

Day 3 (8/28/11)

I. The story of the Apology, Socrates' trial, and the charges against him

The Charges:

Old: Studies things in sky and below earth

Makes the weaker arg. stronger

Teaches these to others

S: no one has heard him speak of any of these things. Is not a Sophist (accepts no money, does not advise how to make weak arg. strong). The Oracle-made-me-do-it.

New: Corrupts the young

Does not believe in old gods

Believes in new divinities

Despite overwhelming arguments against both the arguments and the evidence used to support these charges, Socrates' defense fails: the enormous jury of his peers (hundreds of them) pronounce him guilty and sentence him to death.

But what was Socrates' *really* doing? Answer: going around Athens asserting that he knew nothing, and inquiring from those who claimed to know something how it is that they knew it, and how they justified their claim to know it. Some would say his real purpose was to expose human pretensions, but his mission went much deeper than this. He recognized that people assumed they knew what they were referring to when they used words like 'justice', 'virtue', 'right and wrong', 'piety', etc. But when you asked them to offer a definition of those terms, it soon became clear that there were many different ideas about what justice, or virtue, or morality, or piety is, exactly, and not all these definitions were equally convincing, nor the arguments that supported them. Socrates thought it was essential to the health of Athens, and the well being of those living in it, that people hold back from believing things that they could not support with good arguments and evidence, especially beliefs about what is just, moral, virtuous, pious, and so on. His mission was to find a sound foundation for our claims to knowledge about these matters.

So, Socrates went about challenging Athenians in some of their most-cherished beliefs, hoping to discover a satisfactory account of justice, virtue, piety, morality, etc., through the application of his Elenchus method in conversation with anyone in Athens also interested in knowing what any of these things really is. In doing so, he made a lot of enemies, and eventually they sentenced him to death for the ruckus he roused among his fellow Athenians.

II. The Crito

A. S has been in prison for a month, waiting to die. Common for friends to bribe jailer, not hard to do. Could live in exile.

B. Crito comes to warn S it's last chance to escape.

C. Arguments:

1. C's args that S should escape:

- a. I'll lose a friend
 - b. The many will think we value \$ more than friendship
 - c. Friends will not suffer fines, lose property
 - d. You'd be welcome in Thessaly, etc.
 - e. You don't consider your children, who would be orphans
2. S's args that one must not consider the opinion of the many, and that it's only worth living the good, just, beaut. life.
 3. S's extended arg based on HIS recognition of truth (handout #1)
 4. Personified laws (handout #1)

V. Two questions about these args of S and about handout

- A. Is S justified in arguing that these are good reasons for staying in prison?
- B. ARE they good reasons? Or is S foolish for not escaping?
- C. HANDOUT #1

Break into groups and consider any or several of the questions 1-7 in Handout #1. Bring back answers to the class as a whole. 10 minutes separate time, 10 minutes class discussion of results.

SUMMARY OF SOCRATES IN *APOLOGY*, *CRITO*

- A. Are these all good reasons for doing what he does in his life: telling people to care for their souls and trying to define piety, etc.?
- B. Summary: what is this good, just, beautiful life? If we can't get K of it, what's the use of trying to find out what it is and then live it? Can S ever get justification for what he believes, or is he stuck with nothing better than True belief?