

# A review of the responses of the provoked in the apology of socrates

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Socrates was put on trial for the corrupting the youth and impiety. He stands before the large jury of Athens and delivers his apology, challenging these charges. Socrates comes up with clever answers for the questions he is asked and suggests that he be the model of justice for the city. Plato makes certain arguments and actions in *The Republic* of Plato which sparks a response in his arguments and actions in the *Apology* of Socrates. These argument and actions made from the two texts clarify the evidence for these charges, however, they do also provide evidence against these charges.

In *The Republic* of Plato, Socrates shows interest in discussing justice with Glaucon, who is the next heir to the throne and wants to rule justly. He states, “ no one willingly chooses to rule and get mixed up in straightening out other people’s troubles; but he asks for wages, because the man who is to do anything fine by art but never does what is best for himself, but rather what is best for the man who is ruled.” (Bloom 24). Socrates explains to Glaucon that this ruler will rule to protect the citizens of his kingdom, but will do so if he gets compensated at the end. Socrates tells them that the just ruler will not rule in order to gain money or honor. This is one way how Socrates isn’t creating a corruption, as he is attempting to revive the real definition of being a good person. “ They say that doing injustice is naturally good, and suffering injustice bad, but that the bad in suffering injustice far exceeds the good in doing it; it seems profitable,” says Glaucon. (Bloom 36-37). Glaucon argues that while it is bad to suffer injustice, those doing so benefit from it because of the harm it causes to others. Socrates listening to this seems intrigued that he’s rigorously identifying two men, based on his claims. When Glaucon makes his arguments, he seems slightly fascinated by

what Glaucon and thus, this drives him to advocate the importance of thinking to Glaucon. Adeimantus is more political than Glaucon and always speaks for the people, addressing his arguments as 'we believe' or 'the people believe so'. Socrates observes that Adeimantus has a different mindset on justice. When Adeimantus finishes his argument, Socrates's first reaction is, "I listened, and although I had always been full of wonder at the nature of Glaucon and Adeimantus, at this time I was particularly delighted and said, 'That wasn't a bad beginning.'" (Bloom 44). Observing how much more political Adeimantus is than his brother, Glaucon, he begins to direct his arguments toward the jobs of the different citizens of the city.

Adeimantus can be compared to Meletus during Socrates's trial; when Socrates asks him what makes the men of Athens better people and Meletus doesn't respond, Socrates says, "Do you see, Meletus, that you are silent and have nothing to say? And yet does it not seem to be shameful to you, and a sufficient proof of just what I say, that you have never cared?" (West 74). Although Socrates does not talk as harshly to Adeimantus as he did with Meletus, Socrates still has to point out the little facts that Adeimantus keeps leaving behind. "Now Adeimantus, reflect on whether our guardians ought to be imitators or not." (Bloom 74). Socrates is arguing here that these poets practice the art of imitation, which can lead to misconceptions present in their works; these misconceptions corrupt the youth, according to Socrates. The more points Socrates makes for his view on justice, the more often we see Adeimantus resorting to saying, "That's my opinion too," "Very true," "That's exactly the way it is," and the like.

During his apology, Socrates mentions the people that accuse him for corrupting their young. " Thereupon, those examined by them are angry at me, not at themselves...And whenever someone asks them, ' By doing what and teaching what?' they have nothing to say, but are ignorant." (West 72). These people that accuse him are the parents of the youth that used to believe Socrates was educating their children. Socrates claims that he is not corrupting the youth, because of the knowledge that they have gained. In The Republic of Plato, he calls out Homeric/traditional Greek poetry for providing these false statements about justice. Using this, he is essentially saying that the ones teaching the youth these false statements about justice are the ones corrupting the youth; this claim easily throws away the corruption charge. Also, Socrates points out how Achilles should not be the model for the Athenians. He brings up the fact that Achilles had to choose between going to war and avenging someone's death or staying at home, and turns it into his own example. " I stayed and ran the risk of dying like anyone else, but when the god stationed me, as I supposed and assumed, ordering me to live philosophizing and examining myself and others, I had then left my station because I feared death or any other matter whatever." (West 80). He is saying that at that moment, he would have disobeyed the gods, just like Achilles had done many times before committing to fighting in battle. Socrates is saying that even their role model would've avoided the god's advice, proving how little impact the gods have on the humans. This is another point that the Athenians have against Socrates when it comes to accusing him of impiety.

Socrates also discusses the importance of philosophy in his apology and in his conversations with Adeimantus and Glaucon. He defines the philosopher as, “ the one who is willing to taste every kind of learning with gusto, and who approaches learning with delight, and is insatiable.” (Bloom 155). This person would be an open-minded individual who would not mind learning about anything and everything. Socrates’s strong belief for philosophy is another piece of evidence that one may say supports his impiety charge. When Meletus accuses him that Socrates doesn’t believe in the Gods, he refutes him. Meletus confirms that daimons are gods, and Socrates responds with, “ Therefore if I do believe in daimons, as you say, and if, on the one hand, daimons are gods of some sort, then this would be what I say you are riddling and jesting about, when you say that I do not believe in gods, and again that I believe in gods, since in fact I do believe in daimons.” (West 77-78). Technically, Socrates does believe in gods, which would throw the impiety charge away. The problem with completely disregarding this charge is the fact that Socrates does not ever state that he believes in the Athenian Gods. Back with his conversation with Glaucon, Glaucon wants to know which philosophers are the ‘ true philosophers.’ Socrates explains that there is a difference between the one with knowledge and the one who lets his opinions take over. “ Since knowledge depended on what is and ignorance necessarily on what is not, mustn’t we also seek something between ignorance and knowledge that depends on that which is in between, if there is in fact any such thing?” (Bloom 157). Philosophers do not merely let their opinions control their thoughts; they are open to new ideas and are willing to learn more about what they do not already know. Socrates mentions in his

apology that had he gone into politics, he would not have gone very far with it. This contradicts with what he tells Adeimantus in *The Republic* of Plato, "Philosophers must be established as the most precise guardians." (Bloom 183). Socrates wants philosophers to take over as the guardians, but has stated in his apology and also in *The Republic* that philosophers would be useless and unhelpful in politics. Perhaps this is a ironic move on his part, letting the citizens know how corrupt politics is and how important it is that everyone learns to think for themselves. Still, the evidence shown here is not sufficient enough to completely let go of the impiety charge, as Socrates does still believe in gods but they are not exactly the Athenian gods.

With Glaucon, Socrates uses the Cave analogy to explain the bigger picture of philosophy. "You must go down, each in his turn, into the common dwelling of the others and get habituated along with them to seeing the dark things...you will see ten thousand times better than the men there...you have seen the truth about fair, just, and good things." (Bloom 199). The ones who have been hit with the truth should go back down to the cave and advise each person about it. He discusses how the guardian should be a lover for fighting and for wisdom as well. He uses geometry as an example, showing how useful it is in reality. Glaucon agrees that this wisdom is necessary and seems to still be speaking as the one who wishes to lead, according to Socrates. "You are amusing. You are like a man who is afraid of the many in your not wanting to seem to command useless studies." (Bloom 207). Socrates still sees that Glaucon has a slight dread in wanting to take command of these so-called small tasks. Glaucon is so convinced with Socrates's argument for philosophy, he begins to believe less and less in the

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gods. ““ Yes, by the gods and how ridiculous they are.” (Bloom 210).

Socrates supports this by further detailing, “ Surely we have from childhood convictions about what’s just and fair by which we are brought up as by parents, obeying them as rulers and honoring them...They do not persuade men who are at all sensible; these men rather honor the ancestral things and obey them as rulers.

The arguments and actions made from The Republic of Plato do spark some responses in the arguments and actions in the Apology of Socrates.

According to the evidence weighed from Socrates’s trial and from what Socrates has told to Glaucon and Adeimantus, these arguments and actions do not completely lighten him of the charges. They do, however, aim towards being in favor of Socrates, as his arguments and examples prove stronger than the impiety and corruption charges brought against him.