

Thoughts:

Some said they don't like Socrates, that he was hypocritical. On one hand he claims to be wise only because wisdom means realizing how little one knows, yet he also vehemently claims to know what is right and good and just. I found Socrates to be an arrogant control-freak.

Someone brought up an example: How people would view Socrates in the US Media - how he questions everything

Is Socrates wise?

The title of the written work is ironic because Socrates is no way talking in an apologetic manner.

Socrates believes that what he has actually been accused of is challenging the status quo and daring to think for himself. In response, he refuses to apologize to the jury.

Overall, I thought Socrates explained himself well, but I think the prejudice the jury already had made things difficult for him to be spared from death. Even today, it is extremely common for a jury to have already made up their minds before the trial even begins, which I think is unfair but people can't help it.

Honestly I think he is being very wordy to put the judges and jury to sleep so he can sneak away. A sound plan really. Just make sure no one spots you as you skip town.

I did like the point he made though when he said a philosopher's job is to question and clarify knowledge rather than to affirm it. However, I felt that when he compared the state to being a large and lazy thoroughbred horse and how they should in essence thank him for being there to wake everyone up, it didn't make me like him more so I knew the jury wouldn't be on his side either.

In my opinion, Socrates knew more than he should and this seemed very threatening and dangerous to the rest of the people

His defense did not try to prove his innocence, but rather tried to explain his point of view.

Upon reflection Socrates came to the conclusion that he could only be wiser than any man simply for the fact that he is aware that he knows nothing at all

Socrates appeared to be defending and rationalizing his behavior and actions than actually saying sorry for his actions

Summary:

Socrates says do not treat him like a juvenile orator. However, he has never been to court before and doesn't know how it works.

Socrates has been accused of investigating the heavens: "Socrates is an evildoer and a curious person, who searches into things under the earth and in the heavens. He makes the weaker argument defeat the stronger and he teaches these doctrines to others."

There is a play which makes fun of him.

Socrates claims he does not teach people about the heavens.

Socrates claims no one pays him to teach people how to argue and he isn't interested in sophism. (Evenus the parian)

The oracle of delphi says Socrates is the wisest man in athens. So socrates tries to find someone wiser than him.

Socrates goes to a politician, who many think is a wise man and believes himself to be a wise man....Socrates leaves and says "Well, although I do not suppose either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is -- for he knows nothing and thinks that he knows. I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter, then, I seem to have an advantage over him."

then he goes to the poets..who he says write by inspiration...some type of divine musing...but cannot give any meaning for what they write...so Socrates considered himself to be superior to them for the same reason he was superior to the politician

then he goes to the artisans...but again, the same..

Socrates says, "I am called wise because my listeners always imagine I possess the wisdom which I do not find in others." - they are using his name as an illusion...

THE YOUTH:

The youth follow him because "they like to hear the pretenders examined"

Socrates asks meletus to name the improver of the youth. Meletus says the laws. Socrates says but WHO, what person?? Meletus says EVERYONE BUT YOU SOCRATES

MAIN contradiction:

Socrates teaches atheism...but Socrates says it is sworn in the affidavit that he teaches of divine things, and yet meletus is accusing him of not believing in divine beings. Socrates gets meletus to affirm this contradiction..

“While I have life and strength I shall never cease from practicing and teaching philosophy”

“if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly, given to the State by the gods. The State is like a great and noble steed who is slow in his motions owing to his very size and needs to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which the gods have given the State and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing, persuading, and reproaching you. As you will not easily find another like me, I would advise you to spare me.”

Summary of Plato...Historical background

Higher levels of reality. Platonic forms. Polis/State and health...very important... different levels of goods depending on one's relation to the polis...much the same for the body...the entire body needs a more intense workout than just one muscle, one organ etc...the brain needs intellectual stimulation...the highest of all things. Physical activity also important.

Socrates is ultimately condemned to death.

Socrates pleads by mentioning his service to Athens and how he always fought for justice over social pressures.

Socrates condemns his accusers but wishes they treat his children as he treated athens. Never to let them think they know more than they do.

Main Themes at work

-Rule Following

From the get-go we can tell that Socrates is tongue and cheek in regards to following the social rules of Athens. That is to say, he is well aware of the fact that his trial is being forced by social pressures rather than any actual wrong-doing.

Socrates goes against the grain when it comes to *discipline*. This is evident when he talks about sophistry. A sophist is someone who gives instruction on how to make others believe something through fallacious reasoning - personal attacks, appeals to authority, and the masses etc. So a sophist teaches us how to control people around us. This isn't a bad thing, of course, and it is sometimes necessary in certain proceedings and events. However, it isn't exactly virtuous, and is a deceitful way to discuss the truth. Socrates isn't so much concerned with winning arguments as he is with attaining wisdom.

-Ignorance

Socrates believes human wisdom is plagued with ignorance. We cannot possess the same type of wisdom which the Gods possess, and claiming that we have any type of absolute knowledge is to be unwise. So having the human type of wisdom is to acknowledge that we are actually very unwise.

So part of what Socrates is telling the public is how important it is to keep tabs on our ignorance. This is what his gadfly metaphor is supposed to illustrate.