

The trial of socrates

Philosophy



The Trial of Socrates The text in ' The Trial of Socrates' is a situational reference from the history that narrates the revelations of Socrates as to how he is being accused wrongly of many things by the Athenians by stating his position about his deeds. The main characters in the text are Socrates, the audience that is Athenians, Meletus, and the Judges. At first, Socrates tries to convince the Athenians that all the allegations against him were baseless. Still, he is aware of the possibility of suspicion in the minds of people as to what made all the prejudices claimed against him by them. He says that all the allegations have their birth from prejudice and resentment. To simplify their perspective conflicts, he explains all that caused widespread resentment and prejudice against him among those who believed they were wise. Socrates claims that he has got many people indignant because he proved that they were not wise (16). He did this empirical application of truth of wisdom with politicians, poets and artisans. Socrates claims that though they are good at their work, they do it by a certain innate power and inspiration and not by wisdom. Thus, Socrates establishes that it is God's will for him to test all those who claim to be wise and prove that they are not really wise, as he believes only God to be wise. So, it is this indignation that caused all kinds of allegations against him. The second allegation against him is that he teaches people to disbelieve in Gods (17) and as alleged by Meletus that he corrupts the young people in Athens by teaching them so. In order to prove his stance, Socrates asks Meletus if anyone intentionally tries to get hurt, and Meletus promptly declines the chances of such an event. Then Socrates asks if no one loves to get hurt, how they can allege that he tries to make people around him bad and expect him to want to get himself hurt. It was Meletus who agreed that no one loves to live with bad people

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(18). Thus, Socrates traps Meletus in his own false allegation that he tries to make young people bad. Then Socrates answers the second allegation that he teaches there is no god. Firstly, he makes Meletus say that he teaches people to believe in certain gods but not in the state gods, thus proving that he is not an atheist. As Meletus again alleges that Socrates is a complete atheist, Socrates asks the counter question if it is possible for someone to believe in things pertaining to man and not in man, and if it is possible to believe in horsemanship and not in horse (20). Thus, Socrates effectively manages to prove that what Meletus alleges against him is totally baseless. Yet another part that deserves attention is the area where Socrates answers the doubt why he lives such a dangerous life that may give him death. Here, he explains that when he was placed by his commanders at Potidaea and Amphipolis, he never left his place because of fear of death (21). In his life, God is his Supreme Commander who has directed him to search wisdom and to examine the wisdom of himself and that of others. With his counter questions and explanations, Socrates claims that he does not shrink from doing what is right for fear of death. Evidently, the author has managed to connect various arguments in the most cohesive way. At first, Socrates claims that all allegations against him are baseless and they arise out of resentment and anger. Thereafter, Socrates goes on to explain how and why there is resentment against him. In order to prove that the allegations against him are baseless, they are answered by him one by one. The first allegation he falsifies is that he is misleading people. He uses the argument that since no one likes to live in a group of bad people, no one will try to live around someone found bad. Thereafter, he moves to answer the second allegation that he is a complete atheist. He makes Meletus say that he is not

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an atheist and that he only is against the state gods. Here, he claims that one cannot believe on horsemanship and not on horse. Thus, he proves that the allegations against him are baseless. Thereafter, as he is sentenced to death, he starts saying that he is not worried about death. According to him, death can be interpreted only in two ways. Either it is a sleep. If this is the case, it is always lovable because a good sleep is one of the most lovable things. Otherwise, death is a journey of the soul to another place. If this is the case, it is worth taking because it will give him freedom from the self-styled judges of this world. Here, one can see the brave Socrates proclaiming that “ no evil can happen to a good man” (29). Socrates says that death penalty is what he wished for and not something by chance. Thereafter, he says that if his sons are after riches instead of virtue, they should be punished, and this would give him justice (29). In the opinion of Socrates, “ we must think of what the one man who understands justice and injustice, and of what truth herself will say of us” (29) not about what people will say of us. The first irony that strikes someone is the fact that appearance is often deceptive. To illustrate, the Athenian city that was famous for free speech has become the place where Socrates, the greatest philosopher of all times, was prosecuted for no apparent reason. Evidently, no wrongdoing is alleged against him, but allegation is about his teaching and beliefs. Thus, the first insight one gets from the trial is about the conformity with which the society and authorities hinder people from withering away from the established norms of the society as it would threaten the established authority. Thus, all radicals and geniuses get criticized, tortured, and at times, killed for their efforts to free human mind. So, I made the realization that truth, throughout history, has been crucified for no apparent reason. However, there is

Socrates to give the new insight that one, in the pursuit of truth, should not worry about the worldly inhibitions. He says “ we must think of what the one man who understands justice and injustice, and of what truth herself will say of us” (29), not the ignorant judges of the world. However, Socrates provides the new insight that one does not need to fear death. If it is the end like a long sleep, it is always lovable. If it is an eternal life, it is still lovable because someone gets freedom from this world that abhors truth and freedom.

Evidently, the text manages to pass two powerful subliminal messages on to the reader. The first one is that one should not shrink from doing what is right and from proclaiming what is right just because of fear of death. The second important point is that a good man can neither be harmed by others nor will he receive evil. Works Cited Plato. The Apology of Socrates. Alwil shop, 1901. Print.