Name

Instructor Name

Course Number

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**Socrates, Guilty or Not**

**Introduction**

Socrates (469-399 B.C) was the most exemplary figure among the founding faces of western philosophy. HE was well known as the questioner of everyone and everything. His teaching method was very unique as he used to teach by questioning. He did not left anything written but his students like Plato has let the world known about him. He was known as the follower of a God rather than following lots of Gods, as the people of Athens used to believe. In the end he was accused of spoiling the youth and was sentenced to death. He was known as the wisest man in Athens and he accepted it by saying that he knows his own ignorance (history.com). For Socrates philosophy was a way of life and he not just only wants to talk and think about philosophy but to live it. So to live a philosophical life is to live on the bases of reasons. He lived by analysis the truth and had a very good capacity for arguments. He was a well-known as well as a controversial personality of Athens. He had no writings of his own but his admirers like Xenophon and Plato has wrote about him. He is presented in that work as a wise man with integrity, great insight and having great argumentative skills. His life was ended at age 70 by a group of juries on an accusation of impiety. His speech during the trial is saved in Plato’s Apology of Socrates. His strong views on an examined life and his criticism of states government makes this book the important part of western culture.

He was of the opinion that, “Must one heed popular opinion about moral matters”, and he means that as a citizen of a state we need to follow the laws, despite thinking that they are unfair. He paid the price of this distinction by accepting what the juries decided for him. He found himself before jury of 501 “men of Athens” and he was accused of leading Athenian youth in a wrong way and not believing on the Athenian gods. He did not crumble any word against the jury. Critos was aware of the fact that Socrates was accused unjustly. But Socrates was not going to avoid his fate. Critos tried to motivate him by saying that what people will think and he said that he is going to give his enemy what the need by accepting his faults in front of the juries. Critos motivates him to fight against the injustice that has been done to him but Socrates relied that Critos should not be worrying about what others think but should focus on the appropriate way to live a life. He also remind his student that public opinions not always a good opinion but being the citizen of a state, its laws should be followed.   
He accepted the fairness of the law and is highlighted in the fact that Socrates refused the escape plan of Cerritos saying that “two wrongs don’t make a right” (Plato).

Socrates and his student extended the boundaries of philosophy by explaining the outsider world from tearing once inner side. His interest in explaining through questioning gave rise to the discipline of logic. His life became a great example for importance of living life according to oncemoral, ethics and principals.

**The Trial of Socrates**:

The Trail of Socrates can be discussed in two parts “Socrates and Athens” and “the Ordeal”. As the charges against Socrates were disrespecting gods of the city and by making its youth corrupt. But the actual clash was among between his political beliefs and the city of Athens. Choosing the member of a government and freedom of speech was a symbol of pride for the people of Athens. But for Socrates leaders should be chosen based on the fact that they know how to make rules (Magill).

However, “the Ordeal” describes the trial. Socrates was teaching those youth throughout his life time but he was accused of guiding people wrong when he reached in his seventies. It was analyzed later and find out that him being the teacher of Critias, who destroyed democracy once in the history, was punished to death. So again it was a clash of understanding between Socrates and the Athenian society.

However, Meletus charges proved Socrates as anti-democrat and he was asked to change his political views then he said that he would rather die. So he proved himself a principal man. Socrates methods might not be confused with freedom of speech. Socrates would not have chosen that defense mechanism by giving up his philosophical principles. He showed by accepting this decision that the Athens cannot secure the interpretation of civil liberties and proved democracy as not always the right path to lead the people (Welty, pp. 264-267).

As Socrates was the citizen of Athens and he was bound to follow the laws of city states He was imprisoned for wrong doing and was punished according to the laws of the state. He had an option of running away from the prison in result of an offer of his friend or he had to accept the punishment of breaking the laws of the state. The consequences of attempting an escape would be that he and his friends would be known as a law breaker of different levels. His friends will always remain in danger of punishment. Most importantly he will not be address as a just man and he will be accused to harm his friend for his own sake and that was totally against his policies. While the option of accepting the decisions of jury will be resulting in death of a single man who remained stick to his principles of obeying the rules of the state. This option was a dignified one that was a solution to an unjust decision and that might give rise to amendment in laws.

How much fair were these solutions. So by accepting his fate Socrates maintained his dignity and provided his friends a new level of integrity. He understood the necessity of keeping the decision despite being a just decision and running away from it was going to promote the power of anarchy.

He died with courage and his wisdom will be continued by the students he had left behind. But if he run away from dead then it will reflect his friends and poorly himself. His name would be stained throughout the history of Greece. Although he was unable to impress the jury but he stood with his ethics in front of death as he choose to die but not to make his friends die for him (Kyte)

**Conclusion:**

Socrates is portrayed as a religious figure. He was famous among the Skeptics, Cynics, and Stoics. He and his followers were successful in spreading the light of philosophy and made the world with the help of this incident where their inner moral values were teased apart. According to some historians, there might be some political planning behind his trail; as he was accused on the bases of his virtues, thoughts and teachings. He died happily without any fear and drank the glass of hemlock himself.

Socrates did not defend himself in front of the juries but he showed that saving himself from death is not important as compared to doing the right thing. He showed that the decision of the juries was very unjust but it could not restrain himself in developing his moral soul. His philosophy was based on, “what is a good life?” and for Socrates a good life was one that is lived according to ones virtue. He was always intended to live such a life. His life was ended by evil bodies but he was still virtuous. He did not let evil harm his moral soul by choosing death over escaping from the prison and breaking states laws along with destroy his friends’ life completely.

Socrates accusers were against his virtues. When he realized that his accuser were ignorant of his virtues then he decided to uncover that ignores and never pleaded inform of them. Therefore his behavior in front of juries was high handed. He did not agree on the point of ceasing his philosophical virtues, if the jury agreed to let his go. That proved that he is a man of virtue and he improved the knowledge and virtue of everyone else while accepting his death penalty. He never deserved punished but he accepted this unjust act just to protect his virtues and living his philosophy out. According to him an unexamined life is never worth living but life should be lived with respect to ones virtues and without focusing on outcome (eNotes.com)

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