**Workshop Two: Socratic Method in the *Euthyphro* and *Republic-*I**

**Out of the Cave : Education, Ancient and Modern**

**Pomona College — Spring 2021**

**time started: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**workshop duration: 2 hours**

**complete by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Moveable Part (15 minutes)**

At some point during the workshop time, Jody will pop in for a 15-minute chat.

**Part I: General Instructions & Introductions (15 minutes)**

For this workshop, you will be organized in a Zoom Breakout Room with a group of approximately four students. If you have any questions or concerns, please send a message via Zoom asking for help. I’ll join you as soon as possible.

This workshop has four parts and is designed for 2 hours & 5 minutes. This includes a 15-minute break after the first hour or so. Please note your start time and end time before beginning.

Although we must use the internet in order to meet, please refrain from using a search engine (e.g. Google) to look up answers to questions while completing your Workshops. If a question arises during discussion that you cannot answer without external research, please bring your question back to the seminar for discussion and/or make a note of the question and do your research outside of class time.

Please do make notes — even if you aren’t the scribe — of your responses to this workshop

Please begin today by checking in and introducing yourselves. Appoint a scribe and timekeeper.

**Part II: “What’s the point?” (20 minutes)**

1. (10 minutes) In either the *Euthyphro* or *Republic I*, does anybody ever *learn anything*? Select one of the two dialogues to focus on and discuss this question. If you think the answer is “yes,” cite passages from the text that give evidence of the learning. If you think the answer is no, explain what you think the point of the conversation is.
2. (10 minutes) The scholar Gerasimos Santos has coined the phrase “residue of the refutation” to refer to those ideas and claims “left standing” even after Socrates has refuted the definition or argument of his interlocutor. These “residues” may be important clues as to what Socrates really believes, or of what a true definition of the concept might look like. Are there any residues in the *Euthyphro* or *Republic I*, any clues, strong suggestions, or hypotheses about the nature of piety or justice that are worth further inquiry? Select the other of the two dialogues to focus on and discuss this question (So, if you chose to discuss the *Euthyphro* for question one, discuss the *Republic I* here. Please review your selected dialogue – looking for “residues” – and discuss your findings. Draw on specific passages from the text to support your conclusions.

**Part III: Some idiosyncrasies of the Socratic Method (15 minutes)**

1. (5 minutes) At 349a in *Republic I*, Socrates says to Thrasymachus, “we mustn’t shrink from pursuing the argument and looking into this, just as long as I take you to be saying what you really think. And I believe that you aren’t joking now, Thrasymachus, but are saying what you believe to be the truth.” That *the interlocutor must only assert or agree to propositions he really believes* is thus implied to be an important “rule” of Socratic method. Some commentators treat it as the “fundamental rule” of Socratic dialogue. Why should this rule be so important? What does the rule imply about the way “Socratic method” works as a means of doing philosophy?
2. (5 minutes) One surprise in this dialogue is the following: Not long after enunciating what we called the “fundamental rule” of Socratic dialogue, Socrates is willing to tolerate its blatant violation. Thrasymachus makes it clear that he will verbally agree with Socrates’ assertions without really believing in them, yet Socrates is willing to continue the conversation under these farcical conditions. Why do you suppose he does so?
3. (5 minutes) *Republic I* ends in a way that is very familiar to readers of the Socratic dialogues. Just when they seemed to be making some real progress, Socrates “takes away” all the gains from the conversation. “Hence the result of the discussion, as far as I am concerned, is that I know nothing, for when I don’t know what justice is, I’ll hardly know whether it is a kind of virtue or not, or whether a person who has it is happy or unhappy.” Why does Socrates do this? Why does he seem to intentionally undo any progress that may have resulted from the conversation?

***Please take a 15-minute break now.***

**Part IV. Socratic Method as Education (40 minutes)**

Considering both the *Republic I* and the *Euthyphro,* please discuss the questions below and try to agree on an answer to each in the time allotted. Try to illustrate your answer with an example from one of the dialogues. You may be asked to report out your answers to any or all.

1. (5 min.) Why, from Socrates’ point of view, are examples no good as a way of defining a concept such as piety or justice?
2. (5 min.) What kind of definition is Socrates after?
3. (5 min.) What is the value of asking for a definition (rather than, say, an explanation, a list of examples, a story, etc.)?
4. (5 min.) What are the consequences of asking for a definition?
5. (5 min.) Is this approach useful as education?
6. (5 min.) What kind of education is it?
7. (10 min) Is this kind of education useful? Why or why not?

**After the allotted time, you’ll be brought back to the main Zoom room for reports from the scribes and our concluding discussion.**