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Political Theory

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### Extra Opportunity Reading Response: Plato: The Crito

Plato's Crito takes place in Socrates' prison cell, after The Apology, where his friend Crito is urging him to escape and go somewhere else before Athens executes him. Socrates insists that one must never do wrong, even in response to wrongdoing, arguing that escaping would violate this principle (50a-c). He also introduces his idea of a moral contract with the laws of the city, claiming that by choosing to live in Athens, he implicitly agreed to follow its legal judgements. Socrates argues that justice should not be determined by public opinion but by reason and virtue. Overall, Socrates concludes that breaking the laws would harm the city and its moral order, so he chooses to remain in jail and face execution.

I have heard this story before, but never read about the full conversation and personally, it is a great extension of The Apology. Although at times you can get a bit frustrated with Socrates because in some way you are rooting for him to get out since he has the opportunity but also understanding why he refuses. As someone who isn't guilty of the things they are being 'convicted' of, he wouldn't want to be portrayed as something he claims he isn't. His belief that obeying the laws of Athens is understandable on a moral level but also feels conflicting, due to the unfairness of legal systems, especially comparing it to the system in America. However,

Socrates' insistence on his principles and morals is convincing in a way that he makes readers question whether our moral system would hold up if the same thing happened to us.

If Socrates believes that it is always wrong to disobey the law, what would he say about modern acts of civil disobedience that aim to challenge unjust systems such as protests?