

**“Can we put into words what a Socratic dialogue really is?”  
Dieter Krohn and Jos Kessels in Dialogue on the Meaning of Socratic Dialogue**

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**Abstract**

In their dialogue Dieter Krohn (Germany) and Jos Kessels (The Netherlands) discuss the question of an appropriate understanding of what comprises a Socratic dialogue. What does truth mean? What would be an insight? What is the connection between written and spoken language, on the one hand, and the process of gaining insights, on the other? These questions form the core of the discussion.

**Ten Years of Socratic Dialogue in Prisons  
Its Scope and Limits\***

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**Abstract**

This essay is an account of the Socratic dialogue as a form of philosophical practice in an unusual setting, in prison. It conveys an overall picture of how in Tegel Penal Institution (JVA Tegel) Socratic dialogue proceeds, and the kind of application for it in that setting. Among important aspects handled here are the characteristics through which Socratic dialogue demarcates itself from those customarily practiced techniques of psychological and therapeutic dialogue in prisons. The focus is on the question, whether any, and which kinds of, effects can be hoped for through Socratic dialogue in prisons.

**Neo-Socratic Dialogue in Practice  
The Xenotransplantation and Genetic Counseling Cases**

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**Abstract**

The paper discusses neo-Socratic dialogue as a participatory method to tackle bioethics, focusing on the field of new medical biotechnologies. Recent sociological research has investigated the role of so called ethics committees in the field of the new biotechnologies, approaches of participatory technology assessment and moral communication in bioethical controversies. The paper gives a brief overview about this research and the deficiencies of these approaches. Neo-Socratic dialogue is presented as a method to overcome at least some of these shortcomings. To proof this statement the paper gives details about two international research projects which used Neo-Socratic Dialogues (NSD) to discuss ethical questions with different groups of stakeholders. One project was about the ethics of xenotransplantation, the second one on ethical problems of genetic counseling. In both projects neo-Socratic Dialogue was used as a form of intervention and to evaluate the NSD as a transdisciplinary tool for dialogue and problem solving, as well as means for participatory policy making involving relevant stakeholders. The paper presents results of the neo-Socratic Dialogues and the accompanying sociological research on the effects of the talks. In the final part the chances and limits of neo-Socratic Dialogues in the field of bioethics will be resumed.

**Dissolving Insolubilia**  
**A Rethorical Device/Path Inspired by Leonard Nelson**

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**Abstract**

The article deals primarily with ethical dilemmas in public, professional and private contexts. My hypothesis seems a little bit counterintuitive. In fact, I claim that many dilemmas represent an opportunity more than an obstacle for our private, professional and public life: an opportunity to rediscover “old” philosophical questions as well as a chance to train our phronetical reasoning with other people. It depends how we face them. Inspired by a scheme developed by Leonard Nelson, moved from my experience as socratic facilitator in professional contexts, I will sketch a rhetorical and visual model in which a Socratic discursive attitude and an inspired wise decision-making process interact mutually to dissolve what at first seems indissolvable.