

Socrates's Dream

Humans and everything else, i.e. complexes (sullabai) are composed of primary elements (stoicheia) (201e1-3).

(i) Each element has only one proper name that rigidly designates it. A term rigidly designates if it refers to the same entity in every possible situation that it refers to anything, e.g., the element S has 'S' as its one and only proper name. 'S' refers only to S and never to anything else. (ii) No proper definite description (or unique predicate) is true of an element. Definite descriptions are phrases of the form 'the old philosopher', 'the cold stone', 'the other Boleyn girl', etc. Such a description is proper if it has a unique object, i.e., it describes the same person or object in every situation and all times, e.g., 'the first person to walk on the Moon'.

- A1: (i) The primary elements have no account. (ii) The complexes that are composed of primary elements do have an account.
- A2: The elements are unknowable and the complexes knowable. (202d8-202e1).
- A3: (i) The primary elements have no account *iff* the primary elements are unknowable, and (ii) the complexes have an account *iff* they are knowable.

Socrates argues against A3 via a dilemma; he argues that there is no asymmetry between the knowability of a complex and its elements. Either a complex and its elements are all knowable, or neither the complex or its elements are knowable.

What do we mean by 'the syllable'? The two letters (or if there are more, all the letters)? Or do we mean some single form produced by their combination. (203c3-6)

Horn 1

- P1: SO = 'S and O'.
- P2: A knows SO.
- P3: A knows 'S and O'...(from P1 and P2).
- P4: A knows 'S and O' *iff* A knows S and A knows O.
- C1: A knows S and A knows O...(from P3 and P4).
- C2: SO, S, and O are all knowable.

Interpretative Problems

The argument commits two apparent fallacies. The **first fallacy** relates to the substitutivity of co-extensional terms into opaque contexts. The following is a fallacy:

1. Superman = Clark Kent
2. Louis knows Superman
3. Therefore, Louis knows Clark Kent.

Socrates seems to argue that anyone who knows SO also knows whatever is identical to SO, i.e., they also know 'S and O' together. But this is a fallacy. Can we help Socrates?

The **second fallacy** is called the fallacy of division, which the following is an example of:

1. $7 = 3$ and 4
2. 7 is odd
3. Therefore, 3 is odd and 4 is odd.

Likewise, one might worry that Socrates argues invalidly from the claim that 'S and O' are knowable 'together' to the claim that S is individually knowable and O is individually knowable. But this is a fallacy. Can we help Socrates?

Horn 2

- P1: SO is a single form, and SO \neq 'S and O'.
- P2: SO does not have parts...(from P1).
- P3: SO does not have elements...(from P2).
- P4: SO does not have an account...(from P3).
- C1: SO is unknowable....(from P4).
- C2: SO, S, and O are all unknowable.

How does Socrates infer P2 from P1? More next time...