

Dialogues Conclusive and Inconclusive

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The problem with the Crito

- David Hume (1748) : Socrates “builds a Tory consequence of passive obedience on a Whig foundation of the original contract”
 - “Tory”: the foundation of society is authority as represented by Crown, Church and Law.
 - “Whig”: society exists because citizens freely enter into a contract for mutual protection; law is the means of their agreement.
- Socrates seems to be saying both that we enter freely into a contract to be citizens, and that our obligation is total and blind.

Let's think about



dialogue

Ongoing Dialogue



Ongoing

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Dialogue

Refusing dialogue

- With whom?
- Under what conditions?
- With what justifications?
- Did it ever happen to you?

Ideal dialogue

- Never concludes
- Never excludes

-- how about Socratic dialogue?

Inclusive? Egalitarian?

When does it stop?

Compare with the dialogue of the law courts

You had your chance

- “If we leave this place without first persuading the State to let us go, are we or are we not doing an injury?” (89)
- The Laws say: “Do you not realize... that you must either persuade your country or do whatever it orders?”

The laws / the Laws

- Dialogue in the law court (of which we have one side represented in the Apology)
 - Limited in time and scope
 - Concludes, necessarily, with acquittal or conviction
- Fictive dialogue with the Laws (Crito)
 - Not a discussion between equals

Freedom vs. equality

- Can Socrates be a destroyer of the laws?
 - Threat of disobedience equal and opposite to the laws' power: as if Socrates' power to do harm were indeed infinite (and so a sign of his power to do good?)
- The laws command total obedience because the citizen is not a slave (91, 93)

Immortality

- The Laws: “When you enter the next world, you may plead this in your defence before the authorities there”
- Fixing the bounds of dialogue / referring the issue to a further authority

The waffling many

- “the concerns of the ordinary public, who think nothing of putting people to death, and would bring them back to life if they could, with equal indifference to reason”
(87)

