of Euthyphro," Political Theory, Vol. 6, No. 2 (May 1988), pp. 281-299, interprets Euthyphro's position as one that seeks to universalize persons before the law. This contrasts with Socrates' emphasis on the particular, particular individual's relationships to the city and moral virtues. Meletus, like Euthyphro, is also seeking justice in the same manner, and targets Socrates as a threat to the democracy, which also universalizes individuals. Saxonhouse associates the attitudes of Euthyphro and Meletus as reflecting changes in Athenian law, Cleisthenes' reforms in 508-507 BC, that reformed the deme system from tribalism and instituted appointments to most political offices by lottery. In her view, Socrates opposes this movement towards

universalization, and remains father and mid-wife to the city—concerned with individual relationships. Saxonhouse's view, as I see it, is much too simple as Euthyphro's case reflects much more particular interests, which I later discuss, including revenge against his father and his ambition to be accepted as a legitimate prophet before the Athenian assembly. His case also relies on an ancient religious concept, miasma, which is not in keeping with the "rationalization" and "universalization" that Saxonhouse sees his case as representing. To a certain extent, however, Socrates does represent concern with particular individuals and their improvement. He has spent his life in the private sphere and avoided a public life in order to pursue philosophy. Yet, as true as this is, Socrates' philosophical search is for general, universal principles, so from a philosophical viewpoint he could be said to represent a trend towards "universalization," contrary to Saxonhouse's claims.

18. Robert Talisse, in his article, "Teaching Plato's Euthyphro," *Teaching Philosophy* 26:2 (June 2003), argues that the dramatic details in the dialogue are Plato's means of showing that Euthyphro's case is made for the sake of recognition (and incorporates revenge against his father for not recognizing him). He interprets Euthyphro's position as one that values sophistic expertise as opposed to Socrates' position that values philosophical expertise. Euthyphro's expertise is "sophistic" in that it values persuasion (being recognized and listened to) and power, while Socrates' expertise lies in wisdom, providing an account (logos), and if none can be provided admitting one does not know. Talisse suggests that the references to Daedalus and the myth of Icarus also support this reading of Euthyphro's motivations.

19. Alban D. Winspear discusses the changes in meaning the term "dike" undergoes in Ancient Greek culture in his book, *The Genesis of Plato's Thought*, New York: S.A. Russell, 1940, pp. 37-64. The term for justice, 'dike,' in the Homeric period regarded "the way of things." In this period, it referred to customs, which were right simply because they were the ways in which things were done. A change in the meaning of the term arises, passing from Homer to Hesiod. Communal, tribal ownership of land passed into landed aristocracy and the city-state, and blood-ties were no longer a means to successfully regulate communal relationships. The idea of justice becomes more abstract. It becomes an "eternal principle" that stands outside of human relationships and is not identified with custom (the relationships themselves). The idea the 'nomos' (law) pertains to human custom and convention, while 'dike' regards an abstract standard of what is right emerges. Euthyphro's view about justice and pollution is an interesting hybrid of the more abstract notion of justice found in Hesiod (and afterwards), with the ancient idea of miasma. In opposing his relatives' views, he opposes custom equated with what is right, an even earlier view of dike. In this way, it seems that Euthyphro's idea of justice and piety is "innovative" in that he combines the current notion of justice in Athenian culture with an ancient religious idea.

---

20. Robert Parker, Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

21. Rory B. Egan in "Tragic Piety in Plato's Euthyphro," Dionysius, 7 (1983), pp. 17-32, suggests that Euthyphro's character and case is a parody of the characters from Greek tragedy driven by piety to act impiously. The hero, Oretes, is a paradigmatic example of this dilemma. His thesis is that the dialogue is a comic attack upon the poet's account of piety. I agree fully with this view, although I find that Plato casts a much wider net in terms of literary associations that can be made with the dialogue. These include the myth of Daedalus, as well as Aristophanes' Clouds.

22. Marlo Lewis, Jr. in his article, "An Interpretation of the Euthyphro," Interpretation, 12 (1984), pp. 225-259, notes that students find the dialogue "irritating" and lacking the "charm and spontaneity" of other Platonic works (257). He claims this is because the conversation is not to either interlocutors' taste, and that Socrates would rather not talk at all. I do not find the dialogue lacking in moments of charm, despite the way that the conversation is not to Euthyphro's taste, and I cannot see how Socrates is portrayed as not wishing to speak at all. Plato portrays him as all too willing to speak, even under conditions of personal duress, and this is in keeping with his image in the early dialogues as a philosophical hero. Students sometimes find the dialogue irritating, in my view, because they are often attached to religious ideas similar to those of Euthyphro and experience the same discomfort he does as the dialogue unfolds and these ideas are examined and undermined.

23. 'Idean' is translated as 'characteristic.' Following Heidel, it seems more appropriate to avoid confusing the discussion of defining piety, a critical issue in this dialogue, with a philosophically more advanced and metaphysically loaded term such as 'form.' Heidel argues that in the later dialogues the use of the term eidōs/idean refers both to definitional essences as well as the hypostatized forms. The notion of definition appears in addition into the notion of the forms, and their meanings can be distinguished (Meno 72 c, Republic 435 b). (Heidel, 48) This is not to claim that there is no relationship between definitional characteristics and the forms for Plato, rather that Plato's dialogues distinguish between them as philosophical pursuits. The context of the Euthyphro supports the less technical translation for two main considerations, the first being Euthyphro's unsophisticated level as an interlocutor and the second being the categorization of the dialogue as an "early dialogue," in which the notion of the forms is absent.

24. Socrates questions Euthyphro in a manner common to the early dialogues: “What is piety?” he asks. His interlocutor is expected to reveal the knowledge he claims to possess, providing a definition in answer to this question. The form of Socrates’ question, “What is X?” needs to be answered in such a way that the essential characteristics of the concept X have been placed in a well formed proposition, “X is such and such,” in which X is the definiendum. The definiens must then be proven to contain the individuating features of X for all cases of X. It must explain what all cases of X share in common. If counter-examples, contradiction or circularity are discovered with respect to a provisional definiens of X, Socrates and his interlocutor must make a new attempt at defining it. In the end, the early dialogues that take up a “What is X?” question end inconclusively, in aporia (bewilderment). X’s are never successfully defined. Dialogues of Plato’s middle and late periods tend to provide more conclusive examinations of their topics.

I find that it is crucial to our understanding of the “What is X?” question found in Plato’s early dialogues to take into account an important point raised by Thomas Brickhouse and Nicolas Smith in Plato’s Socrates, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 46-49. They argue that Socrates’ epistemic position in the early dialogues is much weaker than might be apparent. Socrates claims that one needs to know a definition of F-ness before one is in a position to judge what things are and are not F. Without knowledge of the definition of F-ness, judgments about F can fall into error. A strong claim about this demand is that we can never make any correct judgments about F without a definition. A weaker claim is that we cannot always make correct and secure judgments about F without a definition. Brickhouse and Smith believe that the latter, weaker claim better captures Socrates’ worry about judgments. Socrates does not, for example, know what piety is, but he does not believe that one must know a definition of something in order to determine examples (he does not commit the Socratic Fallacy). One may be able to judge some instances of F, given a very limited area of knowledge one happens to have, but even if one can judge some instances correctly, one will never be wise enough to determine all cases besides one’s own. Even in the case that one was divinely inspired and knew one action was pious, this would not guarantee the piety of any other actions. It is the more general wisdom that Socrates hopes to secure through determining definitions. I find further evidence for this sort of view, beyond the epistemic considerations Brickhouse and Smith raise, in the kinds of cases the Euthyphro concerns—difficult cases in which truly expert judges are required.

25. The issues surrounding the idea of the forms are complex, incorporating views about the division of the dialogues into “Socratic” dialogues that reflect Socrates’ views and “Platonic” dialogues that reflect those of Plato. Charles H. Kahn, in Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of Literary Form, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 38-42, provides a clear exposition of the trends in Plato interpretation from the early nineteenth century to the present. The history of these trends is divided between “Unitarian” views, in which the dialogues are understood as representing a single philosophical point of view and differences in the dialogues are

accredited to Plato's exploration of the same problems from different directions. This trend begins with Schleiermacher and continues through von Arnim, Shorey, Jaeger, Friedlander and the Tubigen school (38). In my view, the "dialogical approach" also tends to find unity in the dialogues, even while questioning the existence of firm platonic doctrines, like the theory of forms. Representatives of this kind of view are found in Plato's Dialogues: New Studies and Interpretations, ed. G. Press, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993, Who Speaks for Plato? Ed. G. Press, Maryland Rowman and Littlefield, 2001, James Arieti, Interpreting Plato: The Dialogues as Drama, Maryland: Rowman Littlefield, 1991 and Victorino Tejera, Plato's Dialogues One by One, New York: Irvington, 1984.

The second trend in Plato interpretation is "developmental." The early dialogues, which do not describe the forms as found in the middle dialogues, are taken to represent, more or less, Socrates' views. His concern with definitions is understood as a search for the essences or necessary and sufficient conditions, involved in defining the moral virtues. Middle dialogues, such as the Republic, represent Plato's mature view of the metaphysical structure of ideas and how they are known. This view begins with Karl Friedrich Hermann and continues through Guthrie and Vlastos.

Further complicating this picture is the view that there is an "early" theory of forms that contrasts with a "later" theory of them, as found in R.E. Allen, Plato's 'Euthyphro' and the Early Theory of Forms, New York, Humanities Press, 1970. In my view, the confusion of the dialogues with historical documents, and the attempt to glean a purified picture of the historical Socrates and his views, has been an obstacle to accepting the dialogues as the work of one philosopher, Plato, whose ideas, while influenced greatly by Socrates, develop and grow over the course of his career. The information regarding the idea of piety that Socrates seeks in the Euthyphro is, in my view, far too limited to support any view of the forms, early or late. Allen's interpretation of the dialogue is that the true lesson of the work is about definition, not about piety. I believe this view is overly reductive with respect to the content of the dialogue. The setting of the dialogue and its emphasis on the immediate need for a definition of piety for both Socrates' and Euthyphro's cases suggests that Socrates' interest lies in the practical moral realm, not in the timeless world of the forms.

26. Hesiod, Works and Days, 255-265. Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns and Homeric, trans. H.G. Evelyn-White, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914.

27. In the Homeric Hymns, for example, we find Hera complaining of Zeus' many infidelities: "Hear from me, all gods and goddesses, how cloud-gathering Zeus begins to dishonor (atimazein) me wantonly, when he has made me his true-hearted wife," continuing on to call him "wicked (schetlie) and crafty" (Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns and Homeric, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914, p. 347).

28. Here I translate 'paradeigmati' as 'model.' It can be equally well translated as 'standard.' As with the case of 'idean' (see note 20), 'paradeigmata' is often understood as a "buzzword" for the Forms, but this is not necessarily a correct interpretation. David Sedley, in his paper "The Ideal of Godlikeness," Plato II, ed. G. Fine, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 312-13, explains that Plato's use of 'paradeigmata' differs from the forms in certain dialogues such as the Theaetetus and the Laws, while it is synonymous in dialogues such as the Parmenides. His point is that Plato uses the term for 'standard' in contexts in which the standard in question is not a Form, but, for example, the gods.

29. Alexander Nehamas in his essay, "Universals and Particulars," from Virtues of Authenticity, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 159-175, has a slightly different interpretation of the problem with Euthyphro's first attempt at a definition. He translates Socrates' statement at 6d, "but you told me that this happens to be pious, what you are doing now, prosecuting (epexion) your father for murder" as "in prosecuting your father..." He claims that the present participle should be so translated. By doing this, we find that Socrates is not committing the "Socratic Fallacy" made famous by P.T. Geach. This is the idea that Socrates assumes that if you know you are correctly predicating a given term 'T' you must know what it is to be 'T,' and that it is no use to try to arrive at the meaning of 'T' by citing examples of 'T.' (See P.T. Geach, Plato's Euthyphro: An Analysis and Commentary, The Monist 50 (1966), pp. 369-82.) Geach concludes that the Socratic Fallacy leads to skepticism, since we cannot know an example until we have a definition in place. Nehamas believes that this fallacy is not present if we look closely at the Greek. Nehamas thinks his translation leads us to see that Euthyphro is suggesting that "avenging religious wrongs" is pious and that his case is thus a pious action. Socrates thus objects to the fact that there are other ways in which things/actions can be pious. Euthyphro has not, technically, given an example of what is pious instead of a definition, but a first, faulty definition. His explanation of piety has failed to capture the unity of what is pious, and this is why his first definition of piety fails.

I find there is a problem with Nehamas' translation, however, as it is not clear that the present participle 'epexion' should be translated as "in prosecuting" or "through prosecuting" or "by prosecuting." The circumstantial participle in the nominative case modifies 'su' and agrees with it in case and number, so that the meaning is simply "you are prosecuting." The participle ending could have been in the dative case to indicate cause or action as in an attributive participle, but it is not. In any case, however, in the passage at 6d Socrates states that he did not ask to be taught one of the many pious things. Euthyphro, "prosecuting" his father, or "by prosecuting his father" has not provided the "unified" definiens Socrates requested. I would say that as Socrates' finds this to be one of many pious things, it is an example.

Mary Margaret McCabe in Plato's Individuals, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 26-29 argues that in the early dialogues Socrates rejects examples as

explanations. His view is not skeptical about examples, nor does it entail the skepticism Geach accredits to refusing examples as definitions. She claims that Socrates' "worry" is that examples are simply not self-explanatory. They are "many and complex," while a definition should be "one and simple." The problem with examples, including paradigm cases, are that they are 1) too thin—fail to meet the complexity of the multiplicity they are supposed to explain—and 2) they do not resemble explanations at all. If a paradigm example is offered as a definition, pointing to that example simply does not produce understanding as an explanation needs to do. McCabe finds that it is not that Socrates does not think that we cannot grasp examples without definitions, as Geach claims, but that they are simply not to be mistaken for definitions.

30. I justify my choice to translate 'prophiles' as 'loved' instead of the more common 'dear,' or 'pleasing' on account of consideration of the root stem 'phil' that appears consistently throughout the second and third attempts to define piety as well as at the end at 15b. The series of terms involved, 'prophises,' 'theophiles,' 'philetai' 'philoumenon' and 'philon' share this root stem and their close relationship is quite clear in Ancient Greek. In English, the nuances of relationships are lost. The typical translation of 'prophiles' and 'philon' as 'dear' or 'pleasing' for objects and 'beloved' for persons captures the way in which the verb 'phileo' in Ancient Greek, typically translated as 'love,' does not have the same intensity—relation to the passions and erotic love—that the Ancient Greek verb has. Translating 'prophiles' and 'philon' as 'dear' or 'pleasing' as 'loved' seems the best way to help the reader see the permutations of the definitions of piety more smoothly, in a manner that best matches what is going on in the Ancient Greek. The transition between understanding that piety is what is dear (or pleasing) to the gods and it being god-loved should match fairly exactly. The contrary to the god-loved is the god-hated (theomises) and theomises seems correctly translated as god-hated. Furthermore, the use of 'pleasing' or 'dear' cannot be maintained through the Euthyphro Dilemma section. In these passages it is crucial that the verb 'phileo' is translated as 'love,' a transitive verb. Although the meaning of 'phileo' is closer to 'please' in Ancient Greek, the English verb 'please' is intransitive and cannot be accurately substituted as a translation of 'phileo.'

31. Euthyphro appears to catch on to Socrates' method of pursuing piety, but his success is not complete. For a detailed analysis of the method of dialectic as it most likely was practiced by experienced philosophers and their followers throughout the Pre-Socratic period through Aristotle's Peripataic School, see Gilbert Ryle, "Dialectic in the Academy," *New Essays on Plato*, ed. R. Bambrough, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965, pp. 39-68. As much as Socrates employs the "question and answer" method in the *Euthyphro*, which adheres to the formal nature of elentic dueling as described by Ryle, it is clear that the discussion Plato portrays in the *Euthyphro* does not meet the standards that were established for this kind of philosophical discussion.

32. Views about the social dimension of Socrates' "philosophical mission" and its relationship with the Athenian democracy go beyond the scope of this commentary, but are discussed at length in Gerald Mara, Socrates' Discursive Democracy: Logos and Ergon in Political Philosophy, Albany: SUNY Press, 1997, Adolf Gunderson, The Socratic Citizen, Laham: Lexington Books, 2000, and Jacob Howland, The Paradox of Political Philosophy: Socrates' Philosophical Trial, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.

33. See the Cypria: 1, "Zeus plans with Themis to bring about the Trojan War. Strife arrives while the gods are feasting at the marriage of Peleus and starts a dispute between Hera, Athena and Aphrodite as to which of them is the fairest." Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns and Homerica, trans. H.G. Evelyn-White, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914, p. 489-491. Later in the dialogue, Socrates quotes lines the Cypria from memory.

34. Jokes about the Athenian courts of law and the general litigiousness of the Athenians appear in Aristophanes' Clouds, a comedy representing (or misrepresenting) Socrates in the worst of lights.

35. Roslyn Weiss, in her article "Euthyphro's Failure," Journal of the History of Philosophy 24:4 (1986), p. 442, raises the important concern that the Euthyphro Dilemma needs to be understood as applying only to the morally imperfect gods of Euthyphro's pantheon. "Since perfectly just gods, she claims, "can reasonably be thought to bestow their love on those things and on only those things that are truly holy, these gods will presumably not love things that are not holy. It is therefore safe to say in their case that if they love X, X is holy (the gods' love is a sufficient condition for holiness)." If Weiss is correct, then it seems that theists that hold that their god or gods are perfect are immunized against the Euthyphro Dilemma. I do not find that this is the case. The reason that Weiss' view is incorrect is because the dilemma concerns identifying the intrinsic property of piety that causes the love of god. Even in the case of a perfectly just and omniscient god, the question the dilemma raises is can a god's love create or cause an object to have the intrinsic property of piety. In other words does something become holy or pious by fiat? Is a perfectly just and omniscient god beholden to objective, external standards of right, good, and holy? The problem is not merely, as Weiss notes, that love (will, command) for X is a sufficient condition of the holy, it is that, if it is, X is wholly arbitrary.

The Euthyphro Dilemma has been taken as raising serious theological considerations throughout the history of philosophy following Plato. Leibniz, in his 1686 Discourse on Metaphysics, trans. R. Ariew and D. Garber, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1989, p. 36, considers the problem:

Thus, in saying that things are not good by virtue of any rule of goodness, but solely by virtue of the will of God, it seems to me that we unknowingly destroys

---

all of God's love and all his glory, For why praise him for what he has done if he would be equally praiseworthy in doing the exact contrary?

Another interesting acknowledgment of the Euthyphro Dilemma is a variation of an early Rabbinic saying, "There are matters written in the Torah, which even if they had not been written there, reason would have required that they be written." If we understand this saying as assuming that the Torah directly reveals god's commandments, then, like Leibniz, the Rabbinic saying suggests that god's commands are in accord with reason. Another view like this holds that God creates the laws such that they would be right even if he did not exist. This is to say that, in creating commandments, God imagines a world in which he does not exist, but one in which his commandments are still morally right.

William E. Mann agrees with Weiss' position in his paper, "Piety: Lending a Hand to Euthyphro," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. LVIII, No. 1 (March 1998), pp. 123-142. He sees the application of the arguments articulated in the Euthyphro as applying to polytheism, and that a shift to monotheism is too easily made (125). His thesis is that by plugging in Christian conceptions of God we can accept Euthyphro's first definition of piety as what god loves or is dear to him. Approaches like Weiss and Mann's seek to defend the first horn of the dilemma, the one that Euthyphro rejects, through a further assumption that a perfect monotheistic god's commandments must differ from those of imperfect polytheistic gods. Yet, it seems that as the definition under attack holds that all the gods agree about what is pious, this seems to be a distinction without much of a difference. Moreover, it seems that Socrates' conception of the gods, although polytheistic, holds that the gods are not in disagreement and are perfect. (This idea is found later in the Republic 378a-383c, where the notion is expanded upon at length.) Yet, Socrates develops the dilemma with the understanding that all the gods must love what is pious, and does not import earlier ideas about the disagreement between the gods into his development of the problem.

Other researchers have tried to develop accounts to show that the first horn of the dilemma is not a threat to monotheistic conceptions of god. Michael Levin, in his paper, "Understanding the Euthyphro Problem," Philosophy of Religion 25 (1989), pp. 83-97, takes the opposing view and defends the notion that the second horn of the dilemma, that god commands actions because they are right, does not conflict with god's omnipotence and self-sufficiency, as initially seems the case. He calls this the "guided will theory" (as opposed to "divine command theory"). The crux of his argument is ontological. God is ontologically independent as a substance (not created, sustained or affected by other substances), but goodness and moral standards are not substances and do not have causal powers. The rightness of actions, their standards, are not the sort of things that create sustain or change god. Thus, the "guided will" horn of the Euthyphro Dilemma respects the ontological independence of god. God can be affirmed in standing in congruence with standards of excellence, but this is not equivalent to dependence on them in any ontological sense that lessens god's divinity. Levin's position significantly improves upon and develops an earlier position taken by D. M. MacKinnon in his section of a paper, "The Euthyphro Dilemma: Parts I & II," D.M. Mackinnon and Hugo Meynell, Aristotelian Society, 1972; Suppl. 46, pp. 11-221. MacKinnon holds that Socrates and Plato engage in a rejection of "the arbitrary," and that their view of divinity entails that

god must be beholden to objective standards of morality. Meynell, in his companion paper, argues, similarly to Weiss and Mann, that under the Judeo-Christian notion of god, his commands cannot be arbitrary, but are in accord with his perfect reason so that the second horn of the dilemma can be accepted.

36. Much of the controversy regarding the soundness of the Euthyphro Dilemma rests on how we understand the meaning of the passive participle with a periphrastic copula. P. T. Geach in his article, "Plato's Euthyphro: An Analysis and Commentary," *The Monist* 50 (1966), pp. 369-382, most famously attempts to show that translating this participle construction creates a logical problem—and represents a "linguistic obstacle" (378). He claims we do not know how Plato conceived of the difference between the simple passive participle form and the passive participle with periphrastic copula, and that there is ultimately no difference in meaning between them. Furthermore, he claims that there is no parity between the cases mentioned by Socrates as analogous; something that is being carried differs from something that is being loved. "This assimilation is certainly wrong; among grammatically transitive verbs, verbs like 'know,' 'love,' and 'see' are logically quite different from verbs expressing something is shifted or altered" (379). I find that Geach's interpretation lacks an appreciation for the fine distinctions regarding states and conditions that was available to the ancient Greeks. States of objects that were externally caused, *pathoi* (see 11a), are described through the controversial participle construction, "is being loved/carried/seen." The idiom allows for the distinction between relational, extrinsic properties and intrinsic properties as found in contemporary metaphysics. This distinction was available in ordinary speech to the ancient Greeks, and does not represent a technical innovation on Plato's part, nor does it entail reference to later Platonic works to be understood. Jaegwon Kim, for example, makes the case that intrinsic properties can be understood as "lonely" properties, those which exist in objects independently of its relations with other objects. Extrinsic properties are relational; an object has these qualities in virtue of a relationship with some other thing. In the absence of other objects (a lonely universe), these relational properties cease to exist. I believe Kim's intuitions capture what is metaphysically distinct about the state of being loved, being seen or being carried. To the Greek mind, there is a parity between something in a state of being carried and something in a state of being loved because in both cases objects are singled out via attention and acquire a relational property, which otherwise could not be attributed to the object. Geach appeals to the difference between physical effects—shifting or altering—in order to say that loving and knowing are logically different examples, but the shift or alteration need not be concretely physical (and he presents no argument that this must be the case). For the Greeks, something in a state of being loved has been altered insofar as it has been distinguished by attention. Something or someone in such a state acquires a relational property, the property of being loved, and this distinguishes it against a background of things that do not have this property. An agent's love for an object causes this state to come about, although the cause of the agent's love for an object is not to be mistaken for the cause of this state.

In Plato's later work, the *Theaetetus* (156a-157c), we find a discussion of physical reality in which all physical things are characterized as "becoming," either having the power to affect something or the capacity to be affected. Socrates uses the example of seeing to make this case, sight being the result of the combination of the two kinds of becomings. "Nothing is itself by itself," according to Socrates, and "being" must be removed from everywhere. In these passages we find that *ousia*, being, is non-physical, and contrasts with the world of becoming, the physical world and the relational attributes of physical things. The technical level of this discussion is significantly higher than that of the *Euthyphro* where we find the passive participle and copula expressing relational attributes (*pathoi*). Yet, if we wished to understand why these sorts of constructions regarding states of being loved are classified with states of being carried, despite the differences Geach claims, we can see how Plato's more developed metaphysics treats such relational properties with parity.

37. My analysis of the Euthyphro Dilemma follows what is termed "the causal" and "intensional" interpretation. That is to say that I have interpreted Socrates epagoge of the passive voice and agency as a causal relationship, taking Plato's use of 'hoti' as meaning 'because.' The use of the term 'because' creates an intensional context; one in which the terms 'piety' and 'god-loved' do not pick out the same things and cannot be substituted for each other. Belief statements and causal contexts create intensional conditions in which co-extensive terms cannot be substituted for each other in a statement without changing the statement's truth-value. For example, if it is possible for me to believe that the evening star is on the horizon, yet even if this belief is true, I might not believe that Venus is on the horizon. Venus and the Evening Star can be substituted salva veritate in extensional contexts as the both name the same object, but this substitution cannot be maintained in beliefs contexts. I simply may not believe that the terms are co-extensional. Causal contexts are similar as causal relationships are not symmetrical. Extensionally considered, 'pious' and 'god-loved' may pick out exactly the same class of actions. That is to say, for example, the predicates 'god-loved' and 'pious' may both apply to the extension of actions that includes "participating in a religious festival." This action, extensionally considered, can be both pious and god-beloved. Yet, Plato's Socrates is not interested in the extension of the class of pious actions (examples of piety), but is interested in the intensional principle that individuates that class to begin with. What causes something to be pious (P causes L) and what causes something to be god-beloved (L causes G) differs and does not permit these terms to be substituted salva veritate in an intensional (causal) context.

John H. Brown criticizes the "univocal causal interpretation" in "The Logic of the Euthyphro 10a-11b," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 14: 54 (1964), pp. 1-14. He argues that no coherent, univocal interpretation of the Euthyphro Dilemma is available in which the argument is valid because the key terms prove to be equivocal. Inferences in the epagoge section, he claims, can be considered causally or as logical entailments, and when the Euthyphro Dilemma is interpreted univocally it loses its formal validity. The problem with Brown's approach is that, not being a translator of Ancient Greek, he fails

to recognize that the “state of being carried” which he claims cannot exist is one that exists as a participle construction in ancient Greek as a passive participle with a periphrastic copula. He argues,

That X is carried by someone is the same as that someone carries X, not a causal consequence of it. While the active and passive voices are not synonymous, they designate neither different facts nor different aspects of the same fact. It is possible that Socrates meant to refer to a state distinct from but not causally related to being carried...But there is no state uniformly produced by being carried. Thus the state of being carried does not exist. (12).

Brown fails to recognize the subtlety involved in the passive constructions involved. Something is said to be (or comes to be) in the state of being carried because someone carries it as a result of being carried. An agent action causes this state, which is attributed to the object of the action. The causal relationship at stake in the causal interpretation is not simply that when X is carried by someone, someone causes X to be carried. It is that when something is being carried by an agent, this causes an (accidental) state in which something comes to be carried and is said to be in that state. The causal relationship in the epagoge that Matthews describes is incomplete. There are two orders of causal relationships. Someone loves something for some set of properties an object possesses. (These can also be reasons or explanations for the agent’s love for an object.) Someone’s love for something does not cause this same set of properties to exist in the loved object. When something is said to be in the state of being loved, the attribution of this property is caused by someone’s love for it, but this property is not identical to any of the properties that cause agent’s love for it. An object has this quality or state due to a relation with an agent, and its state of being loved is grammatically ascribed to it. As the text reads, such a state happens to be the case, but is an inessential quality (*pathos*).

Paul Thom in his paper, “Euthyphro 9d-11b,” *Philosophical Inquiry*, 1 (1978), pp. 65-70, shows how ‘because’ can be understood in the sense of “logical priority,” so that we can understand that Socrates wishes to identify only one relata (between the gods and the object of their love) as the cause of the relationship holding between them. On Thom’s account, the logical priority interpretation of the Euthyphro Dilemma refutes Euthyphro’s definition of piety, and shows that this definition tells us something that is true of all members of the class of pious actions without explaining what it is to be a member of that class.

38. See Thomas D. Paxson, “Plato’s *Euthyphro* 10a to 11b,” *Phronesis* 17 (1972), pp. 171-183, for a full discussion of the problem of understanding Plato’s use of the periphrastic copula in these passages. Paxson’s view is similar to mine in that he sees that the distinction between the passive voice and use of the periphrastic copula is of extreme importance in showing how the argument is successful. He attributes the use of the periphrastic copula as a means for Socrates to avoid a category mistake with accidental properties, although he associates this with Plato’s later theory of forms. In my view, there is no need to make such a move, as the essences involved in the *Euthyphro* can be construed as regarding definitions.

39. William Heidel states: "There is however, a great gain achieved by the discussion at this point; for the argument virtually means that the essence of piety (holiness) is independent of the will of the deity—that is to say, the human spirit is as truly autonomous in the field of religion as in the field of philosophical truth generally (Heidel, 68)" The question is, however, whether this autonomy amounts to atheism or a radical change in the meaning of piety. It is one thing to suggest that we apply reason to our beliefs without being beholden to unquestioned religious ideas, but another thing to suggest that we reason with respect to a religious concept without involving religion.

40. William S. Cobb, in his article "Plato on the Possibility of an Irreligious Morality," Philosophy of Religion, 25 (1989), pp. 3-12, examines and defends Socrates' argument in the Protagoras regarding the identity of justice with piety (330c-332a). Cobb shows that although Socrates argument that irreligious morality is impossible is often taken to be invalid, this depends on the idea of justice and piety, and when properly considered (6). Cobb takes the Euthyphro as also not advocating irreligious morality, but claims this is on account of the way that Euthyphro does not say in reply to Socrates' Euthyphro Dilemma that the gods love the pious because it is just (11). Cobb is mistaken on this point, as the definition of piety then would turn into a definition of justice and an explanation of why the gods love it would be in order. Cobb identifies piety with the whole of justice, contrary to Socrates' favoring of the definition of piety as hypertike and his claims about it in the Apology. Cobbs' interpretation of Socratic Piety raises more questions than he deals with in his paper. The Euthyphro and other early dialogues simply provide a portrait of Socrates in which he is religious and as Gregory Vlastos argues in "Socratic Piety," in Plato II, ed. G. Fine, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 57-58, we have every reason to believe that Socrates was a religious man.

41. Here we find Socrates chiding Euthyphro for not explaining the "essential nature" (ousian) of piety, but merely providing an inessential characteristic (pathos). John C. Hall, in his paper, Plato: Euthyphro 10a1-11a10," Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. 18, No. 70, (January 1968), pp. 5, 10-11, claims that "pathos ti peri autou" should be translated as "state of affairs with the pious," and "ousia" as its "being." He feels that the idea of attribute and essence is not a part of Plato's technical vocabulary at the time he wrote the Euthyphro. He later explains, "to give a pathos of the pious is therefore to refer to the very same quality of things that the adjective pious refers to...to refer to it in terms that presuppose an understanding of the pious" (11). He goes on to say that it is clear Plato is not making a distinction between substance/essence and attribute. As far as I can tell, the distinction that Plato is making reflects "characteristics" or qualities and "being" and the terms were in use in a non-technical sense.

42. Gareth B. Matthews, in his article "Perplexity in Plato, Aristotle and Tarski," Philosophical Studies 85 (1997), pp. 213-225, compares the significance of aporia in the Euthyphro with instances of it found in middle dialogues like the Meno and Theaetetus and then later dialogues like the Sophist. He finds that there is a shift in Plato's conception of philosophical inquiry and the role that perplexity plays in this endeavor.

---

Initially, aporia in the early dialogues suggests that the concept in question is problematic, and Socrates claims to share in the same perplexity his interlocutors come to recognize. In the middle period, aporia appears to support the investigation of positive doctrines and Socrates acts more as a guide who does, in fact, have some ideas. Aporia becomes codified as a method, and employed in cases that extend beyond the “What is F?” question. Perplexity, according to Matthews, changes in accord with the philosophical complexity of Platonic dialogues.

43. Jan H. Blits in “The Holy and the Human,” Apeiron 14 (1980), p. 31 associates Socrates’ continued pursuit of piety after the Daedalus Interlude with Aristophanes’ caricature of Socrates in “The Clouds.” The most threatening Socratic principle believed to subvert parental authority is the idea that the wise are not obligated to obey the less wise—“wisdom regarding the highest things frees one from duty to respect any conventional authority.” The Daedalus Interlude thus demonstrates the “worst fears” of his accusers. Plato’s Socrates does not advocate disobedience to the laws, evidenced in the Crito, but we can see the risks involved in his philosophical mission.

44. Alternative verse: You do not wish to strive with Zeus...(eletheiv veikein).

45. Therapeian (e therapeia) can be translated in several ways, some options being ‘service’, ‘attendance,’ ‘ministering’ as well as ‘care.’ Its predominant use is as ‘service,’ but this meaning fails to incorporate the menial aspect of hypertike that Socrates later pursues when clarifying the meaning of therapeia. ‘Attendance’ happens to cohere better, in my view, with a more general, indefinite sense of therapeia as a general type of service, while ‘care’ corresponds to melete, which Plato has earlier exploited in discussion regarding Meletus.

46. At this point, Socrates switches from therapeian to hypertike, a word for ‘attention’ or ‘service’ that bears menial undertones.

47. Murray MacBeath in his paper, “The Euthyphro Dilemma,” Mind, Vo. XCI (1982), pp. 565-571, makes the case that the Euthyphro Dilemma is not exhaustive in its alternatives, but leaves open a third option, that there is an indirect relationship between god and morality. The dilemma is exhaustive and creates undesirable consequences for theists if the disjunction is combined with the propositions: 2) “God commands the performance of all right actions,” 3) “The correlation between an action’s being right and its being commanded by god is capable of explanation” and 4) “The explanatory connection between an action’s being right and its performance’s being commanded by god is a direct connection.” He uses a Utilitarian model of ethics as an example that

skirts this problem indirectly. "If what is right depends on what brings us happiness," he concludes, "then what is right does depend on God—not on his commands, but on his creative purpose" (570).

George W. Harris in his reply to MacBeath, "Religion Morality and the Euthyphro Dilemma," *International Journal of Philosophy of Religion*, 15 (1984), pp. 31-35, argues that although MacBeath is correct about the indirect relationship between an action's being right and commanded by god, this connection is ultimately superfluous. His argument is that god is a supporting condition of morality on MacBeath's view, but not a ground for moral justification and moral knowledge. My sense of this problem is that, while MacBeath and Harris are both concerned with preserving Judeo-Christian divine command theory, Socrates and Plato are not, and the function of the divine as a supporting ground for morality has a different significance for them. Ultimately, I suspect that in Socrates' case, we are not expected to know why the god Apollo commands self-knowledge until or unless we achieve it. As long as pious actions are those that contribute to understanding one's self and one's capacities and limitations, morality is a matter of moderation and temperance, self-regulation and observation. The later Platonic view suggests that pious actions imitate the divine and this may depend upon one's vision of the whole (the Good). The theology under consideration, which I can only begin here to explore, may differ widely from that of Judeo-Christian notions of god, and the idea that piety is indirectly commanded by the gods may cohere better in this case.

48. For a concise discussion of the political motivations behind the charges of impiety Socrates faced, see Nicholas Smith and Paul Woodruff, in their introduction to *Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 3-5. Smith and Woodruff evaluate the "standard view" that holds that the charge impiety was made because Meletus, Anytus and Lycon were prohibited from making a political charge against Socrates on account of the amnesty granted after the restoration of the Athenian democracy in 403/2 to all citizens except the Thirty Tyrants. Socrates could not be tried for opposition to the democracy under this amnesty. The religious charge took the place of a charge for being a traitor. Socrates association with Critias, the leader of the Thirty Tyrants, and Alcibiades, the general who betrayed Athens to Sparta, was well known. Smith and Woodruff present an opposing case that suggests that the political interpretation of the charges is not correct. If Socrates was still continuing seditious activities after the fall of the Thirty, he simply could have been tried for continued sedition. The Amnesty would not have covered such activity. It seems, then, that while there were strong political motivations to prosecute Socrates, these motivations are not sufficient to explain the charge of impiety. The religious charges were sincere. Socrates' association with Critias and Alcibiades did not help his popularity. Religion and politics were so interwoven in Athenian life that any narrow view of the motives behind the charge fails to do justice to this complexity.

49. Socrates testing of the oracle is not an instance of irreverence or impiety as cases in which wise men receive oracles, such as Prince Anarcharsis and Solon (see note 54), involve testing oracles—the wise in contrast to the foolish, seek to verify the truth of the oracle. The common theme of these oracle tales is that what the god means by ‘wisdom’ is not what human beings think. Only the god can be wise in the strictest sense of the word, while human wisdom is necessarily of a smaller, insignificant scale. Socrates insists that he does not believe he is wise to begin with, and this humility is the point of oracle stories in general. His reluctance to accept the oracle is due to the fact that he already has a notion that his own particular wisdom is not worth much. He discovers through his inquiry the general truth of this condition, believing the god has used him as an example.

50. For a full discussion of the pervasive and traditional recognition of the Delphic inscription, “Know Thyself,” and its history see Roger Lipsey, Have You Been to Delphi? Tales of the Ancient Oracle, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001, pp. 229-257. The Delphic Inscription was as widely accepted as the traditional myths about the gods that Socrates disparages. H.W. Parke’s study of the history of Delphi and its antiquity can be found in his work, Greek Oracles, London: Hutchinson University Library, 1967, pp. 33-71.

51. Roslyn Weiss, in her paper, “Virtue without Knowledge: Socrates’ Conception of Holiness in Plato’s Euthyphro,” Ancient Philosophy 14 (1994), pp. 263-282, claims that “serving the god—as opposed to serving a human master—entails in addition the special difficulty of determining what it is that the gods command” (278). Holiness, in her, view precludes knowledge, and this, in turn threatens the unity of the Socratic virtues. “As long as holiness retains its distinction as a virtue of service to the gods, and hence is not simply assimilated to some other virtue such as justice—an assimilation prohibited, I believe, in the Euthyphro—holiness will defy any knowledge centered model of the unity of the virtues” (279). In my view, if we can, as I claim, flesh out service to the gods through the Delphic Command, piety’s status as a virtue remains intact, and it does not pose problems for the Socratic view of the unity of the virtues. Piety as assisting self-knowledge might be considered instrumental in situating persons to acquire other virtues, and may be assailable to the moral virtues as each presupposes self-knowledge. David Sedley, who finds that piety should be understood as service to the gods, claims that piety is a skill, and such a skill is simply that of being just, courageous, moderate and wise. Socratic piety does not threaten the unity of the virtues in this way. David Sedley, “The Ideal of Godlikeness,” Plato II, ed. G. Fine, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. p. 314.

52. Gregory Vlastos in his paper, “Socratic Piety” in Plato II, ed. G. Fine, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 75-77, concurs with this idea. He claims that, “Piety is doing

god's work to benefit human beings" (75). Service to the gods, in his view, amounts to this idea. I follow Vlastos' view quite closely, and have attempted to go further than he has, as he questions whether or not one could "encapsulate this insight in an elenctically foolproof definition." Vlastos holds that this Socratic insight into the nature of piety is a revolutionary conception (75) and challenges the traditional Athenian view of the gods. The use of the Delphic commandment, I believe, lessens the "revolutionary" nature of the insight, while maintaining Vlastos' thesis.

53. C.D.C. Reeve argues in his article, "Socrates the Apollonian?" in Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy, eds. N. Smith and P. Woodruff, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. pp. 24-39, that Socrates' involvement with the god Apollo is not an invention or new innovation—despite some idiosyncrasies. The method of elenctic examination cures human beings of the hubris that their wisdom is more than human, and is very much a Delphinian project. Socrates' insistence that he follows the command of Apollo in the Apology should be taken seriously—not as a rhetorical strategy or piece of irony. His daimonion, the voice that comes to him and prohibits wrong actions, is also an Apollonian aspect of Socrates' wisdom, according to Reeve, an intervention and inspiration from a divine source that stands above humans and their reasoning. For Socrates, human and divine wisdom are strongly contrasted, and human reason and the elenchus should not be considered divine (Apology, 23a-b). Reeves believes that Meletus' charges evolve from misrepresentation—the kind that Euthyphro comments on regarding Socrates' daimonion at the start of the Euthyphro. Reeves view is that Socrates may have been perceived as a rationalizing threat to traditional religion and condemned to death, but "if Socrates were, indeed, the first of something new in this way, it would scarcely be surprising if he were not also the last of something much older" (37).

54. According to Fontenrose (pp. 234-239) through his catalogue of all the oracles preserved for us, oracles were quite simple, clear and distinct affirmations or negations of the questions asked in ordinary day-to-day kinds of circumstances (e.g. will my crops grow, will I bear children soon). The aphorism attributed to Heraclitus (Fragment 93: "The lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither speaks out nor conceals, but gives a sign") does not reflect the "mundane" nature of oracles.

55. See Joseph Fontenrose, The Delphic Oracle: Its Responses and Operations, Berkley: University of California Press, 1978, p. 26

56. Herodotus' accounts of Gyges and Croesus display the "hidden nature" of oracular sayings. Other legendary accounts even involve questioners asking, "Who is the wisest?" like Chaerephon. An example is the Scythian Prince Anacharsis, reputed for great learning and wisdom, who upon asking the Pythia "Who is the wisest man?" learns from

her that Myson, a peasant, was wiser. He, along with Solon (one of the Seven Sages), travel to Chenai to meet Myson and determine the truth of the oracle and its real meaning. There they find the farmer fixing his plow. Solon asks, "Why are you doing this? It's not the season for planting." "Not the season for planting," Myson replies, "but the season to prepare." The parallel message of the both of these oracles is that wisdom is not what people take it to be (and, moreover, that the simple man with *techne* is in a better position with respect to true wisdom than other people). The Delphic oracle finds Solon's wisdom and the prince's less valuable than Myson's. Moreover, Solon and the learned prince journey to find out what the oracle means. They are wise enough to try to determine what the oracle means by wisdom. In contrast, oracle narratives in which the recipient flatters himself in interpreting its meaning, like Croesus, lead to inevitable disasters ("Can't Escape Fate" kinds of tales). It seems that many "gnomic" forms of oracle tales lead to the same thing, showing that humans are unwise, and wisdom, happiness and success are not what people typically take them to be, but there are different ways that this point is expressed. The "wise" man and the fool are both fated to learn this lesson, but the "wise," like Socrates and Solon, begin with enough humility that they explore the oracle. Only Zeno, the clever student of Parmenides, according to this tradition, was capable of determining the truth of a gnomic oracle immediately.

57. Joseph Fontenrose, The Delphic Oracle: Its Responses and Operations, Berkley: University of California Press, 1978, p. 42.

58. The idea the piety assists the gods with their command to know ourselves does not entail that philosophical dialectic is the sole pious activity. David M. Parry in his article, "Holiness as Service: Therapeia and Hypertike in Plato's Euthyphro," The Journal of Value Inquiry, 28 (1994), pp. 529-539, argues that the Euthyphro provides an understanding of piety as service to the gods. His account differs from mine in that he associates this hypertike with philosophical dialectic and the benefits that it accrues (exhorting others to care for the soul, helping them know that they are not wise). He finds that this idea is not fully articulated as "it depends upon obedience to the god rather than the full rational account of the good of the soul" (537). The absence of mention of the soul in the dialogue leads Parry to consider the potential account of piety incomplete. I find that through structuring the definition using the commandment "Know Thyself," taking Socrates' Apollonianism seriously, we end up with a definition of piety that does not necessarily entail that philosophical dialectic is the only means to self-knowledge. Moreover, it seems that self-knowledge can be defined, so as far as piety is concerned, irrationalism is not entailed in the notion of self-knowledge.

Daniel E. Anderson also concurs with the view that Socrates' conception of piety is service to the gods in his article, "Socrates' Conception of Piety," Journal of the History of Philosophy, 5, (1967), pp. 1-13. His claim reduces piety as hypertike to philosophical dialectic, "examination into anything that presents itself as knowledge" (7). Thus, Anderson claims, Socrates is in fact guilty of introducing a new god and teaching

this view to others (9). It is for this reason that the definition of piety as service to the god, in my view, needs to regard the Delphic oracle specifically, as this move is significantly less “innovative” on Socrates’ part. The dialectic does not need to be deified and represent a new god when understood as reflecting a commandment already present in Greek culture. The dialectic is also not an exclusive act of piety under this definition, and Socrates presents it as an example of piety, not as piety itself in the Apology. This distinction makes a difference, as other techniques for generating self-knowledge are not excluded.

There are further considerations for avoiding the claim that piety should be identified with the dialectic, or reason in an exclusive sense, and any further move to “deify” reasoning should be avoided. This is because if reason is rendered divine, the dictates of reason, for example following logical rules, become equivalent to commands of this divinity. The Euthyphro Dilemma reemerges in an interesting manner. Is something right because reason (god) commands it, or does reason command it because it is right? The first horn of this dilemma entails relativism, but the second horn is problematic. In the Euthyphro, the Euthyphro dilemma suggests that reason would be the objective arbiter of piety and moral goodness, as the will of god must command what is pious and good because it is pious. In this case, where reason is now in the role of ultimate arbiter, the second horn of the dilemma collapses into the first horn. Reason only has its own resources for determining rightness. Basically, if reason is the only god, there is nothing that thinking does not make so. Deifying reason results in relativism, and this would not be consistent with the views found in any of Plato’s works.

59. The Alcibiades, a spurious dialogue attributed to Plato, has the self and self-knowledge as its topic. In this dialogue self-knowledge is characterized as the knowledge imparted through self-observation, only analogy with an eye able to observe itself seeing: “Then if the soul, Alcibiades, is to know itself, it must look at a soul, and especially at that region of it in which makes a soul good, wisdom, occurs, and at anything else similar to it” (133b). Self-knowledge is negatively characterized in the Philebus:

Socrates

Taking it generally it is a certain kind of badness, and it gets its name from a certain state of mind. I may add that it is that species of badness which is differentiated by the opposite of the inscription at Delphi.

Protarchus

You mean ‘Know Thyself,’ Socrates?

Socrates

I do. Plainly the opposite of that would be for the inscription to read, ‘By no means know thyself.’

Protarchus

Of course.

Socrates

Now, Protarchus, that is what you must split up into three parts; see if you can.

Protarchus

How do you mean? I am quite sure I can’t.

Socrates

---

Do you mean then that I must make this division, here and now?

Protarchus

That is what I mean, and I beg you to do so.

Socrates

If anyone does not know himself, must it not be in one of three ways?

Protarchus

How so?

Socrates

First, in respect of wealth, he may think himself richer than his property makes him.

Protarchus

Plenty of people are affected that way, certainly.

Socrates

But there are even more people who think themselves taller and more handsome and physically finer than they really and truly are.

Protarchus

Quite so.

Socrates

But by far the greatest number are mistaken as regards the third class of things, namely possessions of the soul. They think themselves superior in virtue, when they are not. (48c-49)

On this account we find that self-knowledge involves awareness of one's social condition, physical condition as well as one's intellectual condition. Developing an account of the Platonic conception of the self and self-knowledge would require a study of the middle and late dialogues, and would, most likely, move away from the concerns of the early dialogues. The main concern with self-knowledge in the early dialogues surrounds the Socratic Mission and its relationship with the Delphic Oracle. Interestingly enough, Plato characterizes Socrates as taking the command "Know thyself" in all seriousness in the early dialogues, without further inquiry into the self and self-knowledge. In this way, Socrates upholds a religious tradition and seeks to situate the philosophical dialectic within that tradition.

60. One might wonder what the gods' interest is if we succeed in achieving the goal of self-knowledge. Do they care if we succeed? Suffer if we fail? My position is that Socrates rejects anthropomorphism and, consequently, the idea that the gods would have a personal vested interest in our success or failure. They would conceivably have a wholly rational interest in that success. In the Apology, Socrates appears to think that the just man has nothing to worry about in the afterlife, if there is one (he wavers on this point). The quality of one's afterlife appears to hinge on how well one has lived, and not upon the divine reward or retribution. In Plato's Republic, it seems that insofar as the gods have complete knowledge of the Good (a vision of the whole), they could be said to have a rational interest in the creation of perfect harmony in human life that is in accord with this goodness. The just individual in this case, is in the position of being able to

wisely choose his next life. Once again the quality of one's afterlife is not determined by the gods, but by individual selves.

In this manner, the Socratic and Platonic views of the gods are earlier versions of the traditional Christian view that god does not suffer. Nicholas Wolterstorff, in his article, "Does God Suffer?" from Questions about God, eds. S. Cahn and D. Shatz, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 111-136, outlines what he terms the "traditional view" as expressed in St. Augustine and maintained by theologians until a modern view that holds god does suffer emerges. The tradition argues that (1) attributing emotion and suffering to god is incompatible with god's unconditioned nature and (2) suffering is incompatible with ideal existence, and god's existence must be ideal. According to the tradition, god loves the world from a state of benevolence, but is apathetic—in the sense that god cannot experience passions.

61. In Plato's later works we find that prayer becomes separated from sacrifice. B. Darrell Jackson in his article "The Prayers of Socrates," Phronesis, Vol. XVI, No. 1 (1971), pp. 14-37, examines the significance of prayers as they appear throughout Plato's middle and late works (no prayers are spoken by Socrates or his interlocutors in the early dialogues). He states:

...Plato never has a character pray in connection with a sacrifice, even though he retains sacrifice in his model states and often discusses prayer and sacrifice together. I would argue that this separation of prayers from sacrifice and the related absence of sanctions results from Plato's wishing to avoid even the suggestion that in prayer one asks for payment on a service rendered. (35)

Jackson's view does not seem definitive, as there are examples that appear to contradict this, such as pouring wine in honor of Zeus in the Symposium. Socrates requests that his followers sacrifice a cock to Aesclepius at the end of the Phaedo as well, and it is difficult to say whether this instance would (or would not) include prayer.

In Plato's later works, prayer functions with the goal of making the worshipper become god-like (Laws IV 716c-d and Theaetetus, 176b). This view of prayer is considered Platonic and not Socratic, and it seems difficult to reconcile this view of prayer with the Socrates of the early dialogues who emphasizes the gulf between gods and humans.

62. Steven A. M. Burns, in his article "Doing Business With the Gods," Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 15, No. 2 (June 1985), pp. 311-325, argues that Euthyphro's fifth definition of piety as knowledge of prayer and sacrifice is, in fact, the substantial definition of piety given to us in the Euthyphro. He claims that such knowledge, correctly considered, is what "right attendance to the gods" is. Socrates' interpretation of prayer and sacrifice as a trading skill, he claims, can be easily defeated. Sacrifice is not giving to the gods, but "self-sacrifice" and prayer is not asking from them, but another form of sacrifice of one's own will to the gods. Burns thinks that this view is then consistent with

Plato's later views of prayer found in the Laws (emulation of the divine), as well as Socrates own sacrifice of his life for his Delphic Mission.

The problem I see with Burns account is that it is not "right attendance to the gods" that catches Socrates' attention, but the notion of service (hypertike) and it is this idea that reappears in the Apology. Burns does not take into account that in the Laws, where the emulation model of prayer appears, sacrifice has fallen to the wayside. Differences in Plato's views need to be taken into account. Burns idea of piety, if it were correct, still raises the question of what it is we give up from ourselves to the gods in sacrifice and prayer. He does not further explain the notion of self-sacrifice. If it amounts to an act of humility or gratitude, Socrates has already asked what this means as a "gift" to the gods. If it is simply pleasing or dear to them, the Euthyphro Dilemma recurs. If self-sacrifice amounts to some other kind of gift of ourselves, we need to know what function this gift plays in an exchange between the human and the divine. Self-sacrifice does not, as Burns believes, hold the key to unpacking Socratic Piety.

63. T.F. Morris in his article, "Plato's Euthyphro," Heythrop Journal, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1990), pp. 309-323, finds that Euthyphro's shamelessness and fearlessness with respect to his case against his father reveals that he is a character interested in recognition and gaining the approval of other people. Instead of caring about his father, and ultimately aiming at improving his father in punishing (prosecuting) him, he is only self-interested. Morris' thesis is that the Euthyphro provides a positive definition of piety as "that which the gods care about." The gods' foremost care is the welfare of human beings and preventing our wrong actions. Morris' view reflects Christian theology, as he also holds that Euthyphro should be looking to the gods for salvation (318). The idea of salvation and any sort of after life that Socrates/Plato conceives of in the early dialogues is a complex question, but is not an idea that resembles the Christian doctrine of faith based salvation. (See the Apology, 42a.)

64. Diogenes Laertius claims Socrates' discussion of piety with Euthyphro deters him from proceeding to indict his father. Diogenes is not a reliable source, but his account shows the tendency of later writers in Antiquity to valorize Socrates. Diogenes Laertius, The Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, Vol. I, trans. R.D. Hicks, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

65. There is some controversy as to just how "standard" Euthyphro's views are with respect to Athenian religious practice. Much of the controversy stems from John Burnet's notes regarding Euthyphro in his edition of the early dialogues, Plato, Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates and Crito, ed. J. Burnet, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924, pp. 85-87. Burnet claims that Euthyphro's religious ideas reflect the Dionysian cult worship that centered on the island of Naxos. According to Burnet, Euthyphro represents an extreme view of religion. Burnet finds that as Plato intends us to

see that Euthyphro is on Socrates' side at the start of the dialogue, his views are not identical to Socrates' accusers.

I find that this argument confuses what Euthyphro believes about himself with what he actually says to Socrates. The ideas he generates with respect to piety, that Zeus is a model for pious behavior, that piety is dear to the gods, and that it is knowledge of prayer and sacrifice, reflect ideas about piety that are commonly held and not particular to the Dionysian Cult, or extreme in any way. Whatever he might believe with respect to his specialized expertise, and whatever he might have done in Naxos in practice, does not appear, in my view, to make him out of the ordinary. There is, as Burnet notes, no religious orthodoxy at Athens or elsewhere in Greece, but Euthyphro manages to voice common, general ideas about piety.

William D. Furley in his article, "The Figure of Euthyphro in Plato's Dialogue," *Phronesis*, Vo. XXX, No. 2 (1985), pp. 201-208, also views Euthyphro as holding standard views, contrary to Burnet, A.E. Taylor in *Plato: The Man and his Work*, London: Methuen, 1926, p. 47, and R.G. Hoerber in "Plato's Euthyphro," *Phronesis* 3, (1958), p.

96. Richard Klonski, in an article not mentioned specifically by Furley, "Setting and Characterization in Plato's Euthyphro," *Dialogos*, 44 (1984), pp. 123-139, also attempts to establish that Euthyphro's views are unorthodox and idiosyncratic. Klonski merely repeats the arguments of Burnet, Taylor and Hoerber. Furley examines the evidence taken for associating Euthyphro with the Dionysian cult and finds that this same evidence supports understanding Euthyphro's beliefs as consistent with those found in Hesiod and Homer. Moreover, he argues that Plato goes out of his way to suggest that Meletus is young and unknown, and thus has no association with the priesthood or cults. Euthyphro's ideas about miasma also reflect common views evidenced in Greek mythology. Furley writes:

If, as I believe, we should return to the pre-Burnet position of seeing in Euthyphro a stickler for adherence to received tradition, we have both a meaningful foil to the originality and perceptiveness of Socrates, and an interesting witness in him to the existence of highly dogmatic religious thinkers in Athens at the turn of the fourth century B.C., who lived and taught as if no intellectual water had flowed under the bridge since Homer and Hesiod. (208).

R.E. Allen also concurs with Furley's understanding of Euthyphro in *Plato's Euthyphro and the Early Theory of Forms*, New York, Humanities Press, 1970, pp. 9-12. He claims, "Euthyphro stands to Homer and Hesiod in much the way that a modern fundamentalist stands to Holy Writ" (9). As Furley notes, Allen's comment barely "skates the surface" with respect to the analogy he asserts, and, in my view, his suggestion that Ancient Greek religion is akin to the bible is not well taken, as it is not a centralized practice. I think that matter is better in this respect. Religious ideas and practices, not being centralized, make for a very bad consensus regarding what counts as piety. Fundamental texts like those of Homer and Hesiod, while venerated, were not the whole story with respect to religion, and these ideas were re-worked in Tragic Drama. Socrates' views about the gods can be

---

seen to revise and consolidate an elaborate web of conflicting religious ideas in his culture.

Bibliography

Books:

Allen, R.E. Socrates and Legal Obligation. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980.

----- Plato's "Euthyphro" and the Earlier Theory of Forms. Routledge and K. Paul: London, 1970.

Anton, John P. and Preus, Anthony, eds. Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy, Vol. II. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983

Arieti, James A.. Interpreting Plato: The Dialogues as Drama. Maryland: Rowman Littlefield, 1991.

Brickhouse, Thomas C. and Smith, Nicholas D. Socrates on Trial. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

-----Plato's Socrates. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Chroust, Anton-Hermann. Socrates, Man and Myth. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957.

Clegg, Jerry S. The Structure of Plato's Philosophy. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1977.

Crombie, I. M. An Examination of Plato's Doctrines. New York: Humanities Press, 1962.

Despland, Michael. The Education of Desire: Plato and the Philosophy of Religion. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1985.

Feibleman, James Kern. Religious Platonism: The Influence of Religion on Plato and the Influence of Plato on Religion. Westport: Greenwood Press 1971.

Friedlander, Paul. Plato: The Dialogues, First Period, Vol. 2. New York: Pantheon Books, 1964.

Fontenrose, Joseph. The Delphic Oracle: Its Responses and Operations. Berkley: University of California Press, 1978

Gauss, Hermann. Plato's Conception of Philosophy. New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1974.

Gunderson, Adolf. The Socratic Citizen. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2000.

Guthrie, W.K.C. The History of Greek Philosophy. Vol. IV. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962.

Grube, Georges. Plato's Thought. Boston: Beacon Press, 1958.

Heidel, William Arthur. Plato's Euthyphro and Pseudo Platonica. New York: Arno Press, 1976.

Helm, Paul, ed. Divine Commands and Morality. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Hesiod. The Homeric Hymns and Homericica. Trans. H.G. Evelyn-White. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914.

Howland, Jacob. The Paradox of Political Philosophy: Socrates' Philosophic Trial. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.

Kahn, Charles H. Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of Literary Form. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Kennedy, George. The Art of Persuasion in Greece. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

Kraut, Richard. Socrates and the State. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Lipsey, Roger. Have You Been to Delphi? Albany: SUNY Press, 2001.

Mara, Gerald. Socrates' Discursive Democracy: Logos and Ergon in Political Philosophy. Albany: SUNY Press, 1997.

MacDowell, D. M. The Law In Classical Athens. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978.

McCabe, Mary Margaret. Plato's Individuals. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Morford, Mark and Lenardon, Robert. Classical Mythology. New York, Longman Press, 1971.

Nails, Debra. The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2002.

Nehamas, Alexander. Virtues of Authenticity. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Parker, Robert. Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Plato. Collected Dialogues. Eds. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Platonis. Opera, Vol. 1, ed. I. Burnet. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903.

Press, Gerrald, ed. Plato's Dialogues: New Studies and Interpretations. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. Who Speaks for Plato? Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.

Randall, John Herman, Jr. Plato: Dramatist of the Life of Reason. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.

Reeve, C.D.C. Socrates in the Apology. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1989.

Sallis, John. Being and Logos: The Way of Platonic Dialogue. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1975.

Seeskin, Kenneth. Dialogue and Discovery. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.

Sinclair, R. K. Democracy and Participation in Athens. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Smith, Nicholas and Woodruff, Paul B. Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Stewart, John Alexander. Plato's Doctrine of Ideas. New York: Russell & Russell, 1964.

Taylor, A.E. Plato: The Man and His Work. London and New York: Methuen, 1926.

Tejera V. Plato's Dialogues One by One: A Structural Interpretation. New York: Irvington Publishers, 1984.

Tigerstedt, E.N. Interpreting Plato. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1977.

Vernant, Jean-Pierre. Myth and Society in Ancient Greece. Trans. J. Lloyd. New York: Zone Books, 1990.

Versenyi, Laszlo. Holiness and Justice: An Interpretation of Plato's "Euthyphro." Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982.

Vlastos, Gregory, ed. The Philosophy of Socrates: a Collection of Critical Essays. New York: Doubleday, 1971.

----- Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.

----- Socratic Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Winspear, Alban D. The Genesis of Plato's Thought. New York: S.A. Russell, 1940.

Articles from Journals and Collections of Essays:

Alderman, Harold. "Dialectic as Philosophical Care," Man and World. 1973; 6, 206-219.

Amico, Robert P. "Euthyphro's Second Chance," Philosophical Inquiry. 1996; 18(3-4), 36-44.

Anderson, Albert. "Socratic Reasoning in the Euthyphro," Review of Metaphysics. 1969; 22, 461-481.

Anderson, Daniel E. "Socrates' Concept of Piety," Journal of the History of Philosophy. 1967; 5, 1-13.

Blits, Jan H. "The Holy and Human: An Interpretation of Plato's Euthyphro" Apeiron. 1980; 14, 19-40

Brickhouse, Thomas C. and Smith, Nicholas D. "Irony, Arrogance and Truthfulness in Plato's Apology." New Essays on Socrates. ed. Eugene Kelly, Lanham: University Press of America, 1984, 29-46.

----- "The Origin of Socrates' Mission." Journal of the History of Ideas, 44:4 (1983), 657-666.

----- "Socrates and the Unity of the Virtues," Journal-of-Ethics, 1997; 1(4), 311-324.

Brown, John H. "The Logic of the Euthyphro 10A-11B," Philosophical Quarterly. 1964; 14, 1-14

Burns, Steven A. M. "Doing Business with the Gods," Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 1985; 15, 311-326.

Candlish, Stewart. "Euthyphro 6D-9B and Its Misinterpretations," Apeiron. 1983; 17, 28-32.

Cobb, William S. "Plato on the Possibility of an Irreligious Morality," International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, 1989; 25, 3-12.

----- "The Religious and the Just in Plato's Euthyphro," Ancient Philosophy, 1985; 5, 41-46.

Cohen, Marc. "Socrates on the Definition of Piety: Euthyphro 10A-11B," Journal of the History of Philosophy. 1971; 9, 1-13

Cropsey, Joseph. "The Dramatic End of Plato's Socrates," Interpretation. 1986; 14, 155-175.

Egan, Rory B. "Tragic Piety in Plato's Euthyphro." Dionysius. 1983; 7, 17-32.

Eisner, Robert. "'Socrates as Hero.'" Philosophy and Literature, 6(1982) 1&2, 106-118.

Faber, Paul. "The Euthyphro Objection to Divine Normative Theories." Religious Studies, 1985; 21, 559-572.

Friedman, I. "Plato's Euthyphro and Leibniz' Law," Philosophia. 1982; 12, 1-20.

Furley, William D. "The Figure of Euthyphro in Plato's Dialogue," Phronesis, 1985; 30, 201-208.

Garrett, Roland. "The Structure of Plato's Euthyphro," Southern Journal of Philosophy. 1974; 12, 165-183.

Geach, P.T. "Plato's Euthyphro: An Analysis and Commentary," Monist. 1966; 50, 369-382.

- Glouberman, Mark. "The Palinode of the Analyst Rationality and Self in the Euthyphro" Philosophical Inquiry. 1994; 16(3-4), 38-55.
- Griswold, Charles L. "Irony in Plato's Dialogues" in Plato's Dialogues: The Dialogical Approach eds. R. Hart and V. Tejera Studies in the History of Philosophy, Vol. 46, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997.
- Hall, John C. "Plato Euthyphro 10A1-11A10," Philosophical Quarterly. 1968; 18, 1-11.
- Hanick, James G.; Mar, Gary R. "What Euthyphro Couldn't Have Said," Faith and Philosophy. 1987; 4, 241-261.
- Hart, Richard E. "Socrates on Trial: Commentary on Brickhouse and Smith." New Essays on Socrates ed. Eugene Kelly, Lanham: University Press of America, 1984, 143-150.
- Harris, George W. "Religion, Morality, and the Euthyphro Dilemma," International Journal for Philosophy of Religion. 1984; 15, 31-36.
- Havelock, Eric A. "The Socratic Self as it is Parodied in Aristophanes' Clouds." Yale Classical Studies, 22(1972), 1-18.  
 ----- "The Socratic Problem: Some Second Thoughts." Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy Vol. II, ed. John P. Anton and Anthony Preus. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983, 147-173.
- Hoerber, R.G. "Plato's Euthyphro" Phronesis. 1958; 3, 95-107.
- Holland, R.F. "The Presidential Address: Euthyphro," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society. 1982; 82, 1-16.
- Klonoski, Richard. "Setting and Characterization in Plato's Euthyphro," Dialogos, 1984; 19, 123-140.
- Kraut, Richard. "Socrates and Democracy," in Plato II, ed. G. Fine, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 34-55.

---- "Socrates, Politics and Religion," in Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy, eds. N. Smith and P. Woodruff, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 13-23.

Levin, Michael. "Understanding the Euthyphro Problem," International Journal for Philosophy of Religion. 1989; 25, 83-97.

Lewis, Marlo. "An Interpretation of Plato's Euthyphro (Part 1, Sections 1-3)," Interpretation. 1984; 12, 225-259.

----- "An Interpretation of Plato's Euthyphro (Part 1, Section 4, to end)," Interpretation. 1985; 13, 33-65.

MacBeath, M. "The Euthyphro Dilemma," Mind. 1982; 91, 565-571.

MacKinnon, D.M. "The Euthyphro Dilemma: Part I," Aristotelian Society. 1972; Suppl. 46, 211-221.

Mann, William, E. "Piety: Lending a Hand to Euthyphro," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research. 1998; 58(1), 123-142.

Matthews, Gareth B. "Perplexity in Plato, Aristotle, and Tarski," Philosophical Studies. 1997; 85(2-3), 213-228.

Meynell, Hugo. "The Euthyphro Dilemma: Part II," Aristotelian Society. 1972; Suppl. 46, 223-234.

McPherran, Mark L. "Socratic Piety in the Euthyphro," Journal of the History of Philosophy. 1985; 23, 283-310.

Morris, T. F. "Plato's Euthyphro," Heythrop Journal, 1990; 31(3), 309-323.

Moutafakis, Nicholas J. "Plato's Emergence in the Euthyphro" Apeiron. 1971; 5, 23-32.

Nehamas, Alexander. "Confusing Universals and Particulars in Plato's Early Dialogues," Review of Metaphysics. 1975; 29, 287-306.

Neumann, Harry. "The Problem of Piety in Plato's Euthyphro," Modern Schoolman. 1966; 43, 265-272.

Nussbaum, Martha. "Aristophanes and Socrates on Learning Practical Wisdom." Yale Classical Studies, 26(1980), 43-97.

Parry, David M. "Holiness as Service: "Therapeia" and "Hyperetike" in Plato's Euthyphro," Journal of Value Inquiry. 1994; 28(4), 529-539.

Paxson, Thomas D. "Plato's Euthyphro 10A TO 11B," Phronesis. 1972; 17, 171-190.

Prior, William J. "Relations between Forms and "Pauline Prediction" in Euthyphro 11E4-12D4," Ancient Philosophy. 1980; 1, 61-68.

Rohatyn, Dennis A. "The Euthyphro as Tragedy: A Brief Sketch," Dialogos. 1973; 9, 147-151.

Rose, Lynn E. "A Note on the Euthyphro, 10-11," Phronesis. 1965; 10, 149-150.

Rosen, Frederick. "Piety and Justice in Plato's Euthyphro," Philosophy. 1968; 43, 105-116.

Ryle, Gilbert. "Dialectic in the Academy." New Essays on Plato and Aristotle, ed. R. Bambrough, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965, pp. 39-68.

Saxonhouse, Arlene W. "The Philosophy of the Particular and the Universality of the City: Socrates' Education of Euthyphro," Political Theory, 1988; 16, 281-299

Seeskin, Kenneth. "Is the Apology of Socrates a Parody?" Philosophy and Literature, 6(1982) 1&2, 94-105.

Sharvy, Richard. "Euthyphro 9D-11B: Analysis and Definition in Plato and Others," Nous. 1972; 6, 119-137.

Taylor, C.C.W. "The End of the Euthyphro," Phronesis. 1982; 27, 109-118.

Talisse, Robert. "Teaching Plato's Euthyphro Dialogically," forthcoming.

----- "Misunderstanding Socrates," forthcoming.

Thom, Paul. "Euthyphro 9D-11B," Philosophical Inquiry. 1978; 1, 5-70.

Vlastos, Gregory. "Socratic Piety," in Plato II, ed. G. Fine, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 56-77.

Weiss, Roslyn. "Euthyphro's Failure," Journal of the History of Philosophy. 1986; 24, 437-452.

----- "Virtue without Knowledge: Socrates' Conception of Holiness in Plato's Euthyphro" Ancient Philosophy. 1994; 14(2), 263-282.

West, Elinor J. M. "An Ironic Dilemma, or Incompatible Interpretations of Euthyphro 5 a-b" in Plato's Dialogues, ed. G. Press, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "Does God Suffer?" in Questions about God, eds. S. Cahn and D. Shatz, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 111-136.

Zeigler, Gregory M. "Plato's Euthyphro Revisited," Pacific Philosophical Quarterly. 1980; 61, 291-300.

#### Translations and Commentaries

Burnet, John. Plato: Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates and Crito. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924.

Cooper, Lane. On the Trial and Death of Socrates. Ithaca, 1941.

Church, F.J. Plato. Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo (the Death Scene) Translation Revised, with an Introduction by R.D. Cumming. Indianapolis, 1956.

Fowler, H.N., Plato in Twelve Volumes. I: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus. London: Loeb Classical Library, 1927.

Gallop, David. Defense of Socrates, Euthyphro, Crito. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Grube, G.M.A. The Trial and Death of Socrates. Indianapolis, 1975.  
----- Five Dialogues. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1981.

Jowett, Benjamin. The Dialogues of Plato, Translated into English with Analysis and Introductions. 4 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1895.

Tredennick, Hugh. The Last Days of Socrates. Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1954.