

Exit out of Athens? Migration and Obligation in Plato's *Crito*

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Abstract

A prevailing theme of the scholarship on Plato's *Crito* has been civil disobedience, with many scholars agreeing that the Athenian Laws do not demand a slavish, authoritarian kind of obedience. While this focus on civil disobedience has yielded consensus, it has left another issue in the text relatively unexplored—that is, the challenges and attractions of leaving one's homeland or of “exit.” Reading for exit reveals two fundamental, yet contradictory, desires in the *Crito*: a yearning to escape the injustice of the homeland for self-preservation and freedom (voiced by *Crito*) and a deep-seated need to honor one's obligations and attachments to the homeland (voiced by the *Laws*). By exposing the conflicted nature of leaving one's native land, Plato's *Crito* enriches an understanding of the meaning and consequences of an exit for the individual.

Keywords

citizenship, migration, obligation, homeland, social criticism

Sometime in the 1960s, Socrates and the *Crito* became associated with civil disobedience. For those thinking about how to effect political change through disobedience, Socrates' defiant assertion in the *Apology* became a touchstone: “I, men of Athens, salute you and love you, but I will obey the god

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rather than you.” Even if the law required it, Socrates added, “I will certainly not stop philosophizing” (*Apology*, 29d).¹ It may have been this statement that led Martin Luther King Jr. to proclaim in his “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” “To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience.”² Nelson Mandela further validated the connection when he cited Socrates as an exemplar for his conduct in prison.³ Some scholars affirmed the connection, proclaiming in one case, “Socrates took a small but important first step in the direction of Walden Pond and the Birmingham Jail.”⁴

Almost as quickly as this association was noted, it was doubted. Skeptics focused on the *Crito*, reinforcing an established line of interpretation that portrayed Socrates as a figure of obedience, not defiance.⁵ For Howard Zinn, Socrates of the *Crito* was no exemplar of civil disobedience: “Should we model ourselves on Socrates . . . at his most jingoistic moment?”⁶ In response to this line of attack, interpretation of the *Crito* matured and deepened, as scholars attempted to understand and explain its apparent conflict with the *Apology*. The most influential interpretations in this vein focus on legal obligation by illuminating two distinct kinds of law breaking—“higher lawlessness” and “lower lawlessness”—and by exploring the limits of the “persuade and obey” doctrine.⁷

While this has been a fascinating and productive line of interpretation, it has drawn attention away from a pivotal question in the *Crito*: Will Socrates leave Athens or will he honor the command of the city to remain for punishment?⁸ Socrates’ obligations to exit are intimate and existential. Socrates’ friends—Crito, Simmias, and Cebes—want to save his life and, as Crito suggests, so does his family (45b; 45c–d). Given these intimate obligations, one might expect the dialogue to be a paean to exit, a philosopher’s encomium to the glories of egress. It is something more, however. The Laws illuminate a competing attachment to the polity and through their speech reveal the multiple and abiding dimensions of political attachment and obligation. Making the unexpected choice, Socrates refuses Crito’s proposal and, by the end of the dialogue, it is clear that his decision is final in both senses of the word. It is beyond dispute, and it marks the end of his life.

Read in this way, the *Crito* offers a deeper understanding of the political challenges of exiting a political homeland. From an external perspective, departure from a polity might appear straightforward and procedural, consisting of making the necessary arrangements to leave and providing the funds to depart. It might seem to involve, in other words, all those things that Crito has taken care of for Socrates. But as the dialogue unfolds, it points to the interiority of the one who exits, and it suggests that the act of leaving a polity is a more daunting task than it might first appear. Exit means severing political

obligations and, in turn, letting go of an established and familiar civic identity. In Socrates' case, he arguably should shed these political attachments without a second thought, and he should be able to shake off any sense of political obligation with ease. Why would Socrates feel attached to a polity that is determined to destroy him? The fact that Socrates gives voice in a literary way to a connection to the polity—the Laws speak through Socrates—gives some sense as to the tricky nature of these bonds. Even when an exit will preserve life and even when it is motivated by government violence toward the one who would walk away, exit can be arduous. The *Crito* opens up the complexity of exit, revealing the layers of political attachment that must be shed in order to depart.

This opens up the possibility that the *Crito* may help illuminate aspects of the internal struggles of emigrants, who to date number approximately 200 million individuals worldwide.⁹ It creates the potential for the dialogue to speak to a cosmopolitan world in which national borders are increasingly porous and displaced populations are more common. Let me be careful: this is not to suggest that Socrates was some sort of every person or that he is a representative emigrant. Rather, the possibility is that the dialogue *taken as a whole* may give deeper insight into would-be emigrants because it evocatively elucidates a tension between the desire to be free of the homeland and the yearning to remain a part of it. By making exit less familiar, the text provides an opportunity to rethink exit and to see its proclivities and potentialities in a new light.

The argument proceeds by situating my reading of exit and obligation against the backdrop of the existing literature on the *Crito*. The second and third sections re-read the dialogue with exit in mind, focusing in particular on the significance of a permanent break for the city and the individual. The concluding section examines the larger implications of these findings on our understanding of leave-taking, loyalty, and belonging.

Re-reading the *Crito*: From Civil Disobedience to the Tension of Exit

A persistent puzzle in Socratic scholarship is why the *Crito* and the *Apology* do not appear to cohere on civil disobedience or, less anachronistically, justified disobedience. The facts of Socrates' case support divergent conclusions. On the one hand, Socrates disobeyed a command by the Thirty Tyrants when he and four others were ordered to bring Salamis Leon the Salaminian to be executed. Instead of doing their bidding, Socrates "went home" (*Apology*, 32c4–d8). Socrates also famously states in the *Apology* that he will break the law rather than quit philosophy (*Apology*, 29d). On the other hand, the *Crito*

seems to urge obedience. Indeed, for some, the *Crito* insists on “absolute submission,” “blind obedience,” and “strict and complete compliance.”¹⁰ Socrates served in the Athenian military at Potidaea, Amphipolis, and Delium, and, according to Alcibiades’ statements in the *Symposium*, he was valorous in battle (*Symposium*, 219e–21b). These conflicting facts have raised questions about what Socrates believed. If, in the *Crito*, Socrates is committed to obedience, then how can he also be committed to justice? And, if Socrates is committed to justice, then is he also bound to the defiant actions that such a commitment seems to demand?

The scholarship on the *Crito* has blossomed in light of these questions, with a decided bent toward refuting the characterization of Socrates as an authoritarian.¹¹ One of the most influential (and also much criticized) arguments is advanced by Richard Kraut, who forcefully argues that the *Crito* is not, as it might first appear, a text that advocates absolute submission. Much of Kraut’s argument hinges on what he refers to as the “persuade or obey” doctrine, a policy outlined by the Laws of Athens that a citizen must either convince Athens that a law is unjust or obey the law. As Kraut interprets the doctrine, the first element, persuasion, is particularly significant because it implicitly opens the door to dissent and disobedience, which can be understood as attempts to persuade the majority of an injustice. On this reading of the *Crito*, the political agreement outlined by the Laws is not procrustean; indeed, it “invites dissent.”¹²

In another prominent and influential line of interpretation, Anne Congleton deftly subverts the apparent conflict between the *Apology* and the *Crito* by arguing that the Laws’ speech is intended to persuade Crito, not Socrates.¹³ Building on Strauss’s distinction between the moral and political *logoi* in the *Crito*, Congleton argues the Laws’ speech addresses Crito’s “lower lawlessness,” that is, Crito’s desire to violate the law in order to appear like a steadfast friend to the many.¹⁴ The Laws’ speech, Congleton argues, does not speak to Socrates’ “higher lawlessness,” that is, to the position that a violation of the law is justified because the law conflicts with reason.¹⁵ By remaining attentive to the literary elements of the dialogue and to Socrates’ remarkable *prosopopeia*, Congleton demonstrates that the *Crito* and the *Apology* differ in their message because they differ in their audience. In this way, Socrates’ coherence is clarified. As one scholar puts it, this line of argumentation makes it possible to reinstate Socrates as a “man of radical independence, the man he was in the *Apology*” and to see him as a “champion . . . [of] the causes of justice and philosophy.”¹⁶

These two lines of interpretation are rigorous, thoughtful, and subtle, and they have been remarkably influential. They have recuperated Socrates from Zinn’s zings. More to the point, they have added depth and complexity to the

understanding of justified disobedience, revealing the intricacies of Socrates' understanding of the relationship between law and obligation. Given their acumen and influence, however, it is surprising that the dominant lines of interpretation lack something key: substantive insights into the *practice* of justified disobedience.

What actions or practices make disobedience justified? Contemporary scholars have distinguished civil disobedience from mere law breaking by clarifying that civil disobedients break the law in a particular way—that is, they violate the law, for instance, publicly, non-violently, or collectively. The debate about which particular deeds are necessary for legitimacy has been animated, but there is widespread agreement that practices are essential to legitimate civil disobedience as civil disobedience.¹⁷

Interpretations of the *Crito*, in contrast, have little to say about the deeds of disobedience. On closer inspection, this absence makes sense given the interior focus of the *Crito*. At the end of the dialogue, Socrates, speaking *propria persona*, sums up the strange and unexpected Laws' speech with a revealing statement: "these things are what I seem to hear, just as the Corybantes seem to hear the flutes, and the echo of these speeches is booming within me and makes me unable to hear the others" (54d). While the sincerity and significance of this statement has been much debated, it is important to note that it points inward.¹⁸ In addition to emphasizing the interior with the first-person pronouns ("I," "me," and again "me"), Socrates indicates that these are inner thoughts and arguments ("the echo of these speeches is booming within me").¹⁹ Even the word "echo" underscores this sense of a closed internal space in which words and thoughts reverberate. The inward character of the dialogue is further emphasized by the fact that Socrates is asleep when Crito arrives, as does Socrates' dream (43b and 44a). While asleep, Socrates is visited by a beautiful woman dressed in white who makes a prophecy concerning his death, an event that also intimates an internal exchange. It is not hard to imagine Socrates, alone and shackled in prison, reverting to the interior in order to examine his situation and his decision from a variety of perspectives.²⁰ Crito's visit and his offer of exit provide Socrates with the opportunity to reveal this interiority, to give voice to what was thought or heard by him alone.

Socrates' description of the *Crito* in interior terms does two very useful things. First, it explains the absence of a discussion of the political practices of justified disobedience. Because the dialogue is not focused primarily on the exterior world of action and exploit, it does not explore the various kinds of behaviors that distinguish justified disobedience from common law breaking. Second, Socrates' description clarifies that the strong point of the dialogue concerns the moral, legal, and political obligations that are forced to

the fore by Crito's proposition to exit Athens. This interior focus has been emphasized in the secondary literature as the pull of legal obligation. But as Peter Euben has persuasively argued, other kinds of obligation are explored in the *Crito* as well. For Euben, there are two central obligations at play: an obligation to politics and to philosophy. These two obligations are severed from one another in the *Crito* and the *Apology*, and this uncoupling of obligations has tragic consequences.²¹ Socrates' philosophical obligation drives him to teach moral and political issues in an unconventional way. At the same time, Socrates' political obligation makes him indebted to the city, to its laws, to his fellow citizens and even to the multitude. These two obligations root Socrates as a citizen and a philosopher to the particular polity that he has known all his life, Athens, and make fleeing to Thessaly impossible. For Socrates, "being uprooted from Athens is a more certain evil than death" because it would "depriv[e] him of his kinsman, gods, and ancestors." Leaving Athens would make "him a stranger in the world."²²

This tension can be put in different terms as a desire to exit from Athens and as a longing to remain a member of one's homeland. Recast in this way, the tension in the *Crito* is between exit and belonging. The desire to exit—and the individuation that it suggests—is fairly easy to grasp. This desire is given voice in the dialogue by Crito, who is keenly aware that Socrates' fellow citizens have sentenced him to death. Socrates has been cast out from citizenship, rejected by his peers, placed in chains; he will be destroyed. The Athenian jury separated him from the Athenian polity in the *Apology*, and the invitation to flee in *Crito* suggests a completion of that process of estrangement. Why not exit from a city that not only seeks to remove Socrates from its midst, but also to remove him from the land of the living? In Thessaly, Socrates could be free of Athens, free of those who voted to kill him. As Crito puts it, "Socrates, you seem to me to be attempting a thing that isn't even just: you are betraying yourself, although it is possible to be saved" (45c). Crito's sentiments on this issue are reinforced by Hobbes, who argued that "if a man be held in prison or bonds . . . he cannot be understood to be bound by Covenant to subjection; and therefore may, if he can, make his escape by whatever means necessary."²³ There is no political obligation to stay; there is an obligation to flee because of self-preservation. Even the setting of the *Crito* seems to long for release. The peripatetic Socrates who does his best thinking roaming the thoroughfares of Athens has been trapped and must philosophize in stillness. From such a state of bondage, it is easy to imagine the siren song of exit.

The countervailing tendency in the *Crito*—the desire to remain a part of, not a part from—is less intuitive or understandable in Socrates' case. An early indication of this view appears in the *Apology* when Socrates illuminates an

understanding of military obligation that is opposed to Hobbes' view. "[W] herever [someone] is stationed by a ruler, there he must stay and run the risk, as it seems to me, and not take into account death or anything else compared to what is shameful" (*Apology*, 28d). Socrates replicates this move in the *Crito*: he stays where he has been stationed, in Athens.²⁴ In this instance, however, Socrates does not run the risk of death; death is a certainty. A contribution of the *Crito*, in other words, is that it clarifies something that is counterintuitive: the inclination to remain in one's birthplace even when the incentives strongly favor fleeing to another political entity that is safer, more politically stable, or has greater economic opportunities. The dialogue does not provide a definitive answer to the question as to why Socrates stays in Athens (more on this below). It seems clear that the Laws' concerns are not identical to Socrates' concerns. The Laws focus, for instance, on the importance of reputation, a factor that Socrates decisively rejects earlier in the dialogue. Though he may understand the Laws' concerns and even may be connected to them in some way, the Laws and Socrates are not one and the same.²⁵

Regardless of this separation, the Laws do raise valid and serious political concerns. Moreover, their fundamental conflict with Crito exposes the conflicted loyalties engendered by the prospect of leaving.²⁶ Read in this way, the *Crito* opens up the inner state produced by the opportunity to exit one's homeland, with Crito himself giving voice to the yearning for exit and to the desire for freedom, opportunities, and life. The Laws' speech gives voice, in contrast, to the longing to stay and to the feeling of belonging, membership, and sense of self that is constituted by long association with one's homeland. This second desire, I've suggested, is the less expected of the two, and perhaps for this reason the bulk of the dialogue is devoted to its explication. It is to this tendency—the unreasonable, imprudent, and impractical impulse to stay—that we too must explore in detail.

Exit, Filial Piety, and Shame

The *Crito*, as we have seen, has been interpreted with a focus on justified disobedience and obedience to the law. Though the two most influential lines of interpretation vary in important respects, they are united in adding complexity to Socrates' understanding of the relationship between citizenship and legal obligation. This agreement is significant, but at the same time, it is not as substantively rich as one might expect. The *Crito* is silent on the practices of justified disobedience.

What happens to the interpretation of the *Crito* if we follow the path set out by Euben and focus on exit and obligations that are interior and political?

One concrete way to think about this switch is in terms of the Laws' speech. While in the past this speech has been mined for its insights on justified disobedience, a focus on exit suggests reading it for its significance and meaning for the prospect of leaving one's homeland. Read in this way, the Laws' speech is a plea against a sudden and definitive break with the "fatherland" (51b). The interpretive emphasis shifts from a *law-breaking* exit to a law-breaking *exit*. In other words, this shift means that the details of how the action will be done are less important (is fleeing legal or illegal, public or covert, individual or collective?). The repercussions and significance of the exit on the internal understanding of the individual become central. Focus also shifts to the two political figures who will be touched by the exit: the city and the one who exits. The Laws' speech in particular narrows the focus on this dyad. The representatives of the collective address the individual who would walk away.

What, Then, Will Happen to Athens and Socrates If He Leaves for Thessaly?

Much of the Laws' speech focuses on the first part of these two elements: the collective. The Laws claim that, if Socrates flees to Thessaly, he will "destroy" the laws and the city "as far as it lies in you" (50b, 50d, 51a, 54c–d). Socrates, the Laws go on, will ruin our laws (*hoi nomoi*) as well as what the city holds in common (*kai tò koinòn tês poleôs*, 50a).²⁷ As spokesmen for the city, the Laws argue exiting is akin to disobeying a parent because the collective brought Socrates into the world, as well as nurtured and educated him (50d–e). "[D]idn't we beget you, and didn't your father take your mother and bring you forth through us?" (50d). As a result, Socrates is "both our offspring and slave" (50e).

The Laws clarify what they mean by focusing on the city's political agreements, arguing that these will be damaged by Socrates' disloyalty. In particular, his agreements "in deed" with the city will be blighted by his departure (52d). As the Laws see it, Socrates' actions—his long residence in Athens, his decision to have children in Athens, and his refusal of exile during his trial—signal his consent to the collective. In performing these actions, Socrates "already agreed with us in deed to do whatever we bid," and he "agreed in deed, but not in speech, to be governed in accordance with us" (51e, 52d). They conclude Socrates should "obey us, your nurturers" and "do not regard children or living or anything else more important than justice" (50b).

To contemporary ears, the argument that the departure of a single individual could destroy the collective sounds strange, maybe even improbable. In a global context in which almost 200 million individuals have emigrated

from their homeland, it is difficult to believe that one defection could be so consequential. Following the logic of the Laws' speech, some of these countries should be destroyed by the exit. Yet, this is not the case. Massive collective exits, like the one that occurred in East Germany in 1989, fell polities, not one exit.²⁸ Although Athens was a city of roughly thirty thousand and the political context was, of course, radically different from the modern one, it seems questionable that the Laws claim was accepted wisdom. Involuntary exile and ostracism were a noteworthy part of Athenian politics.²⁹ Athens had a tradition of establishing colonies and cleruchies, a fact the Laws recognize when they state that Socrates could have left Athens to live in a colony or somewhere else (51d–e). Exit was a part of Athenian culture as well. As Steve Reece points out, the *Odyssey* can be read as a story of homelessness and hospitality in foreign lands because it explores eighteen examples of a stranger's reception and visit in an unknown land.³⁰ The Laws gesture to this culture of travel and exploration when they draw attention to Socrates' tendency to remain in Athens (52b). In terms of political harm, Socrates' would-be flight to Thessaly pales in comparison to the destruction caused by Alcibiades' exile and defection to Sparta during the Peloponnesian War. Alcibiades not only left Athens, he aided the enemy by using his knowledge of the Athenian military to plan the fortification of Syracuse and Decelea.³¹

If the Laws do not mean that Socrates will literally destroy the city with his exit, why do they make this claim? What is it symbolic or representative of?³² One answer is suggested by usual phrasing that the Laws use when they say that Socrates is attempting to destroy the collective "as far as it lies in *you*" (50b, 54c, emphasis added). This phrase might imply that Socrates possesses more capacity to harm Athens than another individual. Or, it might mean that the full implication of Socrates' exit is beyond his control, and thus the Laws are only focusing on the ruin that Socrates himself will cause. In either case, the phrase emphasizes the relationship between the city and Socrates, between the collective and the individual. Moreover, the Laws seem intent on forcing other concerns out. They attempt to obscure the other worries that Socrates might reasonably have about exiting, including anxiety about his "children, living, or anything else." As the Laws see it, Socrates should be nothing more than a part of this dyad. Only one relationship matters, that between the city and man.

With this relationship in mind, the Laws' connection between exit and destruction becomes more intelligible and coherent. The dyadic *relationship* between Socrates and Athens will be ruined by his departure to Thessaly. This is not hyperbole. Exit will rupture the complex, fraught bond that the Laws describe in their speech. The Laws will no longer be Socrates' nurturers; he will no longer be their dependent, neither their "offspring" nor their

“slave.” The Laws’ recounting of Socrates’ “deeds” underscores how long the two have been bound together. Their relationship has endured for over seventy years, through Socrates’ passage into citizenship and his acquisition of property, through the birth of his children in Athens, and through his trial. The Laws use this list of deeds to secure Socrates’ debt of obedience to the city of course, but this list also records a connection between city and man that, like the friendship between Socrates and Crito, is enduring and complex.³³ It may seem outlandish to call this association a “relationship” and to compare it to Crito’s friendship with Socrates. One can imagine the objections raised by Socrates’ flesh-and-blood friends. Yet, when Plato personifies the Laws, he suggests that they ought to be understood in human, relational terms. Plato drives the point home by identifying the specific human relationship between city and man as a familial relationship, like a father and son.³⁴

Consider, for instance, the effect of exit on the political agreement in deeds. Exit will meaningfully destroy this agreement. As Elaine Scary points out, the Laws define political agreements as corporeal; removing one’s body from the polity means removing oneself from the agreement.³⁵ The idea that Socrates will not honor his agreement by disobeying the law is certainly a blow to the agreement and to the Laws. But so too is his removal from the polity altogether. Without Socrates, there is no relationship between city and man, and without a relationship, there can be no agreement.

It is worth considering how this might make Socrates, or any other dyadic “you,” feel. If the Laws’ speech has an emotional and affective message, what sensations does it produce?³⁶ The Laws’ parental metaphor equates exit with a son’s disrespect for his father and the feelings of shame and ambivalence that such a conflict might generate.³⁷ The father–son relationship in Athens could be complex. As a son grew, his role in the *oikos* changed; the boy who received nurture and education became a nurturer for his father in old age and the individual responsible for annual burial visits after death. These were legal obligations and the lawsuits of the time suggest these relationships were sometimes strained.³⁸ These difficulties are reflected in Greek myth: Cronos’ castration of Uranus with a *harpe* and his assumption of control over the kingdom of the sky, Althaemenes’ killing of Crateus, and Telegonus’ murder of Odysseus in the *Telegony*. As Hesiod darkly put it in *Works and Days*, there will be a time soon when “men will dishonor their parents . . . and will carp at them, chiding them with bitter words . . . They will not repay their aged parents the cost of nurture, for might shall be their right.”³⁹

Historical evidence suggests that the father–son bond may have been particularly strained in the last quarter of the fifth-century Athens. The launching of the Sicilian Expedition in 415 B.C., which was understood to be the “high

water mark of Athenian youth, both in practice and ideology,” and its failure were consequential for the issue of filial piety.⁴⁰ A result was a return of the *patrios politeia* (constitution of the father) and a re-emphasis on the rule of the fathers and respect for elders.⁴¹ At home in Athens, the sophistic movement raised questions about the conventional norms of respect, honor, and obedience to one’s parents, a trend captured and mocked in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*. In the play, the son, Pheidippides, studies at Socrates’ “*phrontisterion*” in order to learn how to be insolent, disrespectful, and manipulative of his father, Strepsiades, and to justify his actions with argumentation. By the end of the *Clouds*, Pheidippides’ training is complete: he physically assaults Stresaides and bests his father in an argument as to why the beating was justified.

Aristophanes depicts Socrates on the side of the rebellious, impious sons, a view confirmed by Socrates’ conviction for corrupting the youth. Plato turns this characterization on its head in the *Crito*. Socrates not only listens to the Laws, he does their bidding. He minds the Laws’ speech, without argumentation, and does his duty even when the Laws, his fathers, are at their worst—that is, when they are debasing Socrates, excoriating him, and killing him. Plato may have delighted in the fact that Socrates in the *Crito* is more pious than the majority that condemned him.

Even in the midst of this profound display of political and filial piety, the voice of the rebellious sons can still be heard. Crito gives voice to this yearning, the longing to exit from a relationship with the (overbearing, unjust, authoritarian) civic father. Though Crito’s explicit plea ends early in the dialogue, its traces can be found throughout. Consider, for instance, the names that the Laws use to describe Socrates: “offspring” and “slave.” Even if Socrates’ life were not at stake, the appeal of escaping these appellations is plain. These pejorative terms are incompatible with the dignity and honor contained in the Periclean title of “citizen.” In these scornful titles, Crito’s exhortation for exit, freedom, life, and new beginnings can be heard. As the Laws understand the situation, it is this desire, Crito’s longing to be free of political duty and patriarchal restrictions, that must be overcome. The battle between exit and obligation takes place, in other words, on the gendered terrain of the father–son dyad. This raises the possibility that the concepts themselves are gendered.⁴²

The Laws’ speech can be read as describing the sense of civic destruction and loss that can accompany an exit from a political homeland. To depart, the Laws argue, is to permanently alter the connection with the city, indeed to destroy this bond. Their view is severe. Someone who exits might care deeply about the politics of the homeland. Yet, as the Laws see it, she or he will no longer be a part of the polity and will not be able to participate in its collective

life in an unmediated way. To many—especially those who have emigrated for political asylum—this may seem like a small price to pay to escape death, rape, imprisonment, or torture. For these individuals, self-preservation and the protection of one’s family outweigh the destruction of any political relationship with the polity. The holistic point of the *Crito*, however, does not seem to be that emigration for political asylum is immoral or that civic belonging, gratitude, and humility ought to automatically exceed self-preservation. Instead, the text reveals the tension between exiting and staying, allowing us to discern this friction and to appreciate it. In this way, the *Crito* reminds us that individuals who have excellent reasons to depart—those who depart for political asylum, for example—still makes significant civic sacrifices to do so.

Exit, Social Criticism, and Loss of the Self

While a good portion of the dialogue focuses on the significance of exit for the collective, the *Crito* also considers the meaning of exit for the other side of this dyad, the individual. Here too, there is a friction between two views on what exit will mean for the individual’s sense of self. Will the individual be altered or even metamorphosed abroad through constant contact with strange customs, novel people, and a new way of life? The Laws make this argument, playing on the fear and uncertainty entailed in a life away from one’s political homeland. While the Laws press this view, Socrates’ own constancy in jail and his belief in the unchanging quality of knowledge suggest a counter-argument: identity can be maintained, despite dramatic changes in circumstance.

The first clue to the Laws’ argument appears in an odd line that is easy to disregard. The Laws point out that Socrates will have to cover himself “with some sort of disguise—putting on either a leather skin or other disguises such as those who run away usually use—and by altering your own figure” (53d). This disguise might seem logically like a temporary alteration. After his escape, Socrates can throw off this concealment and become himself again. But the Laws’ persistent focus on changes in identity—that is, not only what a person looks like but also how he acts outside of his homeland—hints that this is not so.⁴³

Exiting to Thessaly, the Laws go on, will transform Socrates. In Thessaly, Socrates “will live by fawning upon all human beings and being their slave,” and he will indulge in sybaritic pleasures (53e). Lacking all honor and dignity, the Laws foretell, Socrates will entertain his foreign hosts with ludicrous and amusing stories of his escape (53d). This line comes and goes quickly in the dialogue, but the transformation that it describes is terrifying nonetheless.

Socrates in Thessaly is the antithesis of Socrates in Athens. In his homeland, Socrates is a man who carefully weighs the numerous benefits of escaping against his established moral beliefs and finds them wanting. He is, in short, the Socrates that we know from Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and Plutarch: cerebral, self-disciplined, and principled. Socrates in Thessaly will metamorphose into the complete opposite, a foolish and debased libertine who uses a personal moral controversy—that is, the decision whether to flee or not—to delight and divert. Socrates' morality will be rendered into cheap entertainment, and the man himself will become a bootlicking wag. Without Athens, Socrates will no longer be Socrates. Though the Laws do not mention him explicitly, their prediction again recalls Alcibiades, who succumbed to a life of even greater self-gratification when he fled Athens.⁴⁴ With this image of the anti-Socrates in mind, the Laws press Socrates with an existential question: “And if you do this, will life be worth living for you?” (53c).⁴⁵

The Laws go on, arguing that a change in location and illegal flight will mean a change in identity and reputation. Socrates will no longer be the same sort of friend to Crito and others that he once was and he will be unable to be the same kind of father (53a, 54a). They hint that his capacity for social criticism will change as well and suggest that Socrates will no longer be able to be a gadfly in Athens or anywhere else.⁴⁶ How will you converse abroad, they ask: “With what speeches, Socrates? The ones that you speak of here, that virtue and justice are of the most worth to human beings, and customs and laws? And do you not suppose the affair of Socrates will appear unseemly? One must suppose so” (53d). No one will listen to him abroad because he will be seen as a “corrupter of the laws” and “of young mindless human beings” (53c). It is certain, moreover, that Socrates will not be able to agitate for change in Athens if he exits. “Where will those speeches concerning justice and the rest of virtue be for us then?” (53e–54a).

Looked at in conjunction with the *Apology*, Socrates' exit becomes equivalent to an abandonment of his special role as a social critic for Athens. In his defense in the *Apology*, Socrates is explicit that he was given to Athens, saying that he was a “the gift of the god” to the city and that “the god seems to me to have set me upon the city” as someone who will “awaken, persuade, and reproach each one of you” (*Apology*, 30e). Socrates also points out that he is an uncommon sort of divine gift; such a social critic will not soon come again to Athens (*Apology*, 31a). Much as the Laws do, Socrates emphasizes his connection to this particular city, Athens, and to its specific citizenry, indeed to “each one of you” in Athens.⁴⁷ This suggests that Socrates' *arete*, his excellence, is bound up with his role as a gadfly for Athens and that he cannot fulfill his full potential without being in Athens.⁴⁸ Moreover, as Socrates presents it, the fulfillment of his role as a gadfly is connected not

only to Athens, but also to piety because it was the god, not Socrates, who set him upon the city.⁴⁹

The transformation that the Laws predict is so radical that it seems to cry out for debunking as a fearsome fantasy. Will Socrates really no longer be Socrates in Thessaly? And, as the Laws seem to hint, is cosmopolitanism really antithetical to social criticism? While the Laws' speech is certainly forceful on these points, the dialogue has more to say on the matter. If, as Socrates suggests in the *Meno*, knowledge is virtue, then one's location would seem to be immaterial. Knowledge of virtuous behavior in Thessaly should produce the same virtuous behavior that knowledge in Athens does. In the *Crito*, Socrates implicitly makes this point in his initial discussion with Crito about whether their shared moral agreements prohibit a jailbreak (46b–50a). For Crito, the context has changed—Socrates is in prison, not roaming freely around the agora—and therefore his behavior should change as well. He should not be able to sleep (43b), he should be vexed at his situation (43c), and he should be concerned with the opinion of the many (44c). For Crito, the context matters and thus he returns repeatedly to Socrates' "present fortune," his current "calamities," and his "present situation" (43c, 43c, 44d). Socrates takes the opposite position, telling Crito that he is not willing to "throw out" the determinations he made in the past "now that this fortune has come to pass for me" (46b). Regardless of the change in context, Socrates insists on adhering to his understanding of the virtuous thing to do.

Looked at from this perspective, the *Crito* reveals the poignancy and fear entailed in transitions to new political spaces, and also the determination to maintain one's sense of self despite an unfamiliar context. As he speaks with Crito, Socrates resides in an unaccustomed political space, the Athenian prison, and as such, he has awareness into the transmogrifications in status and standing that can accompany such relocations. With his conviction, Socrates became *atimia*, an individual deprived of the privileges of citizenship and forbidden from public places. To become *atimia* represented a grave change in Athenian society.⁵⁰ Danielle Allen observes, "For Plato's Socrates, the beginning of life in prison was the end of free living."⁵¹ As the setting for the dialogue, the Athenian prison reflects this sense of disruption, of dramatically changed circumstances. It was a space in which the central divisions in wealth and status of Athenian society were weakened and relaxed, as metics, citizens, debtors, and felons mixed freely with one another.⁵² Virginia Hunter notes, "Life in prison then amounted to an inversion of all that was normal for the free, as they entered a liminal world somewhere between free and slave."⁵³

Socrates' actions in prison suggest an effort to curb the disrupting effects of *atimia* and incarceration, particularly in relation to Socrates' identity as a philosopher. While in prison, Socrates maintains his regular practices: seeing

friends, sleeping and dreaming, discussing philosophy, using reason, listening to his *daimon*. So doing, Socrates reconstitutes himself as a philosopher with his actions. Socrates is so regular and normal in his behaviors that Crito notes it at the beginning of the dialogue when Socrates awakes from sleep. “And though I would have of course often previously regarded you through your whole life as happy in your temperament, I do so especially in the present calamity now, so easily and mildly do you bear it” (43b). Where Crito sees a “calamity” and thus a need for altered conduct, Socrates sees an opportunity to sleep and to debate about the right course of action with a friend. In opposition to the Laws’ arguments that Socrates will no longer be a social critic if he is not physically a part of Athens, the *Crito* shows Socrates was a philosopher despite the prison and his status as *atimia*. On this view, Socrates reveals the power of individual will to maintain a consistent identity and a stable sense of self through unfailing beliefs and actions. Just as the agreement in deeds must be re-established over time through behaviors, Socrates constructs his identity as a philosopher through practices. In this view, the practices of philosophy, wherever they are done, constitute the practice—the work, the business—of philosophy.⁵⁴

One way to think about this tension in the *Crito* between exiting and remaining is that it describes the mindset or feelings of one who is on the cusp of exiting from his or her homeland. Read in this way, the Laws’ speech discloses the shame of abandoning those who should not be abandoned (family, friends, and comrades), and it reveals the fear of a loss self. The Laws’ speech reminds us that at the edge of exiting, feelings of attachment may be felt in profound and plaintive ways. The prospect of exit can prompt uncomfortable questions about political membership, belonging, and who we are. Even the worst homeland—a homeland bent on destroying the individual—is still a homeland, and, as such, it contains those who nurture and support as well as those who kill. A political home is not one thing; it is many.⁵⁵ This may be why, at the end of the *Apology*, Socrates addressed the jurors who voted for acquittal separately from those who voted for conviction. The jury, like the city, is multifaceted. For those exiting, feelings about the homeland are various as well, containing both a desire to depart and unexpected feelings of attachment.

At the same time, Socrates’ example in prison challenges the Laws’ argument, suggesting that they are playing on fear and uncertainty of a life outside of one’s homeland. Given Socrates’ extraordinary capacity for self-control and his determination to remain a philosopher in prison, it seems doubtful that his identity would dissolve if he crossed the Athenian border. If anyone could maintain his identity through his practices in Thessaly, it is Socrates. For Socrates, knowledge *is* virtue. Moreover, Socrates knows that he will be

exiting Athens one way or another: he will either leave for Thessaly or depart for Hades (54b–c). If leaving Athens will present a challenge to Socrates' sense of self, this challenge will exist regardless of whether he decides to remain in Athens or to flee. He seems prepared to meet the challenge no matter. Socrates was an extraordinary person, of course, and his example in this regard may be unrealistic. The point is not that would-be emigrants should emulate Socrates. Rather, the significant point is that his example reveals the resolve to perpetuate a consistent sense of self in the midst of rapidly changing, even unknown, circumstances.

The Tension of Exit

The *Crito* can be profitably read, I've argued, as revealing the tension between an argument to exit and an argument to remain and, given this, it might seem logical to conclude that the dialogue suggests a resolution of that tension. Socrates does, after all, remain in Athens and is put to death. Though there is considerable debate about why Socrates refuses Crito's offer of escape, refuse it he does. Within the interpretive framework established here, this may seem to indicate that the tension between obligation and exit should be resolved in favor of remaining in one's homeland. We can imagine how this argument might go: the Laws seem to win the argument, Socrates' moral *logos* points toward staying, and Crito has nothing to say at the end of the dialogue.

While the desire for resolution is understandable, it seems to rely on negating a significant portion of the dialogue. In particular, it tends to erase Crito's voice—the voice of freedom, the call for escape, the desire for self-preservation and new opportunities, and the longing to throw off the old ways of the father. Seen through Crito's eyes, Thessaly represents freedom from captivity, the end of persecution by the Athenians, and the continuation of the practice of philosophy. Thessaly is life. As such, it signifies a prolongation of those things that Socrates values most dearly: rational thought, dialogue, and fellowship. Seen in this way, it is easy to agree with Crito that the decision to leave Athens is not really a decision. It is a necessity for life. And, with this perspective in mind, we can well imagine Crito's insistent tone when he says, "Socrates, obey me and in no way do otherwise" (46a). Socrates does not take Crito's command of obedience without question, but he is clear that he wants to hear Crito's position (46b). Reaching a universal resolution in favor of the Laws also must overlook Socrates' steadfast sense of self and the rebuke that this represents to the Laws' assertions that his identity will alter in a new environment. Socrates did not metamorphose into someone else in prison, and he did not radically alter who he was given his new status as *atimia*.

Lighting on the solution that the Laws are victorious entails a loss, in other words, a loss that the dialogue itself seems to resist. Taking both perspectives

into account and opposing the desire to subsume exit into obligation (or vice versa) can be dissatisfying. It suggests that the question posed by exit lacks a definitive, guilt-free answer. Choosing one course of action over the other, as one sometimes must, means that something dear must be sacrificed.

With this tension between obligation and exit in mind, we are now in a better position to evaluate the ways in which the *Crito* might speak to the condition of would-be emigrants who are considering leaving their homelands and those who have exited. The *Crito* suggests that access across borders has been a life-or-death proposition for over two thousand years, and it provides an early example of the desperate circumstances that force departures from a country of origin. In this way, it may be a particularly meaningful text in light of the dire situations faced by contemporary political refugees and those seeking political asylum. Through the *Crito*, we may gain a deeper appreciation that refugee and asylum seekers can face a “choice” whether to exit that often is not of their own making and may not feel like an exercise of volition. Moreover, the *Crito* encourages caution about relying on a naturalized conception of exit that assumes that leave taking is uncomplicated, save legal and formal barriers. Even those who have excellent reasons for leaving a homeland, like self-preservation or the protection of one’s family, may feel a deep political attachment to the polity and a quasi-familial attachment to its inhabitants, to their comrades in a political cause, or to their role as a social critic or a political agitator.

Here again, the tension established in the *Crito* does not suggest one answer to the dilemma of would-be emigrants (stay/exit; die/live) but rather allows for an intense and vibrant understanding of the political complexity of their situation. Both options of exit or obligation are flawed and unsatisfying. There is no perfect answer that can be reached without a moral or political remainder—that is, without a sense that some issues have been left unresolved and incomplete. One way to see this moral and political remainder is to observe the tendency of readers to continue the debate, for instance, by taking up Crito’s side, by arguing with the Laws, or by emphasizing the wisdom of Socrates’ moral *logos*. Regardless of the position, this reaction seems like the correct one because it continues the debate and, so doing, it points to the moral and political remainder encompassed in the tension of exit. Socrates himself may motion toward the open-ended character of the dialogue when he sums it up by stating, “the echo of these speeches is booming within me” (54c). It is speeches he hears, not a single, triumphant argument.

Not all of those who confront the tension of exit may have the time that Socrates had to weigh his options, and they may not have a wealthy friend like Crito to provide the resources to exit. In some sense, Crito provides an ideal exit, one in which all the details have been taken care of and the path to

leave has been effectively cleared. Leaving the prison will not require violence—the guard has been bribed—and there is no indication that crossing to Thessaly will entail risks to life or limb. Despite Crito's insistence that the situation demands immediate action, it turns out there is plenty of time to consider the arguments and the implications of Socrates' decision. And, this is what the dialogue does. Resisting the impulse of necessity, it slows down the decision, allowing the reader to apprehend the sometimes excruciating tension between exit and obligation. It invites us into the political, moral, and psychic space of Socrates' predicament and stretches out his decision, allowing us to comprehend the tension of exit and, perhaps, to more deeply appreciate the losses and potentialities entailed both in the decision to depart *and* in the decision to remain.

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1. Unless specified otherwise, all citations for the *Apology* and the *Crito* are from Plato and Aristophanes, *Four Texts on Socrates: Plato's Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito, and Aristophanes' Clouds*, trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).
2. Martin Luther King Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York: Signet Books, 1964), 84.
3. Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994), 467–78.
4. Curtis Johnson, "Socrates on Obedience and Justice," *The Western Political Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1990): 720. Curtis also draws noteworthy distinctions between Socrates and modern civil disobedience.
5. Rex Martin, "Socrates on Disobedience to Law," *The Review of Metaphysics* 24, no. 1 (1970); George Grote, *Plato, and the Other Companions of Sokrates*, 3 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1865); Jacqueline de Romilly, *La Loi Dans La Pensée Grecque, Des Origines À Aristote*, Collection D'études Anciennes (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1971); A. E. Taylor, *Plato, the Man and His Work* (New York: The Dial Press, 1936); Daniel 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 (1978).
6. Howard Zinn, *Howard Zinn on History* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2001), 156.

7. Richard Kraut, *Socrates and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Ann Congleton, "Two Kinds of Lawlessness: Plato's *Crito*," *Political Theory* 2, no. 4 (1974).
8. For an argument critiquing the focus on civil disobedience and legal obligation, see J. Peter Euben, "Philosophy and Politics in Plato's *Crito*," *Political Theory* 6, no. 2 (1978). Frederick G. Whelan suggests that the *Crito* contains insights about exit in F. G. Whelan, "Citizenship and the Right to Leave," *American Political Science Review* 75, no. 3 (1981): 639, 43–44.
9. Uma Anand Segal, Doreen Elliott, and Nazneen S. Mayadas, *Immigration Worldwide: Policies, Practices, and Trends* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.
10. Grote, *Plato, and the Other Companions of Sokrates*, 1:303; Romilly, *La Loi Dans La Pensée Grecque, Des Origines À Aristote*, 130; Taylor, *Plato, the Man and His Work*, 168.
11. Kraut, *Socrates and the State*; A. D. Woozley, *Law and Obedience: The Arguments of Plato's *Crito** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); David Bostock, "The Interpretation of Plato's '*Crito*,'" *Phronesis* 35, no. 1 (1990); R. Allen, "Law and Justice in Plato's *Crito*," *Journal of Philosophy* 69, no. 18 (1972). J. Stephens criticizes these attempts at reconciliation, finding them unconvincing. J. Stephens, "Socrates on the Rule of Law," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* (1985).
12. Kraut, *Socrates and the State*, 181, 54–58. For criticism, see, for instance, Terry Penner, "Two Notes on the *Crito*: The Impotence of the Many, and 'Persuade or Obey,'" *The Classical Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1997).
13. Congleton, "Two Kinds of Lawlessness: Plato's *Crito*"; G. Young, "Socrates and Obedience," *Phronesis* 19, no. 1 (1974): 6–9; Roslyn Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied: An Analysis of Plato's *Crito** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 4–6; James Boyd White, "Plato's *Crito*: The Authority of the Law and Philosophy," in *The Greeks and Us: Essays in Honor of Arthur W.H. Adkins*, ed. Robert B. Louden and Paul Schollmeier (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 114; Mitchell Miller, "'The Arguments I Seem to Hear': Argument and Irony in the '*Crito*,'" *Phronesis* 41, no. 2 (1996): 133; Michael Rosano, "Citizenship and Socrates in Plato's '*Crito*,'" *The Review of Politics* 62, no. 3 (2000).
14. Leo Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
15. Congleton, "Two Kinds of Lawlessness: Plato's *Crito*," 435.
16. Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied: An Analysis of Plato's *Crito**, 5.
17. Hugo Adam Bedau, ed., *Civil Disobedience in Focus* (London: Routledge, 1991); Carl Cohen, *Civil Disobedience: Conscience, Tactics, and the Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971); Wilson Carey McWilliams, "Civil Disobedience and Contemporary Constitutionalism: The American Case," *Comparative Politics* 1, no. 2 (1969); Jeffrie G. Murphy, ed., *Civil Disobedience and Violence* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1971); John Rawls, "The Justification of

- Civil Disobedience,” in *Civil Disobedience: Theory and Practice*, ed. Hugo Adam Bedau (New York: Pegasus, 1969); Jenet Kirkpatrick, *Uncivil Disobedience: Studies in Violence and Democratic Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).
18. M. Lane, “Argument and Agreement in Plato’s ‘Crito,’” *History of Political Thought* 19, no. 3 (1998): 327; Josiah Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 181; Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied: An Analysis of Plato’s Crito*, 134–45; Kraut, *Socrates and the State*, 40; Miller, “‘The Arguments I Seem to Hear’: Argument and Irony in the ‘Crito’”; Kenneth Quandt, “Socratic Consolation: Rhetoric and Philosophy in Plato’s ‘Crito,’” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 15, no. 4 (1982): 250–52.
 19. Raymond Larson translates this last phrase as “the sound of those words rings in my ears and makes me unable to hear all others.” Plato, *The Apology and Crito of Plato and the Apology and Symposium of Xenophon*, trans. Raymond Larson (Lawrence: Coronado Press, 1980), 67. Also see Plato, *Plato’s Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates, and Crito*, trans. John Burnet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 292. Thomas West notes, “The *Crito* portrays a private conversation between two old friends in the dark interior of the prison where Socrates is being held until his execution.” In its “extreme privacy,” the *Crito* stands at one pole of the cosmos of Platonic dialogues,” while the *Apology*, a public speech delivered in a public venue during the day, is at the other extreme.” Thomas G. West, “Introduction,” in *Four Texts on Socrates: Plato’s Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito, and Aristophanes’ Clouds* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 24.
 20. R. G. Mulgan emphasizes Socrates’ capacity in the *Crito* to hear the voice of the god, the “divine and mysterious something,” while others cannot. R. G. Mulgan, “Socrates and Authority,” *Greece & Rome* 19, no. 2 (1972): 211.
 21. Euben, “Philosophy and Politics in Plato’s *Crito*,” 159.
 22. *Ibid.*, 166. Catherine Zuckert and Michael Rosano are also attentive to the tensions between conflicting obligations. Rosano, “Citizenship and Socrates in Plato’s ‘Crito’”; Catherine H. Zuckert, *Plato’s Philosophers: The Coherence of the Dialogues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
 23. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chap. 21.
 24. George Grote emphasizes this patriotic tenor: “Socrates is made to express the feelings and repeat the language of a devoted democratical patriot.” Gregory Vlastos compares Socrates to an “infatuated lover,” noting, “Socrates can hardly bring himself to part a single day from his beloved Athens.” Grote, *Plato, and the Other Companions of Sokrates*, 430–31; G. Vlastos, “The Historical Socrates and Athenian Democracy,” *Political Theory* (1983): 498.
 25. There is much debate about whether Socrates and the Laws disagree. For the range of the debate, see Congleton, “Two Kinds of Lawlessness: Plato’s *Crito*”; Euben, “Philosophy and Politics in Plato’s *Crito*.”

26. Hannah Pitkin describes the conflict as: "Socrates may never have been in doubt as to what he would do, but his friends certainly disagreed with him at first; and he cast his own argument in the form of a confrontation between the desire 'to play truant' and the admonition of the laws." Hanna Pitkin, "Obligation and Consent—II," *American Political Science Review* 60, no. 1 (1966): 40.
27. Darrel Colson, "'Crito' 51a–c: To What Does Socrates Owe Obedience?," *Phronesis* 34, no. 1 (1989): 44; Timothy Mahoney, "Socrates' Loyalty to Athens and His Radical Critique of the Athenians," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1998): 4–5.
28. Albert Hirschman, "Exit, Voice, and the Fate of the German Democratic Republic: An Essay in Conceptual History," *World Politics* 45, no. 2 (1993).
29. Sara Forsdyke, *Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy: The Politics of Expulsion in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).
30. Steve Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993). For an argument that free movement was a crucial sign of freedom in ancient Greece, see William Linn Westermann, "Between Slavery and Freedom," *The American Historical Review* 50, no. 2 (1945).
31. The Laws' claim that they will be destroyed by Socrates' departure has also been interpreted as meaning that the violation of a single law can destroy an entire system of laws. See, e.g., Allen, "Law and Justice in Plato's *Crito*"; Farrell, "Illegal Actions, Universal Maxims, and the Duty to Obey the Law: The Case for Civil Authority in the *Crito*." This argument has been persuasively challenged in the civil disobedience literature. See Howard Zinn, *The Zinn Reader: Writings on Disobedience and Democracy* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997); Peter Singer, *Democracy and Disobedience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973); Michael Walzer, *Obligations: Essays on Disobedience, War, and Citizenship* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).
32. It is possible that the Laws' claim of destruction is both symbolic and actual. For the latter argument, see M. Dyson, "The Structure of the Laws' Speech in Plato's *Crito*," *The Classical Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1978): 428–29; Zuckert, *Plato's Philosophers: The Coherence of the Dialogues*: 763–64.
33. The relationship between Socrates and *Crito* is, fittingly, also complex. See, e.g., Frederick Rosen, "Obligation and Friendship in Plato's *Crito*," *Political Theory* 1, no. 3 (1973); Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied: An Analysis of Plato's Crito*, 39–56.
34. A number of scholars have persuasively argued that certain Platonic dialogues—the *Republic* and the *Symposium*, for instance—reveal a complex understanding of gender and equality. See S. Forde, "Gender and Justice in Plato," *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 3 (1997); Nancy Tuana, *Feminist Interpretations of Plato* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); A Saxonhouse, "Democracy, Equality, and Eide: A Radical View from Book 8 of Plato's *Republic*," *American Political Science Review* (1998).
35. Elaine Scarry, "Consent and the Body: Injury, Departure, and Desire," *New Literary History* 21, no. 4 (1990): 876–78.

36. There is disagreement about whether the Laws' speech contains emotional appeals. Grote, *Plato, and the Other Companions of Sokrates*, 1:302–4; Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule*; Euben, "Philosophy and Politics in Plato's *Crito*," 160; GD Steadman, "The Unity of Plato's '*Crito*,'" *The Classical Journal* 101, no. 4 (2006).
37. John Burnet translates *entropē* in 52c 8–9 as "ashamed" and "to be ashamed of." Plato, *Plato's Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates, and Crito*, 286. *Crito* introduces the idea of shame in 45d–e. Bernard Williams argues that shame is a communal, heteronomous value. Saxonhouse calls shame "a fundamental social passion, Zeus' gift, offered to all humans so that cities could be founded and men might develop the capacity to live with one another peaceably." Arlene W. Saxonhouse, *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 71; Bernard Arthur Owen Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). For an illuminating feminist critique of shame, see Jill Locke, "Shame and the Future of Feminism," *Hypatia* 22, no. 4 (2007).
38. See, e.g., the *Euthyphro*.
39. Hesiod, *Works and Days, Theogony, and the Shield of Heracles*, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2006), 8. Socrates considers the repercussions of parental dishonor in the *Phaedo*, 113e–114c.
40. Barry S. Strauss, *Fathers and Sons in Athens: Ideology and Society in the Era of the Peloponnesian War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). Also see W. G. Forrest, "An Athenian Generation Gap," in *Studies in the Greek Historians: In Memory of Adam Parry*, ed. Donald Kagan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
41. Strauss, *Fathers and Sons in Athens: Ideology and Society in the Era of the Peloponnesian War*: 181–87.
42. Linda M. G. Zerilli, *Signifying Woman: Culture and Chaos in Rousseau, Burke, and Mill* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).
43. Colson, "'Crito' 51a–c: To What Does Socrates Owe Obedience?," 36–38; Euben, "Philosophy and Politics in Plato's *Crito*."
44. Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. John Dryden, 2 vols. (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 1:247–77.
45. Earlier in the dialogue *Crito* states Socrates has a "fear" that he "wouldn't know what to do with [himself] if [he] left" Athens and that this worry has been bothering Socrates for weeks (45b–c). The literal translation of this passage—"you wouldn't have [any notion of] whatever you would use yourself [for]"—gives a sense of the lack of purpose and meaning of a life outside of Athens. Plato and Aristophanes, *Four Texts on Socrates: Plato's Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito, and Aristophanes' Clouds*, 102. Hugh Tredeneck translates this passage as "you wouldn't know what to do with yourself if you left this country." Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 30.
46. John Burnet, "Notes," in *Plato's Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates, and Crito* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 279–80; Euben, "Philosophy and

- Politics in Plato's *Crito*," 152. Perhaps reinforcing this idea of the destruction of identity, the reference to the Phthia region of Thessaly (44b) may be a pun suggesting the verb *phthiein*, meaning "to waste away, decay, perish." Plato and Aristophanes, *Four Texts on Socrates: Plato's Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito, and Aristophanes' Clouds*, 101fn5.
47. The Laws may mean, as Michael Walzer puts it, that "we criticize our society just as we criticize our friends, on the assumption that the terms of the critique, the moral references, are common." Michael Walzer, *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 230. Also see M. Agnafors, "Reassessing Walzer's Social Criticism," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 38, no. 9 (2012); J. Allen, "The Situated Critic or the Loyal Critic? Rorty and Walzer on Social Criticism," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 24, no. 6 (1998); Lawrie Balfour, "The Appeal of Innocence: Baldwin, Walzer, and the Bounds of Social Criticism," *The Review of Politics* 61, no. 03 (1999); Toni Erskine, "Qualifying Cosmopolitanism? Solidarity, Criticism, and Michael Walzer's 'View from the Cave,'" *International Politics* 44, no. 1 (2007); J. Gregory, "The Political Philosophy of Walzer's Social Criticism," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 36, no. 9 (2010); Ian Shapiro, *Political Criticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 55–88.
 48. According to Terence Ball, "*arete* does not and cannot refer to the excellence (moral or otherwise) of man *qua* man but of man *qua* role-bearer in relation to other role-bearers." Terence Ball, *Reappraising Political Theory: Revisionist Studies in the History of Political Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 75.
 49. Commentators have noted the connection for Socrates between being an Athenian and his capacity to philosophize. Euben argues that "it is only among [Socrates'] fellow citizens and within the laws they share that philosophy has any prospect of having a voice in the world." Euben, "Philosophy and Politics in Plato's *Crito*," 164. Building on Socrates' statement in the *Gorgias* that he is the only Athenian to have practiced "the true art of politics" (521d), McLaughlin concludes that "Socratic philosophy" is not "a private activity engaged in just for the benefit of the philosopher himself." R. J. McLaughlin, "Socrates on Political Disobedience: A Reply to Gary Young," *Phronesis* (1976): 195.
 50. Danielle Allen, "Imprisonment in Classical Athens," *The Classical Quarterly New Series* 47, no. 1 (1997): 134; Matthew Christ, "Legal Self-Help on Private Property in Classical Athens," *American Journal of Philology* 119, no. 4 (1998).
 51. Allen, "Imprisonment in Classical Athens," 129.
 52. Virginia Hunter, "The Prison of Athens: A Comparative Perspective," *Phoenix* (1997): 315. Also see Vincent Rosavitch's reading of the *Crito*, which is attentive to distinctions in wealth and status in Athenian society. Vincent Rosavach, "Hoi Polloi in the *Crito* (44b5-D10)," *The Classical Journal* 76, no. 4 (1981).
 53. Hunter, "The Prison of Athens: A Comparative Perspective," 319.
 54. Seen in this way, the *Phaedo* might not only be a recounting of Socrates' life but also a shoring up of Socrates' identity as a philosopher through the practices of

philosophy as he prepares to make his “immigration” to Hades. Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage, and Eric Salem (Newburyport, MA: Focus Classical Library, 1998), 117c.

55. Vlastos writes that while Plato’s Socrates “makes unforgivably intemperate allegations of wrongdoing in public life and attacks pay for public office,” he is “profoundly and consistently loyal to the Athenian constitution.” Vlastos, “The Historical Socrates and Athenian Democracy,” 510–11.

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