

# Comparison of crito by plato and a letter from a birmingham jail by king jr term ...

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



Social injustice is one of the major challenges that the human kind has faced for long. This social vice has attracted quite a great deal of reactions from the oppressed and those in the rule. It has also attracted great scholars and philosophers. Socrates, one of the great philosophers is one such individual who suffered social injustice in Athens. Martin Luther King Junior was also faced by such a challenge in 1963 in his quest to see to it that racial segregation was abolished in the U. S.

The two had an ultimate quest to end injustice. This is because Socrates stated that he had entered into an agreement-contract to live by not leaving Athens the city he lived in. Under such a situation of wilful decision to remain in the city despite the unjust laws, Socrates sees no reason to attack the city on the account of his unjust conviction. He argues that by one remaining in a country with the unjust laws, the person has thus agreed wilfully to abide the laws. This is so because the person has grown up, seeing the laws and how they operate from childhood to adult hood. The person will also have agreed to bring up his children in the same city with the same systems of unjust laws. According to this then, King should not only abide by the unjust laws of racial segregation that existed in the U. S but also he should accept the repercussions they bring forth wilfully. King should not talk of the explanations he ought to give to his children regarding the segregation since he had, of course by wilfully living in the racially desegregated U. S., agreed to bring them up in such an environment.

Socrates agrees that it is not good for any one to do injustice. This means that the white should not racially segregate or despise the Blacks and the

Blacks should also not despise the white. By this he means that in the event of injustice, it would not be good to do injustice in the response of injustice. It is under this premise that he rejects the offer to be helped to escape from the prison by Crito. Crito had offered to do a series of unjust activities to save Socrates. These include first having agreed to have been allowed in early due to favours he had done to the keeper of the prison. He also pointed out that the possible informers could be cheaply bribed to silence. Using this point of view, Socrates would reject the civil disobedience of King since it is an unjust act in response to an unjust treatment. Socrates consents that at any given moment no evil should be done. This is whether one is responding to an evil act or not. By critically looking at this, King will have no moral authority to undertake the civil disobedience or even to justify the civil it. By doing that Socrates points out that King would be disobeying his parents and all the people who brought him up and also breaking the implied contract that he lives in the city and to follow all the laws. However King wilfully agrees that he is ready to take the repercussions of the civil disobedience just the way Socrates had agreed to accept the fact that he was been convicted using the existing law which he was well informed of since childhood.

Socrates did not fear death during his trial. By this he was ready to take what the unjust law had in store for him. He even offers to explain of the dream that he claims indicated that he had only three days to live. This is a clear show of his willingness to accept the unjust laws and its repercussions not only to him alone but also to the other residents of the city. Under such grounds, Socrates would have offered that King to be at ease and accept the

racial segregation broadly as that is what the existing law offered. King should bear with the ugly brutality in the city, the unjust treatment in the courts etc of the Blacks. Just the way he readily accepted the repercussions of his unjust action toward the existing system of governance by not leaving it as Socrates had offered that, if one is discontented with the laws of the city-Athens, then the person was at liberty to leave the city and join another colony. This according to Socrates could be what King should have done rather than to undertake civil disobedience.

King agrees with Socrates on the creation of tensions of the mind. Such tensions will liberate one from the bondage of myths and semi truths and bring about creative analysis and objective appraisals. Such tensions should not be feared and since they are non violent, they should be used to help men rise from the deep dark prejudices and racism to great heights of understanding and brotherhood. This is what Socrates had done to the youths of the Athenian.

The essence of human rule and divine rule was also brought out. Socrates in his defence declared that the rule of both should be respected. However in case of contradiction, the divine rule should take precedence. This was agreed upon by King. King's opinion was that a law is just if it agrees with the moral law or the law of God which is natural and eternal. It is the just law that should prevail all the time and overcome the unjust law which is rooted in ungodly principles and degrades the human personality.

King also pointed privileged majority do not give their privileges willingly and voluntarily which he said is an historical fact. An individual may come to

understand the morals and voluntarily give up the unjust acts as compared to the groups. In such a situation the groups are immoral than individuals. This is the same point of view which Socrates made clear to Crito in their conversation. Socrates put forth that it is not the wish of the majority which is wrong that should be followed but the right act of an individual. Socrates dismissed the view that the will of the majority do wrong should be followed. He demonstrated this by declining the fat offer by Crito and his ally to offer heavy bribes to the people who could witness his escape. He maintained that since he was an individual and was right in his actions, then the offer could not be made to please the majority.

Socrates could not have approved the civil disobedience of the king. This is basically because as indicate above, he did not agree with unjust acts in the response of unjust acts. He advocates for full acceptance of the law and if one is discontented then the individual should leave the area of such injustice. He however agrees upon gradual change without physical violence but the tensions of the mind.

Socrates as he points out of the wrongs of the majority, such a violent civil disobedience cane treated as an act which is immoral. In such a situation Socrates would have preferred that King should have not mobilised people to demonstrate but rather act alone. This would avoid a lot of misconception that leads to greater disagreements rathe than offer solutions.

King would not agree that Socrates should accept the death sentence as a punishment for the charges brought to him. He would opt that Socrates

should have been called upon for dialogue on the matters that he was convicted on. This is because King had to analyse critically and exhaustively the reason why he was in jail and as such points out why he is unjustly detained. It is under this premise that Socrates accusations of corrupting the young and not believing in the gods in whom the city dwellers believed in would attract imprisonment safe the death sentence. King did not approve death in any struggle, and as in the case of Socrates, he would not have approved of the agreement by Socrates to take poison to death as a form of punishment given to execute him.

Just as King's case of racial segregation in which the white segregated Blacks and as such unjustly mistreated them, Socrates case was almost similar. This so because during his defence, Socrates pointed out that the minds of the judges were poisoned by his enemies when they were still young and impressionable. Since every human being has to fight for his rights as king viewed it, it would have been prudent enough for Socrates to refuse the death sentence that face him rather that to wilfully accept it with a feeble defence.

## **Works cited**

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