

Crito dialogue and apology of socrates philosophy essay



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In its plot, the “ Crito” dialogue draws on the continuation of the events discussed in “ Apology of Socrates”, i. e. it describes Socrates as a prisoner under a court sentence and awaiting death in jail. The dialogue is a conversation between Socrates and his wealthy friend Crito on justice and injustice, as well as the appropriate response to injustice.

During the conversation, Crito provides arguments in favor of Socrates’ escape from prison. According to Crito, he and his friends shouldn’t lose their closest friend, besides people could blame Crito for his unwillingness to save Socrates. Arguing with Crito, Socrates points to the inability of the majority to make some great evil or great good, which means that Crito shouldn’t be afraid of public opinions. But according to Crito, through the desire to stay in prison, Socrates commits injustice, similar to the one his enemies do.

Socrates thinks that it is not right to reply to the original injustice with injustice and refuses from Crito’s offer to finance his escape from prison. This dialogue is an ancient model of the social contract theory of the state.

The answer of Socrates to these arguments is based, in his opinion, only on “ reasonable belief” and fearlessness in front of the all-powerful majority. The issue of ratio between the views of the majority and the views of wise minority is one of the main themes of “ Crito”. Socrates argues that it is necessary to follow the opinion of not everyone, but only some, namely, reasonable people, i. e. fair ones, or the opinion of one who knows what justice is, in other words, people must follow the truth.

On the other hand, in the “ Crito” Socrates does not say exactly who should be trusted in matters of justice, calling this only “ someone who knows”.

Taking into account the importance of laws in the “ Crito”, we can assume that Socrates relies on “ Theaet” primarily. In addition, he marks that people shouldn’t just live, but live well, i. e. fairly, while Crito’s arguments are based not on the requirements of justice, but on the customs of the same unprincipled majority.

Socrates speaks to Crito as if on behalf of state laws. These laws regulate commitment of marriages, relations in families, carrying out education and upbringing of citizens, therefore the laws for a citizen is even more important than his parents. Is it acceptable in this case to violate them, i. e., to violate the requirements of the state and the motherland? The laws give citizens the right to disobey them, offering those who disapprove them to leave the country. But those who chose to stay in the native land had thus already committed themselves either to obey its laws as their parents and teachers, or influence the laws in case of their imperfection.

The arguments of personified laws are perceived by Socrates as indestructible. Therefore, the arguments and persuasions of Crito are useless: Socrates refuses to escape.

Giving a general assessment of Plato’s “ Crito” on the basis of the proposed analysis, it is necessary to draw attention to several points.

Plato’s Socrates describes the state laws in their full merger with the state, the state – with the society, and the state and society – with all the vital needs of individual citizens. State, society and their laws only strive to achieve the well-being of citizens, and citizens – only to achieve social and state goals. State laws, as well as the state and society as such are <https://assignbuster.com/crito-dialogue-and-apology-of-socrates-philosophy-essay/>

considered by Plato's Socrates as something native for some people, like their homeland or parents.

After all this it is clear that Plato's Socrates is an unconditional supporter of the classical Greek polis, which really did not distinguish clearly the state and society, and social state life and an individual personality were conceived ideally in total internal and external unity; as for socio-political relations, they were perceived like relations of kinship.

Finally, "Crito" persistently repeats an assertion of the opposition a fair and wise truth and the behavior of unprincipled majority. In some respects this can be considered aristocratism. However, one should not assume that merger of general and personal preached in the dialogue was the province of the aristocracy only. Obviously, when Plato was writing his "Crito", the process of decomposition of the classical polis went too far, and the attempt to make wise the majority through appealing to the former polis system became something utopian. In this dialogue, Socrates says that he would argue only on the basis of reason, but he had nothing else to do.

Consequently, it is not so much the preaching of aristocracy as the painful realizing of the death of the classical monolithic policy.

In addition, it should be marked that the mental appeal to the young, strong, solid and rising slave policy in terms of its collapse necessarily turned into an attempt to restore it, so that the idealism of Socrates and Plato based on pure reason, turned into restorative idealism. Surely, "Crito's" idealism is far from objective idealism, because not ideas are taken for an absolute reality

here, but Hades, while Hades is still just mythology, but not logically designed world of ideas.

Generally, in the “ Crito”, otherworldliness is not inherent for Socrates; he appreciates decent life, and on the basis of Laws’ arguments against the escape from prison, understands justice in the sense of majority from “ Theaet”. The leading role is assigned not to God, and but to the laws and duties of Socrates as a citizen. In other Plato’s dialogues, Socrates is not so law-abiding, e. g. in the “ Theaet” he marks that philosophers do not know and do not understand the laws. In the “ Crito”, God is outside the main arguments, but gives depth to them.