Crito

• Socrates is soundly asleep while Crito has been sleepless: Crito thinks S has a happy temperament to calmly face this calamity, but S thinks it absurd to be disturbed by having to die at his age. Crito tells that the ship from Delos has been sighted and will arrive tomorrow. Socrates suggests a dream he had in which a beautiful woman says that on the third day he will see Phythia meaning that he will enter Hades, home of the dead.

Wikipedia on Phthia

• The reference to Phthia is itself a reference to Homer's Iliad (ix.363), when Achilles, upset at having his war-prize, Briseis, taken by Agamemnon, rejects Agamemnon's conciliatory presents and threatens to set sail in the morning; he says that with good weather he might arrive on the third day "in fertile Phthia" — his home

Socrates

The prison in the agora, Athens

Lions at Delos dedicated to Apollo by the people of Naxos shortly before 600 BC

Cape Sounion in Attica, Greek Temple to Poseidon 440 B.C.

Jacques-Louis David: The Death of Socrates, 1787

• Crito: Save yourself, for otherwise I’ll lose a friend and many will think that I could have saved you through spending money: my reputation will be disgraced.

• Socrates: Why should we care about public opinion, rather than the opinion of reasonable men?

• Crito: But your situation proves that the many can do a person the greatest harm if falsely accused.

• S: The many can do neither the greatest harm nor the greatest good, for they can make a man neither foolish nor wise.

• C: don’t worry about your friends and their possible punishment: we are bound to run such risks…we can pay men to bring you to safety and can pay those who could be informers. Simmias and Cebes could help. You could be brought to Thessaly.

• It would be unjust for you to play into your enemies’ hand. It would also be unjust to abandon your children.

• You ought not to bring children into the world unless you can educate them.

Thessaly

Simmias of Thebes

• (Greek: Σιμμίας; 5th–4th century BCE) was a disciple of Socrates, and a friend of Cebes. In his Memorabilia, Xenophon includes him in the inner circle of Socrates' followers. Simmias was considered a Pythagorean.

– You are choosing the easy way, not that of a good and brave man: and you speak of excellence!

– Men will think your situation is due to the cowardice of your friends.

– These things could be not only evil but dishonorable to you and us.

– Now is that time.

We must reflect on whether we should do what you say: I will still only accept the truest argument. [He must mean the best argument.]

• I will not set aside former arguments because of current misfortune.

• I will not be scared by the many with new terrors.

• Were we right in saying we should only pay attention to some opinions?

• I want to hear what you say: your judgment, Crito, will not be biased. [He is being a bit ironic here.]

• Crito agrees we should only respect some opinions, the good ones, which are those of the wise.

• S: A man in training pays attention to the opinion of the doctor or trainer: we should only fear the blame, and welcome the praise, of this one man. The man in training should eat, exercise, and drink only as he says. He will suffer in his body if he listens to the many (the majority). He will be disabled.

Attic red figure kylix

Side B: javelin throwers

• S: Also in questions of justice and injustice we should follow the opinion of the one man who understands, otherwise we will corrupt (damge and maim) the part of us which is improved by justice.

• S: Nor is our life worth living when the part which is harmed by injustice is corrupted (damaged). [Socrates once again addresses the issue of what makes life worth living. In the Apology he said that the unexamined life is not worth living. Here, life is not worth living if your soul is corrupted.] [Is there a part of us that is harmed by injustice and benefitted by justice?]

• S: We must think of what the one man who understands justice would say and what truth herself will say. [That is, we must consider only the truth.]

• S: True, the many can put us to death: but shouldn’t we set value on living well, rather than just living [not dying.] [This is the same theme as in the Apology.] And living well is the same as living honorably and justly. [This of course is controversial.]

So, based on this, is it just for me to escape from prison?

• We will do it if it is just, and not if it is not. Considerations of expense, reputation, bringing up children, are “only the opinions of the many.” [Utilitarians would not agree.]

– Reason says we should only consider whether we act justly in giving money and thanks to those who help us escape, and in playing our own role in this.

– If we would be acting unjustly in escaping we should not take into account death or other evils that may come from remaining here.

We should never act unjustly voluntarily. What we used to say on this point is the truth regardless of what the many say.

– Nor should we repay injustice with injustice. Nor should we do evil to anyone, repaying evil with evil.

– Doing evil to a man is the same as acting unjustly.

– So we should not harm any man no matter how much we suffer from him. [This of course is highly controversial.]

– Those who do not share this opinion have no common ground and can only hold each other in contempt.

– It is never right to act unjustly, to repay injustice with injustice, or to avenge ourselves. Crito agrees.

S: A man should carry out his just agreements.

• I would be injuring those I least ought to injure if I escaped. Crito does not understand.

• [Here Socrates introduces an imaginary character: the laws of Athens.] L: In trying to escape you try to destroy us, the laws and the state, since we could not exist if our decisions had no force. S: Yet, the state has injured me by judging my case unjustly. L: Our agreement was that you would abide by whatever judgments the state would pronounce.

We are your parents since through us your father took your mother.

– Do you find fault with the laws of marriage, or the laws that regulate child-raising and education, for example in music and athletics?

– You are our child and our slave, as was your father. Your rights are not on a level with ours. You have no right to retaliate.

– “your country is worthier, more to be revered, more sacred, and held in higher honor both by the gods and by all men of understanding, than your farther and your mother and all your other ancestors”

– You should reverence it, submit to it, and approach it more humbly than your father.

– Do what it tells us or persuade it to excuse you.

– Obey in silence even if you are ordered to be whipped, imprisoned, or sent to battle.

– Do what it tells you or persuade it its commands are unjust.

– It is more impious to use violence against your country than against a parent.

If any Athenian is dissatisfied with us he may leave with his goods when achieving adulthood.

– Every man who stays has agreed to do whatever we tell him.

– He who disobeys us disobeys his parents, those who reared him, and those whom he agreed to obey.

– You expose yourself to these charges more than other Athenians since you stayed at home in your country more than others, never going to festivals or journeying for other reasons, and you had children here.

– You might have offered to go into exile at your trial, and even gloried in being willing to die.

– Now you are acting like a slave, trying to run away, and breaking your contracts you made to live as our citizen.

– Given your actions, you were more satisfied with the state and laws than other Athenians.

• Your friends will run a risk of exile or worse. And if you go to a well-governed city like Thebes you will go as an enemy of government and of law, and may be considered a corrupter of the young.

• If you avoid well-governed states life may not be worth having.

• If you go to Thessaly where there is disorder and license they will enjoy hearing your escape story, but they may also say you clung greedily to life.

• There you will be a flatterer, a slave to all men, and you will only be banqueting in Thessaly.

Think neither of children nor life before justice.

– Only then can you defend yourself in the other world.

– You will not be happier, more just, or more pious in this life if you do this thing.

– You will not be happier after death: for when you die the laws in Hades will not be kind.

• S: I seem to hear this as the worshippers of Cybele seem to her the music of flutes.

• C: I have nothing more to say.

Corybantian dancers [followers of Cybele]