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The Failed (?) Rhetoric of Socrates – Identification, Non-conformity, and Subtle Criticism of the Court in Plato's *Apology of Socrates*

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This paper examines the rhetoric used by Socrates in Plato's Apology through the lens of Social Identity Theory and Burke's concept of identification. Considering rhetoric as the art of persuasion through the orator's invocation of shared group identity with the audience, the analysis explores the extent to which Socrates aligned himself with widely accepted conventional norms, values, and beliefs to establish rapport with the dicasts. Remaining steadfast to truth, his principles, and his divine mission, Socrates emerged as a nonconformist to the majority of the contemporary audience. Nonetheless, he managed to establish himself as the prototype philosopher, advocating for an elevated identification based on virtue with his followers and successors across all generations.

In 399 BC, one of the most famous trials in human history took place in Athens. Socrates, the unconventional Athenian citizen and distinctive philosopher, faced charges of impiety and underwent trial before a jury of 500 dicasts.[2] The account of the trial is narrated in Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and in Xenophon's *Apology of Socrates to the Jury* where, despite some noteworthy variations in style and content, both authors present Socrates' defence speech before the Athenian (and, probably, universal) audience.[3] Although there is no unanimous consensus on the date of composition and historicity of these works, it is likely that they were written at some point during roughly the first decade following Socrates' trial.[4]

The actual indictment initiated by Meletus (with Anytus and Lycon acting as supporting speakers) provided that "Socrates does wrong because he corrupts the

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1. This work was facilitated by the sponsorship of The Society of Legal Scholars.

2. The term dicast (judge/juror) refers to the male Athenian citizen over the age of 30 who was selected by lot as a member of a panel empowered to decide legal cases in the popular courts. In a system without professional judges to regulate what the jury can hear, the vote of dicasts was based upon all questions of fact and law, thus combining the functions of modern judges and jurors.

3. Plato, unlike Xenophon, personally witnessed the trial. The historical accuracy, the rationale behind the composition as well as the intended audience of the *Apologies of Socrates* form part of the scholarly debate. See, for example, Gabriel Danzig, "Apologizing for Socrates: Plato and Xenophon on Socrates' Behavior in Court", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* no. 133 (2003): 281-321; Douglas Blyth, "Socrates' Trial and Conviction of the Jurors in Plato's Apology", *Philosophy and Rhetoric* no. 33:1 (2000): 1-22.

4. Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *Socrates on Trial* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 1.

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found it necessary to address a range of explicit and implicit allegations. These allegations were not only prompted by the current indictment but also by past 'accusers' who, for several years, fuelled prejudice and animosity against him in the public eye. Socrates claimed that these past 'accusers', more dangerous than the current plaintiffs, created a false impression to the Athenians about "a certain Socrates, a wise man, a ponderer over the things in the air and one who has investigated the things beneath the earth and who makes the weaker argument the stronger" (Pl. *Apol*. 18b).[5] Because of this, according to the Platonic version, Socrates delivered an apology aimed at providing a comprehensive narrative of his life, tackling both the interconnected sets of charges mentioned above.

The aim of this paper is to analyse Socrates' rhetoric as depicted in Plato's *Apology*. Instead of delving into the historical accuracy of the Platonic version, the focus is on evaluating its persuasive impact on the Athenian dicasts and other, wider, audiences. Based on the psychological theory of *social identity*[6] and the concept of *identification* as developed by Kenneth Burke, the interpretive method to be used will be grounded in an audience-centric approach which seeks to examine the artful creation of shared identity between the speaker and the audience through the use of rhetoric.[7] In that respect, while perceiving the mass Athenian jury as a distinct group marked by a salient social identity, the extent that Socrates rhetorically employed the group's prototypes, norms, and interests to establish his identification - and underscore the opponents' division - with the audience will be analysed.

5. Translations are from *Plato. Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 1 translated by Harold North Fowler; Introduction by W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1966).

6. Vasileios Adamidis, "Mind the audience: forensic rhetoric, persuasion, and identification by reference to the social identity of Athenian *dikastai*", *Rhetorica* no. 42:1 (2024), 1-30.

7. This can be analysed by reference to the psychological theory of social identity, developed in the 1970s by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict", in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, edited by W. Austin and S. Worchel (Pacific Grove, Ca: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1979). Readers who are interested in learning more about the theory of identification would be well advised to consult Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of motives* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1950), because Burke's theory of identification was a significant contribution to modern rhetoric.

Social Identity Theory and Burke's *Identification*

In a tripartite dialogue between a speaker, his adversary, and the audience, rhetoric can be defined as the art of identification and division, in an attempt to "discover the means of persuasion available in a given case".[8] Kenneth Burke, in his seminal study *A Rhetoric of Motives*, approached rhetoric as the enterprise of establishing rapport between the speaker and the audience.[9] Once 'identification' takes place, usually by reference to real or imagined shared values, norms, and beliefs, human beings act together, have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, and attitudes that make them 'consubstantial' and, therefore, receptive to persuasion.[10]

Rhetoric, thus defined, belongs in the psychological realm of Social Identity Theory, which acknowledges and analyses the "individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group's membership".[11] Within this psychological framework, individuals categorize themselves and others into separate social groups, fostering a sense of belonging and self-esteem based on this group membership. As a result, they often align their actions with and show a preference for the values, beliefs, and norms of their own group, while simultaneously showing prejudice against other groups. The psychological construction of an in-group / out-group domain leads individuals to show preference toward members of their group, with whom they share a purportedly common identity, while exhibiting bias against outsiders perceived as not conforming to the group's values. To persuade, then, a skilful rhetorician aims to artfully construct a shared identity with the audience, while underscoring the opponent's division and non-adherence to the norms of the group.

8. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.2.1.

9. This was already acknowledged by Aristotle. One of his apparently favourite passages, as he uses it twice in the *Rhetoric* (at 1.9.30 and 3.14.11), comes from Plato's *Menexenus* (235d) which has Socrates saying that it is not difficult to praise the Athenians before an Athenian audience, but to praise the Athenians before the Spartans. For a detailed treatment of ancient sources on the importance of gaining the good will of the audience, see Vasileios Adamidis, *Character Evidence in the Courts of Classical Athens: Rhetoric, Relevance and the Rule of Law* (London, GB & New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 208-212. For the importance of considering ancient Greek psychology and ideas of the self in the study of the Attic Orators, see Vasileios Adamidis, "The Rhetorical Use of Torture in Attic Forensic Oratory", *Rhetorica* no. 37:1 (2019), 16-34.

10. Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 21.

11. Henry Tajfel, "Social Categorization", English manuscript of "La catégorisation sociale," in *Introduction a la Psychologie Sociale, Vol. 1*, edited by Serge Moscovici (Paris, FR: Larousse, 1972), 272-302, 292.

Socrates' Division with the Audience: The Trial of an Ethical Outsider

Socrates' preexisting division with the audience, primarily attributed to the deep-seated prejudice fostered by previous accusers (Pl. *Apol*. 18c; 19c) and the animosity provoked by his questioning of prominent individuals regarding their understanding of ethical matters (Pl. *Apol*. 21c-23a), was recognized throughout the *Apology* and triggered a subtle criticism of the way Athenian courts operated. Socrates recognised that numerous Athenian dicasts were inclined to vote against him, not because of the current legal charges but due to longstanding bias formed against a fabricated version of 'Socrates' as ethical outsider, constructed through the falsehoods propagated by his old accusers. This distorted image bore no resemblance to the genuine Socrates, who bore no responsibility for these misrepresentations (Pl. *Apol*. 19c), but was enough to condemn him. Thus, being aware of the effect of the established division with the audience, Socrates was doubtful that he would be able to remove this prejudice in the very short time of a trial when it has grown so great for so long a time (Pl. *Apol*. 19a; 24a; 37a-b).

Yet, Socrates' division with – at least – part of the audience stemmed from deeper underlying reasons.[12] While acknowledging the significant impact of the caricature created by comedians, particularly Aristophanes in *The Clouds* (Pl. *Apol*. 18d; 19c), on the perceptions of Athenian dicasts, it is evident that Socrates did little to hide his opposition to the democracy and the damaging rule of the masses, although this did not automatically make him a supporter of oligarchy (Pl. *Apol*. 31e; 32e).[13] The general amnesty of 403 BC aimed to prohibit 'recalling evils' (*mnesikakein*) from the past and, thus, prevent political trials for the sake of reconciliation and social cohesion; however, it is likely that Socrates' opposition to democracy was - at least - indirectly raised by the accusers. Undoubtedly, hardly any member of the court could have overlooked the fact that Socrates had mentored oligarchic figures like Critias and Charmides who held influential positions during the rule of the Thirty Tyrants, as well as the charismatic yet self-serving Alcibiades whose actions were instrumental in the decline of Athens in the final years of the Peloponnesian War.[14]The charge of the corruption of the youth, therefore, could readily be linked to recent events, particularly the evolution of certain individuals within Socrates' circle into nonconformist figures, particularly

12. On those reasons, see I.F. Stone, *The Trial of Socrates* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1988) with the response from T.H. Irwin, Review: "Socrates and Athenian Democracy. The Trial of Socrates by I.F. Stone", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* no.18:2 (1989): 184 – 205.

13. See Richard Kraut, *Socrates and the State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 194-203; Thomas Brickhouse and Nicholas Smith, *Plato's Socrates*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 157-160.

14. See, for example, Aeschines, *Against Timarchus*, 173 who 55 years after the trial of Socrates (i.e. in 345 BC) confirms this view, despite the biased and calculated nature of the argument.

detrimental for the democracy. This narrative underscored in the public consciousness the secret, elitist, and antisocial nature attributed to Socrates' inner circle, as well as the perceived subversive character of his teachings against conventional morality and polity.[15]The division between Socrates and Athens seemed unbridgeable.

The second leg of the charge which referred to Socrates' heterodoxy was equally problematic. The idea that Socrates strayed from traditional religious practices had been deeply rooted in Athenian society since he was first targeted by the 'old' accusers (Pl. *Apol*. 18c). While Socrates successfully demonstrated during his interrogation of Meletus (Pl. *Apol*. 24ff.) that he is not an atheist, this did not directly address the accusation of deviating from the city's religious norms and introducing new divinities. [16] Concerning this aspect, Socrates offers little, if any, rebuttal throughout the *Apology*. [17] To compound matters, Socrates failed to exhibit any attempt to reconcile this divide with the audience. This omission could be attributed either to a shortage of convincing arguments (constrained by Socrates' commitment to the truth, as expressed in Pl. *Apol*. 17d and 20d) or, even worse, to an arrogant disregard for the beliefs held by the dicasts. On the contrary, Socrates insisted on his divine mission that set him apart from his fellow citizens, underscoring that his philosophical activity was dictated by *the god* (Pl. *Apol*. 23b-c; 28d-30a; 33c; 37e) and, therefore, he would not change his conduct even if he was found guilty and he was to die many times over (Pl. *Apol*. 30c). Considering the above, it is hardly surprising that the dicasts often interrupted Socrates' apology with an uproar (Pl. *Apol*. 17d; 20e; 27b; 30c) highlighting the deep division between them.[18]

Failed Rhetoric: Socrates' Personal versus Dicasts' Group Identity

The question then becomes whether Socrates employed a specific rhetorical strategy in his speech to overcome this division and establish rapport with the

15. On the political motives of the prosecution, see Barry Strauss, *Athens after the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

16. Thanassis Samaras, "Who believes in Socrates' Innocence? The Religious Charges against Socrates and the intended audience of Plato's *Apology*", *Polis* no. 24:1 (2007), 1-11.

17. M. F. Burnyeat, "The Impiety of Socrates", *Ancient Philosophy* no. 17 (1997), 1-12.

18. *Thorubos* (uproar) could be the result of the division between a speaker and the audience (Dem. 45.6). On *thorubos* in Athenian courts, see Victor Bers, "Dikastic *Thorubos*," in *Crux: Essays in Greek History Presented to G. E. M. de Ste. Croix*, edited by Paul A. Cartledge and F. D. Harvey (London, GB: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Thorubos was often the way in which mass audiences exercised their authority and imposed conformity on the speakers; see Vasileios Adamidis, "Populist Rhetorical Strategies in the Courts of Classical Athens", *Athens Journal of History* no. 7:1 (2021), 21-40, 17; and Vasileios Adamidis, "Populism in Power? A Reconsideration of the Athenian Democracy of the Late 5th Century BC", *Journal of Ancient Civilizations* no. 37:1 (2022), 33-64, especially at 40, 53.

audience. The evidence from Plato's *Apology* implies that Socrates made a conscious decision to persuade the judges without deviating from the truth, in contrast with his opponents (Pl. *Apol*. 17a-b);[19] that would be the benchmark for his success rather than the persuasive effect of his rhetoric. To prove this, Socrates begins his speech urging the judges to focus solely on whether his words "are just or not; for that is the virtue of a judge, and an orator's virtue is to speak the truth" (Pl. *Apol*. 18a).

Socrates chose to remain steadfast in his commitment to truth and to uphold his personal identity, values, and beliefs throughout the trial. Downgrading the importance of a primary goal of persuasive rhetoric, which involves establishing a connection with the intended audience, Socrates remained unmoved and emphasised his own principles to which the real dicasts should adhere. Rather than seeking common ground with the dicasts by reference to a shared identity grounded in conventional beliefs, he urged the audience to align themselves with his principles from which he did not intend to deviate. After all, this approach was consistent with his behaviour in previous instances where his life was threatened, whether under democratic governance or the rule of the Thirty.[20] For, as Socrates asserts to the audience, in any public or private activity he engaged he has "always been the same as now and have never yielded to any one wrongly" (Pl. *Apol*. 33a). Rather than feeling ashamed of engaging in pursuits that led him to the brink of death, Socrates countered that:

> "a man in whom there is even a little merit ought not to consider danger of life or death, and rather regard this only, when he does things, whether the things he does are right or wrong and the acts of a good or a bad man" (Pl. *Apol*. 28b).[21]

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19. Indeed, this is how Socrates begins his apology: "How you, men of Athens, have been affected by my accusers, I do not know; but I, for my part, almost forgot my own identity, so persuasively did they talk; and yet there is hardly a word of truth in what they have said. But I was most amazed by one of the many lies that they told—when they said that you must be on your guard not to be deceived by me, [17b] because I was a clever speaker. For I thought it the most shameless part of their conduct that they are not ashamed because they will immediately be convicted by me of falsehood by the evidence of fact, when I show myself to be not in the least a clever speaker, unless indeed they call him a clever speaker who speaks the truth".

20. Pl. *Apol*. 32b-3. Socrates, remaining true to his principles, ran a great risk by opposing measures that were profoundly illegal but were supported by those in power. Under the democracy, he happened to be one of the *prytaneis* during the euphemistically called 'Trial of the generals' in the aftermath of the naval battle of the Arginusae in 406 BC, opposing the illegal decision of the Athenian Assembly to execute the winning generals. For an interpretation of these events, see Vasileios Adamidis, "Manifestations of Populism in Late 5th Century Athens," in: *New Studies in Law and History*, edited by David Frenkel and Norbert Varga (Athens, GR: ATINER, 2021), 11-12. Under the rule of the Thirty, Socrates disobeyed the order of the tyrants to bring Leon the Salaminian from Salamis to be put to death.

21. To prove this, Socrates refers to Achilles as the prototype he identifies with, who disregarded the warning of his mother about his imminent death if he decided to avenge the death of Patroclus (Pl. *Apol*. 28c).

In any case, Socrates, distrusting the wisdom of the masses in decision-making and although knowing the risk of opposing them, deliberately refrained from flattering the audience or feigning conformity with their norms and ideas.[22] Consequently, he was not willing to sacrifice his personal identity just to align with their values in the hope of persuading them. In that respect, Socrates' rhetoric was destined to fail, or, in other words, Socrates employed a failed rhetoric.

The *Apology* frequently emphasised the contrasting hierarchy of principles and beliefs, showcasing the Athenians' pursuit of material wealth and other petty things against Socrates' commitment to intellectual and philosophical ideals.[23] Socrates contended that throughout his life remained loyal to his mission to the god, as assigned by the oracle of Delphi (Pl. *Apol*. 21a-23d), which proclaimed that there was no one wiser than him. This dedication to divine service, he argued, stirred prejudice and animosity toward him, as it compelled him to persist in examining individuals whom the majority deemed wise but whom he ultimately discovered to be ignorant. Yet, although perceiving that he was "hated, and grieving and fearing" (Pl. *Apol*. 21e), Socrates nevertheless considered the god's business of the highest importance, "going about and searching and investigating at the god's behest anyone, whether citizen or foreigner, whom I [he] think is wise; and when he does not seem so to me, I give aid to the god and show that he is not wise" (Pl. *Apol*. 23b; cf. 28e, 33c, 37e). This commitment to his divine mission represented true piety for Socrates, and he had no plan to stray from it, disregarding the power and authority of the majority which wrongly interpreted his conduct as eccentric, if not impious.[24] His firm adherence to his personal identity and the unconditional execution of his divine mission posed challenges for his identification with the audience, especially within the confines of conventional morality and practices.

'Elevated' Identification, Subtle Criticism, and the Vision of a New Social Identity

Socrates was not prepared to employ conventional rhetoric to identify with the audience, though this does not mean that he refrained from employing persuasive techniques aimed at establishing a deeper connection with the dicasts.

22. See, for example, 19d; 25b; 28a; 32c; 32e.

23. For example, see 30a-c (to which the dicasts responded with *thorubos*), 36b-d, 38a-b, 41e, and 29d7-e2, where wealth, reputation, and honour are contrasted to wisdom, truth, and perfection of the soul. See Blyth, *Socrates' Trial*, 10.

24. See, Pl. *Apol*. 29c-d and 30b-c, where Socrates says that even if the Athenians decided to release him on the condition that he no longer spends his time on this investigation or in philosophy, he would obey the god rather than the court and not change his conduct even if he was to die many times over.

Despite his assertion to the contrary (Pl. *Apol*. 17c-d), Socrates appears to be familiar with the rhetorical *topoi* employed by litigants in the Athenian courts.[25] Even though he did not aim to conform to the majority's norms, Socrates' didactic tone and his insistence on the truth and his principles, indicated his intention to achieve identification at an elevated level with – at least – part of the (contemporary and future) audience.

His good will towards Athens was genuine and selfless, to the point where he neglected his personal affairs and willingly risked being despised by the masses, all in a lasting commitment to serving the god and benefiting his fellow citizens (Pl. *Apol*. 31b; cf. 30a).[26] Drawing from a rhetorical commonplace often employed by the Attic Orators, Socrates emphasised his valuable contributions to the city, specifically referring to his positive influence on the souls of the Athenians (though, stopping short from asking the dicasts to show gratitude (*charis*) to him in return).

In challenging the conventional idea of public service understood solely in terms of material benefits, he emerged as the prototype of a new, altruistic social figure, introducing a new, elevated social identity.[27] It's easy to imagine the surprise felt by Athenian dicasts upon hearing his words: "[A]nd so, men of Athens, I am now making my defence not for my own sake, as one might imagine, but far more for yours, that you may not by condemning me err in your treatment of the gift the God gave you" (Pl. *Apol*. 30d). While initially this might seem arrogant, Socrates actually advocated a new, elevated set of values. He strived to benefit and improve the Athenians even in his final moments (Pl. *Apol*. 34e), disregarding his own interest, aiming for a new form of identification grounded in virtue rather than uncritical submission to the expectations of the majority of dicasts and conformity with their values.

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25. See, for example, the *prooimion* of Pl. *Apol*., especially 17c-d on Socrates' inexperience in legal matters and old age (34e). Whether this employment of rhetorical *topoi* by Socrates, a well-known critic of rhetoricians, should be seen as a parody is discussed in Brickhouse and Smith, *Socrates on Trial*, 49-59.

26. For the importance of showing good will towards (and securing the good will of) the audience in Athenian courts, see Adamidis, *Character Evidence*, 209.

27. See, for example, Socrates' argument in 30a-b: "know that the god commands me to do this, and I believe that no greater good ever came to pass in the city than my service to the god. For I go about doing nothing else than urging you, young and old, not to care for your persons or your property [30b] more than for the perfection of your souls, or even so much; and I tell you that virtue does not come from money, but from virtue comes money and all other good things to man, both to the individual and to the state." and 36c: "For I tried to persuade each of you to care for himself and his own perfection in goodness and wisdom rather than for any of his belongings, and for the state itself rather than for its interests, and to follow the same method in his care for other things". Reference to public services (liturgies) was also an evidently effective tactic to secure the good will of the audience. See Vasileios Adamidis, "The Relevance of Liturgies in the Courts of Classical Athens", *Athens Journal of History* no. 3:2 (2017), 85-96.

Certainly, Socrates, who never treated anyone unjustly, including himself, and preferred to be wronged rather than harm another, provoked the audience even after being condemned as guilty by proposing a 'penalty' suitable for a benefactor of the city: to receive honorary meals in the prytaneum. He deemed this outcome more fitting for him than even for someone winning a race at the Olympic games, as the latter merely made the Athenians appear happy, whereas Socrates aimed to genuinely contribute to their happiness (Pl. *Apol*. 36d). Naturally, the dicasts were unable to grasp his progressive and advanced reasoning; despite Socrates' friends persuading him to propose a reasonable financial penalty, they ultimately voted for his execution.

Remaining true to his understanding of the role of a judge, Socrates reserved this title solely for those who voted for his acquittal (Pl. *Apol*. 40a), referring to the others simply as "men of Athens".[28] In a direct criticism of the Athenian administration of justice, Socrates implies – by reference to those who condemned him – that dicasts could be easily swayed by rhetorical and performative tricks aimed at contrived, superficial identification, eliciting compassion and pity from the jurors. The fact that he decided not to adopt the tactics that the dicasts would normally expect (or desire) from defendants, reveals his commitment to making an apology befitting his character and principles. As Socrates says, criticising the approach of rhetoricians and the decision-making process in the Athenian popular courts, he could have:

> "begged and besought the judges with many tears, and brought forward his children to arouse compassion, and many other friends and relatives; whereas I will do none of these things, though I am, apparently, in the very greatest danger. Perhaps someone with these thoughts in mind may be harshly disposed toward me and may cast his vote in anger… And why shall I not do so? Not because I am stubborn, Athenians, or lack respect for you. Whether I fear death or not is another matter, but for the sake of my good name and yours and that of the whole state, I think it is not right for me to do any of these things in view of my age and my reputation… For the judge is not here to grant favours in matters of justice, but to give judgement; and his oath binds him not to do favours according to his pleasure, but to judge according to the laws; therefore, we ought not to get you into the habit of breaking your oaths, nor ought you to fall into that habit; for neither of us would be acting piously. Do not, therefore, men of Athens, demand of me that I act before you in a way which I consider neither honourable nor right nor pious, especially when impiety is the very thing for which Meletus here has brought me to trial. For it is plain that if by persuasion and supplication I forced you to break your oaths I should teach you to disbelieve in the existence of the gods and in making my defence should accuse myself of not believing in them…Such acts, men of Athens, we who have any reputation at all ought not to commit, and if we commit them you ought not to allow it, but you should make it clear that you will be much more ready to condemn a man who puts before you such

28. On the rhetorical importance of the forms of address in Athenian courts from a social identity perspective, see Adamidis, *Mind the Audience*.

> pitiable scenes and makes the city ridiculous than one who keeps quiet." (Pl. *Apol*. 34c-35c; cf. 38c-e).[29]

Ironically – yet not untypically for Socrates – his condemnation to death on charges of impiety elevated him to the status of a martyr and the archetype philosopher for future generations; and, indeed, in Plato's *Apology* Socrates emerged as the accuser of his dicasts, denouncing the authoritarian and censorial tendencies of social conformity as employed by the Athenian popular courts which, in his case, suppressed freedom of thought, conscience and expression. Despite respecting the verdict and famously drinking the hemlock, Socrates' stance delegitimised the decision-making authority of his fellow citizens (who did not deserve to be named 'dicasts') and the conformity-imposing power of the many. Establishing a new prototype for nobler values and beliefs, Socrates warned the Athenians:

> "For if you think that by putting men to death you will prevent anyone from reproaching you because you do not act as you should, you are mistaken. That mode of escape is neither possible at all nor honourable, but the easiest and most honourable escape is not by suppressing others, but by making yourselves as good as possible. (Pl. *Apol*. 39d)"

Socrates, remaining true to his principles, may have failed to achieve his identification with the majority of his contemporaries in the famous trial of 399 BC, yet he succeeded in his alignment with virtue, adherence to the law, and identification with the future generations of intellectuals. In this regard, Socrates' seemingly failed rhetoric in the court became a triumph for his legacy and enduring influence across all generations.

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29. Similarly, in Pl. *Apol*. 36d-37a, during the *timesis* (sentencing) phase of the trial, Socrates could have proposed a more modest and reasonable sentence instead of proposing to be honoured with maintenance in the prytaneum as a public benefactor (a role he evidently believed he deserved), thereby improving his chances of avoiding the death sentence proposed by his accusers.

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