Name MODEL

Text Plato's "Apology"

In Plato's "Apology", Socrates believes that the annoyance he causes helps Athens and they will suffer if they put him to death. Socrates thinks he plays a unique role in Athenian society.

Socrates explains that he will argue not for his own sake, but instead for the benefit of the Athenians. He explains that he is "a sort of gadfly, given to the state by God," and that "the state is a great and noble steed who… requires [to be] stirred into life" (106,107-108). Socrates is likening himself to a fly who has been given the purpose of waking up the state from sleep by god. This suggests that it is the god's will to wrest the Athenian citizens from their ignorance, and Socrates is merely doing what he has been called to do (105). Though the Athenian citizens may initially feel "out of temper (like a person who is suddenly awakened from sleep)," Socrates is trying to argue that they should not let this make their decision to put him to death (111-112).

To strengthen his argument even further, Socrates issues several warnings should the Athenians vote to kill Socrates. If they put him to death, Socrates points out that they will "not easily find a successor" like him, and they will "sleep on for the remainder" of their lives (105, 113). Further, he explains that putting him to death will give the Athenians an "evil name" (149). Socrates is sure that once he has been killed that "punishment far heavier" will "surely await" Athens (177, 178).

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