

5-1-2004

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Recommended Citation

Marchevsky, Masha (2004) "Socrates Misinterpreted and Misapplied: An Analysis of the Constructed Contradiction between the Apology and the Crito," *Macalester Journal of Philosophy*: Vol. 13: Iss. 1, Article 4.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/philo/vol13/iss1/4>

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Socrates Misinterpreted and Misapplied: An Analysis of the Constructed Contradiction between the Apology and the Crito

Masha Marchevsky

Introduction

Plato's dialogues portray Socrates, the philosopher, through his conversations with others. The *Apology*, one of the first dialogues written by Plato, presents Socrates' argument to the court as to why he is not guilty of breaking Athenian law under the accusation of corrupting the youth and worshipping gods different from the gods everyone else worships. In his speech, Socrates shows that he has not corrupted the youth more than any other Athenian citizen has and that he is no atheist, but rather that he believes in gods and has even visited the Oracle. Moreover, Socrates argues that if doing philosophy makes him guilty, then the court should either put him to death or acquit him because he will never stop searching for wisdom. Socrates says, "Men of Athens, I have the highest regard and affection for you, but I will obey god rather than you.... Either acquit me, or don't, knowing that I will not behave differently even if I am to be put to death a thousand times over (29d)."¹ Scholars of the *Apology*, such as John T. Bookman, Reginald Allen, Anthony Woozley, and David Luban, frequently interpret Socrates' statement to show him defiant of the court, saying that if the court ordered him to stop practicing philosophy, then he would disobey.

In contrast with the *Apology*, Plato's *Crito* suggests Socrates held the philosophy that citizens of a state have a duty to obey laws. Socrates provides several arguments for this. First, Socrates makes an argument from agreement, which says that if people decide to live within a state they make an implicit agreement to follow the laws of that state. With a genuine alternative, if people do not agree the laws are fair, then they must leave the state. If they do not leave, then an implicit agreement is formed and they must adhere (52b-53c).² Secondly, Socrates argues that breaking the law would result in a destruction of the rule of law in Athens. This is an argument from "non-injury." If everyone broke laws they believed to be unjust, then harm would result. Therefore, Socrates argued he could not break the law in order to avoid a complete destruction of Athenian law (50b).³ The third argument Socrates makes demonstrates a duty to obey in reciprocity for benefits. Socrates argues that because we have a duty to obey our parents and because the state is like a parent, we have a duty to obey the state. If we participate under an enterprise under which we receive benefits, then fairness requires us to obey the rules of that enterprise (50e-51c).⁴ Clearly, in the *Crito*, Socrates' agenda is to convince Crito that following the law is a duty that every moral citizen must follow. Therefore, Socrates cannot escape from jail and avoid drinking deadly hemlock as a punishment from the court.

Scholars and philosophers frequently point out and try to resolve the contradiction between the *Apology* and the *Crito*. Typically, they try to frame the dialogues to allow for civil disobedience. As a result of the common interpretation that Socrates' philosophy supports disobeying the law when it is immoral, in his letter from the Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King alludes to Socrates as an explicit supporter of civil disobedience. In his letter he wrote, "To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience."⁵ In my paper, I will first outline the arguments in the *Crito*, which demonstrate Socrates'

¹ Plato, *Apology*, translated by Tom Griffith, in *Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 1 of *Philosophy Classics*, 3rd ed., Forrest E Baird and Walter Kaufmann, eds., (Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), 91-92.

² Plato, *Crito*, translated by Tom Griffith, in *Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 1 of *Philosophy Classics*, 3rd ed., eds. Forrest E Baird and Walter Kaufmann (Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), 107-108.

³ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 106-107.

⁵ Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in *Philosophy of Law*, 6th ed., eds. Joel Feinberg and Jules Coleman (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000), 222.

commitment to obedience of the law. Second, I will discuss a common interpretation of the *Apology's* stance on civil disobedience and demonstrate the contradiction. Next, I will demonstrate that the solutions scholars offer to the contradiction do not solve it. Finally, I will offer my explanation of how the *Apology* and the *Crito* work together to advance Socrates' belief in obedience to Athenian Laws. My argument will demonstrate that Martin Luther King's interpretation of and allusion to Socrates is incorrect.

Socrates' Arguments in the Crito

In the *Crito*, Socrates personifies the Laws of Athens to offer two major arguments for obedience of the laws from agreement and from non-injury. The two arguments persuade Socrates' friend Crito that despite Socrates' belief that the verdict in his trial was unjust, Socrates must obey the court order. Daniel Farrell offers a common scholarly interpretation of the arguments Socrates presents in the *Crito* and strengthens them. I will use his presentation of the arguments as a springboard for closer analysis of how they present explanations for obedience to the state.

The argument from agreement is based on the claim that Socrates would be breaking his word if he tried to escape. In the *Crito*, the Laws speak for Socrates to effectively persuade Crito of the reasons Socrates has to choose death over an escape from prison. Asking Socrates about his agreement, the Laws demonstrate that he has agreed to obey them both verbally and through his actions. "Are we right in saying that you have agreed—not just verbally, but by your behavior—to live your life as a citizen under us?" (52d).⁶ Daniel Farrell finishes the presentation of the argument by showing that by this, the Laws imply obedience is a result of Socrates' choice, "to live in Athens, knowing what would be expected of him if he did."⁷ From this, the Laws logically conclude that anyone who freely chooses to live in Athens and knows the consequences of that choice has entered into an agreement to do what the Laws command (52e). From this, the logical conclusion is that Socrates cannot escape from jail, because the court's decision was a lawful state order to death, and he agreed by staying in Athens that he would obey such orders.

Often, scholars question whether Socrates has an agreement with the court or with the state as a whole. One reading of the dialogue claims that Socrates has an agreement only with the Laws, not the court or the state. This is evident because throughout the dialogue, the Laws are speaking to Crito through Socrates, and when an agreement is discussed, they refer to themselves, rather than a state or court. The Laws function through the state and the court, however, and would not exist without them. Rather than the state and court being entities in themselves that must be followed, they are tools of the Laws. As long as the court and the state act in accordance with the Laws and to advance their purposes, then they must be followed as well. Since obeying lawful court convictions is a part of Socrates' agreement, this argument shows that Socrates must obey the law.

The second argument Socrates presents through the Laws for why he should accept his punishment is based on a concept Daniel Farrell presents as "non-injury." There are two parts to this argument. The first is a demonstration that disobeying the Laws destroys the state, and the second is that the state has a parent-child relationship with each citizen, and harming parents is immoral. The argument that disobeying the Laws destroys the state can be outlined as follows:

1. If everyone doing "x" would lead to a disaster, then no one should do "x."
2. If everyone broke laws one believed to be unjust, then the rule of law would be destroyed.

⁶ Baird and Kaufman, *Ancient Philosophy*, 108.

⁷ Daniel M Farrell, "Illegal Actions, Universal Maxims, and the Duty to Obey the Law: The Case for Civil Authority in the *Crito*," *Political Theory*, 6, no. 2, (May, 1978): 174.

3. Socrates should not disobey the laws.

Socrates demonstrates earlier in the dialogue that doing harm in general is wrong. Combining that argument with the above argument demonstrates that Socrates believes he cannot disobey the laws because it would destroy the rule of law, cause massive harm, and would therefore be immoral.

The Laws in the *Crito* describe the parent-child analogy. Farrell offers an accurate summary of the analogy. “According to the Laws, the state provides and cares for its citizens in much the same way a parent provides and cares for its children. In fact, they say, the state does even more for the citizens than a parent does for a child...”⁸ From there, if we must concede that a child has an obligation to obey his or her parents, we conclude that, similarly, each citizen has a duty to obey the Laws, as they function through the state. Therefore, it would be wrong for Socrates to escape. Clearly, this argument is another demonstration that Socrates wants to argue that everyone must obey the Laws of Athens.

Although there are many responses as to why Socrates is wrong and why laws can and should be disobeyed, the purpose of the presentation of the arguments above was to show that Socrates does argue for obedience to the laws in the *Crito*. By providing two detailed arguments, Socrates clearly demonstrates his belief, if we assume his sincerity in the *Crito*, that laws must be obeyed.

Socrates in the Apology

Common interpretations of the *Apology* present a clear contradiction between it and the *Crito*. In the *Apology*, Socrates presents arguments in front of the court as to why the court should not convict him. Socrates is on trial as a result of accusations brought about by Meletus. R.E. Allen, in his book *Socrates and Legal Obligation*, describes the accusations brought against Socrates. “There were, then, three counts: refusing to acknowledge the gods acknowledged by the city, introducing new (or strange, *kaina*) divinities; and corrupting the youth.”⁹ Throughout his defense, it turns out that Socrates never answers these accusations, but only offers cross-examination questions for his accuser. Through cross-examination, Socrates proves that he corrupts the youth no more than any other Athenian citizen and demonstrates that he is not an atheist.

The apparent conflict with the *Crito* becomes relevant when Socrates discusses his disobedience of the Thirty Tyrants and when Socrates tells the court he would not obey their order if they asked him to stop practicing philosophy. David Luban, in his article “Difference Made Legal, the Court and Dr. King,” summarizes the two arguments.

When the Thirty Tyrants had ordered him to arrest Leon the Salaminian unjustly, so as ‘to implicate as many in their crimes as they could,’ Socrates merely went home; he tells his jurors that he would have died for his disobedience had the government not fallen soon after. And earlier in his defense Socrates provokes his jurors by telling them that if they were to order him, on pain of death, to abandon his philosophical activities, he would reply: “Men of Athens, I respect and love you, and while I live and am able to continue, I shall never give up philosophy.”¹⁰

Luban offers a common interpretation of the arguments Socrates presents in the *Apology* to demonstrate his commitment to civil disobedience as long as the agent is acting morally and is

⁸ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁹ Reginald Allen, *Socrates and Legal Obligation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 3.

¹⁰ David Luban, “Difference Made Legal: The Court and Dr. King,” *Michigan Law Review* 87, no. 8 (August 1989), 29.

willing to accept punishment. However, Luban provides no convincing evidence from the text of the *Apology* to warrant such a claim. A.D. Woozley, in his book *Law and Obedience* further demonstrates that an interpretation of Socrates as a supporter of civil disobedience is common. Woozley argues that a civil disobedient could legitimately claim to have Socrates as an ancestor, who would support his or her actions, such as opposing the Vietnam War or breaking other laws during the civil rights era.¹¹ When I present my argument later with a closer analysis of the *Apology*, I will demonstrate that Luban's, Woozley's, and other common interpretations of Socrates' opinion are inaccurate. On face, however, the explanation provided by Luban poses a contradiction between the *Apology* and the *Crito*.

Proposed Resolutions to the Contradiction

The contradiction between the *Apology* and the *Crito* has resulted in many disputes regarding what Socrates "actually" believed. Is Socrates a supporter of civil disobedience, as the *Apology* seems to suggest, or is he a supporter of strict obedience to the Laws, as his extensive arguments in the *Crito* demonstrate? A. D. Woozley offers a clear description of the contradiction. "The objection is that, as in the *Apology* he expresses his determination to defy a court order prohibiting him from engaging in further public philosophizing, and as in the *Crito* he declares that the individual must obey the court, no matter what. At least one of the accounts cannot be accurately reporting Socrates."¹² Despite the contradiction, many people who engage in civil disobedience, such as Martin Luther King Jr., assert that Socrates was a supporter of their actions. There is no obvious explanation for why they hold the arguments in the *Apology* above those in the *Crito*, but their insistence on assigning the belief of disobedience to Socrates has resulted in several attempted resolutions to the contradiction.

Most of the literature discussing the contradiction between the *Apology* and the *Crito* focuses on resolving it in a way that forces Socrates to support civil disobedience. Arguments supported by Woozley, such as the "persuade or obey" argument, and responses to that argument, all take different approaches to resolving the contradiction by placing Socrates in a positive light. Some discussions of the *Crito*, such as Ann Congleton's, grasp so desperately at an explanation that they argue that Socrates didn't mean anything he stated in the *Crito* because he was "dumbing-down" his arguments for Crito's sake, claiming Crito is not intelligent enough to understand Socrates' "real" position on civil (dis)obedience. In both cases, I will demonstrate that these answers are inadequate to resolve the contradiction presented by the two dialogues.

Those trying to find a reconciliation of the dialogues often offer the "persuade or obey" argument. The argument tries to show that Socrates actually believes, when considering both the *Apology* and the *Crito*, that there is not an absolute duty to obey the laws of the state, but rather that a person must obey the laws or try to persuade the government to change them, thereby engaging in civil disobedience. Proponents of this "resolution" try to show how in the *Apology*, Socrates is merely trying to persuade the court to change laws and in the *Crito* that he leaves room for disobedience.

A.D. Woozley suggests the "persuade-or-obey" doctrine to show Socrates supports civil disobedience. He states, "In Athens people either must show what is wrong with a proposed law before it is enacted, or, if they are unable to convince the government or body proposing the legislation, then they must obey it after it is enacted."¹³ Woozley takes this even further by saying that the "persuade-or-obey" doctrine allows for citizens to challenge the government on the subject of a law or policy, thereby engaging in civil disobedience. Woozley claims that

¹¹ Anthony Douglas Woozley, *Law and Obedience: The Arguments of Plato's Crito* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 39.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 30.

Socrates would support this position and that it eliminates the contradiction between the *Apology* and the *Crito*.

Since Woozley's book is one of the main works on this issue, there are several responses to his study of the dialogues. One response comes from Richard Kraut, who argues that Woozley's interpretation of the amount of civil disobedience allowed is too narrow and that Socrates would go farther than Woozley allows him to. He argues that rather than focusing on persuasion prior to the enactment of the law, Woozley should focus on allowing challenges of currently existing laws, an argument which resembles Socrates' view more accurately. Additionally, recognizing that Woozley does mention both the arguments for obeying the laws presented in the *Crito*, Kraut objects that although Woozley uses them as a way to allow for civil disobedience, neither of the arguments allows for any disobedience. According to Kraut, the alternative states that "the only situation in which someone might be justified in disobeying the law was that in which he was engaged in trying to persuade the authorities that the law or the order under it was bad."¹⁴ The main problem with this interpretation of Socrates is that policies of persuasion to change laws did not exist in ancient Athens. Kraut concludes that Woozley uses the word "persuade" in a way that has no clear parallel in Athenian rhetoric or philosophy. The solution Woozley presents to the contradiction is therefore inadequate to resolve it, leaving no room for allowing civil disobedience under Socrates' philosophy.

Kraut shows how Woozley fails, but then he proceeds to offer his own solution to the contradiction. His resolution rests on the argument from agreement. He argues that Socrates believes that only *just* agreements are to be respected. Kraut argues that this serves a double purpose—"it both binds the citizen to his city under certain conditions (namely when just agreements have been made) and frees him under other conditions."¹⁵ As support for his argument, Kraut cites 49e in the *Crito* by stating that it requires a just agreement for action. "Whatever things someone has agreed upon with another, if they are just, are to be done" (49e-Kraut's translation). However, a different translation of the *Crito* states, "If a man makes an agreement—a fair agreement—with someone, should he fulfill his side of the agreement, or should he try to get out of it?" (49e-Griffith's translation) The previous passage uses the word "fair" rather than "just," giving the phrase an entirely different meaning. "Fair" does not imply justice or morality, but rather a reciprocity agreement, which creates a fair tradeoff. Combining the two translations suggests that by "just" Socrates means fair in accordance with reciprocity rather than "just" on a morality level. Kraut's conclusion is unwarranted because he misinterprets what Socrates means in the quote from *Crito*. Without offering further support for believing Socrates only supports morally just laws, Kraut's argument is at best weak. Therefore, neither Woozley nor Kraut offer a compelling resolution to the contradiction between the *Apology* and the *Crito*.

J. Peter Euben, in his article "Philosophy and Politics in Plato's *Crito*," offers another response to Woozley. He argues that Woozley's analysis is incomplete for three reasons. First, Euben argues that Woozley's position, operating under the assumption that Socrates would have been aware of the contradiction between the *Crito* and the *Apology*, that Socrates did not need to mention his opinions in the *Apology* regarding philosophy and its practice as an exception to his position in the *Crito*, is unpersuasive. Secondly, Euben points out that Woozley assumes that Socrates is honest and straightforward in the *Crito*. This, Euben argues, cannot be proven to be true and therefore, Woozley's reliance on the two dialogues is illegitimate. Finally, Euben rejects Woozley's analysis as an attempt to reconcile the dialogues because of Woozley's lack of acknowledgement of the argument that not following the law can be socially destructive.¹⁶ Euben's analysis demonstrates that Woozley's attempt at reconciliation fails to account for

¹⁴ Richard Kraut, "Plato's *Apology* and *Crito*: Two Recent Studies," *Ethics*, 91, no. 4 (July 1981): 661.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 662.

¹⁶ J. Peter Euben, "Philosophy and Politics in Plato's *Crito*," *Political Theory* 6, no. 2 (May 1978): 151-152.

several factors including Socrates' knowledge of the possible contradiction, Socrates' potential use of irony and myth, and Socrates' strong argument against disobeying that shows a consequence of destruction of the rule of law.

Woozley's attempted resolution clearly fails according to the responses of Kraut and Euben. Additionally, their attempts to reconcile the dialogues also fail. The persuade-or-obey doctrine is not only unsupported by the *Crito*, which clearly argues for obedience to laws, as previously discussed, but it is also anachronistic and incomplete.

Another resolution to the contradiction, offered by Ann Congleton, in "Two Kinds of Lawlessness: Plato's *Crito*," suggests that in the *Crito*, Socrates' position is not sincere and that is evident through his attempts to "dumb-down" his position to help his friend Crito understand. The basic premise of Ann Congleton's article is that there are two levels of lawlessness. Crito operates at the lower level of lawlessness, breaking laws without regard to their level of justice, whereas Socrates operates at a higher level, meaning he only breaks laws that are unjust. Through the dialogue, Congleton argues, Socrates tries to raise Crito a level from lower lawlessness to lawfulness, the necessary level in between lower and higher lawlessness. Congleton assumes that Crito is not smart enough to understand Socrates' "real" position and therefore must listen to a false version of Socrates' opinion. Through her assumptions, Congleton wants to prove that the *Crito*, when used as justification for breaking up protests, is used incorrectly.¹⁷

In order to begin her argument that Socrates is not giving his true opinion in the *Crito*, Congleton begins by presenting her opinion as to why Crito is "corrupt" (subject to "lower lawlessness"). She argues that Crito is corrupt because he bribed the guard without showing concern for the problematic nature of his action and because of his knowledge and familiarity with uses and prices of sycophants.¹⁸ Congleton states, "Plato, by various means, characterizes Crito as a man with a tendency to lawlessness."¹⁹ From this, Congleton concludes Crito has no sense of lawfulness, and Socrates takes on the duty of educating him about it. Her thesis in the article becomes, "the problem of the dialogue is not whether Socrates should go beyond the law to something higher, but whether Crito can get up to the notion of law from something lower."²⁰ Throughout the rest of the article, while mapping out the arguments in the *Crito*, Congleton presents Crito as extremely unintelligent and Socrates as a man on a mission to individuals, whose goal is to help Crito see the value of obeying the law. "Socrates does not rehearse with *Crito* the arguments against tyranny because Crito does not need that, and he does not engage Crito in a discussion of higher lawlessness because Crito cannot yet use that."²¹

Congleton's position has two major flaws. Firstly, Congleton's characterization of Crito is unwarranted. For the two aforementioned reasons, which Socrates directly neither responds to nor condemns, Congleton quickly jumps to a conclusion that Crito is lawless and unintelligent. Although it is true that throughout the dialogue Crito frequently expresses his lack of understanding of Socrates' comments, his confusion is not necessarily an indication of his ineptitude, but rather it shows his unfamiliarity with the reasoning Socrates utilizes. Nowhere in the dialogue is there a suggestion that Crito would not be able to understand the concept civil disobedience. Conclusively, Congleton's initial assertion, on which her attempted resolution is based, is inadequate to support the rest of her argument.

The second flaw of Congleton's position is her conviction that Socrates would lie for Crito's benefit. Socrates provides us with no reason to believe he is withholding his "true opinion" from Crito. Additionally, if we believe Congleton's conclusion that Socrates actually adheres to the maxim of "higher lawlessness," or disobeying the law when it is unjust, then there

¹⁷ Ann Congleton, "Two Kinds of Lawlessness: Plato's *Crito*," *Political Theory* 2, no. 4 (November 1974): 433.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 434.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 435.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 435

²¹ *Ibid.*, 438.

would be no reason for Socrates to remain in jail. Clearly, Socrates believes his conviction was unjust, yet he does not escape. The logical conclusion is that Socrates stayed because his arguments in the *Crito* were sincere as were his reasons for not disobeying the orders of the court.

I can further support this by showing that Socrates values his life, as described in his speech to the jury in the *Apology*. “I believe that this service of mine to god is the most valuable asset you in this city have ever yet possessed” (30b). Socrates clearly wants to live to continue philosophizing and spreading his wisdom. There is no indication that teaching Crito a lesson is Socrates reason for not escaping and consequently dying. From the two dialogues, there is no reason to believe Socrates is being insincere in the *Crito* in order to help Crito learn about “lawfulness.” Congleton’s attempt to reconcile the dialogues and advance the image of Socrates as a supporter of civil disobedience fails, just like Woozley’s.

The problem both Woozley and Congleton encounter in their attempt to reconcile the dialogues stems from their focus on changing the common interpretation of the *Crito* to meet their political agenda of advancing Socrates as an ancestor to people who engaged in civil disobedience in the 1960s. A better way to reconcile the dialogues is by focusing on the *Apology*. Through in-depth analysis of the *Apology*, it becomes evident that Socrates at no point advocates civil disobedience, but rather encourages the court to follow the Laws of Athens. The two major contradictions in the *Apology* are the disobedience of the order of the Thirty Tyrants and Socrates’ statement to the court that he would not obey the jury if they instructed him to stop practicing philosophy. In the context of ancient Athens, neither of these “contradictions” are manifestations of civil disobedience.

In the *Crito*, Socrates makes it clear that his agreement is with Athenian Laws, not with the government or the court. In the *Apology*, when Socrates talks about him ignoring an order of the Thirty Tyrants, Socrates would argue that he kept his agreement with Athenian law, while the tyrants violated it. As A. D. Woozley points out, “While the initial appointment of the Thirty to the government of Athens following final defeat in the war had been legal enough, their administration became more and more arbitrary and tyrannical...It would have been impossible for Socrates to believe that in disobeying their order to bring in a man for summary execution he was disobeying the law.”²² In the context of Athenian history, knowing that the bloody reign of terror by the Thirty was so universally condemned, it is clear that his opposition to their order was not an action contrary to law, but rather a message that despite arbitrary orders, one must always obey the law.

The second major apparent contradiction is Socrates’ refusal to accept the court’s punishment if they had ordered him to stop practicing philosophy. This is frequently used as justification for civil disobedience, showing that when an order by the state is unjust, that it can be disobeyed. However, when we once again examine this from the context of Plato’s Athens, it is clear by arguing that he would not accept such a punishment, Socrates was preaching for adherence to the Laws, not the other way around. As Richard Kraut contends, the court would have no legal authority to issue such an order; a defendant, found innocent, could not be penalized by the court that acquits him.²³ If the court acquitted Socrates on the condition that he would stop practicing philosophy, the condition would be a suggestion and would have no binding force on Socrates. Harry Prosch writes in his article, “Toward an Ethics of Civil Disobedience,”

It is not clear, however, that the court before which Socrates was tried even *could*—legally—make such a conditional offer of acquittal—or of a quasi-suspended sentence. Its powers seemed to be limited to finding the accused innocent or guilty and, if guilty, to

²² Woozley, *Law and Obedience*, 54.

²³ Kraut “Plato’s *Apology* and *Crito*,” 657.

assigning either the punishment proposed by the accuser or else that offered as an alternative by the condemned.²⁴

Prosch's analysis suggests that the court would not have the authority to order Socrates to stop practicing philosophy as a punishment mainly because the accuser had already suggested the punishment of death, the only punishment that would be acceptable if Socrates was found to be guilty except an alternative that he could propose. Therefore, what Socrates is really saying is that he would never propose such an alternative; he would rather be put to death.

Kraut concludes, "Socrates is therefore saying very little when he tells the court, 'I will obey the god rather than you.' He does not explicitly say in this passage how he would react to a valid court order banning philosophy."²⁵ Kraut's analysis of Athenian law, with which both Woozley²⁶ and Prosch agree, demonstrates that Socrates' statement does not advocate civil disobedience, and therefore does not create an inconsistency with the *Crito*.

Furthermore, several passages in the *Apology* advocate obeying Athenian Laws. Under a lawful government, for example, Socrates demonstrates that despite a risk of death, he obeyed their lawful orders. "When the commanders whom you chose to command me told me to take up position at Potidea and Amphipolis and Delium, on those occasions I stayed where they posted me, just like anyone else, and risked death" (28e). Moreover, Socrates encourages the jury to act in accordance with the Laws when he tells them that he will not beg them or bribe them, but rather he hopes that the jury will look at his argument and make a decision based on Athenian Laws. Together, these two examples in the *Apology* show that Socrates was committed to obeying Athenian Laws throughout both dialogues and was never an advocate of civil disobedience.

From the arguments I presented above, it is clear that Martin Luther King's allusion to Socrates in his letter from Birmingham jail as a proponent of civil disobedience is an incorrect characterization of Socrates, which is unsupported by the text of the dialogues and the aforementioned arguments demonstrating his commitment to following Laws. An analysis of the *Apology* demonstrates Socrates' commitment to obeying the Laws and eliminates the contradiction between the *Apology* and the *Crito* by dispelling the common misperception that Socrates advocates civil disobedience in the *Apology*.

²⁴ Harry Prosch, "Toward an Ethics of Civil Disobedience," *Ethics* 77, no. 3 (April 1967): 181.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 657.

²⁶ Woozley, *Law and Obedience*, 44.