

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

Socratic Dialogue as Moral Self-formation

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is the work of my own and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature is attributed and cited in references.

Bratislava, February 22, 2016

Nikola Bakšová,

Signature:.....

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Socratic Dialogue as Moral Self-formation

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Abstract

Socratic dialogue can be explained as a method of realizing the extent of one's real correct knowledge. Socrates often uses irony (also called Socratic irony), which consists of a sequence of questions, raised by Socrates himself. These questions have to be responded to by his interlocutor, who is considered to or who claims to have the greatest knowledge about the topic they are discussing. The most well known topics are about ethics, moral principles, holiness, or politics.

Socratic early dialogues usually end in aporia, which can be explained as an inability of Socrates' interlocutors to give him an appropriate definition, or response to the issue discussed. Because of the inability to respond, interlocutors realize that neither are they the most knowledgeable about the topic, nor can they really give Socrates any satisfactory answer – they realize that they know nothing.

Three Socratic dialogues will be analyzed in this thesis. These three dialogues span most of his life, the most crucial events and decisions he had to make throughout his lifetime. It will be Euthyphro, where he discusses what piety means before his speech at the trial. Then it will be the dialogue about the actual speech and the trial that was brought against him, the Apology. And the last dialogue will be Crito, during which he was imprisoned and sentenced to death.

Sokratovský dialóg ako práca na sebe

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Abstrakt

Sokratovský dialóg môže byť definovaný ako proces realizácie rozsahu vedomostí jednotlivca. Sokrates často používal metódu irónie, ktorá pozostáva zo sledu otázok kladených Sokratom samým. Tieto otázky mali byť zodpovedané jedincom, s ktorým bol dialóg vedený a ktorý sa považoval za experta v danom obore. Najznámejšími témami rozhovorov sú otázky etiky, morálky, zbožnosti, či politiky.

Skoré Sokratovské dialógy boli zväčša ukončené apóriou, čo znamená, že neobsahovali jasné ukončenie. Ten, kto viedol so Sokratom dialóg, nebol schopný vyjadriť a dostatočne vysvetliť definíciu pojmu, na ktorý sa Sokrates pýtal. Vďaka tejto neschopnosti sa jeho spolurečníkovi naskytuje možnosť uvedomenia si svojich reálnych vedomostí. Táto realizácia ho vedie k skutočnosti, že nielen neoplýva najväčšou vedomosťou o danom pojme, a teda sa nemôže považovať za experta, ale že nemá žiadnu vedomosť o diskutovanej téme. Na základe tejto realizácie sa mu

naskytuje možnosť pracovať na sebe, a teda rozvíjať svoje vedomosti a zmeniť chybné morálne princípy, ktorými sa až do momentu uvedomenia riadil.

Táto práca bude analyzovať tri Sokratovské dialógy (Eutyfron, Obrana Sokratova, Kritón), ktoré pokrývajú posledné obdobie Sokratovho života. Obdobie, v ktorom bol nútený robiť zásadné životné rozhodnutia. V prvom dialógu, sa stretáva s Eutyfronom pred budovou súdu, kde diskutujú o koncepte zbožnosti. V druhom dialógu, nazvanom Obrana Sokratova, sa Sokrates nachádza už v budove súdu, kde má predviesť svoju obhajobu. Posledný dialóg, Kritón, hovorí o rozhovore Sokrata s jeho starým priateľom Kritónom. Počas tohto rozhovoru je už Sokrates uväznený a čaká na výkon rozsudku smrti.

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Introduction

What is a true knowledge? Is there only one definition of piety? Is it even possible to come up with universal definition of something? How can one realize what his real knowledge is, how much of it he possesses?

Socratic dialogues are full of this kind of questions and answers to them. In this thesis I will analyze three chosen Socratic dialogues, and try to find how Socrates was motivating people to gain true knowledge, or to get closer to it. His method of questioning instead of talking about an issue discussed seems to me very sophisticated and interesting. It forced his interlocutor to think about the topic Socrates is asking about and think of appropriate and satisfactory answer. At the end he realizes that he do not possess the knowledge he thought, which had to be very hard for him. This can be one of the reasons why Socrates was not understood among many people.

What can one do if he realizes that he knows nothing? This confession should lead to some kind of change. Because of the fact that Socrates showed the real knowledge to his interlocutor, we can consider Socrates as the wisest man, as someone, who already knows what is right or wrong and which principles can be considered as universal. This thesis will show how Socratic dialogue contributes to moral self-formation of his interlocutor.

Chapter 1: Socratic Method

This chapter is to be an introductory and explanatory part of this thesis. Important terms this thesis is discussing and is connected to will be explained. It will be about the *Socratic method*, also called the Socratic dialogue, where *moral principles* are rooted, and is mostly ended by *Aporia*. Through Socrates' conversations in those dialogues the place for the *process of moral self-formation* is to be found and in some cases also fulfilled.

The basis of Socratic method is dialogue. That is also why this method is called the Socratic dialogue. In general, and in a way easier to understand, it is a sequence of systematic questioning. The final answer to these questions should be the one and only definition of the topic/term that is discussed. Most of these dialogues end in *Aporia*; they are open ended. Either the responder leaves the conversation without saying anything, or he confesses that he does not possess satisfactory knowledge about the topic, therefore he is unable to answer Socrates' question.

To be more concrete and to examine this method deeper, the pattern Socrates was using needs to be revealed. What is important to know first is the fact that Socrates was not trying to gain the greatest knowledge. He was more trying to examine what other people considered to be their greatest knowledge. The pattern in his dialogues starts with the question that seems to be simple and easy to answer - What is 'X'?

After all it was not easy to answer this question because Socrates' interlocutors did not know what exactly Socrates wanted to hear from them. For example, in *Euthyphro*, Socrates seeks the answer to the question "What is piety?". He wants to hear a general definition which can be used on all examples of pious actions – something that pious acts have in common. The nature of this question is very simple. Socrates assumed that the only person able to give him a satisfactory answer is the one who actually knows 'X' (Graeser, 2001, p.113-120). The reason why Socrates lead his dialogues with such and such a person was that this individual claimed to have the greatest knowledge about the topic discussed and that he was an expert in that field.

Once Socrates asked this person his question, the latter was not able to answer correctly. Even after further examination with Socrates' assistance.

These questions were mostly related to matters of morality, ethics, and politics. In this search for a definition, many of Socrates' principles were revealed as well as those of his interlocutors. These principles will be examined throughout next chapters of this thesis.

As was mentioned above, Socrates' dialogues were composed of questions related to topic discussed. Throughout those conversations many attempts to answer were made, and many characteristics of the subject were described. Only one thing was missing – the actual general definition which would end these dialogues. Most early Socratic dialogues, including two of those that will be analyzed in this thesis, ended in Aporia.

For Aporia the lexicon offers 'difficulty, being at a loss, being wanting, embarrassment, perplexity, distress'... (Kirkland, 2012, p.99).

The word Aporia can be also understood as some kind of 'waylessness'. In dialogues it is to be understood as something unfinished or something that ended unclosed. The reader does not really know what happened at the end, because Socrates' interlocutor either left their conversation too early or did not answer the question. It falls upon the reader to interpret this ending, and what probably went on after it.

One experiences aporia only if one encounters the obstacle when one is already toward the Piraeus, if one is already on the way there and 'knows' it in some qualified sense as his or her desired destination...aporia is an always prior relatedness and even a preunderstanding or foreknowledge of that which we experience aporetically...Indeed, the aporia that results from Socratic questioning is simply the yawning into view of this distressing distance between us and 'what virtue is,' that distance which the movement of appearing has been covering and covering over (Kirkland, 2012, p.104-105).

To sum it up, and to put it into more understandable language, aporetic ending of Socratic dialogues can be understood as showing the distance between what one thought before about the topic discussed and what he thinks about it after the examination of this or that term. As was already said, and will be shown in the second chapter of this thesis, Socrates' interlocutors were in fact wrong about their opinions and their knowledge; and conversation with Socrates proved this fact. This realization should lead them to final step, to their moral self-formation.

In these terms the process of moral self-formation should be understood as some kind of realization and self-awareness. It can be seen gradually throughout the dialogues. At first, the interlocutor is confident and considers himself as an expert of the topic of the discussion. During the dialogue, as the interlocutor is not able to answer Socrates' question immediately, he is trying to describe the term that is the subject of their discussion. Here the change of roles is revealing. By asking more and more questions and explaining the way the interlocutor is wrong in his opinions, Socrates appears as the expert in their conversation and the interlocutor finds himself learning new ideas from Socrates. At the end interlocutor realizes that he is still not able to give Socrates any eligible answer, and that he knows nothing about the subject of their conversation. By this realization, and Socrates' assistance throughout the dialogue, the interlocutor sees that the principles and opinions Socrates has are in a way untouchable and unchallenged. Now that he knows that he led his life wrongly and that, in many cases, he was teaching what was not true, he is able to change his point of view, principles, or opinions to those that are right, moral, and just. He is now on his way to moral self-formation.

Chapter 2: Socratic Dialogue as Moral Self-formation

The second chapter is going to be an interpretation of three Socratic dialogues – Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito. In the first dialogue, Euthyphro, Socrates is about to defend himself before the court. He was accused of corrupting the youth and of impiety. He asks Euthyphro what piety is in order to have a teacher that is well known and respected by the people of Athens, because this could help Socrates prove his innocence. The second dialogue is the actual speech in front of the jury and the confrontation with his principal accuser, Meletus. At the end of this dialogue, Socrates is sentenced to death and put in prison. The last dialogue this thesis will analyze is Crito. Here Socrates' old friend Crito comes to see Socrates in jail. He wants him to run away from prison to save his life. Socrates examines whether he should stay or escape the death penalty.

In all three dialogues the process of moral self-formation will be revealed and described.

2.1 Euthyphro

This section provides an interpretation of Socrates' conversation with Euthyphro. Meletus accused Socrates of spoiling the youth, of impiety, and of creating new gods. He is going to give his defensive speech in front of the jury. While he is on his way to the building where the trial will take place, he meets Euthyphro, who is well known as a sophist and expert in all religious matters. Euthyphro is accusing his own father of the murder of his servant, who was also a killer, but this fact was not the reason why Euthyphro's father killed him. What Euthyphro did not like about his father's action was that he bound this man and let him die of a starvation in pain. He did not have any right to do so, because it was an act in drunken anger. Even though his family thinks that to prosecute your own relative is impious, Euthyphro claims that they are wrong, because he knows what piety is and his action is right, pious and just.

Socrates wants to know something that could possibly help him defend himself. He claims that if he tells in front of jury that Euthyphro is teaching him, he cannot be accused of doing anything impious.

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Socrates acknowledges that Meletus is correct in many things, except for prosecuting him. Meletus wants to protect young men from being corrupted by the elders of the city. Socrates likes the way Meletus wants to do this: *“I think he is the only one of our public men to start out the right way, for it is right to care first that the young should be as good as possible, just as a good farmer is likely to take care of young plants first, and of the others later”* (Euthyphro, 2d).

Because Euthyphro is able to send his own father to jail, he has to be an expert in these matters. That is why Socrates wants to become his pupil and learn everything he needs to know about piety. Socrates was at first very shocked by Euthyphro’s case. He could not understand that there is no difference whether the murderer is someone one knows well or a stranger.

Euthyphro’s teaching started with the explanation that it does not really matter who the killer is. The only thing that is important here is the question of whether this person acted justly or unjustly.

One should only watch whether the killer acted justly or not; if he acted justly, let him go, but if not, one should prosecute, even if the killer shares your hearth and table. The pollution is the same if you knowingly keep company with such a man and do not cleanse yourself and him by bringing him to justice (Euthyphro, 4b-c).

Socrates decides that he wants to know everything about piety from Euthyphro. He asks him for the definition of this term. He starts to ask questions about the meaning of holiness. Here the Socratic Method comes to practice.

The next few pages are discussing the term piety. Euthyphro, who is considered to be an expert in this field, is trying to give Socrates the definition and characteristics of what piety is.

I would certainly say that the pious is what all the gods love, and the opposite, what all the gods hate, is the impious.
(Euthyphro, 9e)

Although Euthyphro seems to be very confident about his knowledge of godliness, this definition is not satisfactory to Socrates. He wants to examine this claim by further questioning. He raises the question of whether piety is based mainly on an act of being pious or on the love given by gods for being pious. He also lists a few examples to clarify his question, such as “...something being carried and something carrying, of something being led and something leading, of something being seen and something seeing...” (Euthyphro, 10a). He wants Euthyphro to realize the difference between these examples, and to put the definition right. After further examination, they arrive at the conclusion that what is pious does not necessarily need to be god-loved and vice versa, that what is god-loved is not mandatorily pious. The reason why it is so is that there are many gods and each of them is different. This means that what one god may like, does not necessary mean that others might like as well. By this they appeared back at the beginning of their conversation about godliness.

S: But if the god-loved and the pious were the same, my dear Euthyphro, then if the pious was being loved because it was pious, the god-loved would also be being loved because it was god-loved; and if the god-loved was god-loved because it was being loved by the gods, then the pious would also be pious because it was being loved by the gods. But now you see that they are in opposite cases as being altogether different from each other: the one is such as to be loved because it is being loved, the other is being loved because it is such as to be loved. I'm afraid, Euthyphro, that when you were asked what piety is, you did not wish to make its nature clear to me, but you told me an affect or quality of it, that the pious has the quality of being loved by all the gods, but you have not yet told me what the pious is. Now, if you will, do not hide things from me but tell me again from the beginning what piety is, whether being loved by the gods or having some other quality—we shall not quarrel about that—but be keen to tell me what the pious and the impious are. (Euthyphro, 11a-b)

At this point, it is clear that Euthyphro lost his position of the teacher and became a pupil to Socrates. He is neither explaining nor giving definitions anymore, nor is he examining his previous claims. From now on, he is listening to what Socrates is saying. His answers to Socrates' questions are only words of simple agreement or disagreement.

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It is obvious that Euthyphro is starting to realize that his knowledge is doubtful now, and that he has to re-think whether all his actions and teaching were in accordance with the concept of piety and justice.

Socrates and Euthyphro come to the position where being pious is somehow connected with acting justly. Euthyphro comes with the idea of how those things are connected, but he, again, does not give Socrates a clear and satisfactory answer. He does not explain what he means by the word care. In order to come up with the definition of piety, Socrates has to keep questioning him.

E: I think, Socrates, that the godly and pious is the part of the just that is concerned with the care of the gods, while that concerned with the care of men is the remaining part of justice.

S: Is piety then, which is the care of the gods, also to benefit the gods and make them better? Would you agree that when you do something pious you make some one of the gods better?

E: By Zeus, no.

(Euthyphro, 12e – 13c)

Euthyphro probably again lost a piece of his confidence, because he was again wrong about what he was saying. What is important here is the fact that they raised the connection between justice and piety for the second time. At the beginning of the text, Euthyphro said that it did not make any difference whether the killer was a stranger or not; the important thing is whether he acted justly or not. This is the second time they come back to the beginning of their discussion.

The last definition of piety that Euthyphro comes up with is the one where people are trying to serve gods and to pray to them. These acts are, according to Euthyphro, to be considered as pious. Those gifts for gods are respect and gratitude. Gods do not have anything from them; they only know how people honor them. According to this definition, pious is, what is dear to gods. (Euthyphro, 14a-15b)

S: Do you then not realize now that you are saying that what is dear to the gods is the pious? Is this not the same as the god-beloved?

E: It certainly is.

S: So we must investigate again from the beginning what piety is, as I shall not willingly give up before I learn this. If you had no clear knowledge of piety and impiety you would never have ventured to prosecute your old father for murder on behalf of a servant.

(Euthyphro, 15 c-e)

After these lines, Euthyphro is not able to tell Socrates the definition of piety. He is leaving without giving any satisfactory answer. It is obvious that he is not an expert in this field and does not have the greatest knowledge about godliness. The fact that he probably realized this should lead him to think about his actions, and more importantly to change his opinions and principles of justice and morality that were wrong in order to keep his job as a sophist. Otherwise, he would teach young men in a wrong way, which would be unjust to them, and in the end impious.

Now Socrates has to defend himself without Euthyphro's help, with his own knowledge and his own moral principles and beliefs.

2.2 Apology

This part is going to be about the time when Socrates gave his speech on the trial brought against him. The dialogue discussing this episode of his life is called the Apology. What is really important to know right at the beginning is the meaning of this term. The word Apology came from the Greek *apologia* which means defense; there is nothing apologetic in Socrates' speech. The other thing is that this work is unique in a way that it is not a dialogue. To be more concrete, only a small part of it is written in the form of a dialogue, the discussion with Meletus, who is the main accuser of Socrates.

Apology consists from three parts – the first is main defensive speech of Socrates, the second is counter-assessment, and the third is about the last words of the jury (Plato, p. 21).

At the beginning of Apology, Socrates presents his main defensive speech in front of the jury. He starts with the explanation that, because of the fact that he has never been put on trial, he does not really know how to compose the speech. Because of this he decided to improvise and make up his speech right away; it would be a proof of his honesty and truthfulness. His speech is not prepared at all, so he is saying what comes to his mind and leaving it on justice and laws of the city. After that he wants to divide his accusers into two groups – the old and the new or recent ones. Socrates is going to defend himself first from old accusations because they are well known, and then from recent accusations. He also notes that he is giving this speech because he has to obey the law, which is also the reason why he appeared at the court. He starts with the description of his indictment:

What is the accusation from which arose the slander in which Meletus trusted when he wrote out the charge against me? What did they say when they slandered me? I must, as if they were my actual prosecutors, read the affidavit they would have sworn. It goes something like this: Socrates is guilty of wrongdoing in that he busies himself studying things in the sky and below the earth; he makes the worse into the stronger argument, and he teaches these same things to others. (Apology, 19b)

After reading his accusation, he asks the audience whether any person present heard him teach or have a conversation about such things, or whether they know anyone else who heard it. It was also said about him that he taught for a fee, as the sophists do. Because he claims that he was not, he again asks the audience if they think something else. He confesses that even if he wanted, he could not teach for a fee because he does not possess any concrete knowledge. He is having his dialogues with people who claim to have the greatest knowledge in order to learn something from them. In his eyes he does not have knowledge. Then he realized that one may doubt this by saying:

One of you might perhaps interrupt me and say: "But Socrates, what is your occupation? From where have these slanders come? For surely if you did not busy yourself with something out of the common, all these rumors and talk would not have arisen unless you did something other

than most people...Perhaps some of you will think I am jesting, but be sure that all that I shall say is true. What caused my reputation is none other than a certain kind of wisdom. What kind of wisdom? Human wisdom, perhaps. (Apology, 20c-d)

Human wisdom is for him something that ordinary people possess. People who charge others for teaching them possess a wisdom more than human, which he does not understand because he does not have it. He brought the example of a man who was his friend for a very long time and who is known as a friend of many other people not only from the audience at a trial, Chairephon. This man once asked if there was anyone wiser than Socrates and the Pythian replied that there is no one wiser. Socrates brought this as a possible reason for the origin of a slander.

He again repeats that he does not think that he has knowledge at all, but there are people that do. He continues by describing of how he tried to show Chairephon that he was wrong and that he was not the wisest of men. He once went to see a man who was considered to be very wise, and he wanted to prove his non-knowledge by having a conversation with him. While Socrates was examining him, he came to the conclusion that this man was not wise at all, that he did not possess the knowledge he claimed to possess. But he confessed that he realized that many people could consider this man to be wise because he himself did, and he was confident about his teaching. After all, this man started to dislike Socrates as many people did after his examination of their knowledge. Here he comes to the reason why many people dislike him and why he is now giving his defensive speech at a trial.

So I withdrew and thought to myself: "I am wiser than this man; it is likely that neither of us knows anything worthwhile, but he thinks he knows something when he does not, whereas when I do not know, neither do I think that I know; so I am likely to be wiser than he to this small extent, that I do not think I know what I do not know. (Apology, 21d)

Socrates did this with many people, and by that he became unpopular in these circles. He came up with a thought that people with the highest reputation, who claim to be the most knowledgeable are in fact the least. Socrates could have used this knowledge

to his advantage and become the same man with a high reputation, charging young people for his teachings, but instead he chose to remain true to himself, even though people did not like him. The reason why he said that he was wiser than those men is not that he thought himself knowledgeable; he is humble about himself. He considered himself wiser because he never claimed to possess concrete knowledge. He was just an old man who wanted to gain this knowledge by asking other people.

If one asks them what he does and what he teaches to corrupt them, they are silent, as they do not know, but, so as not to appear at a loss, they mention those accusations that are available against all philosophers.

(Apology, 23d)

Because Socrates' occupation is seeking out people who claim to be wise and showing them that they are not, he does not have the time to corrupt youth or to do the other activities he was accused of.

The next part of Apology is about Socrates' main accuser Meletus and their conversation at the court. At the beginning of this part, Socrates brought an indictment against Meletus as being guilty of bringing someone to court without having any evidence against him, with claiming and sharing false accusations and about accusing people from something he has never been concerned with. After these words he challenged Meletus to come and examine these accusations. Here the Socratic dialogue starts. Socrates' first question concerned the topic about him corrupting the young; he asked Meletus who is than improving them. The final answer was that everyone improves the youth – the laws, jurymen, the audience, members of council and assembly – except for Socrates. Socrates' response to this was simple, that it would be such a great state if only one person corrupted others. In this first question, Socrates showed that Meletus is not concerned with the youth at all. He continued with his examination by asking Meletus whether there is any person who wants to be harmed. He answered that there is no one like that. So Socrates asked whether he is corrupting young people unwillingly or deliberately. The answer was that he is doing it deliberately. Socrates pointed out that if he were corrupting people on purpose, he would be risking that these people will harm him because they would become wicked.

Either I do not corrupt the young or, if I do, it is unwillingly, and you are lying in either case. Now if I corrupt them unwillingly, the law does not require you to bring people to court for such unwilling wrongdoings, but to get hold of them privately, to instruct them and exhort them; for clearly, if I learn better, I shall cease to do what I am doing unwillingly. (Apology, 26a)

By this Socrates showed and proved that Meletus did not have any right to accuse him. Socrates then went on by asking a supplementary question: if he is corrupting young people, how is he doing so. Meletus told him that by teaching them about gods that do not exist and making them believe in these gods Athenians do not believe in. He also said that Socrates teaches them not to believe in gods because there are no gods above. By saying that, Meletus contradicted himself in a way that Socrates cannot be an atheist when he is teaching other people about other divinities. By teaching about gods—no matter what gods—he must believe that they exist, therefore he cannot be a non-believer.

As proof of not being an atheist, Socrates made Meletus say that he must believe in divine beings when he believes in divine activities and teaches about them. He did it by sequence of questions which is also known as the Socratic method.

Eventually, Meletus was embarrassed and ashamed because he could not demonstrate and succeed in accusing Socrates from corrupting the young and teaching them not to believe in gods or to believe in non-existing ones. Socrates then turned back to the audience and the jury and said that even though he defended himself from Meletus' accusations, he is still unpopular and unwanted for many people, and that by accusing him, this unfairness will not stop. He has though no feeling of any guilt and is not afraid of death.

Someone might say: "Are you not ashamed, Socrates, to have followed the kind of occupation that has led your being now in danger of death?"
However, I should be right to reply to him: "You are wrong, sir, if you think that a man who is any good at all should take into account the risk of life or death; he should look to this only in his actions, whether what he

does is right or wrong, whether he is acting like a good or a bad man.

(Apology, 28b-c)

According to Socrates, there is nothing bad about death when a person acted justly throughout his life. That is why he has no fear of death; he never did anything unjust, and because all the accusations are wrong, he does not feel the necessity to be afraid.

Wherever a man has taken a position that he believes to be best, or has been placed by his commander, there he must I think remain and face danger, without a thought for death or anything else, rather than disgrace ... when the god ordered me, as I thought and believed, to live the life of a philosopher, to examine myself and others, I had abandoned my post for fear of death or anything else ... to fear death, gentlemen, is no other than to think oneself wise when one is not, to think one knows what one does not know. No one knows whether death may not be the greatest of all blessings for a man, yet men fear it as if they knew that it is the greatest of evils. (Apology, 28d-e)

By this statement Socrates showed how great an importance he sees in being a philosopher, in being what god wanted him to be, in being himself. He would rather risk that he could be sentenced to death than behave in a way people want him to behave and be popular amongst them. For him, the most important thing is to show young men not to care that much about wealth and their bodies, but rather about their souls and the city. If the jury sentences him, it will be more a loss for the city than for Socrates himself.

The next section is about Socrates caring more about justice and piety than about his own life. He provides an example where he was a member of a council and the government wanted to do something unjust in order to improve its lot. Socrates decided not to do it, and left the Hall. He could have easily been sentenced to death, but he was not afraid because he was doing the right thing. After describing this experience, he summed up his life and the actions he decided to do:

Throughout my life, in any public activity I may have engaged in, I am the same man as I am in private life. I have never come to an agreement with anyone to act unjustly...I have never been anyone's teacher...I am equally ready to question the rich and the poor if anyone is willing to answer my questions and listen to what I say. And I cannot justly be held responsible for the good or bad conduct of this people, as I never promised to teach them anything and have not done so. (Apology, 33a-b)

Then Socrates asked a question, why people are enjoying listening to him questioning other people. It is because they enjoy how he is showing that those people are not wise as they claimed and thought they were. He also pointed out that throughout his long life he had many conversations, so if he really corrupts the youth, they would now be adults realizing that he was teaching them the wrong thing and would be at the court now accusing him themselves. And even if they did not show up, their relatives would. Many of these people that were influenced by Socrates and have known him for a long time were present in the audience, for example his old friend Crito, Antiphon, Adeimantus, or the brother of Plato. No one amongst these brought Socrates to trial or supported Meletus in his accusations; those men are just people. Socrates did not want to call any witnesses to help him; he kept the trial in quiet in a way that he wanted to defend himself on his own without any assistance.

For him, the jurymen should not decide whom to send to jail according to sympathy, but according to the laws. That is why he is calm and not afraid. He is leaving it to justice and god, because they know what is best for him and for the city (Apology, 35c-d).

[The jury now gives its verdict of guilty, and Meletus asks for the penalty of death.]
(Apology, 35d)

Socrates was surprised by number of votes, and said loudly that if Anytus and Lycon had not helped Meletus and accused Socrates, he would have been acquitted. But he did not want to fight for letting him free, he said that he would make people happy and agreed with the penalty they decided to give him.

Since I am convinced that I wrong no one, I am not likely to wrong myself, to say that I deserve some evil and to make some such assessment against myself. What should I fear? That I should suffer the penalty Meletus has assessed against me, of which I say I do not know whether it is good or bad? It would be a fine life at my age to be driven out of one city after another, for I know very well that wherever I go the young men will listen to my talk as they do here. (Apology, 37b-e)

By these words Socrates wanted to say that wherever he would go, the same would probably happen; many people would not like him and would rather see him quiet or dead. To see him quiet is impossible, because he was chosen by god and he believed in his philosophic profession, and he would rather die than not listen to what god wants him to do and by so doing act impiously. He also said that the jury could make him pay a fine, but that he has no money so he would not be able to pay it. He knows that his friends would pay any fine for him, but he would not ask this from them. But for Socrates, if he should get the fine, it should be the amount of money he is able to pay, which in his case is almost nothing.

[The jury now votes again and sentences Socrates to death.]
(Apology, 38b)

Socrates' closing speech begins with words to those who convicted him. He is now at the age of seventy, so his life is close to its end even without the death penalty. But those people decided to sentence him to death. The reason, for Socrates, is very simple: they did not hear what they were expecting – there were no lamentations and tears (Apology 38e).

I would much rather die after this kind of defense than live after making the other kind...It is not difficult to avoid death, gentlemen of the jury, it is much more difficult to avoid wickedness, for it runs faster than death...I leave you now, condemned to death by you, but they are condemned by truth to wickedness and injustice...This perhaps had to happen, and I think it is as it should be. (Apology, 38e-39c)

After this speech Socrates continued to speak only to those who wanted to acquit him - to the real judges, so far as he was concerned. He is calling them friends and feels the need to explain what just happened. Those who accused him were caught up by wickedness. But Socrates is not angry with them because his inner voice did not tell him to stop while he was approaching the court, or giving his speech. Because of that he does not think that what just happened is wrong, it is the way it should be and he is at peace with his verdict. He still has hope that a death is some kind of blessing because of his inner voice and because no one has any experience with the opposite.

...there is good hope that death is a blessing, for it is one of two things: either the dead are nothing and have no perception of anything, or it is, as we are told, a change and a relocating for the soul from here to another place. If it is complete lack of perception, like a dreamless sleep, then death would be a great advantage...If on the other hand, death is a change from here to another place, and what we are told is true and all who have died are there, what greater blessing could there be, gentlemen of the jury?...I could spend my time testing and examining people there, as I do here, as to who among them is wise, and who think he is, but is not.

(Apology, 40c-41b)

By people who are already there Socrates meant well-known and respected people who already died but are still in the memories of those who are alive. It would be the greatest blessing to meet those wise and famous men and to have a conversation with them. And because he believes that a good man cannot be harmed neither in life nor in death, he knows that nothing bad will happen to him.

The only thing he wanted from his accusers was that if they see that his three sons are concerned with wealth, their bodies or anything else but their virtues, they should have told them and treated them like Socrates did with people who thought they were somebodies but were in fact nobodies (Apology, 41e).

I go to die, you go to live. Which of us goes to the better lot is known to no one, except the god. (Apology, 42a)

In terms of moral self-formation, there are many instances of Socrates' moral principles in this dialogue. It also contains the Socratic method and the process of how he is an example to others and how he is actually changing people's minds. On the contrary to moral self-formation, the lack of moral self-formation is shown in this work as well. To be more concrete, in terms of the lack of moral self-formation, Meletus is a great example. He, as an accuser of Socrates, does not have satisfactory evidence against Socrates, which was well described during Socrates' speech. Meletus came from this trial as a liar who does not really care about the topic discussed, about the youth and their supposed corruption. At the end, he could not even properly answer the question Socrates asked him. He was ashamed and embarrassed in front of the audience.

Socrates stands by his principles no matter what situation he appears in. Even when his own life is in danger, his principles and rules remain the same. That is why he is not worried about his own death, or about what comes after it. He is sure that because he always acted justly and morally, there cannot be anything bad waiting for him after death. In some parts of this work he is actually looking forward to examine what comes after this life, and whom he will meet in the underworld. These are proofs why Socrates' principles are, at least in his own personal way, universal. As was mentioned before, Socrates does not need to pretend anything. He is a seventy year-old man who has experienced a lot in his life and spoke with many people. He is the same person in private life as he is in public. That is also why he wants to show other people that they are wrong about what they claim they know and what they are showing to other people. During his dialogues and conversations with other people who claim to be wise, he is not telling them that they are not. He is just pointing out in what ways they made a mistake in their opinions and what was contradictory in their speeches. It is up to them if they realize it or not, or if they change their views on topics discussed with Socrates.

The next dialogue will show how one can realize that he was wrong and that Socrates is a wise man indeed.

2.3 Crito

After the hearing at the court, Socrates was sentenced to death. His defensive speech was not satisfactory for the jury and was not successful. Because the state galley was sent to an annual religious mission, no executions were allowed; so Socrates had to wait for his death for a month in prison. One day his old friend Crito came to visit Socrates. He made an effort to help him escape from the prison and to start a new life. He thought he had prepared good arguments so he would persuade Socrates to leave Athens.

This dialogue starts with Socrates waking up and asking his friend Crito why he came so early in the morning. Socrates was sleeping for a while after Crito came. His friend explained to him that he did not want to wake him up from a good sleep, because he would not have much to do in his cell.

Crito was very clear about the reason why he came so early, he wants to help Socrates escape from prison and save his life. He pointed out that this is probably the last chance to run away, because he heard from some man that the boat from Delos will arrive soon, the day they met. Socrates told him that he is pretty sure that the boat would come later because he had a dream where a beautiful woman told him that he was going to die on the third day. But he was not worried about it, as he said: *“May it be for the best. If it so please the gods, so be it”* (Crito, 43d).

Crito was not happy to hear that his friend was prepared to die. He started with his arguments for why Socrates should escape. The first thing he mentioned was his reputation and the reputation of all Socrates' friends in front of the majority of people. He sees it as a bad image to let the old friend die without any attempt to help him in some way. By that way Crito meant money. He collected much more from his and his friend's property as well as the money from strangers that were willing to help Socrates. He believed that the majority of people would judge all of them. Socrates' response was clear; he asked Crito why they should care about the opinion of the majority. For him, the most important is the few people that will know that they did what was just and needed. Crito did not agree and he came up with an example of Socrates' current situation, where the majority was able to do the greatest evil and they accused and executed him.

This example Crito provides seems to be appropriate according to the situation that appeared, but Socrates added to Crito's sentence that if they were capable of doing the greatest evil, they were also capable of doing the greatest good. The next point Crito made was related to the punishment and fines Socrates' helpers can get. Crito asked Socrates if he was afraid of harming his friend by leaving the city. Right after he asked the question, he noted that there was no need to be afraid because all his friends knew that they could be punished but they were still willing to help their old friend Socrates. Socrates admitted his fear but he said that there are more things he is afraid of.

After asking Socrates not to fear of consequences and listening to Crito's advice, his friend assured him that there are many places Socrates will be welcomed in. As an example he mentioned Thessaly where his friends live.

One of the most crucial and important argument of Crito was the one where he brought Socrates' sons into their conversation. He said that Socrates should live for his sons and bring them up, give them education and teach them how to care about important things in life. By these important things Crito meant how morally and justly Socrates led his own life.

Either one should not have children, or one should share with them to the end the toil of upbringing and education. You seem to me to choose the easiest path, whereas one should choose the path a good and courageous man would choose, particularly when one claims throughout one's life to care for virtue. (Crito, 45d)

Socrates was listening to what Crito wanted to say in order to persuade him, and now he is giving his response. He agreed to think about Crito's idea, but to decide what he will do he needs to be fully persuaded by good arguments. He suggested to examine whether he should leave the city or stay and let the state accomplish the final statement of the jury. He does not want to change the way he was living his whole life in order not to die in few days.

I value and respect the same principles as before, and if we have no better arguments to bring up at this moment, be sure that I shall not agree with you, not even if the power of the majority were to frighten us with more bogeys, as if we were children, with threats of incarcerations and executions and confiscation of property. (Crito, 46c)

Here the Socratic method of asking started. Socrates wanted to examine their argument in a best way they possibly could because it is not just a definition, but it is about breaking laws and escaping from the country in which he spent his whole life. His first question was whether one should believe in what the majority is saying or he should rather believe those who know what they are talking about and have good opinions. Crito agreed with Socrates that the most important is the opinion of people who are educated in that topic and he wanted Socrates to carry on. Socrates brought up a few examples related to his question to be sure that they both agreed on the same thing. He asked Crito if a man interested in his physical wellbeing should listen to the advices of the majority or to the advices that a doctor or a physician were giving him. Crito said that only what the doctors are saying should be important for him. So they both agreed that this man should lead his life according to the advice given to him by a physician, that he should eat and exercise properly as his doctor advised him to do. If he will not listen to the professional's opinion he would probably harm and corrupt himself. He would act unjustly to his own body because he decided to listen to the majority.

We should not then think so much of what the majority will say about us, but what he will say who understands justice and injustice, the one, that is, and the truth itself. So that, in the first place, you were wrong to believe that we should care for the opinion of the many about what is just, beautiful, good, and their opposites. "But," some might say "the many are able to put us to death. (Crito, 48a)

By this statement they came to the fact that not to live a life is important, but to live a good, beautiful, and a just life is what really matters. That is why they both agreed that if it is just Socrates will do what Crito advises him to do, but if it is unjust, there is no other reason to continue this conversation because Socrates will harm not only

himself but the whole city. So the only thing remained in their conversation, whether Socrates should or should not leave Athens.

Before they actually started seeking the final answer, Socrates asked Crito to interrupt him whenever he feels like just to be sure that Socrates is not acting against his friend's wishes.

At first, Socrates wanted to make sure that Crito agreed that no one should never willingly harm anybody even if he suffers a lot. Nor can he harm someone back when he has been harmed or ashamed. The same thing goes for justice. When someone sees that something is just, he should follow it and fulfil it. According to Socrates, he should not leave the city without its permission, because it would mean that he is a wrongdoer. For further examination he acted like the laws came to him and asked him questions why he wants to leave. The first would be why he is attempting to destroy whole city by running away and not obeying them. If an individual does not fulfil the verdict of the court, which in other words means the verdict of laws and therefore the city as such, he is nullifying them. But for Crito, the city was wrong in these terms, so Socrates has a right to leave. Socrates is still going on:

What accusation do you bring against us and the city, that you should try to destroy us? Did we not first bring you to birth, and was it not through us that your father married your mother and begat you? "Very well," they would continue "and after you were born and nurtured and educated, could you, in the first place deny that you are our offspring and servant...? Do you think you have this right to retaliation against your country and its laws? ...And will you say that you are right to do so, you who truly care for virtue? (Crito, 50d-51a)

If one should respect his mother and father, and should act justly and be pious, one should also obey the laws and fulfil the duties he has in his country. It is the state where he was born, the state that educated him, the state that he lived in, the state whose laws were with him for his entire life. And now it is the state that thinks he did something wrong and wants to execute him. It would not be right if someone was

accused from wrongdoing to the city and he would just leave it without any fine or shame.

In terms of possible arguments of the Athenian laws, Socrates kept going. One can leave the city if he wants, but once he knows how just they are and how the conduct their trials, he would rather stay in this city.

We say that one who disobeys does wrong in three ways, first because in us he disobeys his parents, also those who brought him up, and because, in spite of his agreement, he neither obeys us nor, if we do something wrong, does he try to persuade us to do better. Yet we only propose things, we do not issue savage commands to do whatever we order; we give two alternatives, either to persuade us or to do what we say. (Crito, 51e-52a)

Socrates had a chance to persuade the court not to accuse him from impiety and corrupting youth, but he was not successful. Because of that he should now do what laws order him to do.

The other proof why Socrates should not leave the city is the fact that he has never done it before. He spent his whole life in Athens. He never went to see any festival outside the city; he never went to another city, except when he was in military service. He was free to do so, but he rather decided to stay in Athens, which seems to mean that he was more than satisfied with the life that was provided in the city. He also had children there, so he must have believed in justice of laws there. Socrates also said at the trial that he would rather die than go to an exile.

You have had seventy years during which you could have gone away if you did not like us, and if you thought our agreements unjust...It is clear that the city has been outstandingly more congenial to you than to other Athenians, and so have we, the laws, for what city can please without laws? (Crito, 52e-53a)

The laws also introduce the topic of his close friends and family and the possible danger he would put them in by running away. But if he decides to do it, there are only two types of cities and consequences he will experience. The first are well-governed cities, such as Thebes or Megara, where he will not be welcomed as a friend. Because of their good governing system, Socrates would probably be considered as someone who does not respect the law. And because of destroying one city, he would be probably sentenced in the next one as well. The reason is that one who does not respect his country can easily corrupt young people and act impiously. The second type of cities Socrates can go to is a city where disorder has taken place, a city like Thessaly. There he would meet people who would welcome him and listen to what he is saying, but only because they would laugh at the Athenian rules that Socrates had destroyed. One of the consequences here stays the same - he will not be happy in either one. His sons will not have a chance to be well-educated, except if they stay in Athens and Socrates let his friends to take care of his children.

The last thing the laws would probably say is that if he left this world peacefully and justly, he would be treated more kindly in the underworld.

S: Crito, my dear friend, be assured that these are the words I seem to hear, as the Corybants seem to hear the music of their flutes, and the echo of these words resounds in me, and makes it impossible for me to hear anything else. As far as my present beliefs go, if you speak in opposition to them, you will speak in vain.

However, if you think you can accomplish anything, speak.

C: I have nothing to say, Socrates.

S: Let it be then, Crito, and let us act in this way, since this is the way the god is leading us. (Crito, 54d-e)

This dialog ends with Crito agreeing with Socrates, that he should remain just as he was for seventy years and stay in Athens. Even though he had prepared good arguments and he believed that he would convince Socrates that it was time to run away, throughout their conversation, he realized that his old friend was right in everything he was saying and that it would be just and morally good to obey laws and the judgment of the court.

Chapter 3: Moral Self-formation and the lack of it

The last chapter will connect three Socratic dialogues described in chapter two with the concept of moral self-formation. Each case of change of Socrates' interlocutors will be shown and connected to morality. After that, the moral codex that appeared as Socrates' own is to be outlined as well as the reason why these dialogues ended with Aporia, in other words, without clear closure.

Three early Socratic dialogues were analyzed in the previous chapter. Those three dialogues span the most crucial period of Socrates' life where he is about to defend himself in front of the jury for corrupting young men and for impiety. Before he gets to the court, he meets Euthyphro who is considered an expert in all religious matters. He could help Socrates in his defense from the accusation of being impious. During their conversation Euthyphro was not able to answer to the question related to definition of piety. Socratic Method of questioning proved that Euthyphro is not an expert in these matters, and that his opinions and teaching were in fact wrong. The process of moral self-formation started when Euthyphro acknowledged for the first time that his position was wrong. After a few more questions asked by Socrates, Euthyphro became a pupil to Socrates and Socrates himself was determining the sequence of their conversation. At the end of this dialogue, Euthyphro lost probably the last piece of his confidence and decided to leave without saying a further word. This aporetic ending showed and proved that Euthyphro could not finish the discussion because his teachings were wrong and he had no strong arguments left. Although the moral self-formation of Euthyphro was not obvious at the end, the change of his confidence and teachings could be noticed. This conversation with Socrates was some kind of leash or turning point thanks to which he could realize where he was wrong and was able to change himself.

In Apology, Socrates is about to give a defensive speech to explain to the jury and the audience at the court that his conscience is clear and he did not do any of wrongdoings he was accused of. Socrates was describing his life, actions and reasons why he is disliked among people. Only a small part of this work is written as

dialogue. It is the conversation with Meletus where Socrates wants to know the reason why Meletus wants him to be sentenced. During this dialogue Socrates proved that Meletus had no concern about the youth and had no evidence against Socrates. At the end, Meletus was ashamed and embarrassed but still wanted Socrates executed. The process of moral self-formation here can be noticed during Socrates' speech about him examining people that think themselves wise and knowledgeable. He is explaining that one has to be humble about his knowledge. That is why Socrates does not think himself to be the wisest man, even though many people have told him so. The only way in which he considers himself to be wiser than others is in front of those who were too confident about their knowledge and were examined by Socrates, which ended by proving their non-knowledge. This is the Socratic method in practice, described in many instances by Socrates himself.

The third dialogue, *Crito*, is different. Crito came to Socrates because he wanted to persuade him to leave Athens and save his life. He had prepared quite strong arguments, but all of them failed to pass. Socrates wanted to be just, so he came to an agreement that he and his friend Crito would try to examine whether Socrates should or should not leave the prison. Socrates played role of Athenian laws which would not agree to his escape. Eventually, Crito agreed with everything Socrates said, and had nothing more to say. He realized that leaving prison would be neither just, nor moral. In other words, it would not be a good idea. In terms of moral self-formation, Crito learned that his previous ideas about leaving Athens were wrong, and that everything Socrates said was right.

These dialogues can be divided into two groups according to the process of moral self-formation. In *Euthyphro* and *Crito* moral self-formation took place, while in *Apology*, Meletus' attitude is characterized by the lack of moral-self formation and he did not want to open his mind to Socrates and be critical about himself. This leads to the structure or pattern of Socratic dialogues. Three steps can be noticed – the decomposition of the old system of understanding, Socrates' view on life, the decision that has to be made. At first, after asking the Socratic question (What is 'X'?) and not knowing the answer, Socrates is trying to explain why his interlocutor is wrong and continues in asking. This questioning leads to the disintegration of interlocutor's opinions. Socrates further reveals his own view on the topic discussed and on the way

one should live his life. At the end of the discussion it is up to the interlocutor whether he wants to change and acquire a good and proper life, or he does not want to change, even if it means that he will be wrong. This final solution is not Socrates' concern though; he showed his interlocutors the possibilities and leaves it on their own decision. This is also the reason why those dialogues do not have an ending.

If Socrates' questioning led his interlocutors to moral self-formation, what were his moral principles?

Most of Socrates' principles are described in *Apology* and *Crito*, where he is explaining why and how he led his life. He is critical about his knowledge, and that is also the reason why he is examining people that claim to be the most knowledgeable. He does not want to change his profession because he is representing the will of the gods. As a philosopher, he does not judge people according to his sympathies; he is examining them and making his opinion about them objectively. During his life he never acted differently in public than in private. For him virtues are more important than the body or wealth, which is also why he does not make any difference between those who are poor and those who are rich. And what he said at the end of his defensive speech as well as in *Crito*, he never acted unjustly, never did anything to harm other people, even if this conviction would bring him to death, what at the end happened.

Conclusion

After the analysis of three chosen Socratic dialogues it was shown that they are contributing to moral self-formation of Socrates' interlocutors. This change was visible from the beginning of the dialogue with Socrates, where his interlocutor was trying to prove and show his knowledge to Socrates. Because of the fact that he was not able to do so, he started to realize that he does not possess the greatest knowledge as he thought at the beginning of their conversation. This realization should lead him to begin the process of his moral self-formation. Whether it was shown at the end, or it was not, is not that important. Socrates' intent was to examine people who claim to be the most knowledgeable at all in order to learn something from them. When he found out their real knowledge, in some cases non-knowledge, he wanted to show them that they are wrong. Many of his interlocutors were well-known among people of the city and were teaching the youth. For Socrates, the importance was in principles one should lead his life by, in justice and morality. His principles were demonstrated mainly in the last dialogue, Crito, where he decided to stay in prison and wait for the death sentence. Even when his life was in danger, his principles remained the same.

Aporetic ending of each of chosen dialogues can be understood as the inability of Socrates' interlocutors to answer his questions by which they could prove their knowledge about the topic discussed, as well as the opportunity of moral self-formation for the reader of these dialogues. Aporia is leaving the open space for the imagination of what probably happened afterwards, and also for revaluation of reader's moral principles.

Resumé

Táto práca predstavuje analýzu troch vybraných Sokratovských dialógov. Začiatok je venovaný vysvetleniu pojmov potrebných ku skúmaniu jednotlivých dialógov. Snaží sa prepojiť Sokratovský dialóg s procesom práce na sebe jednotlivca, ktorý so Sokratom daný dialóg vedie, a teda dokázať, že tento druh dialógu výrazne prispieva k zmene jednotlivca, ktorý so Sokratom viedol konverzáciu.

Úvod a prvá kapitola pomôžu čitateľovi pochopiť spôsob, akým Sokrates svoje dialógy viedol a samotný dôvod vedenia týchto dialógov, ktoré rovnako ako čitateľovi predstavujú postavu Sokrata, tak predstavujú aj jeho spolurečníkov. Taktiež opisujú formu konverzácie vedenej Sokratom a jeho hlavný úmysel, ktorý môže byť chápaný ako snaha o preskúšanie ľudí, ktorí o sebe tvrdia, že oplývajú sú najvzdelanejší v ich odbore. V úvodných kapitolách práce je vysvetlený pojem apórie, t.j. otvoreného konca jednotlivých dialógov. Tie nechávajú čitateľovi priestor na úvahu, možné stotožnenie sa, či možný nesúhlas so Sokratovými morálnymi princípmi a názormi na správny život.

Druhá kapitola je samotná analýza troch vybraných Sokratovských dialógov, a to dialógov Eutyfron, Obrana Sokratova a Kritón. Dôvodom výberu práve týchto troch dialógov je, že čas, v ktorom sa odohrávajú opisuje posledné obdobie Sokratovho života a jeho pravdepodobne najdôležitejšie rozhodnutia. Taktiež pomerne jasne opisujú spôsob, akým Sokrates žil, jeho morálne princípy a presvedčenia. V prvom dialógu ide o stretnutí Sokrata s mužom menom Eutyfron pred budovou súdu. Sokrates bol obvinený z kazenia mládeže a bezbožnosti. Dôvodom k rozhodnutiu viesť dialóg s Eutyfronom je, že tento muž sa považuje za experta všetkých náboženských záležitostí. Sokratovi sa teda naskytuje možnosť použiť vedomosti, ktoré mu Eutyfron môže odovzdať, v prospech svojej obhajoby. Chce preto vedieť definíciu zbožnosti, ktorú je možno použiť v každom prípade spojenom s náboženstvom. Eutyfron mu však nie je schopný odpovedať správne na jeho otázku a teda nepotvrďuje ani nijak nedokazuje svoju vedomosť v danej téme. Dialóg končí tým, že Eutyfron odíde takmer bez jediného slova a nechá Sokrata stáť pred budovou

súdu bez toho, aby mu odpovedal na jeho otázku. Sokrates je teda odkázaný sám na seba.

Druhý dialóg opisuje samotnú obhajobu Sokrata na súde, a práve z tohto dôvodu je nazvaný Obrana Sokratova. Po stretnutí s Eutyfronom Sokrates vstupuje do budovy súdu, kde má obhájiť svoju osobu proti všetkým obvineniam. Ako prvé Sokrates vysvetľuje porote, akými morálnymi princípmi sa riadi a akým spôsobom viedol celý svoj život. Sokrates sa odvoláva na to, že ho už mnoho ľudí počulo rozprávať a vie, akým spôsobom vedie dialógy. Práve to mohlo spôsobiť, že ho veľa ľudí nemá rado, ako aj to, že voči nemu boli vznesené obvinenia. Aby sa obhájl, odvolával sa na ľudí, ktorí sú v Aténach vážení, a sami považujú Sokrata za najmúdrejšieho zo všetkých, ktorých poznajú. Zaujímavé je, že Sokrates sa viac snaží ukázať na veci, ktoré počas svojho života robil správne a nie na tie, ktoré robia ostatní nesprávne. Po Sokratovej úvodnej a obhajujúcej reči vedie Sokrates dialóg s Melétom, ktorý ho obvinil z kazenia mládeže. Sokrates sa snaží zistiť Melétove pohnútky k tomuto činu. Práve v tejto časti Obrany Sokrata je viditeľná Sokratova metóda kladenia otázok. Aj v tomto prípade, rovnako ako v predchádzajúcom dialógu s Eutyfrónom, Melétus nie je schopný podložiť svoje obvinenia dôkazmi. Aj keď Sokrates porote dokázal, že obvinenia Meléta nemajú byť ako podložené, väčšina poroty hlasovala za trest smrti. Sokrates na verdikt poroty reagoval veľmi pokojne, prehlásením, že iba boh vie, čo po smrti príde, a teda Sokrates nemá dôvod sa smrti báť. Keďže po celý svoj život konal spravodlivo a nikdy nikomu neublížil ani neporušil žiaden zo svojich morálnych princíпов, nemôže sa mu ani po smrti stať nič zlé. Prijal teda rozhodnutie poroty, pretože ako správny občan musí dodržiavať zákony.

Posledný dialóg, ktorému sa táto práca venuje, je Kritón. Sokrates je vo väzbe a čaká na rozsudok smrti. V jedno skoré ráno ho príde navštíviť jeho starý priateľ Kritón, aby mu navrhol pomoc pri úteku z väzenia. Sokrates si nie je istý, či by takéto rozhodnutie bolo správne, a tak navrhne Kritónovi, aby spoločne pouvažovali nad správnosťou tohto rozhodnutia. Ak sa ukáže ako správne, Sokrates ujde z väzenia, ak nie, nechá sa odsúdiť na smrť.

Kritón sa teda rozhodne odôvodňovať nutnosť Sokratovho úteku. Hovorí o reputácii, ktorá by bola poškodená, keby sa Sokratovi priatelia rozhodli nechať Sokrata umrieť s vedomím, že rozsudok súdu nebol spravodlivý. Ďalej argumentuje tým, že Sokrates nemôže nechať svojich dvoch synov bez otca. Aj keď sú tieto argumenty zdanlivo

silné, nepresvedčia Sokrata o nutnosti jeho úteku. Ak by sa totiž Sokrates rozhodol opustiť svoje rodné mesto, na výber by mal len dva typy štátov, kde by mohol dožiť. Prvým typom je štát, v ktorom sú spravodlivé zákony. V tomto štáte by bol Sokrates vnímaný rovnako ako v tom, kde bol odsúdený na smrť. Druhý typ štátu nemá spravodlivé zákony, takže by Sokratovi nehrozilo odsúdenie, avšak nebol by schopný viesť svoj život rovnakým spôsobom ako doteraz. Sokratova argumentácia je tak silná, že Kritón prizná dôležitosť dodržovania zákonov. Rozhodnú sa teda nič nemeniť, čo znamená, že Sokrates vo väzení zostane a súhlasí s rozsudkom smrti.

Na základe analýzy jednotlivých dialógov bolo možné dospieť k záveru, že Sokratovský dialóg sa naozaj podieľa na morálnej zmene a na práci na sebe Sokratových spolurečníkov. Jednotlivé kroky sú opísané v každej analýze, rovnako ako sú zhrnuté v poslednej kapitole tejto práce. Tá sa venuje zhrnutiu a podporeniu hypotézy, ktorú si táto práca určila hneď na začiatku. Aj keď nie je viditeľná finálna fáza práce na sebe jednotlivých spolurečníkov, je zjavné, že si potrebu tejto zmeny uvedomili, a to na základe realizácie svojich vedomostných nedostatkov. Finálny krok nie je viditeľný najmä z dôvodu, že Sokratovské dialógy sú ukončené apóriou, a teda nemajú jasný koniec. Zostáva na čitateľovi ako si vysvetlí jednotlivý dialóg, a najmä čo si z neho zoberie. Ak s ním nesúhlasí, svoj nesúhlas si môže odôvodniť. Ak s ním však súhlasí, buď si potvrdí správnosť svojich morálnych princípov, alebo môže začať proces svojej morálnej zmeny, a teda proces práce na sebe.

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