*Apology* 1/25

What is Socratic teaching?

* To care for the excellence of your souls
  + “Excellence does not come from wealth but wealth from excellence.”

Arguing on behalf of the jury?

* “And now Athenians I am not arguing in my own defense at all, as you might expect me to do, but rather in yours in order that you may not make a mistake about the gift of the god by condemning me . . . For if you put me to death, you will not easily find another who . . . clings to the state as a sort of gadfly to a horse that is large and well-bred but rather sluggish because of its size, so that it needs to be aroused.”

The question of citizenship is raised as an important philosophical question here:

* Can a Socratic force exist alongside the order and stability that are needed for a society to function smoothly?
* Different *images* of citizenship being put forward.

“There is no man who will preserve his life for long, either in Athens or elsewhere, if he firmly opposes the multitude, and tries to prevent the commission of much injustice and illegality in the state. He who would really fight for justice must do so as a private citizen and not as a political figure, if he is to preserve his life, even for a short time.”

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Non-emotional plea:

* “I will not plead emotionally because I did nothing wrong.”

“I am sure that it is not allowed that a good man can be injured by a worse.”

* + What is his prophecy to them?
    - “a far more severe punishment than you have inflicted on me will surely overtake you as soon as I am dead. You have done this thing, thinking that you will be relieved from having to give an account of your lives.”

Why would ignorance have *political* significance?

“Political,” has to do with the relationship between those who rule and those who are ruled over: the relationship between citizens and government and what the *nature* of that relationship is.

What does ignorance or the lack of knowledge have to do with this relationship?

In other words what does the lack of knowledge or information have to do with trying to understand the relationship between citizens and government?

Recall that Socrates claims that the one thing that makes him different than anyone else is that he does not claim to know things he does not know: we can refer to this as *epistemic humility*.

Types of ignorance:

* One can, of course, be *merely* ignorant, that is, lack knowledge of something and not even be aware of this.
* One can be *Socratically* ignorant which is to not only *be* ignorant of something but to be aware of such ignorance and admit it.
* On another level still, one can be ignorant of something, be made aware of such ignorance, and yet *still maintain that ignorance* in the face of all evidence to the contrary.
  + Why would anyone want to remain in a state of ignorance?
    - Shouldn’t it be the goal of human beings to seek more knowledge?

Let’s take the average citizen: would you say they are more likely to be *merely* ignorant (lack knowledge) or willfully ignorant?

* Is it the duty of citizens to escape their ignorance or to seek out more knowledge?
  + Socrates clearly believes so in his description of himself as a *gadfly*.

What about elected leaders?: Merely ignorant or willfully ignorant?

* It seems like we could say that it is in the interest of elected leaders to remain in a state of willful ignorance—to not see the world as it really is but to see the world as they *want* it to be.

Why?

For one thing, remaining in this state is much easier.

More to the point, if a leader can convince the citizens that the fabricated picture of the world is the correct one, they are more likely to maintain support from those citizens.

* On a very cynical level, we might say that it is the goal of political leaders to ensure citizens remain in a state of ignorance.

Thus, it is obvious why someone like Socrates poses a threat to the established order