

Symposium and
phaedo determine
why socrates is
spared the tragic fate
of many old...

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Socrates Symposium is a text based on philosophy written by Plato and examines love from its beginning, intention and nature. Love is analyzed by men attending a party and all men must give a speech praising love.

Socrates is involved in this speech, and he focuses on the philosophical aspects of love. Socrates argues that the main purpose of love is to acquire wisdom and to the Greeks, wisdom is the most essential virtue an individual can acquire (Cornford, 27).

Socrates is a philosopher, and he analyzed the dynamics of love in the Symposium; as a result of his analysis, the word “ Platonic love” emerged and he is the generator of this type of love. In his analysis, Socrates seeks the interpretation of love from Diotima, a priest of Zeus. Socrates gives the genesis of love, which emanates from Resource and Poverty. To him, Resource is the father of Love and Poverty is the mother of Love. Socrates further argues that Love has many dimensions, it can be patient, harsh, beggarly or deceptive and, therefore, it balances itself into these virtues depending on the situation at hand (Conford, 56). Socrates further argues that people have the desire to procreate, physically and mentally, and for them to bring forth children of high intellect; they have to become philosophers as this will ensure the immortality of their children. This analysis of Socrates in the Symposium makes him a Great Greek hero. Phaedo depicts the death of Socrates; just as Symposium, it is a work by Plato. It analyzes the beliefs of Socrates just before being executed by the Athenian courts for not believing in the Athenian gods (Conford, 32). This analysis by Plato emanates from Phaedo, a student of Socrates. The analysis of Phaedo represents Socrates as a great Greek hero because of his

philosophical views of death. Socrates introduces the Greeks into the notion of life after death, arguing of the immortality of the soul. He gives four reasons as such:

He states that because the body is subject to physical harm and death, it is opposite of the soul. The Soul is not subject to death, therefore, it is immortal. He calls this the cycle argument.

He argues that before birth, the soul existed to possess knowledge and, therefore, after death, the soul will exist to continue with knowledge. This is called the theory of recollection.

The third argument is on the fact that visible, mortal and real things are not the same as invisible, immortal and unreal. The Soul is invisible, therefore, cannot pass the same process as the body which is physical.

Finally, he argues that everything in the world exist in Forms, for example, ugly substances exist in the form of ugliness, the soul which is mortal, is depicted by life and, therefore, it cannot die.

From these teachings, Socrates managed to install to the Greeks wisdom and knowledge of life and the soul and, therefore, regards him as a great Greek hero.

In conclusion, Socrates compared to Achilles, is greater. Achilles was a warrior but did not embrace wisdom and knowledge whereas Jason is depicted as loving power. Jason and Achilles were warriors who pursued their goals through violent means while Socrates pursued solutions to his problems by searching on wisdom. To Greeks, knowledge is more beneficial than courage or even power, because with knowledge, you can gain courage and means of ascending to power.

Works Cited

Cornford, F. M. Before and after Socrates. Cambridge [Eng.: University Press, 1932. Print.