

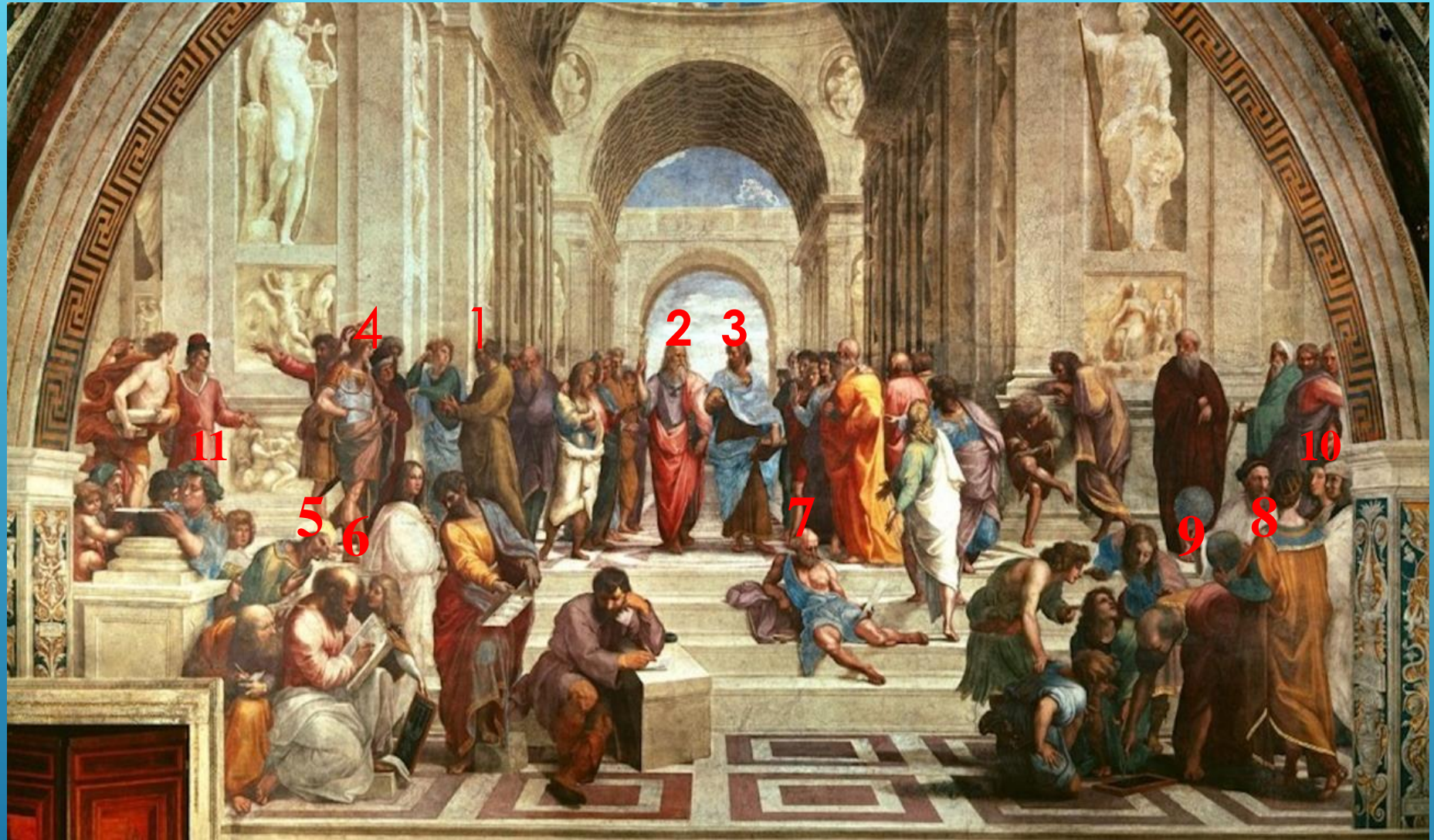
ETHICS AND CULTURE (HUM 103)

# SOCRATES: DIALOGUES OF DEFINITION

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR RIAZ P KHAN

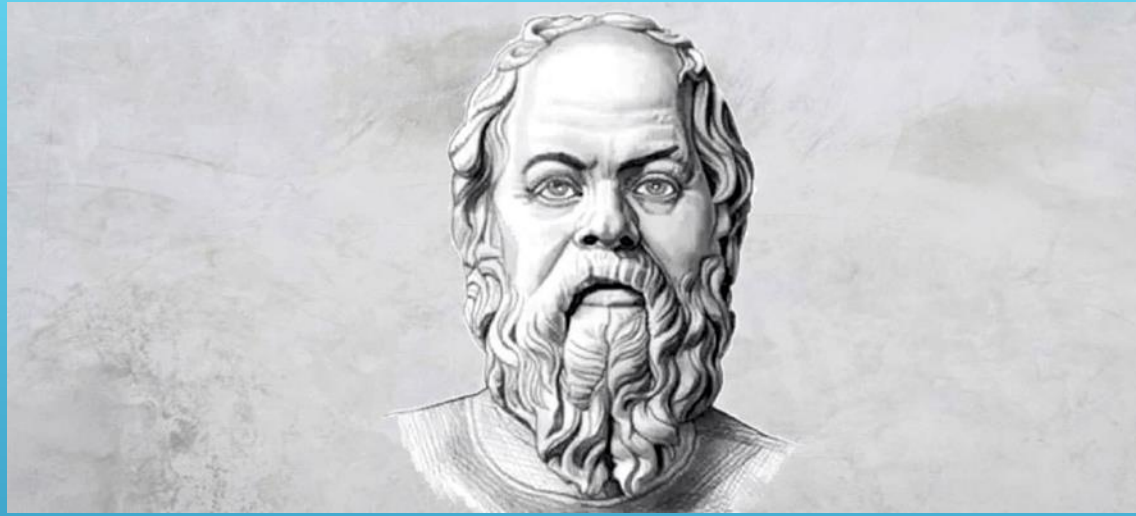


1. **Socrates**
2. **Plato**
3. **Aristotle**
4. **Alexander the Great**
5. **Averroes**
6. **Pythagoras**
7. **Diogenes**
8. **Ptolemy**
9. **Archimedes**
10. **Raphael**
11. **Epicurus**



*The School of Athens* (1509-1511) by Raphael





## SOCRATES(470-399 BCE)

- ❑ Greek philosopher of Athens: one of the founders of western philosophy
- ❑ Considered the first moral philosopher of the western ethical tradition.
- ❑ The first Greek philosopher to critically examine philosophical questions
- ❑ A “gadfly” of Athenians
- ❑ He was tried and executed on the dubious charges of “corrupting the youth” and “introducing new gods”

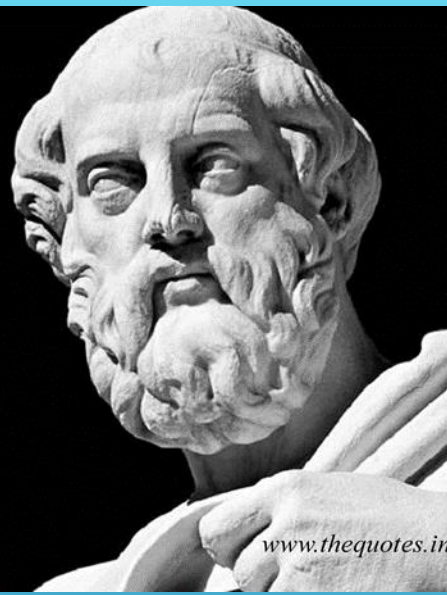




Courage is knowing what not to fear.

*Plato*

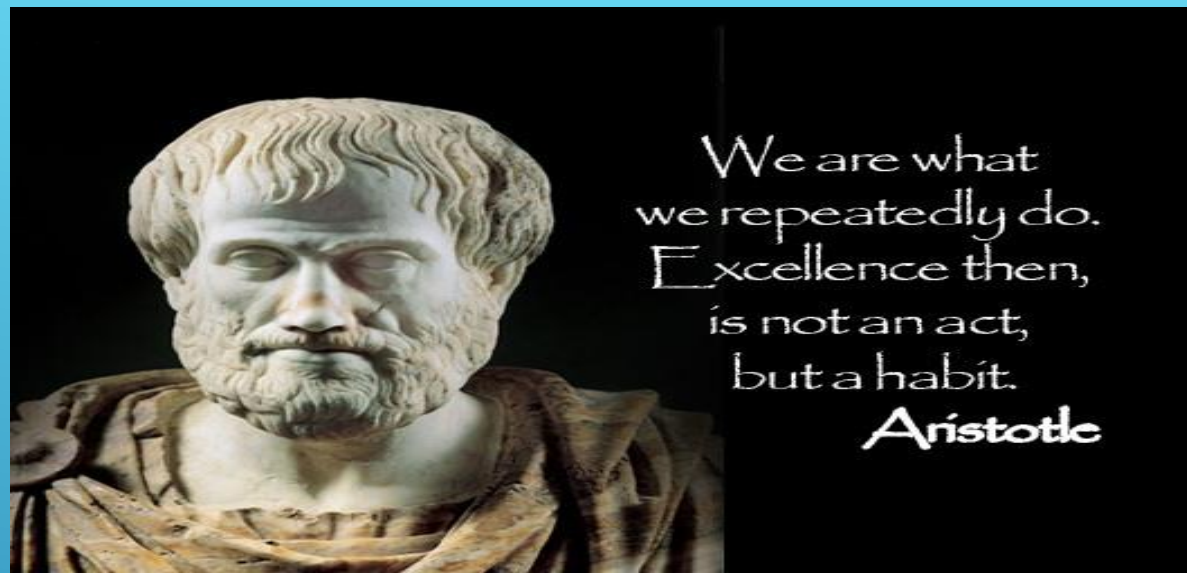
[www.thequotes.in](http://www.thequotes.in)



## PLATO (427-347 BCE)

- ❑ Student of Socrates
- ❑ His written *Dialogues* (particularly the early dialogues) are considered as the authentic sources of Socrates' teachings.
- ❑ Some of his famous *Dialogues* include *Charmides*, *Crito*, *Euthydemus*, *Euthyphro*, *Gorgias*, *Laches*, *Protagoras*, *Republic*, and *Laws*.





## ARISTOTLE (384-322 BCE)

- ❑ Student of Plato; Tutor of Alexander
- ❑ His philosophy had profound and lasting influence on medieval thought, classical Islamic philosophy, and modern philosophy
- ❑ Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* is considered among the greatest works of moral philosophy, and still has profound influence on modern virtue theories



# Platonic Socrates

1. Early Dialogues (short ethical works)
2. Middle Dialogues
3. Late Dialogues



# *The Apology*

## A Novel by Plato

- Formal speech of legal self-defence presumably given by Socrates at his trial
- Thought to be the closest of Plato's works to the historical Socrates
- The charges against Socrates:
  1. "corrupting the youth"
  2. "not acknowledging the gods that the city acknowledge and introducing new god"
- Three main accusers of Socrates: Meletus, Anytus and Lycon



# The *Apology* (Contd)

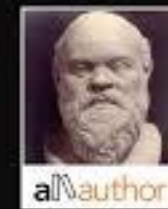
## Socrates' legal self-defence:

- Oracle of Delphi declared that no man wiser than Socrates
- Socrates went searching for the wisest person but found none
- Socrates claimed himself as the *gadfly* of the state
- Seek virtue and wisdom instead of only your own interests: “The unexamined life is not worth living”
- The jury found Socrates guilty and sentenced to die by drinking hemlock.



## The *Crito* by Plato

- Socrates' friend Crito arranges for Socrates to escape from prison
- Socrates refused to escape and chose to obey the law, arguing that “wrongdoing injures the soul.”
- He argues that evading the punishment would be to damage the law. And, this goes against his ‘bedrock principle that one must never do wrong, even in return for wrong.’



Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will  
you remember to pay the debt?

-Socrates





# The Execution of Socrates



# Early Dialogues : Dialogues of Definitions

1. *Euthyphro* (reverence/piety)
2. *Laches* (courage)
3. *Charmides* (temperance)
4. *Hippias Major* (beautiful/fine)



# Socratic Method: *Elenchus*

- Method of *elenchus*
- Series of short questions and answers
- A negative instrument of hypothesis testing
- Identifying false positive and false negatives in the evaluation of answers



# Socratic Definition: The elentic method

Definitions: What is *courage*? Or, what is *reverence*?

- The answer must identify something that belongs to every case of reverence or courage
- The answer does not include anything that is not about reverence or courage





# The *Laches* by Plato

- ❑ Two distinguished generals, Nicias and Laches take turns attempting to define the meaning of courage while Socrates intervenes and responds
- ❑ Definitions of Courage

Laches: *Courage is staying at your post and not running away*

Socrates critically examines this definition:

- 1) **False Positive** : other ways of being courageous than just “stand, fight, and not flee”
- 2) **False Negative**: ways or motivations of “stand and fight, not flee” that not be deemed courageous



# The *Laches* by Plato (Continued)

- ❑ Laches gives a second definition: “Courage is endurance of the soul”
- ❑ With further prompting from Socrates, Laches slightly modifies the new definition: “*Courage is a wise endurance of the soul*”
- ❑ Socrates critically examines the new definition:
  - 1) **False Positive** (cases that fall outside definition, but define the object): **Cases where courage does not involve endurance...**
  - 2) **False Negative** (cases that fall under definition, but not define object): Cases/kinds of “wise endurance of the soul” that are not considered act of courage
- ❑ At this point, Laches gives up and Nicias steps forward to present his views



# The *Laches* by Plato (Continued)

- ❑ According to Nicias, *Courage is knowledge of that which inspires fear or confidence*
- ❑ He has heard somewhere that *courage is “knowing what to fear and what not to fear”*
- ❑ An ”inside joke”
- ❑ Once again, Socratic applies his method of questioning:
  - 1) **False Positive:** cases of courage that doesn't involve ‘knowing’ what to fear or not to fear
  - 2) **False Negative:** knowing without doing cannot be defined as courageous



# The *Laches* by Plato (Continued)

- ❑ **Courage is the knowledge of what is good and evil**
- ❑ The definition becomes one not just of “**courage**” but of the “**whole of virtue**”
- ❑ But, that cannot be right, since we can and do distinguish between different virtues such as courage, generosity, and so on...
- ❑ So, they all agree that they have not been able to define “courage”





# Brief summary of Socrates's examination of “courage” in Plato's *Laches*

- a) *External-Action*
- b) *Internal- State of mind*
- c) *Knowledge- Internal state of mind*

## *Key points of Socrates on Virtue*

1. *Virtue is knowledge; Ignorance is Vice*
2. *Unity of Virtue:*
  - a. *All virtue is just wisdom*
  - b. *(knowing what to do)*
3. *Platonic objection: weakness of will*



# Parts of the Soul and

## Four Cardinal Virtues: Wisdom, Self- control, Courage and Justice

