

Kori Bookman

Instructor's Name

The Class Title

Date

### **IN THE LAST DAYS OF SOCRATES**

Rumors, prejudices, and questions have unfolded the Athens just after the death of Socrates—also known as the wisest man in his time. Eventually, his final judgment has won the attention and respect of thinking men.

In *The Last Days of Socrates*, Plato historically made use of accurate portrait of Socrates. He exposed in this book the innocence of Socrates, despite his conviction and the reason why Socrates did not escape his punishment as offered by the court –where he was accused of impiety and corruption of youth.

Through the writings, “Euthyphro,” “The Apology,” “Crito,” and “Pheado” it does not only helped the general population of Athens and the friends and followers of Socrates understand his death, but it also enlightened the public with great works and virtues of Socrates. These writings portrayed a common theme of a memorial to Socrates, which also describes who really Socrates is in his time and gave an in-depth view of the culture of Athens.

Meletus was the person who brought the indictment against Socrates. It was him who argued that Socrates was guilty of corrupting the youth of Athens and committing acts of impiety. In *The Last Days of Socrates*, trials began with the prosecutors presenting their case against the accused before the Athenian jury. The *Apology* begins with the

defense speech of Socrates noting that he was unfamiliar with the law court. Actually, the *Apology* refers to Socrates' defense why he should be justified and should not be convicted of such crime mentioned. It is different with the first notion or impression that we get with the literal word 'Apology' which is literally being apologetic for about Socrates' beliefs.

These are some of the few instances of Socrates' questioning of Meletus, which led Meletus to assert logically inconsistent statements:

- (1) *Socrates* corrupts the youth intentionally.
- (2) Nobody intentionally harms himself.
- (3) *People who corrupt society ultimately harm themselves.*

*“ If (1) Socrates corrupts the youth intentionally and (3) people who corrupt society ultimately harm themselves, then (2) must be false (which is ridiculous.) However, if (2) nobody intentionally harms himself or herself and (3) people who corrupt society ultimately harms him or her are true, then (1) must be false (since Socrates cannot be corrupting the youth intentionally). If that is the case, Socrates needs to be instructed on how his activity is corrupting the youth. Socrates concludes that he either does not corrupt the youth or else he corrupts them unintentionally.”*

Based on these premises, as depicted In *The Last Days of Socrates*, it appears that the sentiment largely favors Socrates and it is more reasonable to take into account that Meletus charges against him is illogical.

Plato uses Socrates' own voice, which convincingly explains that his conviction is without merit. Notwithstanding the last days and death of Socrates in the dialogues of *Apology*, *Crito* and *Phaedo*, ultimately the death of Socrates has earned the respect especially of the thinking men, and influenced them as well.

On a final note, Socrates life and death should serve as a guide today's generation more than ever, in discerning what is important and what is right from what is not. As what this great man said in his speech after the trial: "I am not afraid of dying but I looked forward to continuing my philosophical questioning with the heroes in Hades." We too should not stop to where we are right now, instead let our quest for knowledge moves on...###

Source:

Plato The Last Days of Socrates. Translated by Hugh Trendennick and Harold Tarrant. (The Penguin book series)

<http://socrates.clarke.edu/aplg0323.htm>