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Chapter 1 : Socrates : Philosophy's first martyr - [DOC Document]

There is a point, Socrates must have realized as he listened to the death sentence the Athenian jury pronounced against him, where philosophy, if it is not to lose face, has to use something stronger than words to do its job. And what is stronger than words, in such a situation, is the philosopher's own death.

The Good Life Socrates is generally considered the first major philosopher of Western civilization. Before him there lived about a dozen other Greek thinkers, the so-called Pre-Socratics, who also produced significant work from about BCE on. But little of that work has come down to us. Socrates is the first Western philosopher about whom a good deal is known. He was a widely discussed figure among the Greeks of his day, and he has remained an icon of wisdom in the history of Western thought. It is primarily through him that the West has gotten the idea of what philosophy is, and what it may be like to live a philosophical life. Socrates, one might say, gave us a philosophical definition of the good life. Socrates was born in , and he died in . His entire life he lived in Athens. Athens emerged from that victory not only as one of the most important commercial centers of the Mediterranean world, but also as the leader of a military alliance that quickly transformed the city into a dominant naval power. By controlling the funds of the alliance, Athens managed to channel a significant portion of the annual contributions of her allies into a lavish building program that turned the city into a place of architectural and cultural splendor. Under the supervision of the famed sculptor Phidias, the Parthenon and other monumental structures were erected on the Acropolis. And around the agora--the market place and civic center of the city--numerous temples, court structures, halls, shrines and statues formed an environment that functioned as the visual and administrative center of a thriving imperial metropolis. Not far from the agora, the Odeon and the Theatre of Dionysus provided spaces for elaborate musical and theatrical productions. Twice a year such playwrights as Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes competed for prizes with splendid performances for thousands of spectators. During official festivities countless visitors from all around the Mediterranean Sea came to admire the wonders of Athenian culture. The Acropolis of Athens During most of the 5th century Athens was a democracy. In addition, most court cases were decided by large juries of ordinary citizens. That made effective public speaking and forensic debating skills highly important for anyone who wanted to succeed in any area of public life. As a consequence numerous teachers of public speaking and forensic debating--known as the sophists--were attracted to Athens from all parts of Greece; the growing wealth of the city could afford handsome fees for their tutorial services. The presence of many sophists in the city was a primary reason for the transformation of Athens into the main center of Greek intellectual life. Sophists did not only educate the sons of the upper classes, they also absorbed and debated the works of Greek--and probably foreign--thinkers among themselves, thus creating an atmosphere of broad-minded intellectual exchange that laid the groundwork for a cosmopolitan civilization. While many smaller cities and outlying regions produced outstanding thinkers and artists, it was primarily in Athens that the various minds would meet and publish their work. Through cross-fertilization and competition within the context of a thriving and powerful metropolis, these minds developed their talents and productions to the high degrees of excellence by which classical Athens established itself as the first major center of Western civilization. Pericles was a powerful speaker and skillful politician. During the public funeral of the first casualties of the Peloponnesian War the popular leader of the city flattered his fellow-citizens by assuring them that they were the best, and that Athens was vastly superior to any other commonwealth in sight. Thus he declared, among other things: Our constitution does not copy the laws of other states: Our laws provide equal justice for all. Success in public life depends on ability and merit, not on social origin and class. I doubt that the rest of the world can produce a type of man that is as versatile, resourceful, and self-reliant as the Athenian. And that this is not just ceremonious bragging, but a plain fact, is proven by the power of the state based on such traits. For Athens alone among all cities is found, when tested, to be greater than her reputation. The war lasted from to . Its basic cause was the imperial arrogance with which Athens treated not only her own

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allies, but also other Greek city states that were not under Athenian control. Some of her allies wanted to secede from the alliance, for example, because they did not wish to pay for the splendor of the domineering city with their annual contributions for defense. Athens prevented such secessions by military force and economic sanctions, thus reducing many member states to virtual colonies. Athens also added further "allies" to her empire, whether these newcomers assented to such incorporation into the empire or not. In time more and more independent cities became afraid that they, too, would eventually be conquered and annexed. As a precaution they formed their own federation, and they made Sparta with its feared army their military leader. For a time the explicitly anti-democratic city of Sparta became thus, paradoxically, the widely acknowledged champion of Greek liberty. Many Greeks had no desire to engage in a major war. Even in Athens many were weary of such a prospect. Peace negotiations with Sparta took place. But Pericles, bent on making Athens the uncontested leader of the Greek world, repeatedly provoked hostilities and armed conflict. He was not only a competent administrator and general, but also a wily manipulator of public opinion; he knew how to nurture among ordinary citizens the kind of patriotism that assumed that everything Athenian was always better than anything else. A majority of Athenian voters was willing to follow Pericles wherever his ambition would lead them. The empire, after all, provided them with large amounts of tribute money, colonies, land for settlements in overseas regions, and with the emotional satisfaction of dominating the lives of other people. Given their powerful navy and their abundant resources, Athenians had plausible reasons for thinking that they could subdue Sparta and her allies in a short time, and thus crown their past achievements by making themselves the manifest hegemon of Hellas. The war proved to be a disaster not only for Athens, but for most Greeks. It lasted much longer than anyone expected. It decimated the population, caused vicious civil strife, wiped out whole cities, ruined much industry and commerce, brutalized Greek life, and in the long run subjected most of Greece to the power of foreign empires and rulers. The enterprise that Pericles conceived as the ultimate consummation of Athenian and Greek glory turned out to be a protracted exercise in self-destruction. Politically Greece never fully recovered from the events between and The only Athenian achievement that survived the war intact was Greek intellectual culture. Together with Greek as the international language of educated people it established itself as a dominant life-shaping force in the Mediterranean world for centuries to come. The brilliant achievements of Athenian and Greek culture did little to check the brutalities of armed conflict. Numerous atrocities were committed during the Peloponnesian War. One incident became especially notorious: The incident became well known because the Athenian general and historian Thucydides reported it in his history of the war "in conjunction with the sort of arrogant thinking that Athenian diplomats displayed when they tried to talk the citizens of Melos into an uncontested surrender. Mention of the incident is helpful, as it shows how dark the shadow was that the war cast on the city that had produced the cultural splendor of the "Golden Age. In that year, before also assaulting the much more powerful city of Syracuse in Sicily, Athens demanded that the small island become part of her empire and war effort. The Melians pleaded to be left alone; they had no desire to fight on either side. The Athenians threatened to attack them unless the Melians agreed to their demand. During a last parley the Athenian ambassadors offered the following piece of cynical reasoning: And we ask you on your part not to imagine that you will move us by saying that you, though once a colony of Sparta, have not joined Sparta in the war, or that you have never done us any harm. Instead we suggest that you should try to get what it is actually possible for you to get, taking into consideration what we both really think. For you know just as well as we do that, when these matters are discussed by practical people, the standard of justice depends on the power to coerce, and that the strong do what they have the power to do, and the weak accept what they are forced to accept. The Athenian Assembly then voted to put all Melian men, down to the age of fourteen, to death, and to sell the women and children into slavery to offset the cost of the military operation. After the mass execution the territory of the island was annexed and handed over to Athenian settlers. It was in response to the Melos incident that Euripides wrote the anti-war play *The Women of Troy*, a highly emotional pageant of misery that shows captured women as they are carted off, together with other war booty, as chattel or sex slaves. Euripides, although an ardent

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patriot at the beginning of the war, eventually became so disgusted with Athens that toward the end of his life he exiled himself from his native city. This, then, the splendor of the "Golden Age" as well as the brutality of the Peloponnesian War, was the social and cultural context within which Socrates lived his life. As will be seen, Socrates did not identify with the culture of his day. To understand Socrates the philosopher is to understand how much he stood against the very essence of the culture of his age. Socrates was a deliberate outsider among his fellow-Athenians and fellow-Greeks, an intellectual stranger, and his critical distance to the culture and society that surrounded him is a significant part of what defines him as a philosopher. This should become clear by taking a closer look at some of the outstanding traits of his life and thought. Unlike many of his well-to-do and aristocratic friends and disciples, Socrates was of middle-class origin. His father was a stonecutter or sculptor, and his mother a midwife. He may have inherited a modest estate, which allowed him to pursue his true calling--philosophical inquiry. By dedicating his life to the intensive pursuit of wisdom, however, he eventually neglected the economic side of his life to such a degree that he became rather poor. That fact did not bother him personally, but it may have made life less than comfortable for his wife Xanthippe, who had to run their household and raise their three sons. Then as later, people differed with regard to the amount of material goods that are necessary for a good life. Xanthippe may have had her own ideas about the matter, and there may have been marital tensions because of that. Men who want to become expert horsemen will not acquire the most docile horses, but the spirited ones. They believe that if they can handle these they will be able to handle any horse. I take a similar approach. I want to be able to deal with all human beings. I have Xanthippe to deal with. Getting along with her insures me that I will get along with the rest of humankind. Although he never aspired to any elevated rank, he seems to have distinguished himself through courage and endurance under adverse conditions. In he held a minor office in the democratic administration of the city when it was his allotted turn. Otherwise Socrates deliberately stayed out of the politics of the city, the area in which most ambitious Athenians tried to distinguish themselves. The contribution that he wished to make to the life of Athens was of a different kind. The fame or notoriety that he enjoyed among his fellow-citizens was based entirely on his philosophical work. What, then, was this work? Considering that Socrates never wrote any books, what exactly did he do? He regularly went either to the agora, or to one of the gymnasiums outside the city walls, to meet his friends and to discuss certain fundamental questions with them. Often bystanders and chance visitors became involved in the discussions as well.

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Chapter 2 : Socrates & Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective

Within the Marxist philosophical tradition the Pre-Socratics are recognized as the first Materialists. Nietzsche described the Pre-Socratics as "the tyrants of the spirit", and says of Socrates that "the hitherto so wonderfully regular, although certainly too rapid, development of the philosophical science was destroyed in one night".

Edouard Zeller was also important in dividing thought before and after Socrates. It may sometimes be difficult to determine the actual line of argument some pre-Socratics used in supporting their particular views. While most of them produced significant texts, none of the texts has survived in complete form. All that is available are quotations by later philosophers often biased and historians, and the occasional textual fragment. The pre-Socratic philosophers rejected traditional mythological explanations of the phenomena they saw around them in favor of more rational explanations. These philosophers asked questions about "the essence of things": From what is everything created? How do we explain the plurality of things found in nature? How might we describe nature mathematically? Others concentrated on defining problems and paradoxes that became the basis for later mathematical, scientific and philosophic study. Later philosophers rejected many of the answers the early Greek philosophers provided, but continued to place importance on their questions. Furthermore, the cosmologies proposed by them have been updated by later developments in science. History of metaphysical naturalism Graphical relationship among the various pre-socratic philosophers and thinkers ; red arrows indicate a relationship of opposition. Coming from the eastern or western fringes of the Greek world, the pre-Socratics were the forerunners of what became Western philosophy and natural philosophy , which later developed into the natural sciences such as physics, chemistry, geology, and astronomy. The pre-Socratics saw the world as a kosmos , an ordered arrangement that could be understood via rational inquiry. Writings[edit] Only fragments of the original writings of the pre-Socratics survive many entitled Peri Physeos, or On Nature , a title probably attributed later by other authors. However, the translation of Peri Physeos as On Nature may be misleading: Thales BC is reputedly the father of Greek philosophy; he declared water to be the basis of all things. He assumed as the first principle an undefined, unlimited substance without qualities apeiron , out of which the primary opposites, hot and cold, moist and dry, became differentiated. Regarding the world as perfect harmony, dependent on number, he aimed at inducing humankind likewise to lead a harmonious life. His doctrine was adopted and extended by a large following of Pythagoreans who gathered at his school in south Italy in the town of Croton. Ephesian school[edit] Heraclitus of Ephesus on the western coast of Anatolia in modern Turkey BC posited that all things in nature are in a state of perpetual flux, connected by logical structure or pattern, which he termed Logos. To Heraclitus, fire, one of the four classical elements , motivates and substantiates this eternal pattern. From fire all things originate, and return to it again in a process of eternal cycles. Eleatic school[edit] The Eleatic School , called after the town of Elea modern name Velia in southern Italy , emphasized the doctrine of the One. Xenophanes of Colophon BC declared God to be the eternal unity, permeating the universe, and governing it by his thought. Zeno propounded a number of celebrated paradoxes, much debated by later philosophers, which try to show that supposing that there is any change or multiplicity leads to contradictions. He appears to have been partly in agreement with the Eleatic School, partly in opposition to it. On the one hand, he maintained the unchangeable nature of substance; on the other, he supposes a plurality of such substances - i. Of these the world is built up, by the agency of two ideal motive forces - love as the cause of union, strife as the cause of separation. He referred all generation and disappearance to mixture and resolution respectively. To him belongs the credit of first establishing philosophy at Athens. This was the doctrine of atoms - small primary bodies infinite in number, indivisible and imperishable, qualitatively similar, but distinguished by their shapes. Moving eternally through the infinite void, they collide and unite, thus generating objects which differ in accordance with the varieties, in number, size, shape, and arrangement, of the atoms which compose them. He was an eclectic philosopher who adopted many principles of the Milesian school , especially the single material principle, which he identified as air. He

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explained natural processes in reference to the rarefactions and condensations of this primary substance. Sophists[edit] The Sophists held that all thought rests solely on the apprehensions of the senses and on subjective impression, and that therefore we have no other standards of action than convention for the individual. They flourished as a result of a special need at that time for Greek education. Other early Greek philosophers[edit] This list includes several men, particularly the Seven Sages , who appear to have been practical politicians and sources of epigrammatic wisdom, rather than speculative thinkers or philosophers in the modern sense.

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Chapter 3 : Socrates | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

socrates: the first martyr of philosophy By Will Durant I see him, in the oldest tale told of him, standing in the snow outside his tent on the night before the battle of Potidaea. The place is Greece, the year is before Christ, and Socrates is thirty-eight years old.

Socratic method Perhaps his most important contribution to Western thought is his dialectic method of inquiry, known as the Socratic method or method of "elenchus", which he largely applied to the examination of key moral concepts such as the Good and Justice. It was first described by Plato in the Socratic Dialogues. To solve a problem, it would be broken down into a series of questions, the answers to which gradually distill the answer a person would seek. The Socratic method has often been considered as a defining element of American legal education. The Socratic method is a negative method of hypothesis elimination, in that better hypotheses are found by steadily identifying and eliminating those that lead to contradictions. An alternative interpretation of the dialectic is that it is a method for direct perception of the Form of the Good. Little in the way of concrete evidence exists to demarcate the two. The lengthy presentation of ideas given in most of the dialogues may be the ideas of Socrates himself, but which have been subsequently deformed or changed by Plato, and some scholars think Plato so adapted the Socratic style as to make the literary character and the philosopher himself impossible to distinguish. Others argue that he did have his own theories and beliefs. Consequently, distinguishing the philosophical beliefs of Socrates from those of Plato and Xenophon has not proven easy, so it must be remembered that what is attributed to Socrates might actually be more the specific concerns of these two thinkers instead. The matter is complicated because the historical Socrates seems to have been notorious for asking questions but not answering, claiming to lack wisdom concerning the subjects about which he questioned others. When he is on trial for heresy and corrupting the minds of the youth of Athens, he uses his method of elenchos to demonstrate to the jurors that their moral values are wrong-headed. He tells them they are concerned with their families, careers, and political responsibilities when they ought to be worried about the "welfare of their souls". Socrates also questioned the Sophistic doctrine that arete virtue can be taught. He liked to observe that successful fathers such as the prominent military general Pericles did not produce sons of their own quality. Socrates argued that moral excellence was more a matter of divine bequest than parental nurture. This belief may have contributed to his lack of anxiety about the future of his own sons. Also, according to A. According to Xenophon, he was a teleologist who held that god arranges everything for the best. He mentions several influences: Prodicus the rhetor and Anaxagoras the philosopher. Perhaps surprisingly, Socrates claims to have been deeply influenced by two women besides his mother: The following are among the so-called Socratic paradoxes: No one errs or does wrong willingly or knowingly. Virtue is sufficient for happiness. Therefore, Socrates is claiming to know about the art of love, insofar as he knows how to ask questions. For his part as a philosophical interlocutor, he leads his respondent to a clearer conception of wisdom, although he claims he is not himself a teacher Apology. Perhaps significantly, he points out that midwives are barren due to age, and women who have never given birth are unable to become midwives; they would have no experience or knowledge of birth and would be unable to separate the worthy infants from those that should be left on the hillside to be exposed. To judge this, the midwife must have experience and knowledge of what she is judging. These virtues represented the most important qualities for a person to have, foremost of which were the philosophical or intellectual virtues. Socrates stressed that " the unexamined life is not worth living [and] ethical virtue is the only thing that matters. It was not only Athenian democracy: Socrates found short of ideal any government that did not conform to his presentation of a perfect regime led by philosophers, and Athenian government was far from that. The Tyrants ruled for about a year before the Athenian democracy was reinstated, at which point it declared an amnesty for all recent events. He believed he was a philosopher engaged in the pursuit of Truth, and did not claim to know it fully. It is often claimed much of the anti-democratic leanings are from Plato, who was never able to overcome his disgust at

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what was done to his teacher. In any case, it is clear Socrates thought the rule of the Thirty Tyrants was also objectionable; when called before them to assist in the arrest of a fellow Athenian, Socrates refused and narrowly escaped death before the Tyrants were overthrown. He did, however, fulfill his duty to serve as Prytanis when a trial of a group of Generals who presided over a disastrous naval campaign were judged; even then, he maintained an uncompromising attitude, being one of those who refused to proceed in a manner not supported by the laws, despite intense pressure. Irvine argues that it was because of his loyalty to Athenian democracy that Socrates was willing to accept the verdict of his fellow citizens. As Irvine puts it, "During a time of war and great social and intellectual upheaval, Socrates felt compelled to express his views openly, regardless of the consequences. As a result, he is remembered today, not only for his sharp wit and high ethical standards, but also for his loyalty to the view that in a democracy the best way for a man to serve himself, his friends, and his city—'even during times of war'—is by being loyal to, and by speaking publicly about, the truth. In the Symposium, Socrates credits his speech on the philosophic path to his teacher, the priestess Diotima, who is not even sure if Socrates is capable of reaching the highest mysteries. Further confusions result from the nature of these sources, insofar as the Platonic Dialogues are arguably the work of an artist-philosopher, whose meaning does not volunteer itself to the passive reader nor again the lifelong scholar. According to Olympiodorus the Younger in his Life of Plato, [] Plato himself "received instruction from the writers of tragedy" before taking up the study of philosophy. These indirect methods may fail to satisfy some readers. It was this sign that prevented Socrates from entering into politics. In the Phaedrus, we are told Socrates considered this to be a form of "divine madness", the sort of insanity that is a gift from the gods and gives us poetry, mysticism, love, and even philosophy itself. Today, such a voice would be classified under the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as a command hallucination. In the play, Socrates is ridiculed for his dirtiness, which is associated with the Laconizing fad; also in plays by Callias, Eupolis, and Telecleides. Other comic poets who lampooned Socrates include Mnesimachus and Ameipsias. In all of these, Socrates and the Sophists were criticized for "the moral dangers inherent in contemporary thought and literature". Prose sources Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle are the main sources for the historical Socrates; however, Xenophon and Plato were students of Socrates, and they may idealize him; however, they wrote the only extended descriptions of Socrates that have come down to us in their complete form. Aristotle refers frequently, but in passing, to Socrates in his writings. Although his Apology is a monologue delivered by Socrates, it is usually grouped with the Dialogues. The Apology professes to be a record of the actual speech Socrates delivered in his own defense at the trial. In the Athenian jury system, an "apology" is composed of three parts: Plato generally does not place his own ideas in the mouth of a specific speaker; he lets ideas emerge via the Socratic Method, under the guidance of Socrates. Most of the dialogues present Socrates applying this method to some extent, but nowhere as completely as in the Euthyphro. What is the pious, and what the impious? The soul, before its incarnation in the body, was in the realm of Ideas very similar to the Platonic "Forms". There, it saw things the way they truly are, rather than the pale shadows or copies we experience on earth. By a process of questioning, the soul can be brought to remember the ideas in their pure form, thus bringing wisdom. Cyrenaics Immediately, the students of Socrates set to work both on exercising their perceptions of his teachings in politics and also on developing many new philosophical schools of thought. Aristotle himself was as much of a philosopher as he was a scientist with extensive work in the fields of biology and physics.

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Chapter 4 : Pre-Socratic philosophy - Wikipedia

Socrates's death is considered iconic and his status as a martyr of philosophy overshadows most contemporary and posthumous criticism. However, Xenophon mentions Socrates's "arrogance" and that he was "an expert in the art of primping" or "self-presentation".

On "Presocratic" and the Sources Difficulties are perhaps inevitable any time we lump a group of variegated thinkers under one name. For, where the thought of different people deals with similar ideas, a specific name seems appropriate for that group of people. For example, the atomist Democritus—traditionally considered to be a Presocratic—is supposed to have been approximately contemporary with Socrates. Continuing on with the use of the term then, should be a tentative and careful endeavor. Whatever the case, these thinkers set Western philosophy on its path. The Sources We have no complete writings from any of the Presocratics, and from some, nothing at all. Our sources, then, are primarily twofold: These might be fragments of books that they wrote, or simply recorded sayings. In any case, there are no surviving complete works from the Presocratics. Moreover, it is important to remember that there are no original compositions—of any length or degree of completeness—available. Neither, for that matter, are any originals available from Plato or Aristotle. In the pre-printing press days, scribes copied whatever editions of books and other written works they had available to them. We have texts that have been copied many times over. This means that, even with the fragments, we can never be sure whether or not the words we are reading correspond exactly to the original ideas that the Presocratics expressed. The ancient testimonies come to us from several sources, each having its own agenda and degree of reliability. Both Plato and Aristotle explicitly name many of the Presocratics, sometimes discussing their supposed ideas at length. We must recognize that both Plato and Aristotle almost certainly treated Presocratic thought in light of their own respective philosophical agendas. Therefore, the information we get from them about the Presocratics is likely skewed and sometimes arrantly false. Plato wrote philosophical-literary dialogues, and likely needed to represent the Presocratics in his own peculiar ways to meet the needs of the dialogues. Aristotle, who wrote in the treatise style to which we are more accustomed today, also references the Presocratics in the context of his own philosophy. Aristotle would set out to write on a particular topic for example, physics, and would survey the ideas of his predecessors on that same topic. In doing so, he at times agreed with their positions, and often disagreed with them. We have to beware, especially where Aristotle disagreed with his predecessors, of a possible and possibly intentional straw-man technique that Aristotle might have employed to advance his own position. Thus, while the accounts of Plato and Aristotle can be useful, we should read them cautiously. The Milesians While it might be inaccurate to call them a school of thinkers, the Milesian philosophers do have connections that are not merely geographical. Hailing from Miletus in Ionia modern day Turkey, Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes each broke with the poetic and mythological tradition handed down by Hesiod and Homer. With what little we know about the Milesians, we do not consider them philosophers in the same way that we consider Plato, Aristotle, and their successors philosophers. Much of what we know about them suggests that they were protoscientists, concerned with cosmogony, which was the generation of the cosmos; and cosmology, the study of or inquiry into the nature of the cosmos. Their cosmogonies and cosmologies are oriented primarily by naturalistic explanations, descriptions, and conjectures, rather than traditional mythology. In other words, the Milesians ostensibly sought to explain the cosmos on its own terms, rather than pointing to the gods as the causes or progenitors of all natural phenomena. The geographical placement of Miletus is noteworthy. It is not unlikely that someone like Thales, for example, travelled to Egypt and perhaps to Babylon. Indeed, there is great evidence to suggest that the Babylonians, in some fashion or another, contributed significantly to ancient Greek knowledge of astronomy and mathematics. This is important to keep in mind when considering Presocratic discoveries in astronomy, mathematics, and other fields. There is scant evidence to suggest that this or that Presocratic thinker was the sole inventor or discoverer in any particular

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scientific finding or field. Thales Typically considered to be the first philosopher in the history of Western philosophy, Thales c. The historian Herodotus says that Thales proposed a single congress for Ionia, effectively centralizing the governmental powers, and making Ionia a single state Graham In a Lydian military campaign, he is supposed to have diverted the Halys river so that the Lydian military could safely cross in the absence of bridges Graham Aristotle relays another story, claiming to show us how Thales defended himself and philosophers against claim that philosophers are useless. Through astronomy, Thales was purportedly able to predict a good olive harvest for a particular year. Plato relates the humorous story that Thales fell into a well while stargazing. Thus, this might be the first anecdote of the impractical and incompetent philosopher who proves himself practically competent, but ultimately unconcerned with worldly affairs. While we have no way of knowing whether or not any of these stories square with the facts, they paint a picture of Thales as a practical and theoretical wise man—a picture that attracted the eyes of most ancient authorities. He is said to have predicted a solar eclipse in , helping the Ionians in battle, since he informed them of the coming darkness, and the enemy was, literally, left in the dark Graham It is also reported that Thales was highly influential in his work in geometry, if not being entirely responsible for introducing it to Greece from Egypt. Indeed, he is supposed to have discovered that two triangles sharing a side and having equal adjacent angles are congruent Graham 35 , that a circle is bisected by its diameter Graham 33 , and that angles at the base of two isosceles triangles are equal Graham Perhaps because of Thales, Milesian philosophy has running through it a taste for the first principles or beginnings of the cosmos. Thales supposed the principle or source arche of all things to be water. Aristotle guesses some reasons why Thales might have believed this Graham First, all things seem to derive nourishment from moisture. Next, heat seems to come from or carry with it some sort of moisture. Finally, the seeds of all things have a moist nature, and water is the source of growth for many moist and living things. Some assert that Thales held water to be a component of all things, but there is no evidence in the testimony for this interpretation. It is much more likely, rather, that Thales held water to be a primal source for all things—perhaps the sine qua non of the world. It is unclear just how far we are to take Thales here, or precisely how, or if, water plays a role in every cosmological phenomenon. While Thales did turn to naturalistic explanations of the cosmos, he did not abandon belief in the gods. If all things either are water, or can ultimately be traced in some way to water, water itself becomes divine—it is the life of the universe, and thus all things are in some way divine. Moreover, if water is more or less connected with some particular thing in the cosmos, then it would stand to reason that some things are more or less divine. Thales, then, did not abandon theology in favor of naturalism, but rather radically modified it. He was supposed to have invented the gnomon, a simple sundial Graham He may have introduced the knowledge of the solstices and equinox to the Greeks, as well as the twelve-hour division of the day—knowledge he probably gained from the Babylonians Graham He travelled extensively, gaining first-hand geographical knowledge. Indeed, he was supposed to have drawn a map of the earth as he knew it Graham Like Thales, Anaximander also posited a source for the cosmos, which he called the boundless apeiron. That he did not, like Thales, choose a typical element earth, air, water, or fire , shows that his thinking had moved beyond the more possibly evident sources of being. He might have thought that, since the other elements seem more or less to change into one another, there must be some source beyond all these—a kind of background upon or source from which all these changes happen. How it is that this separation took place is unclear, but we might presume that it happened via the natural force of the boundless. The universe, though, is a continual play of elements separating and combining. In the generation of the cosmos as we know it now, human beings came to be from other animals. While it would be inaccurate to call Anaximander the father of the theory of evolution, the history of that theory should at least make mention of his name. Anaximander thought that human beings could not have been at their origin the way that they are now. That is, they must have arisen from some other animals, since human beings need longer stretches of time for nurture than other animals. They could not have survived, he reasons, without the generative help of other animals Graham He thought that human beings arose from or were at least akin to fish Graham Beyond this, humans seem to have

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needed moisture and heat for their generation. What evidence Anaximander might have had to support these claims we can only guess, but his willingness to explain the world on its own terms, without recourse to divine generation or intervention although he might well have considered the boundless to be divine, is the mark of a new way of thinking. Anaximenes If our dates are approximate, Anaximenes c. However, the conceptual link between them is undeniable. Like Anaximander, Anaximenes thought that there was something boundless that underlies all other things. Unlike Anaximander, Anaximenes made this boundless thing something definite—air. For Anaximander, hot and cold separated off from the boundless, and these generated other natural phenomena. For Anaximenes, air itself becomes other natural phenomena through condensation and rarefaction. Rarefied air becomes fire. When it is condensed, it becomes water, and when it is condensed further, it becomes earth and other earthy things, like stones. This then gives rise to all other life forms. Furthermore, air itself is divine. Air, then, changes into the basic elements, and from these we get all other natural phenomena. This means that ostensibly qualitative properties of things, for example, hot-cold, hard-soft, and so forth, are reducible to quantitative properties. Since air is boundless, it does not have a beginning or end, but is in a constant state of flux. Air is the morphological thread binding all things together. So, the individual human soul is in some way divine since each human being partakes of air. Again, it is remarkable that Anaximenes, like his fellow Milesians, did not have recourse to Homeric or Hesiodic mythology to explain the world. The Milesians arguably stand at the beginning, at least as the testimony and scant textual evidence has it, of a distinct way of thinking that we consider to be scientific, however primitive it may be. Despite this inclination toward naturalistic explanations of the world, they considered the gods to be thoroughly infused with their world. With the Milesians comes a radical shift in thought. The radical nature of their thinking does not depend upon a rejection of all divinity, but a reformation in the way we think about it. This leads us to Xenophanes, who first explicitly formulated a critique of traditional ways of thinking about divinity. He did not remain in Colophon, but travelled around Greece reciting his poetry, finally settling in modern day Sicily. Since his views were expressed poetically, it is at times difficult to know how to interpret them.

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Chapter 5 : Socratic Method

This is a short text combining extracts from the work of one of the world's greatest thinkers with commentary from one of Britain's most distinguished writers on philosophy.

Internet Sources The most interesting and influential thinker in the fifth century was Socrates , whose dedication to careful reasoning transformed the entire enterprise. Since he sought genuine knowledge rather than mere victory over an opponent, Socrates employed the same logical tricks developed by the Sophists to a new purpose, the pursuit of truth. Thus, his willingness to call everything into question and his determination to accept nothing less than an adequate account of the nature of things make him the first clear exponent of critical philosophy. Although he was well known during his own time for his conversational skills and public teaching, Socrates wrote nothing, so we are dependent upon his students especially Xenophon and Plato for any detailed knowledge of his methods and results. The trouble is that Plato was himself a philosopher who often injected his own theories into the dialogues he presented to the world as discussions between Socrates and other famous figures of the day. Nevertheless, it is usually assumed that at least the early dialogues of Plato provide a fairly accurate representation of Socrates himself. Euthyphro , for example, Socrates engaged in a sharply critical conversation with an over-confident young man. Finding Euthyphro perfectly certain of his own ethical rectitude even in the morally ambiguous situation of prosecuting his own father in court, Socrates asks him to define what "piety" moral duty really is. The demand here is for something more than merely a list of which actions are, in fact, pious; instead, Euthyphro is supposed to provide a general definition that captures the very essence of what piety is. First, there is the obvious problem that, since questions of right and wrong often generate interminable disputes, the gods are likely to disagree among themselves about moral matters no less often than we do, making some actions both right and wrong. Notice that this problem arises only in a polytheistic culture. More significantly , Socrates generates a formal dilemma from a deceptively simple question: If right actions are pious only because the gods love them, then moral rightness is entirely arbitrary, depending only on the whims of the gods. If, on the other hand, the gods love right actions only because they are already right, then there must be some non-divine source of values , which we might come to know independently of their love. In fact, this dilemma proposes a significant difficulty at the heart of any effort to define morality by reference to an external authority. Consider, for example, parallel questions with a similar structure: So this horn is clearly unacceptable. But on the first alternative, the authority approves or disapproves of certain actions because they are already right or wrong independently of it, and whatever rational standard it employs as a criterion for making this decision must be accessible to us as well as to it. Hence, we are in principle capable of distinguishing right from wrong on our own. Thus, an application of careful techniques of reasoning results in genuine if negative progress in the resolution of a philosophical issue. At most, it points us toward a significant degree of intellectual independence. The character of Euthyphro, however, seems unaffected by the entire process, leaving the scene at the end of the dialogue no less self-confident than he had been at its outset. The use of Socratic methods, even when they clearly result in a rational victory, may not produce genuine conviction in those to whom they are applied. The Examined Life Because of his political associations with an earlier regime, the Athenian democracy put Socrates on trial, charging him with undermining state religion and corrupting young people. Explaining his mission as a philosopher, Socrates reports an oracular message telling him that "No one is wiser than you. In each case, however, Socrates concludes that he has a kind of wisdom that each of them lacks: The goal of Socratic interrogation, then, is to help individuals to achieve genuine self-knowledge, even if it often turns out to be negative in character. As his cross-examination of Meletus shows, Socrates means to turn the methods of the Sophists inside-out, using logical nit-picking to expose rather than to create illusions about reality. If the method rarely succeeds with interlocutors, it can nevertheless be effectively internalized as a dialectical mode of reasoning in an effort to understand everything. Even after he has been convicted by the jury, Socrates

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declines to abandon his pursuit of the truth in all matters. Refusing to accept exile from Athens or a commitment to silence as his penalty, he maintains that public discussion of the great issues of life and virtue is a necessary part of any valuable human life. Even when the jury has sentenced him to death, Socrates calmly delivers his final public words, a speculation about what the future holds. Disclaiming any certainty about the fate of a human being after death, he nevertheless expresses a continued confidence in the power of reason, which he has exhibited while the jury has not. Who really wins will remain unclear. Perhaps few of us are presented with the same stark choice between philosophy and death, but all of us are daily faced with opportunities to decide between convenient conventionality and our devotion to truth and reason. How we choose determines whether we, like Socrates, deserve to call our lives philosophical. Now in prison awaiting execution, Socrates displays the same spirit of calm reflection about serious matters that had characterized his life in freedom. Even the patent injustice of his fate at the hands of the Athenian jury produces in Socrates no bitterness or anger. Friends arrive at the jail with a foolproof plan for his escape from Athens to a life of voluntary exile, but Socrates calmly engages them in a rational debate about the moral value of such an action. Of course Crito and the others know their teacher well, and they come prepared to argue the merits of their plan. Escaping now would permit Socrates to fulfil his personal obligations in life. Moreover, if he does not follow the plan, many people will suppose that his friends did not care enough for him to arrange his escape. Therefore, in order to honor his commitments and preserve the reputation of his friends, Socrates ought to escape from jail. But Socrates dismisses these considerations as irrelevant to a decision about what action is truly right. As he had argued in the Apology, the only opinion that counts is not that of the majority of people generally, but rather that of the one individual who truly knows. The truth alone deserves to be the basis for decisions about human action, so the only proper approach is to engage in the sort of careful moral reasoning by means of which one may hope to reveal it. One ought never to do wrong even in response to the evil committed by another. But it is always wrong to disobey the state. Hence, one ought never to disobey the state. And since avoiding the sentence of death handed down by the Athenian jury would be an action in disobedience to the state, it follows Socrates ought not to escape. The argument is a valid one, so we are committed to accepting its conclusion if we believe that its premises are true. But what about the second premise, the claim that it is always wrong for an individual to disobey the state? Surely that deserves further examination. In fact, Socrates pictures the laws of Athens proposing two independent lines of argument in favor of this claim: First, the state is to us as a parent is to a child, and since it is always wrong for a child to disobey a parent, it follows that it is always wrong to disobey the state. Crito 50e Here we might raise serious doubts about the legitimacy of the analogy between our parents and the state. Obedience to our parents, after all, is a temporary obligation that we eventually outgrow by learning to make decisions for ourselves, while Socrates means to argue that obeying the state is a requirement right up until we die. Here it might be useful to apply the same healthy disrespect for moral authority that Socrates himself expressed in the Euthyphro. The second argument is that it is always wrong to break an agreement, and since continuing to live voluntarily in a state constitutes an agreement to obey it, it is wrong to disobey that state. Crito 52e This may be a better argument; only the second premise seems open to question. Even if we suppose, as the laws suggest, that the agreement is an implicit one to which we are committed by our decision to remain within their borders, it is not always obvious that our choice of where to live is entirely subject to our individual voluntary control. Nevertheless, these considerations are serious ones. Socrates himself was entirely convinced that the arguments hold, so he concluded that it would be wrong for him to escape from prison. As always, of course, his actions conformed to the outcome of his reasoning. Socrates chose to honor his commitment to truth and morality even though it cost him his life.

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Chapter 6 : Socrates (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Philosophy has sometimes been understood as "an art of living," and rightly so. But there are good reasons to believe that philosophy can be an "art of dying" as well. "Dying for an idea" is the stuff of martyrdom — "philosophic martyrdom."

The extant sources agree that Socrates was profoundly ugly, resembling a satyr more than a man — and resembling not at all the statues that turned up later in ancient times and now grace Internet sites and the covers of books. He had wide-set, bulging eyes that darted sideways and enabled him, like a crab, to see not only what was straight ahead, but what was beside him as well; a flat, upturned nose with flaring nostrils; and large fleshy lips like an ass. Socrates let his hair grow long, Spartan-style even while Athens and Sparta were at war, and went about barefoot and unwashed, carrying a stick and looking arrogant. Something was peculiar about his gait as well, sometimes described as a swagger so intimidating that enemy soldiers kept their distance. He was impervious to the effects of alcohol and cold weather, but this made him an object of suspicion to his fellow soldiers on campaign. We can safely assume an average height since no one mentions it at all, and a strong build, given the active life he appears to have led. Against the iconic tradition of a pot-belly, Socrates and his companions are described as going hungry. Aristophanes, *Birds* — In the late fifth century B. Although many citizens lived by their labor in a wide variety of occupations, they were expected to spend much of their leisure time, if they had any, busying themselves with the affairs of the city. Other forms of higher education were also known in Athens: One of the things that seemed strange about Socrates is that he neither labored to earn a living, nor participated voluntarily in affairs of state. Rather, he embraced poverty and, although youths of the city kept company with him and imitated him, Socrates adamantly insisted he was not a teacher. Plato, *Apology* 33a — b and refused all his life to take money for what he did. The strangeness of this behavior is mitigated by the image then current of teachers and students: Because Socrates was no transmitter of information that others were passively to receive, he resists the comparison to teachers. Rather, he helped others recognize on their own what is real, true, and good. Plato, *Meno*, *Theaetetus* — a new, and thus suspect, approach to education. He was known for confusing, stinging and stunning his conversation partners into the unpleasant experience of realizing their own ignorance, a state sometimes superseded by genuine intellectual curiosity. Socrates claimed to have learned rhetoric from Aspasia of Miletus, the de facto spouse of Pericles. Plato, *Menexenus*; and to have learned erotics from the priestess Diotima of Mantinea. Plato, *Symposium*. Socrates was unconventional in a related respect. Athenian citizen males of the upper social classes did not marry until they were at least thirty, and Athenian females were poorly educated and kept sequestered until puberty, when they were given in marriage by their fathers. It was assumed among Athenians that mature men would find youths sexually attractive, and such relationships were conventionally viewed as beneficial to both parties by family and friends alike. A degree of hypocrisy or denial, however, was implied by the arrangement: What was odd about Socrates is that, although he was no exception to the rule of finding youths attractive. Plato, *Charmides* d, *Protagoras* a — b; Xenophon, *Symposium* 4. Socrates also acknowledged a rather strange personal phenomenon, a daimonion or internal voice that prohibited his doing certain things, some trivial and some important, often unrelated to matters of right and wrong thus not to be confused with the popular notions of a superego or a conscience. The implication that he was guided by something he regarded as divine or semi-divine was all the more reason for other Athenians to be suspicious of Socrates. Socrates was usually to be found in the marketplace and other public areas, conversing with a variety of different people — young and old, male and female, slave and free, rich and poor — that is, with virtually anyone he could persuade to join with him in his question-and-answer mode of probing serious matters. Socrates pursued this task single-mindedly, questioning people about what matters most, e. He did this regardless of whether his respondents wanted to be questioned or resisted him. Who was Socrates really? The difficulties are increased because all those who knew and wrote about Socrates lived before any

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standardization of modern categories of, or sensibilities about, what constitutes historical accuracy or poetic license. All authors present their own interpretations of the personalities and lives of their characters, whether they mean to or not, whether they write fiction or biography or philosophy if the philosophy they write has characters, so other criteria must be introduced for deciding among the contending views of who Socrates really was. One thing is certain about the historical Socrates: His comedy, *Clouds*, was produced in when the other two writers of our extant sources, Xenophon and Plato, were infants. In the play, the character Socrates heads a Think-o-Rama in which young men study the natural world, from insects to stars, and study slick argumentative techniques as well, lacking all respect for the Athenian sense of propriety. The actor wearing the mask of Socrates makes fun of the traditional gods of Athens lines 48, 24, mimicked later by the young protagonist, and gives naturalistic explanations of phenomena Athenians viewed as divinely directed lines 33; cf. *Theaetetus* e, d, a; *Phaedo* 96a. Worst of all, he teaches dishonest techniques for avoiding repayment of debt lines 1 and encourages young men to beat their parents into submission lines 1. Thus, what had seemed comical a quarter century earlier, Socrates hanging in a basket on-stage, talking nonsense, was ominous in memory by then. Comedy by its very nature is a tricky source for information about anyone. A good reason to believe that the representation of Socrates is not merely comic exaggeration but systematically misleading is that *Clouds* amalgamates in one character, Socrates, features now well known to be unique to other particular fifth-century intellectuals Dover, xxxii-lvii. That Socrates eschewed any earning potential in philosophy does not seem to have been significant to the great writer of comedies. Aristophanes did not stop accusing Socrates in when *Clouds* placed third behind another play in which Socrates was mentioned as barefoot; rather, he soon began writing a revision, which he published but never produced. Aristophanes appears to have given up on reviving *Clouds* in about 400, but his attacks on Socrates continued. Xenophon was a practical man whose ability to recognize philosophical issues is almost imperceptible, so it is plausible that his Socrates appears as such a practical and helpful advisor because that is the side of Socrates Xenophon witnessed. Although Xenophon tends to moralize and does not follow the superior conventions introduced by Thucydides, still it is sometimes argued that, having had no philosophical axes to grind, Xenophon may have presented a more accurate portrait of Socrates than Plato does. But two considerations have always weakened that claim: He left Athens in on an expedition to Persia and, for a variety of reasons mercenary service for Thracians and Spartans; exile, never resided in Athens again. And now a third is in order. Plato was about twenty-five when Socrates was tried and executed, and had probably known the old man most of his life. The extant sources agree that Socrates was often to be found where youths of the city spent their time. The dialogues have dramatic dates that fall into place as one learns more about their characters and, despite incidental anachronisms, it turns out that there is more realism in the dialogues than most have suspected. It does not follow, however, that Plato represented the views and methods of Socrates or anyone, for that matter as he recalled them, much less as they were originally uttered. There are a number of cautions and caveats that should be in place from the start. Even when a specific festival or other reference fixes the season or month of a dialogue, or birth of a character, one should imagine a margin of error. Although it becomes obnoxious to use circa or plus-minus everywhere, the ancients did not require or desire contemporary precision in these matters. All the children born during a full year, for example, had the same nominal birthday, accounting for the conversation at *Lysis* b, odd by contemporary standards, in which two boys disagree about who is the elder. This is a way of asking a popular question, Why do history of philosophy? One might reply that our study of some of our philosophical predecessors is intrinsically valuable, philosophically enlightening and satisfying. The truly great philosophers, and Plato was one of them, are still capable of becoming our companions in philosophical conversation, our dialectical partners. Because he addressed timeless, universal, fundamental questions with insight and intelligence, our own understanding of such questions is heightened. That explains Plato, one might say, but where is Socrates in this picture? Is he interesting merely as a predecessor to Plato? That again is the Socratic problem. Inconsistencies among the dialogues seem to demand explanation, though not all philosophers have thought so Shorey Most famously,

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the Parmenides attacks various theories of forms that the Republic, Symposium, and Phaedo develop and defend. In some dialogues e. There are differences on smaller matters as well. A related problem is that some of the dialogues appear to develop positions familiar from other philosophical traditions e. Three centuries of efforts to solve the Socratic problem are summarized in the following supplementary document: Contemporary efforts recycle bits and piecesâ€”including the failuresâ€”of these older attempts. The Twentieth Century Until relatively recently in modern times, it was hoped that confident elimination of what could be ascribed purely to Socrates would leave standing a coherent set of doctrines attributable to Plato who appears nowhere in the dialogues as a speaker. Many philosophers, inspired by the nineteenth century scholar Eduard Zeller, expect the greatest philosophers to promote grand, impenetrable schemes. Nothing of the sort was possible for Socrates, so it remained for Plato to be assigned all the positive doctrines that could be extracted from the dialogues. In the latter half of the twentieth century, however, there was a resurgence of interest in who Socrates was and what his own views and methods were. The result is a narrower, but no less contentious, Socratic problem. Two strands of interpretation dominated views of Socrates in the twentieth century Griswold ; Klagge and Smith Although there has been some healthy cross-pollination and growth since the mid s, the two were so hostile to one another for so long that the bulk of the secondary literature on Socrates, including translations peculiar to each, still divides into two camps, hardly reading one another: The literary-contextual study of Socrates, like hermeneutics more generally, uses the tools of literary criticismâ€”typically interpreting one complete dialogue at a time; its European origins are traced to Heidegger and earlier to Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. The analytic study of Socrates, like analytic philosophy more generally, is fueled by the arguments in the textsâ€”typically addressing a single argument or set of arguments, whether in a single text or across texts; its origins are in the Anglo-American philosophical tradition. Hans-Georg Gadamer â€” was the doyen of the hermeneutic strand, and Gregory Vlastos â€” of the analytic. Thus terms, arguments, characters, and in fact all elements in the dialogues should be addressed in their literary context. For both varieties of contextualism, the Platonic dialogues are like a brilliant constellation whose separate stars naturally require separate focus. Marking the maturity of the literary contextualist tradition in the early twenty-first century is a greater diversity of approaches and an attempt to be more internally critical see Hyland Analytic developmentalism[6] Beginning in the s, Vlastos , 45â€”80 recommended a set of mutually supportive premises that together provide a plausible framework in the analytic tradition for Socratic philosophy as a pursuit distinct from Platonic philosophy. The evidence Vlastos uses varies for this claim, but is of several types: Finally, Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates only what Plato himself believes at the time he writes each dialogue. The result of applying the premises is a firm list contested, of course, by others of ten theses held by Socrates, all of which are incompatible with the corresponding ten theses held by Plato , 47â€” Many analytic ancient philosophers in the late twentieth century mined the gold Vlastos had uncovered, and many of those who were productive in the developmentalist vein in the early days went on to constructive work of their own see Bibliography. To use them in that way is to announce in advance the results of a certain interpretation of the dialogues and to canonize that interpretation under the guise of a presumably objective order of compositionâ€”when in fact no such order is objectively known. And it thereby risks prejudicing an unwary reader against the fresh, individual reading that these works demand. As in any peace agreement, it takes some time for all the combatants to accept that the conflict has endedâ€”but that is where we are. In short, one is now more free to answer, Who was Socrates really? In the smaller column on the right are dates of major events and persons familiar from fifth century Athenian history. Although the dates are as precise as allowed by the facts, some are estimated and controversial Nails When Socrates was born in , a Persian invasion had been decisively repulsed at Plataea, and the Delian League that would grow into the Athenian empire had already been formed. Assuming that his stoneworker father, Sophroniscus, kept to the conventions, he carried the infant around the hearth, thereby formally admitting him into the family, five days after he was born, named him on the tenth day, presented him to his phratry a regional hereditary association and took responsibility for

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socializing him into the various institutions proper to an Athenian male. Athens was a city of numerous festivals, competitions, and celebrations, including the Panathenaea which attracted visitors to the city from throughout the Mediterranean. Like the Olympics, the Panathenaea was celebrated with special splendor at four-year intervals. After an initial battle, a long siege reduced the population to cannibalism before it surrendered Thucydides 2. As the army made its way home, it engaged in battle near Spartolus and suffered heavy losses Thucydides 2.

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Chapter 7 : calendrierdelascience.com – Socrates the Resentful Martyr

The philosopher Socrates remains, as he was in his lifetime (B.C.E.), [] an enigma, an inscrutable individual who, despite having written nothing, is considered one of the handful of philosophers who forever changed how philosophy itself was to be conceived.

The Historical Socrates i. His family was not extremely poor, but they were by no means wealthy, and Socrates could not claim that he was of noble birth like Plato. He grew up in the political deme or district of Alopece, and when he turned 18, began to perform the typical political duties required of Athenian males. These included compulsory military service and membership in the Assembly, the governing body responsible for determining military strategy and legislation. In a culture that worshipped male beauty, Socrates had the misfortune of being born incredibly ugly. Many of our ancient sources attest to his rather awkward physical appearance, and Plato more than once makes reference to it *Theaetetus* e, *Symposium*, a-c; also Xenophon *Symposium* 4. Socrates was exophthalmic, meaning that his eyes bulged out of his head and were not straight but focused sideways. He had a snub nose, which made him resemble a pig, and many sources depict him with a potbelly. Socrates did little to help his odd appearance, frequently wearing the same cloak and sandals throughout both the day and the evening. As a young man Socrates was given an education appropriate for a person of his station. By the middle of the 5th century B. Sophroniscus, however, also took pains to give his son an advanced cultural education in poetry, music, and athletics. In both Plato and Xenophon, we find a Socrates that is well versed in poetry, talented at music, and quite at-home in the gymnasium. In accordance with Athenian custom, his father also taught him a trade, though Socrates did not labor at it on a daily basis. Rather, he spent his days in the agora the Athenian marketplace , asking questions of those who would speak with him. While he was poor, he quickly acquired a following of rich young aristocrats – one of whom was Plato – who particularly enjoyed hearing him interrogate those that were purported to be the wisest and most influential men in the city. Socrates was married to Xanthippe, and according to some sources, had a second wife. Most suggest that he first married Xanthippe, and that she gave birth to his first son, Lamprocles. He is alleged to have married his second wife, Myrto, without dowry, and she gave birth to his other two sons, Sophroniscus and Menexenus. Various accounts attribute Sophroniscus to Xanthippe, while others even suggest that Socrates was married to both women simultaneously because of a shortage of males in Athens at the time. In accordance with Athenian custom, Socrates was open about his physical attraction to young men, though he always subordinated his physical desire for them to his desire that they improve the condition of their souls. Socrates fought valiantly during his time in the Athenian military. Just before the Peloponnesian War with Sparta began in B. E, he helped the Athenians win the battle of Potidaea B. He also fought as one of 7, hoplites aside 20, troops at the battle of Delium B. Both battles were defeats for Athens. Despite his continued service to his city, many members of Athenian society perceived Socrates to be a threat to their democracy, and it is this suspicion that largely contributed to his conviction in court. It is therefore imperative to understand the historical context in which his trial was set. Later Life and Trial 1. Athens fought one of its bloodiest and most protracted conflicts with neighboring Sparta, the war that we now know as the Peloponnesian War. Aside from the fact that Socrates fought in the conflict, it is important for an account of his life and trial because many of those with whom Socrates spent his time became either sympathetic to the Spartan cause at the very least or traitors to Athens at worst. This is particularly the case with those from the more aristocratic Athenian families, who tended to favor the rigid and restricted hierarchy of power in Sparta instead of the more widespread democratic distribution of power and free speech to all citizens that obtained in Athens. Plato more than once places in the mouth of his character Socrates praise for Sparta *Protagoras* b, *Crito* 53a; cf. *Republic* c in which most people think the Spartan constitution is the best. The political regime of the Republic is marked by a small group of ruling elites that preside over the citizens of the ideal city. In conjunction with these crimes, Athens witnessed the profanation of the Eleusinian mysteries, religious rituals

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that were to be conducted only in the presence of priests but that were in this case performed in private homes without official sanction or recognition of any kind. Rather than face prosecution for the crime, Alcibiades escaped and sought asylum in Sparta. Socrates had by many counts been in love with Alcibiades and Plato depicts him pursuing or speaking of his love for him in many dialogues Symposium c-d, Protagoras a, Gorgias d, Alcibiades I ac, ea. Alcibiades is typically portrayed as a wandering soul Alcibiades I c-d , not committed to any one consistent way of life or definition of justice. Instead, he was a kind of chameleon-like flatterer that could change and mold himself in order to please crowds and win political favor Gorgias a. Though the democrats put down the coup later that year and recalled Alcibiades to lead the Athenian fleet in the Hellespont, he aided the oligarchs by securing for them an alliance with the Persian satraps. Alcibiades therefore did not just aid the Spartan cause but allied himself with Persian interests as well. Sparta finally defeated Athens in B. Instead of a democracy, they installed as rulers a small group of Athenians who were loyal to Spartan interests. The Thirty ruled tyrannically—executing a number of wealthy Athenians as well as confiscating their property, arbitrarily arresting those with democratic sympathies, and exiling many others—until they were overthrown in B. Both Critias and Charmides were killed and, after a Spartan-sponsored peace accord, the democracy was restored. The democrats proclaimed a general amnesty in the city and thereby prevented politically motivated legal prosecutions aimed at redressing the terrible losses incurred during the reign of the Thirty. Their hope was to maintain unity during the reestablishment of their democracy. In the discussion, Socrates argues that if one wants to know about virtue, one should consult an expert on virtue Meno 91be. The political turmoil of the city, rebuilding itself as a democracy after nearly thirty years of destruction and bloodshed, constituted a context in which many citizens were especially fearful of threats to their democracy that came not from the outside, but from within their own city. While many of his fellow citizens found considerable evidence against Socrates, there was also historical evidence in addition to his military service for the case that he was not just a passive but an active supporter of the democracy. Additionally, when he was ordered by the Thirty to help retrieve the democratic general Leon from the island of Salamis for execution, he refused to do so. His refusal could be understood not as the defiance of a legitimately established government but rather his allegiance to the ideals of due process that were in effect under the previously instituted democracy. Notwithstanding these facts, there was profound suspicion that Socrates was a threat to the democracy in the years after the end of the Peloponnesian War. But because of the amnesty, Anytus and his fellow accusers Meletus and Lycon were prevented from bringing suit against Socrates on political grounds. They opted instead for religious grounds. As recounted by Diogenes Laertius 1. Many people understood the charge about corrupting the youth to signify that Socrates taught his subversive views to others, a claim that he adamantly denies in his defense speech by claiming that he has no wisdom to teach Plato, Apology 20c and that he cannot be held responsible for the actions of those that heard him speak Plato, Apology 33a-c. It is now customary to refer to the principal written accusation on the deposition submitted to the Athenian court as an accusation of impiety, or unholiness. Rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices that were officially sanctioned by the city and its officials marked ancient Greek religion. The sacred was woven into the everyday experience of citizens who demonstrated their piety by correctly observing their ancestral traditions. Interpretation of the gods at their temples was the exclusive domain of priests appointed and recognized by the city. The boundary and separation between the religious and the secular that we find in many countries today therefore did not obtain in Athens. A religious crime was consequently an offense not just against the gods, but also against the city itself. Socrates and his contemporaries lived in a polytheistic society, a society in which the gods did not create the world but were themselves created. Socrates would have been brought up with the stories of the gods recounted in Hesiod and Homer, in which the gods were not omniscient, omnibenevolent, or eternal, but rather power-hungry super-creatures that regularly intervened in the affairs of human beings. Human beings were to fear the gods, sacrifice to them, and honor them with festivals and prayers. Socrates instead seemed to have a conception of the divine as always benevolent, truthful, authoritative, and wise. For him, divinity always operated in accordance with the standards of

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rationality. This conception of divinity, however, dispenses with the traditional conception of prayer and sacrifice as motivated by hopes for material payoff. Jurors at his trial might have thought that, without the expectation of material reward or protection from the gods, Socrates was disconnecting religion from its practical roots and its connection with the civic identity of the city. While Socrates was critical of blind acceptance of the gods and the myths we find in Hesiod and Homer, this in itself was not unheard of in Athens at the time. Solon, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and Euripides had all spoken against the capriciousness and excesses of the gods without incurring penalty. Though it has become customary to think of a daimon as a spirit or quasi-divinity for example, Symposium ea, in ancient Greek religion it was not solely a specific class of divine being but rather a mode of activity, a force that drives a person when no particular divine agent can be named. Socrates claimed to have heard a sign or voice from his days as a child that accompanied him and forbid him to pursue certain courses of action. Plato, Apology 31c-d, 40a-b, Euthydemus ea, Euthyphro 3b, Phaedrus b, Theages a, Theaetetus cb, Rep c; Xenophon, Apology 12, Memorabilia 1. Xenophon adds that the sign also issued positive commands Memorabilia 1. This sign was accessible only to Socrates, private and internal to his own mind. For all the jurors knew, the deity could have been hostile to Athenian interests. However, Socrates had no officially sanctioned religious role in the city. As such, his attempt to assimilate himself to a seer or necromancer appointed by the city to interpret divine signs actually may have undermined his innocence, rather than help to establish it. His insistence that he had direct, personal access to the divine made him appear guilty to enough jurors that he was sentenced to death. Because he wrote nothing, what we know of his ideas and methods comes to us mainly from his contemporaries and disciples. These works are what are known as the *logoi sokratikoi*, or Socratic accounts. Aside from Plato and Xenophon, most of these dialogues have not survived. What we know of them comes to us from other sources. Aeschines of Sphettus wrote seven dialogues, all of which have been lost. It is possible for us to reconstruct the plots of two of them: Phaedo of Elis wrote two dialogues. His central use of Socrates is to show that philosophy can improve anyone regardless of his social class or natural talents. Euclides of Megara wrote six dialogues, about which we know only their titles. Diogenes Laertius reports that he held that the good is one, that insight and prudence are different names for the good, and that what is opposed to the good does not exist. All three are Socratic themes. Lastly, Aristippus of Cyrene wrote no Socratic dialogues but is alleged to have written a work entitled *To Socrates*. The two Socratics on whom most of our philosophical understanding of Socrates depends are Plato and Xenophon. Origin of the Socratic Problem The Socratic problem first became pronounced in the early 19th century with the influential work of Friedrich Schleiermacher. Until this point, scholars had largely turned to Xenophon to identify what the historical Socrates thought. Schleiermacher argued that Xenophon was not a philosopher but rather a simple citizen-soldier, and that his Socrates was so dull and philosophically uninteresting that, reading Xenophon alone, it would be difficult to understand the reputation accorded Socrates by so many of his contemporaries and nearly all the schools of philosophy that followed him. The better portrait of Socrates, Schleiermacher claimed, comes to us from Plato. Though many scholars have since jettisoned Xenophon as a legitimate source for representing the philosophical views of the historical Socrates, they remain divided over the reliability of the other three sources.

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Chapter 8 : Socratic - By Historical Period - The Basics of Philosophy

Pre-Socratics: Pre-Socratics, group of early Greek philosophers, most of whom were born before Socrates, whose attention to questions about the origin and nature of the physical world has led to their being called cosmologists or naturalists.

This outlook Protagoras and Socrates deliberately attacked, condemning natural philosophy as worthless compared with the search for a good life, the discussion of social and political questions, and individual morality. Socrates also dismissed its explanations as inadequate because expressed predominantly in terms of origins and internal mechanisms. In his view explanation should be functional, looking to the end rather than the beginning. Thus, for the last sixty or so years of the fifth century, both points of view existed, and a lively controversy went on between them. It was not that the natural philosophers excluded human nature from their investigations but that they saw man and society in a larger framework, as a particular late stage in cosmic development, whereas the others deliberately turned their backs on the external world. The universal and speculative character of pre-Socratic thought was also combated by some of the fifth-century medical writers, and it was in the fields of physiology and hygiene that observational science reached its highest point in this period. Nature of the Evidence Before attempting to describe the pre-Socratic doctrines, it is necessary to emphasize the peculiar nature of our sources of knowledge. Actual quotations occur and are in some cases extensive, as with the prose fragments of Heraclitus and the surviving lines of Empedocles. Yet, from Aristotle onward, the men who passed on this information were not historians in the modern sense but wrote from a particular philosophical viewpoint most often Peripatetic, searching the past for anticipations of their own ideas and selecting and arranging their material accordingly. The task of reconstruction and interpretation is thus very different from and more precarious than that of interpreting a philosopher whose original writings are still available for study. The Milesian School Pre-Socratic philosophy differs from all other philosophy in that it had no predecessors. Philosophy has been a continuous debate, and even highly original thinkers can be seen developing from or reacting against the thought of a predecessor. But with the Greeks of the sixth century the debate begins. Before them no European had set out to satisfy his curiosity about the world in the faith that its apparent chaos concealed a permanent and intelligible order, and that this natural order could be accounted for by universal causes operating within nature itself and discoverable by human reason. They had predecessors of a sort, of course. It was not accidental that the first pre-Socratics were citizens of Miletus, a prosperous trading center of Ionian Greeks on the Asiatic coast, where Greek and Oriental cultures met and mingled. The Milesian heritage included the myths and religious beliefs of their own peoples and their Eastern neighbors and also the store of Egyptian and Babylonian knowledge—astronomical, mathematical, technological. The influence of this heritage was considerable. Yet the Milesians consciously rejected the mythical and religious tradition of their ancestors, in particular its belief in the agency of anthropomorphic gods, and their debt to the knowledge of the East was not a philosophic one. That knowledge was limited because its aim was practical. Astronomy served religion; mathematics settled questions of land measurement and taxation. For these purposes the careful recording of data and the making of certain limited generalizations sufficed, and the realm of ultimate causes was left to dogmatism. For the Greeks knowledge became an end in itself, and in the uninhibited atmosphere of Miletus they gave free play to the typically Greek talent for generalization, abstraction, and the erection of bold and all-embracing explanatory hypotheses. Consciously, the revolt of the Milesian philosophers against both the content and the method of mythology was complete. No longer were natural processes to be at the mercy of gods with human passions and unpredictable intentions. In their place was to come a reign of universal and discoverable law. Yet a whole conceptual framework is not so easily changed. Poetic and religious cosmogonies had preceded the schemes of the Milesians, and the basic assumptions of these can be detected beneath the hypotheses of their philosophic successors. Nevertheless, the achievement of abandoning divine agencies for physical causes working from

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within the world itself can hardly be overestimated. It was common to the mythologies of Greece and neighboring civilizations and, indeed, to others that the world arose from a primitive state of unity and that the cosmogonic process was one of separation or division. This was the first act of the Hebrew Creator. In the Babylonian Enuma Elish the original state of the universe was an undefined mass of watery cloud. The Greek theogony of Hesiod speaks of Heaven and Earth, conceived as anthropomorphic figures, lying locked in an embrace until their son forced them apart as Marduk formed heaven and earth by splitting apart the body of the monster Tiamat. Euripides relates an old tale according to which earth and heaven were once "one form" and after their separation brought to birth the whole variety of living things. In Egypt like Babylonia, a river culture everything arose out of the primeval waters. The key, they thought, lay in identifying the single substance that must satisfy the condition of being able to produce variety out of itself. Thales active in BCE, who chose water or moisture, may still have had the myths at the back of his mind. For him the earth floated on water as it did for the Egyptians. Little else certain is known of him, and we can only guess at his reasons. Water can be seen as solid, liquid, and vaporous. Aristotle thought it more probable that Thales was influenced by the essential connection of moisture with life, as seen in such substances as semen, blood, and sap. With the removal of external personal agents, the world must initiate its own changes, and at this early stage of speculation the only possibility seemed to be that life of some kind is everywhere and that the universe is a growing, organic structure. This may be the explanation of the saying attributed to Thales: Anaximander spoke of only the hot and the dry, which were inevitably in conflict with the cold and the wet. This led him to a momentous idea. The original substance of the universe could not be anything definitely qualified like water, for how could the cold and wet produce their opposites, the hot and dry? Water quenches fire; it cannot engender it. Prior to all perceptible body there must be an indefinite something with none of the incompatible qualities implied by perceptibility. Although still regarding all that exists as corporeal, Anaximander is the first to find ultimate reality in the nonperceptible. This primary substance he called the apeiron, a word of many meanings all related to the absence of limits—everlasting, infinite, indefinite. Because it was imperishable, the origin of all things, and the author of their changes, he called it says Aristotle divine. From it all things have been "separated out," though in what sense they were previously "in" it while the apeiron itself remained a unity is a question that probably did not present itself to him. Somewhere in the apeiron, Theophrastus asserts, a "germ" or "seed" of hot and cold was separated off, and from the interaction of these two flowed the whole cosmic process. A sphere of flame enclosed a moist mass, more solid at the center where the earth formed, vaporous between. The sphere burst into rings around which the dark vapor closed, leaving holes through which we see what appear as sun, moon, and stars. Wet and dry continue to separate, forming land and sea, and finally life itself is produced by the same action of heat sun on the cold and moist portions of the earth. The first animals were born in water and crawled onto dry land. Human infants were originally born and nurtured within the bodies of fishlike creatures, for under primitive conditions unprotected babies could not have survived. Earth, a flat cylinder, hangs freely in space because of its equal distance from all parts of the spherical universe. The sun is the same size as Earth. Eclipses are caused by the closing of the holes in the vapor tubes of the sun and moon. In this first of all attempts at a rational cosmogony and zoogony, the sudden freedom from mythical modes of thought is almost incredible. In its elusiveness and invisibility as atmospheric air, it could almost match the apeiron, and, whereas apeiron, once differentiated into a universe, could no longer be so called, air could become hotter and colder, rarer and denser, and still remain the same substance. Moreover, this theory allowed Anaximenes to break with the notion of separation, which was, at bottom, mythical, and account for the universe by the extension of a known natural process. This was condensation and rarefaction, the former of which he associated with cold and the latter with heat. Air as it rarefies becomes fire; condensed, it turns first to wind, then to cloud, water, earth, and stones. In other words, it is all a question of how much of it there is in a given space, and for the first time the idea enters science that qualitative differences are reducible to differences of quantity. With air as his basic, self-changing substance, Anaximenes could find room for the ancient belief that life was identical with breath. Macrocosm and

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microcosm were animated by the same principle: His contribution lies elsewhere. The Pythagoreans Pythagoras c. As a result the western or Italian Greek philosophers, even when not actual members of his school, became known for a characteristic outlook very different from that of the materialistic and purely rational Milesians and stamped with the impress of his remarkable genius. He founded a brotherhood dedicated to philosophia the word was believed to be his invention as a way of life, with a strong religious, and also a political, element. Philosophically, his importance lies in the shift of interest from matter to form. Inspired, it is said, by the discovery that the musical intervals known to the Greeks as consonant and marked by four fixed strings on the seven-stringed lyre were explicable in terms of ratios of the numbers 1 through 4, Pythagoras saw the universe as one glorious harmonia, or mathematico-musical structure. Number was the key to nature. This idea had incalculable consequences for science even if it led at the time to some rather fanciful equations of natural objects and moral qualities with particular numbers. In spite of that, by the time of Socrates the school had made real progress in mathematics. Since the cosmic harmony included everything, all life was akin. The soul was immortal and underwent a series of incarnations, both human and animal. Philosophy was the effort to understand the structure of the cosmic harmony, with the ultimate aim of integrating the philosophic soul more closely into that harmony on the principle that knowledge assimilates the knower to its object. This aim also demanded the observance of certain religious precepts of which the most important was abstention from animal food. Heraclitus Heraclitus active c. Life was maintained by a tension of opposites fighting a continuous battle in which neither side could win final victory. Thus, movement and the flux of change were unceasing for individuals, but the structure of the cosmos remained constant. This law of individual flux within a permanent universal framework was guaranteed by the Logos, an intelligent governing principle materially embodied as fire, the most subtle element and identified with soul or life. Philosophy had thus far meant the search for an essentially simpler reality underlying the bewildering confusion of appearances. The answers fell into two broad categories, matter and form: Reality was a single material substance the Milesians or an integral principle of structure that could be expressed in terms of numbers the Pythagoreans. Heraclitus, with a statement like "You cannot step twice into the same river," reaches the logical conclusion of the materialistic answer. The water will be different water the second time, and, if we call the river the same, it is because we see its reality in its form. The logical conclusion of form-philosophy is the opposite of flux—namely, a belief in an absolute, unchanging reality of which the world of change and movement is only a quasi-existing phantom, phenomenal, not real. This conclusion was reached in the idealism of Plato, which was largely of Pythagorean inspiration. Unity of Reality At this time the direction of philosophy was changed by the precocious and uncompromising logic of Parmenides of Elea , who was perhaps twenty-five years younger than Heraclitus. For the first time abstract, deductive reasoning is deliberately preferred to the evidence of the senses: In this way he "proved" that, on the premise of his predecessors that reality is one, differentiation of the real can never occur. It remains one—a timeless, changeless, motionless, homogeneous mass, which he compared to a sphere. The multiple, changing world of appearances is an illusion of our senses. Only as a concession to human weakness, and in recognition of our practical need to come to terms with the show of a natural world, did he append a cosmology of the conventional type, beginning with two principles, heat-light and cold-darkness.

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Chapter 9 : Socrates: Philosophical Life

*A survey of the history of Western philosophy. Plato's description of Socrates's final days continued in the *Apology* (1991). Now in prison awaiting execution, Socrates displays the same spirit of calm reflection about serious matters that had characterized his life in freedom.*

The place is Greece, the year is before Christ, and Socrates is thirty-eight years old. There he is, short and stocky, already half bald, and not inclined to good looks; yet there is something about him that convinces you at once that he is an exceptional man. All night long he stands barefoot between the snow and the stars, in almost motionless meditation. He is the Thinker; through him thought, speculation, philosophy, will begin to play a role in European history and will dare the adventure of attempting to understand the world. But this man is no dreamer, to whom thought is a cowardly substitute for action; the very next day, at the height of the battle, he saves the life of his young friend Alcibiades at the risk of his own; and every report heralds his bravery. Like all great men, he could have been any sort of great man; he chose to become a philosopher, not knowing that it is safer to be a general. And so we see him, next, teaching his pupils under the porticoes of the Parthenon. His little band follow him up that scared hill, to hear the Master discourse on wisdom as the highest virtue and democratic aristocracy as the highest state. What hair he has left is now quite white; he is stouter than ever and not an inch taller; he has the head of a satyr, the mouth of a town crier, the eyes of a warrior, the nose of a genius; he will smell out truth where it is, and no disguise will cheat him. One garment covers his body – a simple toga, seldom changed and never immaculate; underneath are the feet of a peasant, always bare. He prefers his roofless school to his noisy home. His wife, Xanthippe, is a misfortune. She berates the philosopher as a good-for-nothing idler, who spends his time gabbing in the market place instead of making bread and butter; she is disappointed to find that Socrates returns from town day after day with his head full and his hands empty; she has a realistic mind, and believes that a man should provide for his family before rearranging the universe. She tells him so in many phrases; and to avoid a misunderstanding, she empties a pail of water upon his head. So he goes back to his students, to Diogenes the cynic, Antisthenes the radical, Alcibiades the dandy, Plato the enthusiast, and many more. He likes the splendor of their young bodies gleaming in the sun and splashing in the pool. He finds the secret of a happy old age in intellectual comradeship with youth; and to these handsome lads he confides his most intimate thoughts, his way to wisdom and peace. What is that he teaches them? He checks his students with question after question, stings their theories with facts, compels them to define their terms, deflates them with humor, burns them with irony, and forces them to see the implications of their thought. He will have no loose minds about him; and such of these as come soon slink away, licking their wounds and scheming revenge. It seems to him a noble virtue, greater than goodness without brains; and he believes that all wrongdoing is rooted in ignorance. He knows the faults and possibilities of democracy 2, years before the radio. Suddenly his life moves out of the quiet rhythm of speculation into the turbulence of public strife. Socrates refuses; he scorns all who use violence and considers government by millionaires to be as ruinous as government by the mob; he will have no aristocracy but that of the wisest men, selected from all ranks by equal educational opportunity in every generation. In the midst of bloodshed and chaos he stands alone. Then the democrats recapture Athens, kill Critias, and arrest Socrates as the supposed intellectual source of the revolt. They cannot charge him with political heresy, which is no crime in Athens; they charge him, deviously, with irreligion – by which they mean that he has rejected the crowded pantheon of Greece and believes there is only one God. Five hundred judges are selected from the people to form the court of justice, the *Dikastery*, that tries him. He makes little defense. He challenges his accusers to show him guilty of either impiety or crime; he startles the court by telling it that instead of being tried for his life, he ought to be supported at public expense as a teacher; useful precisely because of the independence of his thought and speech. The judges are politically hostile to him, and do not care for his ideas; they vote for death by 80 to 1. He has still a chance for life – if he will appeal to the public assembly, it

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may accept a slighter penalty. But he refuses to ask for mercy; and calm and strong as ever, he is led away to jail, condemned to drink the hemlock that will kill him. He is seventy-one years old, and it is the year before Christ. The rest of his story all the world knows, for Plato "who loved him this side of idolatry" has put it down in prose more beautiful than poetry. Read that incomparable narrative, at the end of the Phaedo, in which, with all the restraint of an artist, his greatest pupil tells how the Master drank the last cup and quietly watched himself die. These books will open for you one little pathway into the Country of the Mind; other paths you will find for yourself, until you have won the comradeship of all genius and have absorbed something of that intellectual and moral heritage of the race, which transforms us into men.