Classical Quarterly 63.2 580–594 © The Classical Association (2013)
doi:10.1017/S0009838813000116

CRITO'S FAILURE TO DELIBERATE SOCRATICALLY*

In comparison to the speech of the Laws, the dialectic between Crito and Socrates at the beginning of the *Crito* has received little attention. In this paper I argue that it contains an important philosophical message. It illustrates that the many's failure to follow Socrates' principles, like his principle of non-retaliation, is due to the intrinsic fragility of true beliefs. Though the many can understand Socrates' values and may accept his principles if he argues with them long enough, they may fail to hold on to his principles when confronted with the difficulties of life. Crito's failure to deliberate Socratically at the beginning of the *Crito* exemplifies the many's predicament.

My interpretation challenges a recent interpretation of Crito's dramatic persona in the *Crito*. According to it, Crito is a typical member of the many who is entrenched in their system of values and unable to transcend it. This interpretation is frequently coupled with the view that Crito is unphilosophical and has poor dialectical skills.[1] The upshot is that Crito and the many are unable to understand Socrates' values.[2]

My paper is divided into four sections. In the first section I explore the form of the dialectic between Crito and Socrates at the beginning of the *Crito*. In the second I challenge the view that Crito is unable to understand Socrates' values. In the third I argue that Socrates believes that Crito lost his originally held Socratic beliefs through fear at the prospect of Socrates' death. In the final section I relate this diagnosis of Crito's condition to Socrates' views about the intrinsic instability of beliefs and the power of appearance.[3]

* I am grateful to Melissa Lane and members of the Yorkshire Network for Ancient Philosophy for comments on earlier drafts.

[1] For the thesis that Crito's values prevent him from understanding Socrates see M. Miller, '"The arguments I seem to hear": argument and irony in the *Crito*', *Phronesis* 41 (1996), 121–37, R. Bentley, 'Responding to Crito: Socrates and political obligation', *History of Political Thought* 17 (1996), 1–20, and V. Harte, 'Conflicting values in Plato's *Crito*', *AGPh* 81 (1999), 117–47. Scholars who also support the thesis that Crito has poor cognitive and dialectical skills include C. Young, 'Socrates and obedience', *Phronesis* 19 (1974), 1–29 and R. Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied: An Analysis of Plato's* Crito (Oxford, 1998). M. Lane ('Agreement and action in Plato's *Crito*', *History of Political Thought* 19 [1998], 313–30) claims that the text of the *Crito* leaves it open whether Crito's failure to understand Socrates is 'due to willful blindness or intellectual incapacity' (315 with n. 9).

[2] The view that Crito is unable to comprehend Socrates' values is normally coupled with the interpretation that the speech of the Laws is un-Socratic; see Miller, Harte, Young and Weiss (n. 1). According to it, Socrates presents to Crito the speech of the Laws because Crito is unable to understand the real reasons behind Socrates' decision to remain in prison. In this paper I do not directly address the question of whether the speech of the Laws is Socratic (I take on this task in 'Socrates and the speech of the Laws' [manuscript]). My arguments, however, challenge the account of the dramatic development of the dialogue offered by supporters of the un-Socratic tenor of the speech of the Laws. For, as I argue, Crito is able to understand Socrates' values and thus does not need to be presented with a second-best system of values.

[3] By 'Socrates' views' I refer to the views of the Socratic character in Plato's early dialogues. I focus primarily on the *Protagoras* and to a lesser extent on the *Meno* (for my use of evidence

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

1. LOCATING THE PROBLEM: THE DIALECTIC BETWEEN CRITO AND SOCRATES

Crito urges Socrates to save himself (44b6–7). He argues that helping Socrates escape is just and courageous for Crito and Socrates' friends. It is just because by helping Socrates escape they will avoid harming their public image. The many could not claim that they valued their money more than their friend (44b6–c5). And it is courageous because by disregarding the risks involved in getting Socrates out of prison they would not appear cowardly to the many (45d9–46a3). Crito also argues that it is just for Socrates to save himself. For by escaping he will frustrate the plans of his enemies (45c6–9). And he will fulfil his parental duties. He will continue raising and educating his children instead of letting chance determine their fate as happens with orphans (45c10–d3). Further, given that parental duties are burdensome Socrates' refusal to fulfil them will count as an act of cowardice (45d4–9).

Socrates thinks that Crito's deliberations rest on two mistaken theses. The first thesis (T1) is that one should take into account in one's practical deliberations how the many morally evaluate one's conduct (44d1–2). By contrast Socrates holds that (T1*) one should only value the moral views of the prudent, not those of the many (44c6–9). The second thesis concerns the power of the many to harm. Crito claims that the many can cause not the least but the greatest harm. As Socrates' current predicament shows, the many have the power to bring about someone's death (44d2–5). Thus Crito believes that (T2) death is the greatest harm.

Crito links T1 and T2. He claims that one should care about the moral views of the many (44d1–2) because they can cause the greatest harm, that is, death (44d3–5).[4] Socrates responds to T2 by claiming that the many do not have significant power because they cannot make anyone wise or foolish (44d6–10). His response shows that Socrates believes that (T2*) his current predicament, for which the many are responsible (that is, his death), is not the greatest harm.

Crito's deliberation about what he and Socrates should do is based on theses which Socrates rejects. Socrates responds to Crito's arguments in true elenctic fashion. He identifies two other theses which Crito explicitly holds and argues that they are inconsistent with T1 and T2. The first thesis (T3) is that in general one should value only some views, those of the wise (47a2–10). The second thesis (T4) is that one should primarily value living justly and not merely surviving (48b4–9). Socrates claims that these theses are parts of arguments (λόγους) he himself upheld (πρεσβεύω) and cherished (τιμῶ) in the past (46c1–2) and continuously advocated (see his use of ἐλέγετο at 46d1, d7 and 47a12). The idea conveyed by Socrates' remarks is that Crito's explicit approval of T3 (47a6) and T4 (48b6) is at least partly based on Socrates' previous and repeated arguments in favour of them. Thus Crito's original theses (T1 and T2) are inconsistent with other theses (T3 and T4) he holds at least partly as a result of his participating in or witnessing previous Socratic elenchi.[5]

from the *Meno* see n. 23). I do not assume that these views are necessarily the views of the historical Socrates.

[4] Crito qualifies his claim that the many can cause the greatest harm by adding 'roughly speaking' (σχεδόν, *Crito* 44d4). The use of σχεδόν, however, does not indicate that Crito has any real reservations about whether death is the greatest harm. Crito has already described death as disaster (συμφορά) for everyone who is about to die (43c2). In any case, Socrates understands Crito to put forward the unqualified thesis that the many can cause the greatest harm (44d6–7) and Crito does not protest against this interpretation of his thesis.

[5] It is not clear from the discussion between Socrates and Crito whether Crito came to hold (or confirm his commitment to) T3 and T4 partly as a result of being himself the subject of elenctic

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

This is the problem I want to address: why does Crito base his original deliberations on T1 and T2 instead of the Socratic T1* and T2*? I single out three possible explanations. The first explanation is that T1* and T2* were *never explicit* to him. He either never inferred T1* and T2* from T3 and T4 respectively or never encountered any other arguments for T1* and T2*.

The second explanation is that, though T1* and T2* were explicit to Crito in the past, he *never* endorsed them or indeed the bulk of Socrates' principles. Rather T1 and T2 express the system of values which Crito endorses. His commitment to the Socratic principles T3 and T4 is superficial, reluctant or insincere.

The third explanation is that, though Crito encountered and accepted T1* and T2* in the past (as a result of participating in or witnessing previous elenchi), for some reason he recently lost his commitment to them and endorsed the views of the many.[6]

The first explanation may be quickly dismissed. Socrates produces a lengthy argument from 47a2 to 48a10 in which he infers T1* (one should value the moral views of only the prudent and not the many) from T3 (in general one should value only the views of the wise) and tries to support T2* (death is not the greatest harm). The main gist of the argument is that as in taking care of our body we heed the views of the gymnast or the doctor but not the many, in moral conduct which concerns our living well we should similarly heed the views of the moral expert and not the many. At 48b2–4 Socrates claims that this argument looks to him the same as before. He immediately signals that the argument is familiar from the past not only to him but also to Crito. He asks Crito whether the thesis that one should care not for mere survival but for living well, which is part of the general argument, 'remains still with *us*' (ἔτι μένει ἡμῖν, 48b4–5). Crito answers in the affirmative (48b6). Socrates also indicates that another premise of the argument in support of T2*, namely the equation of living justly with living well and rightly, is familiar to Crito from the past. He asks whether this thesis also remains with them (48b7–8) and Crito again agrees (48b9).

Do the other two explanations fare better? I will start by examining a variant of the second explanation which has recently gained currency. According to it, Crito never endorsed Socrates' theses *because he never understood Socrates' system of values*. His acceptance of T3 and T4 was superficial.

2. DOES CRITO UNDERSTAND SOCRATES' VALUES?

What supports the claim that Crito fails to understand Socrates' system of values? Young argues that 'there is an abyss between Crito's opinions and those of Socrates … Crito is … one of the many, and … therefore he will not be able to understand, or at least to

examinations by Socrates or simply witnessing elenctic examinations of others. This distinction, though interesting in its own right, is not important for my argument.

[6] A fourth explanation may be that Crito is in what E. Schwitzgebel, ('In-between believing', *PhilosQ* 51 [2001], 76–82) calls an 'in-between state of belief'. The idea is roughly that Crito should not be considered to either fully believe or fully not believe T1, T2, T3 and T4. Rather he is in an intermediate state of believing with respect to these theses. I avoid exploring this fourth explanation as there is no evidence that Socrates recognizes such intermediate states of beliefs in the *Crito* or other early dialogues. As the analogy of Daedalus (see § 4 of this paper) indicates, Socrates prefers to speak in terms of acquisition and loss of flat-out beliefs rather than in terms of degrees of beliefs.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

understand properly and fully, the Socratic principles'.[7] This suggests the following explanation (E1) of Crito's failure to understand Socrates' values:

E1: Crito's moral framework prevents him from understanding Socrates' values.[8]

Some scholars believe that Crito's understanding of Socrates' values is also impeded by his poor cognitive and reasoning capacities. For example, Weiss speaks of Crito's general 'unphilosophical nature' and Young of his poor dialectical skills.[9] We thus have a second explanation of Crito's failure to understand Socrates' values:

E2: Crito's poor cognitive and reasoning abilities prevent him from understanding Socrates' values.

I will start by assessing whether Crito is described in the dialogue as having poor cognitive and reasoning abilities. I will use as a standard the cognitive and reasoning abilities one could reasonably expect a typical member of the many to have.

Plato's portrait of Crito in the *Crito* does not provide grounds for thinking that Crito lacks such *ordinary* cognitive and reasoning abilities.[10] First, Crito's arguments, though not Socratic, are coherent and reasonable, at least from the point of the many's moral framework. There seem to be no logical gaps in his inference from T1 and T2 to the conclusion that Socrates should escape. His description of the plan to bribe officials and help Socrates' escape to Thessaly (*Crito* 45a6–c5), though sketchy, does not seem absurd. His account of the harm Socrates' children will suffer is reasonable and at least *prima facie* relevant to the discussion (45c10–d7). His claims that by dying Socrates will serve his enemies' aims (45c6–9) and harm the public image of his friends (45d9–46a4) raise reasonable concerns at least from the point of view of the many.

Second, the fact that Crito fails to take on board Socrates' 'philosophical' conception of harm as harm to the soul and continues to think in terms of physical harm or harm to the body[11] should not count as evidence that he has poor reasoning and cognitive abilities. Socrates presents to him his conception of harm to the soul in the context of his lengthy argument in support of T1* and T2* (47a2–48a10). Socrates, however, does not explain the relation between harm to the soul and physical harm. It is unclear (a) whether he (or for this purpose, Plato, the author of the dialogue) understands that there is a tension between the two conceptions of harm or (b) if he does, how he resolves it.[12] This unclarity does not allow us to draw any conclusions about Crito's ability to understand the conception of harm to the soul.

[7] Young (n. 1), 6.

[8] Apart from Young (see n. 7), Bentley (n. 1), 8 and 17, Harte (n. 1), 130–4 and Weiss (n. 1), 80 also support E1. Miller (n. 1), 134 is not explicit about what prevents Crito from following Socrates' line of reasoning, but his claim that 'it is precisely the perspective of the many … that rules in [Crito]' suggests that he thinks it is Crito's moral framework.

[9] Weiss (n. 1), 43–9; Young (n. 1) at 12. Lane (n. 1), 135 speaks of Crito's 'obduracy'.

[10] I focus exclusively on the dramatic persona of Crito in the *Crito*. For an account of Crito's dramatic persona in other dialogues see M. Stokes, *Dialectic in Action: An Examination of Plato's* Crito (Swansea, 2005), 29–32. Stokes shows that Crito is not depicted as a fool or stupid in either the *Phaedo* or the *Euthydemus*. I am in substantial agreement with Stokes's remark that "'un-Socratic" and "intelligent", even in Plato's eyes, need not be mutually contradictory epithets' (p. 32).

[11] See Weiss (n. 1), 64–5 and 82–3. My arguments in the main text also tell against Harte's claim (n. 1), 132 that Crito and Socrates have fundamentally different understandings of harm.

[12] The tension between these two conceptions of harm and justice maps the tension between ordinary and psychic justice in the *Republic*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Furthermore, the course of the discussion between Socrates and Crito does not require that the latter employs Socrates' conception of harm to the soul. After arguing for T1* and T2*, Socrates himself ceases to employ the conception of harm to the soul. He turns to the principle that one should never commit injustice (49a4–5) and relies exclusively on the conception of physical harm. For example, when he equates committing injustice (ἀδικεῖν) with ill-treating others (κακουργεῖν) (49c2–9),[13] he has in mind ill-treatment in the ordinary (and Crito's) sense of physically harming others and not in the sense of harming one's soul.

One could object that the real point of this principle is that one should never harm one's own soul. But this will not do. Consider another Socratic principle, the principle of non-retaliation (49b9–c1 and c4–6), which Socrates' ban on all injustice grounds. One cannot make sense of the principle that one should never return injustice unless injustice involves physically harming others, namely those who originally physically harmed the agent. If the conception of harm to the soul were used, the principle would be inapplicable to paradigmatic cases of retaliation. It would only rule out trying to harm the souls of those who harmed one's soul.

Third, one should not overstate the implications of Crito's admission at 50a4–5 that he does not understand the point of a relevant Socratic question. Socrates gains Crito's agreement that one should do the just things one has agreed to do (49e5–8). Then he asks Crito whether by escaping without persuading the city they will be ill-treating some people and in fact those one should least ill-treat and whether they will in so doing be remaining faithful to their just agreements (49e9–50a3). Crito's puzzlement is totally justified. Socrates has not indicated whom one should least ill-treat. He has not explained why the point of persuading the city is relevant. And he has not specified what the relevant just agreements are. Crito has every reason to be unclear about what Socrates has in mind.[14] Socrates immediately proceeds to elucidate the content of his question by the imaginary speech of the Laws.

Thus, Crito is not presented in the *Crito* as a person with atypically poor cognitive and reasoning abilities, that is, as falling short of the standards of cognitive and reasoning abilities one would reasonably expect the many to have. It may be argued, however, that in order for one to understand Socrates' system of values one needs cognitive and reasoning abilities higher than those possessed by a typical member of the many. In the *Crito* Socrates expresses his pessimism about the possibility that the many may change their moral outlook. He claims to *know* that very few will *ever* agree with his view that one should never return injustice (49d2). Is Socrates' pessimism founded on his belief that the many lack the intellectual ability to understand his values?

[13] The controversy over whether κακουργεῖν means here mere harm as opposed to wrongful harm is irrelevant to my argument. For different views compare Harte (n. 1) with C. Kahn, 'Problems in the argument of the *Crito*', *Apeiron* 22 (1989), 29–43.

[14] Lane (n. 1), 322 claims that Crito fails to grasp the minor premise of Socrates' practical deliberation, the conclusion of which is that Socrates should not escape. According to Lane the major premise is the agreed principle that one should never do injustice and the minor premise is that to escape is to do injustice because it is harmful. The minor premise, however, follows from Socrates' equation of ἀδικεῖν with κακουργεῖν at 49b4–c9, only if we assume that for Socrates escaping from prison would be an act of κακουργεῖν. But Socrates has not argued for this point yet. The relevant justification is provided in the speech of the Laws. Weiss (n. 1), 79 also claims that Crito fails to grasp an argument against escape that Socrates has already established. For criticisms (in my view conclusive) of Weiss's interpretation, see L. Brown, 'Did Socrates agree to obey the Laws?' in L. Judson and V. Karasmanis (edd.), *Remembering Socrates* (Oxford, 2006), 72–87, at 76–7; Stokes (n. 10), 201–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In the *Republic* Plato is explicit that it is impossible for the many to become philosophers (494a4). He believes that only few have the natural abilities for reaching philosophical truths (491a7–b3), which include truths about moral values. On the one hand, however, we do not find any explicit remarks about the many's natural abilities in either the *Crito* or other early dialogues; so it is prudent not to rush into reading this doctrine of the *Republic* about the natural abilities of the many into the *Crito*. On the other, philosophy is regarded in the *Republic* as a high-level intellectual discipline which presupposes training in high-level specialized studies like mathematics. But, first, Socrates does not associate moral reasoning in the *Crito* or any other early dialogue with training in high-level specialized disciplines. And, second, the question at issue concerns the many's ability to understand *Socrates*' values. It is true that in the early dialogues Socrates stresses the importance of definitions for moral knowledge. Even if grasping moral definitions is considered a high-level intellectual enterprise, it is clear from Socrates' repeated disavowals of knowledge[15] that he lacks this high-level moral knowledge. Thus it is questionable whether we can rely on the doctrine of the *Republic* about the many's natural abilities to explain Socrates' pessimism.

Is Socrates' pessimism based on his belief that the many's moral framework prevents them from understanding Socrates' values? This prompts examination of E1. The supporters of E1 do not clarify how Crito's moral framework is supposed to prevent him from understanding that of Socrates. One possibility should be ruled out on the basis of my argument in the previous paragraph. We should not think that Socrates' moral framework includes pieces of high-level moral knowledge or specialized high-level non-moral knowledge inaccessible to the many.

Perhaps, however, the idea is not that Crito cannot comprehend Socrates' values because he lacks an appropriate conceptual apparatus. Rather, since Crito is entrenched in the moral values of the many, he cannot really see the *point* of Socrates' values. He cannot conceive the form of life they suggest as a meaningful form of life for him.

There is in ancient philosophy a train of thought which supports the idea that some people may fail to see the point of other people's values. Those who follow this train of thought stress the importance of one's being habituated to virtuous conduct or receiving appropriate moral education from early childhood. For example, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle denies that arguments alone can make men good. It is almost impossible that they remove character traits long developed by habit. Moral arguments are useful only to those who have already been appropriately habituated to virtuous conduct (1179b4–31).[16]

Similarly, Plato recognizes the importance of one's receiving appropriate moral education from early childhood in the context of his discussion of the educational power of poetry and music in Books 2 and 3 of the *Republic*. It would be a mistake, however, to project back to the early dialogues the idea that only those who are properly morally trained from early childhood can access the true moral values. It conflicts with Socrates' confidence in the *Apology* that he would convince the jurors of the truth of one of his most paradoxical theses, namely that no one would willingly commit wrong, were he allowed more time to talk to them (37a6–b1). Socrates does not assume that his fellow Athenians are properly trained in virtue. He explicitly asserts that the

[15] I side with the interpretation that Socrates' disavowals of knowledge are genuine. For a defence, see T. Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (Oxford, 1995), 27–9.

[16] For an analysis of Aristotle's argument see M. Burnyeat, 'Aristotle on learning to be good', in A. O. Rorty (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle* (Berkeley, 1980), 69–92.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

many do not properly educate their children (24e1–25c4). Thus Socrates believes that his fellow Athenians even though they have not been properly educated in virtue are able to understand and potentially be convinced about the truth of his values.

This is further corroborated by a comment Socrates makes in response to Callicles' claim in the *Gorgias* that like the many he is not convinced by Socrates' arguments (513c3–6). Callicles is hardly someone who has received proper training in virtue according to Socrates' standards. But Socrates remains confident that he would convince him if he engaged in many discussions with him (513c7–d1).

Finally, the text from the *Crito* which is adduced to support the thesis that Crito's moral framework prevents him for understanding Socrates' values[17] fails to establish as much. Socrates claims:

> So one should never return injustice nor ill-treat any human being, no matter what they suffer from them. And be careful, Crito, that in agreeing to these you are not agreeing to anything which goes against your own beliefs. For I know that few do believe or will believe these things. And there is no common counsel (κοινὴ βουλή) between those who believe these things and those who don't, but it is necessary that they show contempt for each other when they encounter each other's deliberations.
>
> (*Crito* 49c10–d5)

Vlastos rightly remarks that Socrates does not deny that he can argue with the many. His point concerns only *practical* deliberation. As Vlastos puts it, 'the gulf created by this disagreement will be unbridgeable when it comes to *deciding what is to be done*'.[18]

So Socrates believes that if two persons hold opposing principles of action they cannot agree about how to act. Since Socrates claims that they will show contempt for each other, we can reasonably assume that he means that the first person cannot see the point of the action the second person proposes and vice versa. The scope of this unbridgeable disagreement is narrow. It concerns the course of action to be taken. The disagreement is also conditional. It is conditional on the persistence of their disagreement about their principles. But the thesis that Crito's moral framework prevents him from understanding Socrates' values implies something stronger. It implies that if two persons held opposing principles of action neither of them could see the point of the opposing principle. The explanation is that the overall moral framework of the first person, say, the cluster of moral principles and attitudes he holds as a result of his education, prevents him from seeing the point of the principle the second person holds and vice versa. Thus, these two persons cannot resolve their disagreement about these principles. The scope of the allegedly unbridgeable disagreement is wide. It concerns the opposing principles themselves. Can we infer from the fact that two persons are unable to resolve their narrow disagreement about the course of action to be taken because they share different principles that they are equally unable to resolve their (wide) disagreement about these principles? The answer is no. Nothing precludes that they may – through considering, for example, some further principles – agree that only one of the opposing principles is correct.

So the passage of the *Crito* under consideration establishes a principle weaker than the principle required by the thesis that Crito's moral framework prevents him from understanding Socrates' values. It shows only that Socrates believes that for as long

[17] Bentley (n. 1), 8 and 16–7; Miller (n. 1), 125; Weiss (n. 1), 62–3; and Harte (n. 1), 130.
[18] G. Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge, 1991), 195 (my emphasis). Weiss (n. 1), 62 and Harte (n. 1), 130 agree with Vlastos's interpretation.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

as two persons have opposing principles of action neither of them can see the point of acting in the way the opposing principle recommends. But it does not show they are unable to resolve their disagreement about their principles of action (by, say, one of them changing his view about his principle of action).[19]

Why, then, does Socrates claim that the many will never believe that one should never retaliate? The claim is ambiguous. Socrates may be referring to the acquisition of a relevant belief by the many. In this case he claims that the many will never come to believe his thesis. Alternatively he may be referring to the tenacity of their belief.[20] That is, he claims that even if they come to believe his thesis they may not retain it. I will focus on Socrates' views about the tenacity of the true beliefs of the many in § 4. For now it suffices to note that if we take Socrates to be referring to the many's coming to believe his thesis, we may construct an initial explanation of Socrates' pessimism on the basis of the evidence of the *Apology* and the *Gorgias*. Socrates believes that the many will never come to believe his thesis because he did not have enough time to engage in repeated arguments with a great number of people about the justification of retaliation (and obviously his death will prevent him from engaging in such arguments in the future).

To sum up. I argued that Crito has the reasoning and cognitive abilities one should expect a typical member of the many to have. Further I argued that we have no strong reasons to think that Socrates believes that Crito's moral framework prevents him from understanding that of Socrates. I suggest we treat with scepticism the interpretation that Crito fails to understand Socrates' values and for this reason fails to deliberate Socratically.

There remains another possibility. Although Crito may have understood Socrates' principles, he was nevertheless *never convinced by* them. Perhaps Socrates did not argue enough with him. All his avowals of Socrates' principles, that is, both those made in the course of the discussion with Socrates in the *Crito* and their previous similar agreements that Socrates repeatedly refers to have been insincere or at best reluctant. We may treat this possibility as another variant of the interpretation that Crito did not deliberate Socratically because he never endorsed Socrates' values. It gains plausibility from Socrates' claim that he does not want to convince Crito against his will (ἄκοντος, 48e3–5). And it is further corroborated by the claim Socrates makes at 49d1–2 that he does not want Crito to agree with him against his belief (παρὰ δόξαν). These Socratic remarks could be plausibly understood as exhibiting concern about the sincerity of Crito's agreement with Socrates.

I will return to this possibility after exploring the third explanation of why Crito did not deliberate Socratically that I distinguished in the first section of my paper. According to it, though Crito endorsed in the past (as a result of participating in or witnessing Socratic elenchi) Socrates' theses about the value of the views of the many and the importance of death, he recently lost his commitment to them.

[19] In fact the elenchus is based on the assumption that this wide agreement is possible. If someone disagrees with Socrates' principles Socrates could gain his agreement on some other principles and through them get him to revise his commitment to his original un-Socratic principles. This is precisely what Socrates does in the *Crito* when he gains Crito's agreement on T3 and T4 and makes him reconsider his commitment to T1 and T2.

[20] On this reading δοκεῖ and δόξει at 49d2 refer to the disposition of believing that one should never retaliate as opposed to the acquisition of the relevant belief.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

3. SOCRATES' DIAGNOSIS OF CRITO'S PREDICAMENT: CRITO'S FEAR

I will begin by looking closely at how Socrates reacts to Crito's un-Socratic deliberations. Immediately after Crito's exhortation to escape Socrates responds that he will obey only the rational argument (λόγῳ) which seems best to him. This is what he has been doing throughout his life (46b4–6). He adds that he is not able to (οὐ δύναμαι) throw out (ἐκβαλλεῖν) the rational arguments (λόγους) he previously accepted in the face of his current misfortune (τύχη, 46b6–8). The reason is that these rational arguments continue to look to him very much the same (σχεδόν τι ὅμοιοι); so he upholds and respects them as before (46b8–c2). If he and Crito fail to find better rational arguments which apply to the current situation, he will definitely (εὖ ἴσθι ὅτι) refuse to follow Crito's suggestion (46c2–3). He would not change his mind even if the many were to try to scare them like children with more evils than they currently do, that is, by threatening them with imprisonments, deaths and confiscation of wealth (46c3–6). He makes a similar point in his discussion of the principle that one should never commit injustice. He suggests that their previously agreed theses should not be thrown out (ἐκκεχυμέναι) in a period of a few days (in which they are faced with their current misfortune) (49a7–9). If they did so, they would behave no differently from children despite their being of an advanced age (49a9–b1). Irrespective of whether the many threaten them with even more evils than they currently do, they should not change their minds about the principle that it is altogether bad and shameful to commit injustice (49b1–5). Thus Socrates remains committed to his originally held beliefs and will not revise them in the face of his imminent death. He implies that Crito should do the same.

Furthermore, Socrates' overall emotional condition is not in the least affected by the prospect of his death. When Crito enters his cell he finds Socrates peacefully asleep (43a9–b5). Socrates makes the rather humorous comment that men of his age should not be afraid of death (43b10–11). And when he hears the bad news that the ship from Delos is arriving he shows no anxiety but is ready to accept his fate (43d7–8).

What about Crito? Socrates claims that since Crito is not going to die tomorrow the current predicament would not make him lose his correct judgement (παρακρούει, 46e3–47a2). The irony of Socrates' claim is striking.[21] On the one hand, Crito's judgement has already been adversely affected. Crito has already produced arguments based on the alleged importance of the views of the many and the significance of mere survival. On the other, Crito is actually overwhelmed by fear and anxiety. He manifests his anxiety in various ways. He declares it at the opening scene when he contrasts Socrates' ability to enjoy a peaceful sleep with his own sleeplessness (ἀγρυπνία) and distress (λύπη, 43b3–5). He also claims that the news of the arrival of the ship from Delos is bad and heavy to bear for himself and the companions of Socrates (though, as Crito observes, not for Socrates himself) (43c5–8). He employs vocabulary with strong emotional overtones. He introduces the term 'disaster' (συμφορά) to describe the prospect of Socrates' death (43b8–9 and c2). He also uses the same term to describe what will happen to him if Socrates dies (44b8). His anxiety is also evinced in the

[21] Though the comment is 'ironic' in the sense that Socrates means the opposite of what he says, the aim of Socrates is not to ridicule or mock Crito. Rather his aim is educational: he wants to make Crito realize that his anxiety affects his reasoning. Once Crito becomes aware of this fact he will be more readily benefited by an elenctic discussion. For an illuminating discussion of the nature and scope of Socratic irony to which I am indebted, see M. Lane, 'Reconsidering Socratic irony', in D. Morrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates* (Cambridge, 2011), 237–59.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

way in which he presents his arguments in order to convince Socrates to escape. He is so anxious to convince Socrates that his impatience gets the better of him. He urges Socrates to be convinced and not to act otherwise (45a3 and 46a8–9) and not to give a lot of thought to the issue because there is little time (46a4–5).

I suggest that the conclusion to draw from Socrates' ironic claim at 46e3–47a2 is that Socrates believes that Crito deliberated un-Socratically at the beginning of the dialogue because of his fear at the prospect of Socrates' imminent death. Crito fears that Socrates' death is the worst thing both for him and for Socrates. Because of his fear Crito loses his commitment to T1* (one should only value the moral views of the wise) and T2* (death is not the greatest harm), starts valuing the views of the many and thinks that mere survival is of paramount importance.

This interpretation is corroborated by two additional considerations. First, it is supported by the form of Socrates' repeated questions about whether Crito stands by previously discussed theses (see 48b2–5, 48b7–8 and 49e2–3). Socrates formulates his questions using the verbs μένειν and ἐμμένειν. This indicates that he is concerned with the *stability* of Crito's beliefs.[22] Secondly, this interpretation captures the main point of the contrast between Socrates and Crito. As we have seen, Socrates claims that he is unable to throw out (ἐκβαλλεῖν) the rational arguments he originally held in the face of a misfortune (46b6–9). But on the interpretation I am advancing this is exactly what Crito does. He is throwing out his originally held beliefs in the face of Socrates' imminent death.

Crito's fear does not bring him to a state in which he is unable to argue. As I have explained, he can construct coherent (though not Socratic) arguments in favour of Socrates' escaping from prison. Furthermore, Socrates himself seems to believe that Crito can be alerted to his predicament and through arguments restore his originally held true beliefs. On the one hand, Socrates signals to Crito that his mindset is influenced by his fear. For example, he refers to the grotesqueness of being scared by the power of the many like children at 46c3–6. And he makes the ironic comment at 46e3–47a2 that Crito must be clear-headed given that he is not the one who will die the following day. On the other, he engages in a dialogue with him. The dialogue consists in reiteration of principles established in previous elenchi and some arguments which support or clarify these principles. Socrates reiterates the thesis that one should value only some moral views, those of the wise, and not all views (47a2–11). He then supports and clarifies this thesis with an argument about the benefits of following the views of the wise at 47a12–48a10. He also reminds Crito of the thesis that one should care most about living well and not merely surviving and that living well is equivalent to living justly (48b2–9).

There remains the possibility that after Socrates tries to refute the false assumptions of Crito's arguments and restore his commitment to the relevant Socratic principles he realizes that Crito is unable to follow the path of reason. The form of the subsequent discussion between Socrates and Crito does not give credence to this interpretation. Socrates presents to Crito the principle which should guide their deliberation about whether Socrates should escape. It is the principle that one should under no

[22] Socrates consistently uses μένειν and ἐμμένειν to refer to the stability of beliefs. μένειν is used at *Euthyphro* 11b8, c4, c6, c9 and d8, *Euthydemus* 288a3, *Gorgias* 480b3 and *Meno* 83d3 (cf. μένουσαν at *Protagoras* 356e2). ἐμμένειν is used at *Protagoras* 353b3. In the context of the analogy of Daedalus in the *Meno* παραμένειν is used possibly because of the contrast with δραπετεύειν, see *Meno* 97d10, e4 and 98a2. For more on the analogy of Daedalus see § 4 of this paper.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

circumstances do wrong (49a4–7) even in retaliating for a wrong received (49b9–10). This principle is presented as a genuine Socratic principle which has been agreed in many previous discussions with Crito (49a6–7). Socrates later elucidates that this principle should be treated as equivalent to the principle that one should never ill-treat people even in retaliation for previous ill-treatment (49c2–11).

Thus, even after Socrates tries to refute the false assumptions upon which Crito bases his arguments (47a2–48b9), he continues to present to Crito genuine Socratic principles. Furthermore he does not exhibit any concerns about whether Crito comprehends these principles. Rather his worry continues to be whether Crito's commitment to these principles is stable. He asks Crito whether their previous consensus that one should never commit injustice holds or has been thrown out (ἐκκεχυμέναι) because of the recent event of Socrates' imprisonment (49a5–9). And he similarly asks Crito whether he remains stable in his belief that one should never do injustice or ill-treat people, even when one has been wronged (49d5–e3). In both cases Crito reaffirms his commitment to his originally held beliefs (49b6 and 49e4).

Socrates continues to be preoccupied with the issue of the stability of one's commitments in the speech of the Laws. One of the central questions he presents the Laws as asking is whether by escaping Socrates would reverse his commitment to previous just agreements with the Laws. The point the Laws are making is that Socrates agreed to obey the Laws and more specifically the law which commands that the decisions of the courts have authority (50c5–7, 53a6; cf. 50a2–3). In the relevant passages the verb ἐμμένειν is used. An implicit parallel is drawn between, on the one hand, Socrates' imaginary loss of commitment to his previous just agreements with the Laws and, on the other, Crito's actual and Socrates' imaginary loss of commitment to their own previous agreements. Socrates claimed that if in the face of his current predicament he and Crito backed down from their previously agreed principles they would look like children despite being of advanced age (49a7–b1). The Laws claim that if Socrates retracted his lifelong agreements with them he would look ridiculous (53a7–8).

It may be objected that in the speech of the Laws Socrates is concerned not with the issue of the stability of one's beliefs but with the issue of the stability of one's intentions. What the Laws accuse Socrates of is failing to stick to his intention to obey the Laws which he expressed in deeds by choosing to remain in Athens (52d4–6). But one should not overstate the distinction between stability of beliefs and stability of intentions in this context. First, in the imaginary scenario of Socrates' escape, the reversal of his intention to obey the Laws would be due to the fact that some of his beliefs changed. These would be beliefs about the legitimacy of his retaliating against the Laws because the court did not judge his case correctly (50c1–4). Thus Socrates would form the intention to disobey the Laws because he would have changed his commitment to the belief that retaliation is always wrong or his commitment to the belief that one should never do wrong (49b2–c11). Second, Crito's unstable beliefs which Socrates focusses upon at the beginning of the *Crito* are not theoretical beliefs concerning, for example, mathematical or scientific truths. They are beliefs about the value of the views of the many and the importance of mere survival which guide Crito's practical deliberations. Thus they are beliefs which are intrinsically linked with the formation of Crito's relevant intentions.

Furthermore, the Laws do not accuse Socrates of being insincere in making his agreements with them. They do not doubt that Socrates intended to obey them when he agreed to obey them by deciding to remain in Athens. Their point is that if Socrates escaped he would be inconsistent with agreements he genuinely intended to

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

honour at the time of making them. They claim that he was distinctively more satisfied with Athens and its laws than his fellow citizens (53a3–5). On the imaginary scenario of his escape Socrates would have changed his attitude towards Athens and its laws after his trial and the decision of the court.

This last consideration paves the way for explaining Socrates' concern about the sincerity of Crito's agreements with Socrates at 48e3–5 and 49d1–2. He does not believe that Crito's avowals of Socrates' principles have *always* been insincere or reluctant. At both 48e3–5 and 49d1–2 Socrates worries about the sincerity of Crito's avowal of the principle that one should never do wrong. But it is clear that his worry has restricted scope. Socrates worries about Crito's avowal in the context of their current discussion and not about Crito's previous avowals of the same principle. Shortly after his remark that he does not want to convince Crito against his will, Socrates invites him to consider 'whether all those previous agreements have been thrown out in the course of these few days (ὀλίγαις ἡμέραις [presumably the days of Socrates' trial and imprisonment], 49a7–9). 'These few days' are contrasted with the 'many times' (πολλάκις) in which Crito and Socrates have agreed on the principle that one should never do wrong (49a6–7). The idea conveyed is that Socrates worries about whether Crito has changed his mind about this principle in the last few days in the face of Socrates' predicament. The text does not suggest that Socrates doubts the sincerity of Crito's many *previous* agreements.

Socrates' worry is understandable on the interpretation I advance. He knows that Crito lost his commitment to some other Socratic principles that he previously held because of his fear at the prospect of Socrates' imminent death. He wants to make certain that Crito's fear has not shaken his confidence in other Socratic principles as well.

To sum up, Socrates believes not that Crito is unable to understand Socrates' values but rather that Crito has unstable beliefs. His fear at the prospect of Socrates' death causes him to lose his originally held true beliefs and start deliberating on the basis of false beliefs about the value of the view of the many and the significance of mere survival.

4. SOCRATES ON THE INSTABILITY OF TRUE BELIEFS AND THE POWER OF APPEARANCE

On my proposed interpretation Socrates assumes in the *Crito* that (a) true beliefs may be lost (b) due to certain psychological conditions of the agent (like fear). Evidence from the *Protagoras*, the *Euthyphro* and the *Meno* suggests that (a) is a basic Socratic thesis. Socrates' views about the power of appearance in the *Protagoras* also elucidate how (b) is possible, namely how one's psychological condition may make one lose one's true beliefs.

In the *Protagoras* Socrates implies that true beliefs may be lost. At 356d7–e2, a passage to which I will return shortly, he claims that possession of the art of measurement of pleasures and pains enables one's soul to *retain hold* of the truth (μένουσαν ἐπὶ τῷ ἀληθεῖ). Thus he implies that if one lacks this art of measurement one may lose one's true beliefs. Socrates illustrates the intrinsic instability of beliefs by analogy with Daedalus' statues, which do not stay firm but fly away (*Euthyphro* 11b6–d6). The point of the comparison is to illustrate that the elenchus can remove false beliefs. In the *Meno* Socrates uses the analogy of Daedalus to illustrate that true beliefs may be lost (in accordance with what is implied in the *Protagoras*). He recognizes that true

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

beliefs (as opposed to knowledge) are intrinsically unstable. Like Daedalus' statues, they never remain stable but escape from the soul, unless they are tied down. What ties them down and makes them stable is explanatory reasoning provided by knowledge (97d6–98a8).[23]

Crito's true beliefs behave like Daedalus' statues. Crito does not possess knowledge about how one should live one's life. Thus he cannot tie down the true beliefs which he gained as a result of his discussions with Socrates. Some of his previously held true beliefs about the value of the moral views of the many and the comparative unimportance of mere survival depart from his soul and fail to guide his deliberations.

What triggered the departure of these true beliefs from Crito's soul? On my interpretation it was Crito's fear. The *Protagoras* provides a model for understanding both what Crito's fear consists in and how it can cause the loss of Crito's true beliefs. In the *Protagoras* Socrates contrasts the art of measurement of pleasures and pains upon which the salvation of our lives depends with the power of appearance (356c8–357c1). The person who possesses the art of measurement of pleasures and pains can correctly calculate their intensity and spatial or temporal proximity and make informed choices. As a result he is not deceived by the power of appearance but helps his soul retain its true beliefs (τὴν ψυχὴν μένουσαν ἐπὶ τῷ ἀληθεῖ, 356d7–e2). Socrates equates pleasure and pain with goodness and badness respectively in the *Protagoras*. Whether Socrates sincerely espouses hedonism is controversial.[24] For my argument it suffices that he recognizes that there is an art of measurement of harms and benefits (irrespective of whether the latter are analysed in terms of pain and pleasure) which enables the agent to reach correct decisions about how he should act. The person who lacks this art of measurement can be deceived by the apparent magnitude of certain harms and benefits and miscalculate their significance.

We may consider Crito to be a victim of the power of appearance on the basis of the model of the *Protagoras*. Crito compares the harms and benefits resulting from Socrates' death with the harms and benefits resulting from Socrates' escape from prison. He becomes overwhelmed by the apparent magnitude of the harms resulting from Socrates' death presumably because of their temporal proximity.[25] For example, the contempt which he believes his fellow Athenians will show to him because he did not try to save his friend appears to him exceedingly harmful. And perhaps the same is true of the satisfaction of Socrates' enemies with their achievement of destroying him. These appearances lead him to expect that exceedingly bad things will happen to him and Socrates if Socrates dies. In the *Protagoras* Socrates defines fear as expectation of evil (358d5–e2). Thus we can say that these appearances generate fear in Crito's soul.[26] His fear, that is, his expectation that exceedingly bad things will happen

[23] Despite the fact that the *Meno* contains 'Platonic' doctrines like the theory of recollection, two considerations which I have already mentioned suggest that the analogy of Daedalus is primarily 'Socratic' in spirit. First, in the *Euthyphro* Socrates compares beliefs to the statues of Daedalus. Second, in the *Protagoras* Socrates implicitly assumes what the analogy of Daedalus illustrates in the *Meno*, namely that true beliefs are unstable.

[24] For opposing interpretations, see C.C.W. Taylor, *Plato* Protagoras (Oxford, 1991), 164–70 and D. Zeyl, 'Socrates and hedonism: *Protagoras* 351B–358D', *Phronesis* 25 (1980), 250–69.

[25] It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the question of why some things have the power of appearance. For an original answer to this question and review of the relevant literature, see T.C. Brickhouse and N.D. Smith, *Socratic Moral Psychology* (Cambridge, 2010), 70–88.

[26] Crito's sleeplessness and distress may be considered to be somatic and emotional manifestations of his fear.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to him and Socrates if Socrates dies, loosens his commitment to T1* (one should value the moral views of only the prudent and not the many) and T2* (death is not the greatest harm). He now comes to believe T1 (one should value the moral views of the many) and T2 (death is the greatest harm) and base on them his deliberations about what Socrates should do.

Thus the *Protagoras* model of the instability of true beliefs helps us get a more complete account of Crito's failure to deliberate Socratically. As Socrates indicates in the *Crito*, Crito's loss of his originally held true beliefs is due to fear. On the basis of the *Protagoras* fear may be understood as the proximate cause of the loss of Crito's true beliefs. Its ultimate cause is Crito's lack of the art of measurement and his related vulnerability to the power of appearance.

We may ponder on Socrates' understanding of the instability of beliefs and the power of appearance to further sharpen the contrast between Crito and Socrates. If we take Socrates' disavowal of knowledge at face value, then he (like Crito) has not tied down his true beliefs with explanatory reasoning and does not possess the art of measurement. Nevertheless, even at the prospect of his death his true beliefs do not escape from his soul but guide his deliberations. I do not have the space here to provide a full explication of the tenacity of Socrates' true beliefs. I will only outline how Socrates resists the power of appearance in order to elucidate the contrast with Crito.

Socrates knows that his true beliefs are not intrinsically stable. He is also aware of the power of appearance and his lack of the art of measurement. Furthermore, he holds with confidence certain beliefs (about the value of death, the power of the many, the justness of retaliation and the imprudence of injustice) which he has examined repeatedly using the elenchus. I suggest that for these reasons he (a) distrusts any unreflective judgements (of others or even his own) which are based on unexamined appearances and (b) gives precedence to his reflective, elenctically examined beliefs. During a life devoted to arguments he has developed the epistemic virtue of having his reflective judgements trump his unreflective ones. This is the gist of his claim that he has *always* (ἀεί) obeyed the argument (λόγῳ) which seemed best to his reasoning and that in the face of his death he is unable to throw out his elenctically examined beliefs but continues to respect and value them (*Crito* 46b4–c2). Since he believes that his fellow citizens similarly lack the art of measurement of goods and evils, he urges them to daily examine issues of virtue and stresses that an unexamined life is not worth living (*Apology* 38a1–6). Someone who lives an unexamined life may follow his unreflective judgements and succumb to the power of appearance.[27]

Socrates' devotion to arguments is unique. In the *Apology* Socrates considers it to lie beyond what is to be expected from an ordinary human being (ἀνθρωπίνῳ)[28] since it

[27] We need not infer from the fact that Socrates always obeys his reflective judgement and thus does not fall prey to the power of appearance that Socrates believes that his true beliefs are stable. I suggest that Socrates thinks that it is possible that he may lose his true beliefs because of an argument by a superior dialectician. I base my suggestion on the fact that Socrates acknowledges that he holds his beliefs provisionally and that they may be refuted. For example, in the *Crito* he is willing to examine whether there is a better argument in favour of his escaping from prison (46c2–3) and even to give up his previous beliefs if they are found wanting under the current examination (46d5–7). In the *Gorgias* he claims that he assumes but does not know his beliefs to be true on the grounds that no one *so far* has refuted them (implying thus that he does not rule out that one might refute them in the future, *Grg.* 509a4–b1).

[28] Since Socrates is able to exhibit extreme devotion to arguments he cannot mean that it is beyond the reach of *any* human being. Cf. A. Hatzistavrou, 'Socrates' deliberative authoritarianism', *OSAPh* 29 (2005), 75–113, at 86 with n. 20.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

requires total disregard for one's own affairs (31a9–b5). This presumably explains why he believes that it would be very difficult for the Athenians to find anyone else like him if they killed him (30e1–5). Crito does not share Socrates' atypical zeal for arguments. Since Crito has not devoted his whole life to examining arguments, he has not developed the epistemic virtue of having his reflective judgements trump his unreflective ones. For this reason, unlike Socrates, he is susceptible to the power of appearance.

The critical tone that Socrates adopts towards Crito indicates that he believes that Crito is to an extent responsible for losing his true beliefs. Socrates' critical attitude is compatible with his pessimism about the possibility of Crito's resisting the power of appearance. To think otherwise would be to confuse explanations of human actions with their moral justifications.[29] Socrates' theses about the intrinsic instability of beliefs and the power of appearance explain why Crito did not deliberate Socratically and formed the intention to help Socrates to escape. But they do not justify Crito's urging Socrates to escape. Even though Socrates could not reasonably have expected Crito to exhibit his own atypical zeal for arguments, he may still think that Crito could (and should) have done more to resist the power of appearance and follow his reflective, elenctically tested judgements on this occasion. After all, as Socrates points out, Crito has been well aware of Socrates' arguments against trusting the moral views of the many or thinking of death as a great evil. Socrates' explanatory theses about the intrinsic instability of beliefs and the power of appearance provide the general framework within which one should properly assess Crito's moral responsibility. They do not automatically exonerate Crito.

To conclude, I argued that Crito's failure to deliberate Socratically at the beginning of the *Crito* is not due to the fact that he does not understand Socrates' values. Crito understands Socrates' values but loses his commitment to them because he is overcome by the power of appearance. Given that Crito possesses ordinary cognitive and reasoning skills, we may reasonably take his case to exemplify a common predicament of the many. Like Crito, the many can understand Socrates' values and may temporarily be convinced by his arguments. But since they lack either moral knowledge or Socrates' atypical devotion to arguments they are unlikely to hold on to Socrates' values when confronted with the difficulties of life. If my interpretation is correct then it paves the way for a different understanding of Socrates' pessimistic remark at *Crito* 49d2–3 that few people will ever believe one of his central moral principles, namely that one should never return injustice. I have already mentioned one possible reading of Socrates' remark. Socrates may be referring to the probabilities of the many's *coming to believe* his principle. In that case, as I have argued, Socrates should be understood as regretting the fact that he has not so far been (and will not in the future be) able to argue long enough with many people about his principle so as to convince them. But it is possible that Socrates is thinking (alternatively or additionally) of the ability of the many *to retain* their belief in his principle. In that case Socrates expresses his pessimism that only few of those who have been convinced by his arguments may manage to hold on to his principle.

University of Hall ANTONY HATZISTAVROU
a.hatzistavrou@hull.ac.uk

[29] To believe that all humans are likely to err at some point is not a reason for believing that when they do err they are not responsible.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838813000116 Published online by Cambridge University Press