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Socratic Autonomy and Responsibility in the *Apology*

Raymond M. Herbenick

INTRODUCTION

Although Socrates' face and name do not appear on our Jesse Philips Humanities Center with those of other major figures from our diverse Western intellectual traditions, words attributed to Socrates at his 399 B.C. Athenian trial are inscribed as follows:

Ho anexetatos bios ou biotos anthropoi.

The unexamined life is not a life to a person.

Apology (38a)¹

This concept of examining one's life is central to the theme of "Autonomy and Responsibility" in the Humanities Base and Cluster approach to general education at the University of Dayton.

But numerous questions arise.

What is "autonomy"? What is "responsibility"? How are the two concepts related? How did the historical Socrates understand these concepts?

The concepts of autonomy (independence) and responsibility (accountability) have rich but different philosophical ancestries as is evident in database searches of *The Philosopher's Index*. With the 1971 renaissance of Socratic philosophy through Gregory Vlastos' research, scholars have reexamined our understanding of Socrates' philosophy and his times, including classical Greek variations on the theme of "Autonomy and Responsibility."

To understand the historical Socrates' views of these concepts for our use in our general education program, the Philosophy Department at the University of Dayton crafted an interpretative statement with two key components: 1) how Plato's *Apology* exemplifies all four general education themes under the rubric of "to be human"; and 2) how the text illustrates "Autonomy and Responsibility" in particular.

For the former component, the document interprets the four themes as a life of questioning, clarification, and reflection to uncover ideologies and presuppositions. Recognizing the limits of one's knowledge and the need to reduce those limits tends to produce humility of learning.

For the latter component, the document advises interpreting the "Autonomy and Responsibility" theme of the *Apology* in light of Socrates' moral courage shown in four ways: facing commonly held opinions and civil society's expectations for human behavior; choosing in accord with objectivity of values; acting consistently on one's principles; and caring for a life of virtue in a genuinely human life.

Judging from preliminary assessment data studies by Wilhoit, it appears that the choice of this text is a solid one for both faculty and students in meeting the goals

of general education. But can our understanding of the text be improved in light of recent scholarship? Yes.

Faculty treating Humanities Base and Cluster themes for the Dayton Plan of General Education can enrich their understanding of “Autonomy and Responsibility” in Plato’s *Apology* in two ways:

- 1) by viewing the text anew in light of the combined approach of a “good reasons” model used in contemporary ethics along with a moral psychological developmental model of moral maturation;²
- 2) by understanding what Plato deliberately omitted from his text in portraying the historical Socrates, namely, the guises of Socrates found in Xenophon the military historian and friend of Socrates, in Aristophanes the comedy writer and satirist of Socrates, and in the largely dismissed Aristotle, the next-generation logic and ethics commentator on Socrates in Plato’s mathematically-oriented Academy.³

In short, the theme of “Autonomy and Responsibility” becomes more intelligible once two shortfalls are remedied: first, failure to recognize a good reasons model of ethical reasoning in the elenchial activities of Plato’s historical Socrates; and second, failure to adequately correct Plato’s historical Socrates with guises of Socrates offered by contemporaries such as Xenophon and Aristophanes and by next-generation historians of philosophy such as Aristotle. However, only the first shortfall will be remedied in what follows.

STAGES OF GOOD REASONS IN MORAL REASONING

Recent ethical theorists like Stephen E. Toulmin have noted the importance of offering good reasons for moral choicemaking. Moral psychologists like Lawrence Kohlberg have observed stages of moral maturity in giving good reasons for deciding ethical dilemmas. Combining both approaches offers interpreters of “Autonomy and Responsibility” a better opportunity to understand the elenchial activities of the historical Socrates — not modeled after the torpedo-fish⁴ of Plato’s *Meno* (80a,c) — but after the stinging horsefly (gadfly) of large, lazy thoroughbreds encountered in Plato’s *Apology* (30e).

To appreciate this moral developmental perspective of the elenchus in Socrates’ trial, it is helpful to first recognize it in the arguments by Socrates and his wealthy former student Crito about escaping the death sentence of the Athenian jury in Plato’s *Crito*.⁵ As Socrates chides Crito:

Have we at our age failed to notice for some time that in our serious discussions we were no different from children?

(C, 49b)

Now Kohlberg’s model of moral maturity is a useful tool for gauging levels of autonomy and responsibility given the limits and biases of his longitudinal and cross-cultural studies.⁶ It describes stages of giving good reasons to lead oneself from heteronomy to autonomy and from nonresponsibility to responsibility.

Deciding an ethical dilemma proceeds from self-oriented stages of reasoning (the preconventional morality level), to other-oriented stages (the conventional morality level), and finally to conscience-oriented stages (the postconventional morality level). Moral maturity seems to be a sequence of giving better reasons in ethical decision-making, somewhat akin to Jean Piaget's findings for development of a child's moral judgment from justice as obedience, through justice as equality, to justice as equity.

When Toulmin's strategy of citing good reasons is combined with Kohlberg's stages of citing good reasons, the following sequence seems plausible on the developmental path from heteronomy to autonomy and from nonresponsibility to responsibility:

1. fear is a reason for knowingly choosing X rather than Y in view of one's self-concerns;
2. want satisfaction is a reason for knowingly choosing X rather than Y in view of one's self-concerns;
3. esteem is a reason for knowingly choosing X rather than Y in view of one's concerns for others;
4. authority is a reason for knowingly choosing X rather than Y in view of one's concerns for others;
5. expression of a right is a reason for knowingly choosing X rather than Y in accord with the voice of one's own conscience;
6. justification by principle is a reason for knowingly choosing X rather than Y in accord with the voice of one's own conscience.

Perhaps the elenchical stings of Socrates like those of the flat manta ray on humans encountered in the sea or that of the gadfly annoying thoroughbreds at the racecourse function as prods to self and others to give better reasons for one's moral choices. If so, this combined Toulmin-Kohlberg perspective can help one better understand the concepts of autonomy and responsibility in Plato's *Crito* because they are so clearly evident in that dialogue. And this perspective may help one recognize similar patterns in Plato's *Apology*. Could this combined Toulmin-Kohlberg perspective supplement the traditional scholarly view of Socrates' logic-driven elenchus with a moral psychological dimension otherwise overlooked?

STAGES OF GOOD REASONS IN CRITO'S MORAL REASONING (C, 43a-53e)

The conversations between Socrates the mentor and Crito the student show evidence of all six kinds of good reasons offered by Crito as justifications for Socrates' escape in disobedience of the Athenian law of verdicts. These seem to be offered in hopes of finding better reasons for one's informed choicemaking.

FEARS:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| death deprives one of a friend | (44b) |
| death is a multiple misfortune for a friend | (44b) |
| a majority can inflict the greatest evils if slandered | (44d) |

little money needed to bribe someone for the escape	(45a)
money to informers is affordable to me and others	(45a-45c)
about saving yourself now given your court statements	(45a-45c)
no harm will come to you in Thessaly with my friends	(45c)
your sons will probably have the usual fate of orphans	(45d)

WANTS:

to be free of distress and asleep if facing death	(43b)
to let you sleep to spend your time most agreeably	(43b)
cannot have a friend like you again so want you alive	(44b)
want you to have my money which is sufficient	(45a)
if you want to go to Thessaly, my friends will accept you	(45c)
you want to show concern for the fate of your children	(45d)
to live not with a body corrupted or in bad condition	(47e)

ESTEEM:

what people will think of us in not spending to save you	(44b)
no worse reputation than to value money over friends	(44c)
one must also pay attention to the majority's opinion	(44d)
your fate will reflect our cowardice or unmanliness	(45e-46a)

AUTHORITIES:

professional respect of one expert, not many nonexperts	(47b)
agreed in words and deeds to live in accord with laws	(52d)

RIGHTS:

no right to give up life when you can save it	(45c)
right to escape since city decision wronged you	(50a-50c)

PRINCIPLES:

we are justified in risking all to save you by escaping	(44e)
you will fail parental care duty of educating your sons	(45d)
one should not have children or else should educate them	(45d)
caring for virtue requires courage—not the easiest path.	(45d)

Clearly, in relying on appeals to fears and wants for the self, to esteem and authority of others, and even to a few rights and principles of conscience, Crito's giving of good reasons is dominated by the first three stages of giving moral reasons. For Crito, autonomy and responsibility are primarily self-directed and other-directed rather than conscience-directed beyond self and others. This differs substantially from Socrates' behavior as reported by Plato.

STAGES OF GOOD REASONS IN SOCRATES' MORAL REASONING (C, 43a-53e):

The conversations between Socrates the mentor and Crito the pupil show evidence of all six kinds of good reasons offered by Socrates in not escaping from prison in obedience to the Athenian law of verdicts. These again seem to be offered in hopes of finding better reasons for moral choicemaking.

FEARS:

- in mind is fear of misfortune to friends aiding my escape (45a)
- majority's power to frighten with threats is to no avail (46c)
- a majority is able to put us to death (48a)
- friends can be exiled, disfranchised, or lose property (53a)
- being suspect as enemy of government as destroyer of laws (53b)
- laws of Athens will be angry at you while you live (54c)
- laws of the underworld will not welcome you after you die (54c)

WANTS:

- if displeased with birth/nurture/education, one can leave (51d)
- if want to go with property to another colony, free to go (51d)
- consistent dwelling in Athens proves your satisfaction (52b)
- you had no desire to know another city or other laws (52c)
- having children in this city shows satisfaction (52c)
- had seventy years to go away if you disliked the laws (52e-53a)
- a city cannot please its residents without laws (53a)
- greed for life with few years left as reason to break law (53d)
- license to feast disorderly with Crito's Thessaly friends (53e)
- want to live to educate children as strangers in Thessaly (54a)
- to want goodness more than sons/life is defense for Hades (54b)

ESTEEM:

- care for what reasonable people think, not the majority (44c)
- majority cannot make one wise or foolish (44d)
- greatly value some people's opinions, but not others (46e)
- value the good opinions and not the bad ones (47a)
- good opinions from wise men, bad ones from foolish men (47a)
- think not so much of what the majority will say about us (48a)
- think of what one who knows justice & injustice will say (48a)
- leaving the city makes one a laughing stock (53a)
- arrival in a new city as a suspected enemy of government (53b)
- arrival in a new city as a suspected destroyer of laws (53b)
- to escape will convince jury they decided verdict rightly (53b)
- after escape, shame to be felt in conversing with anyone (53d)
- appear to be an unseemly kind of person as a fugitive (53d)
- befriending Crito's comrades embraces license & disorder (53d)
- many disgraceful things rumored about you when gadflying (53e)

University of Dayton Review, Vol. 25, No. 1 [1997], Art. 5 (53e)
 will spend your time ingratiating yourself with all (53e)
 will be at the beck and call of new friends ingratiated

AUTHORITIES:

honor of country is better than family/gods/sensible men (51a)
 must either persuade of unjust law or obey just order (51a)
 endure in silence whatever just law instructs you to do (51a)
 obey a just law even if it leads to war wounds or death (51a)
 one must not give way or retreat or leave one's post (51a)
 obey just laws in war & courts, or persuade of injustice (51b)
 wrong to use violence against one's mother or father (51c)
 wrong to use violence against one's country or city (51c)
 by staying in a city one agrees to obey instructions (51d)
 to disobey hurts parents, caregiver, unpersuaded citizens (51d)
 city issues no savage commands: only persuade or comply (52a)
 escape breaks compact made without force/deceit/deadline (52e)
 law is needed for a city to please its inhabitants (53a)
 escape when hurt by men (not law) returns wrong for wrong (54c)
 escape when hurt by men (not law) gives injury for injury (54c)
 escape hurts those least deserving (self-friends-country) (54c)
 laws of Athens will be angry at you while you are alive (54c)
 laws of the underworld will be unkind to you once you die (54c)
 not to escape is the way the god leads us (54e)

RIGHTS:

to think one has a retaliatory right against country/law (51a)
 to examine whether one can escape when not acquitted (48c)
 if a right to escape is seen, will try to escape (48c)
 if a right to escape is not seen, will abandon escape (48c)
 to give money and thanks to liberators (48d)
 to assist liberators (48d)
 to stay in prison and keep quiet until dying (48d)

PRINCIPLES:

to act in this way or not, now and at all times (46b)
 listen to argument that seems best upon reflection (46b)
 cannot discard former arguments due to change of fate (46b)
 value and respect the same principles as before (46b)
 producing better arguments to escape can lead to escape (46b)
 prison, death, and confiscation threats cannot persuade (46c)
 the most important thing is not life, but the good life (48b)
 one must never in any way do wrong willingly (49a)
 to do wrong is never good or admirable (49a)
 wrongdoing in every way harms and shames the wrongdoer (49b)
 one must never do wrong (49b)
 nor must one, when wronged, inflict wrong in return (49b)
 one must never injure anyone (49c)

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never right to inflict an injury in return for injury	(49c)
never do wrong in return	(49d)
never injure any man for injury done to you by that man	(49d)
fulfill just agreements rather than cheat on them	(49e)
one must either persuade a city or obey its orders	(51b)
chose proudly at trial death to exile	(52d)
death not resented at trial but would be now in escape	(52d)
unashamedly now exile would be preferred to death	(52d)
to escape is to act like the meanest slave, not a citizen	(52d)
life will not be worth living to one who escapes	(53c)
value goodness over your children and your life	(54b)
your self, friends and country should be least injured	(54c)
the god is leading us not to escape.	(54e)

Clearly, Socrates finds reasons based on principles as superior to those based on fears and wants for the self, esteem and authority of others, and even rights appeals. For Socrates, autonomy and responsibility are not merely self-directed nor other-directed but conscience-directed based on principles beyond self and others. Hence, giving good reasons of the kind offered by Crito is inferior to giving better reasons of the kind offered by Socrates. This prod to giving better reasons may also be found in Plato's *Apology*, particularly in the main speech.

STAGES OF GOOD REASONS IN SOCRATES' MORAL REASONING (A, 17a-35d):

From beginning to end, Plato's historical Socrates in the *Apology* maintained his innocence on all three charges brought against him in the sworn deposition of Meletus (for the poets), Anytus (for the politicians and craftsmen), and Lycon (for the orators). These charges were: corrupting the youth, not believing in the gods in whom the city believes, and believing in other new divinities. (A, 24b)

Socrates noted that chief prosecutor Meletus was himself "guilty of dealing frivolously with serious matters, of irresponsibly bringing people into court, and of professing to be seriously concerned with things about none of which he has ever cared, and I shall try to prove that this is so." (A, 24c) Under Athenian law at the time, frivolous lawsuits were discouraged. If the accuser failed to convince at least one-fifth of the jurors, he was fined 1,000 drachmas and lost some citizen privileges such as being able to accuse in court by way of a lawsuit. Socrates, despite confessing his inexperience in the lawcourts (A, 17c), knew full well that Meletus had to have at least one-hundred jurors vote him guilty of the charges lest Meletus be found guilty of a frivolous lawsuit.

Socrates' defense was thus serious.⁸ "Even so, let the matter proceed as the god may wish, but I must obey the law and make my defence [under the Persuade or Obey principle]." (A, 19a) This defense was two-tiered at trial: a) "Hardly anything of what they said is true." (A, 17a); and b) "I have hidden or disguised nothing." (A, 24a) Socrates claims here that generally the accusations are not true and that he has concealed and feigned nothing [*sic!* except for his cosmology studies with Archelaus the Physicist of Miletus and Athens, a pupil of Anaxagoras].

During the trial, Socrates disclosed changes in his elenchial refutation strategy and offered good faith reasons for such shifts in accord with the serious duties obligating him first to persuade and then, if failing, to obey:

- a) the oracle certainly does not lie according to Socrates since lying is illegitimate for the oracle but ambiguity is not; (A, 21b)
- b) he could refute the oracle by examining a well-known but unnamed wise man in a "This man is wiser than I, but you said I was" gambit, but failed in the attempted refutation of the oracle; (A, 21c)
- c) he must attach the greatest importance to the god's oracle by examining all those with a reputation for knowledge such as politicians, poets, writers of tragedies and dithyrambs, and craftsmen — and succeeded in showing them not so wise after all; (21e)
- d) his efforts were undertaken as if to prove the oracle irrefutable, and this was so shown; (22a)
- e) he found that the irrefutable oracular message was that "the god is wise" and that the wisest humans recognize that their wisdom is "worth little or nothing." (A, 23b)

Such strategic changes in the main speech involved four shifts after recognition that the oracle does not lie: attempted refutation of the oracular message itself; increased weighting of oracular authority by acknowledging its divine source; proving the oracle irrefutable; and finally decreased weighting of the authority of human wisdom. Through these shifts in elenchial activities Socrates explored the various kinds of good reasons for deciding his guilt or innocence at trial. His gadfly-like behavior (A, 30e) functioned to prod others and self from a simplistic listing of reasons to Kohlbergian-like levels of better reasons on the way to moral enlightenment and maturity. As Plato cited Socrates at trial:

Then, if one of you disputes this and says he does care [for wisdom, truth or the best possible state of one's soul more than for wealth, reputation and honors], I shall not let him go at once or leave him, but I shall question him, examine him and test him, and if I do not think he has attained the goodness that he says he has, I shall reproach him because he attaches little importance to the most important things and greater importance to inferior things. (A, 29e-30a)

Here Plato makes clear that Socratic prodding by way of gadflying aims not merely at annoying for the sake of annoying but at assisting an examinee to propel himself to the kind of goodness he says he has by attaching himself to a proper order of things. This order of things lies beyond fears and wants of the self, beyond the esteem of others and external authorities, and even beyond mere rights appeals.

FEARS:

fears old accusers' lies more than recent accusers' lies	(18b)
to follow an occupation like philosophy that risks death	(28b)
face danger if choosing best position/commanded to do so	(28d)
dreadful to abandon post for fear of death in 3 battles	(29a)
to fear death is to think one knows what one does not	(29a)
fear of death may be of greatest evil or of best blessing	(29a)
immediate death for doing for anyone what is not right	(32a)
prison/death for voting against unjust military trial	(32b-32c)
death for disobeying tyrants' execution order of Leon	(32c-32e)

WANTS:

to live without politics due to service to the god	(23b)
to live in great poverty due to service to the god	(23b)
want wealth/fame/honor more than wisdom/truth/virtue	(29d-29e)
wealth does not bring virtue, but virtue brings blessings	(30b)
young and old who want to can listen to me free	(33a)
some want my company when I question pretenders to wisdom	(33b)
not unpleasant to hear pretenders to wisdom questioned	(33b)

ESTEEM:

our mutual friend got the oracle's message about me	(21a)
a famous wise person & bystanders came to dislike me	(21c-21d)
a wiser person & many others came to dislike me	(21d-21e)
constant query of ones deemed wise proved unpopular	(21a-22e)
unpopularity was hard to deal with and a heavy burden	(23a)
slandered by examinees with reputations for wisdom	(23a)
false impressions gained by bystanders about my wisdom	(23a)
this very conduct of mine at trial makes for unpopularity	(24a)
egged Council on against me for opposing an illegal trial	(32c)
never have been a teacher of anyone young or old for fee	(33a)
no fee charge for conversing; no fee needed for talking	(33a)
equally ready to question rich/poor if willing to respond	(33a)
some enjoy my company when probing pretenders to wisdom	(33b)
still have no lack of respect for you	(34e)
to convict on pity in courts makes a city a laughingstock	(35b)

AUTHORITIES:

let the trial proceed as the god wishes	(19a)
must obey law [persuade of injustice or obey in justice]	(19a)
must make my defense	(19a)
story is not a boast but from the trustworthy Delphi god	(20e)
still examine anyone I think wise as the god ordered me	(23b)
aid the god in showing one I thought wise to be unwise	(23b)
my god-service occupation does not allow public service	(23d)
my occupation does not allow tending to my own affairs	(23b)
unwilling wrongdoing does not require a court appearance	(26a)

unwilling wrongdoing requires private instruction	(26a)
willing wrongdoing requires a court of law for judging	(26a)
will disobey you if ordered to stop philosophizing	(29d)
will obey the god & philosophize than obey you to stop	(29d)
I am a gift of the god to the city	(31a)
Meletus mocks a divine sign from god in his deposition	(31c)
a voice speaks to deflect me from an act I am about to do	(31d)
a voice never speaks to me to do anything	31d)
voice has stopped me from politics to your benefit & mine	(31e)
generals tried illegally for failed naval rescue in storm	(32b)
only Council member to oppose your acting against law	(32b-32c)
prison/death risked to side with the law against you	(32b-32c)
to examine pseudo-wise is enjoined on my by the god	(33b)
the god enjoined me to examine by oracles and dreams	(33b)

RIGHTS:

as young man to toy with words before you	(17c)
as old man not to toy with words before you	(17c)
to make unrequired defense against first accusers' lies	(18a)
to make required defense against second accusers' lies	(18a)
to examine (unrequired) rumors, hearsay, gossip, slander	(18d)
to query (required) poets, orators, politicians/craftsmen	(18d)
to seek any citizen or stranger I think wise but is not	(23b)
to show lack of wisdom to pretender of wisdom to aid god	(23d)
to not yield for fear of death to anyone doing wrong	(32a)
to not be held responsible for others' good/bad conduct	(33b)

PRINCIPLES:

excellent judging focuses on just/unjust statements	(18a)
human wisdom is worth little or nothing	(23b)
no one wants to be harmed	(25d)
to contradict oneself in one's affidavit is as a jester	(27a)
no good man should consider risk of life/death in acting	(28b)
good man looks only to rightness/wrongness in his action	(28b)
good man looks only to his acting like a good/bad man	(28b)
worst ignorance is believing one knows what one does not	(29b)
I have no adequate knowledge of the underworld	(29b)
I do not think I do have a knowledge of the underworld	(29b)
it is wicked and shameful to do wrong	(29b)
it is wicked and shameful to disobey superiors: god/man	(29b)
never fear or avoid things which one does not know about	(29c)
one should fear what one knows is bad	(29c)
one should not fear whether something may not be good	(29c)
reproach if little import attaches to the most important	(30a)
reproach if greater import attaches to inferior things	(30a)
it will be to one's advantage to listen	(30c)
it is not allowed that a better man be harmed by a worse	(30c)

to execute someone unjustly harms the executors more	(30d)
not human nature to neglect/tolerate neglect of affairs	(31b)
persuade you as father/elder brother to care for virtue	(31b)
to go around privately to give advice	(31c)
to interfere in private affairs in giving advice	(31c)
to survive the fight for justice requires a private life	(32a)
a public life in the fight for justice does not last long	(32a)
be the same person in public life as in private life	(32e-33a)
never begrudged anyone from listening to me talk	(33a)
never promised to teach them anything and did not	(33b)
not to arouse by pity in court even when life is at stake	(34c)
to think it is a terrible thing to die is shameful	(35a)
better to teach-persuade jury than dramatize-be acquitted	(35c)
justice not to be given under oath to those one favors	(35c)
justice to be given under oath according to law	(35c)
do not do violence to your oath of office with my appeal	(35d)
I do believe in the gods contrary to my accusers.	(35d)

From the preceding, it is evident that the elenchus of Socrates has not merely the standard logical features described by Vlastos and Reeve, but also moral psychological dimensions of learning to give good reasons at various stages of moral maturity. Clearly, there are differences in the kinds of autonomy and of responsibility for deciding ethical dilemmas in both Plato's *Apology* and *Crito*. But the level of principled conscience is what Socrates aimed at so as to not depart life before "I had cleared my conscience" as Plato tells us in *Phaedo* (61b). It is this level of principled conscience common to both Platonic dialogues that Socrates finds as both most autonomous and most responsible in human choicemaking that knows virtue and acts virtuously in a consistent manner. Good reasons at various stages and levels of moral maturity are important catalysts for moral reasoning in human conduct. But for the historical Socrates the elenchus exists to prod ourselves and others to better reasons in human choicemaking if not the best ones.

CONCLUSION

Examining one's life is the central teaching of Plato's historical Socrates. It is also a core meaning of "Autonomy and Responsibility" in general education at the University of Dayton.

The preceding textual analyses used a combined Toulmin-Kohlberg approach to examine the place of good reasons, better reasons, and best reasons for autonomous and responsible choicemaking for the historical Socrates left to us by Plato.

The analyses uncovered a nest of meanings for autonomy and responsibility as related concepts rather than as necessarily opposed concepts for the historical Socrates. A network of different kinds of reasons for autonomous and responsible human conduct is clearly evident—although Kohlbergian-type sequencing is not as evident in the two Platonic dialogues examined. Such a webwork can supplement our primary logical understanding of Socrates' elenchial activities in recent Socratic scholarship. And it can also amplify the voice of Socrates as logician and ethicist

through the sounding-board of Aristotle, the all but forgotten commentator on Socrates.⁹

The combined Toulmin-Kohlberg approach allows one to better understand the regular, comparative, and superlative kinds of reasons operative in many kinds of autonomy and responsibility. At the same time, the approach enables us to better grasp the moral developmental dimensions of the elenchus. The elenchus may well be modelled as a series of standard logical argument structures of the Vlastos and Reeve types. But to so conceive the elenchus invites us to miss it as a moral prodding device used by Socrates to goad and guide one in producing good reasons, better reasons, and ultimately the best reasons for achieving autonomy and responsibility in a fully examined human life.

Department of Philosophy

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Plato, "Apology," *The Trial and Death of Socrates* [tr. G. M. A. Grube]. (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), p. 39. Hereafter referred to as A.
- ² Stephen E. Toulmin, *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1950). See Chapter 11 on the logic of moral reasoning for an example of a good reasons model in ethics. For the controversy on gendered moral reasoning between Lawrence Kohlberg's model and Carol Gilligan's model, see George Sher, "Other Voices, Other Rooms? Women's Psychology and Moral Theory," in George Sher (ed.), *Moral Philosophy: Selected Readings*, 2nd Ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996), pp. 593-604. Our study of Plato's texts that follows shows both Kohlberg-type reasons (abstract, principled, impersonal, impartial, and duty) and Gilligan-type reasons (concrete, contextual, unprincipled, personal, partial, and care) appear without a specific sequence.
- ³ Hugh H. Benson (ed.), "Editor's Introduction," *Essays on the Philosophy of Socrates*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 3-4. Benson characterizes the standard guises of Socrates in the following way: "(1) the Aristophanic Socrates, a sophistic natural philosopher who was willing to teach anyone who would pay how to make the weaker argument appear the stronger and who denied the existence of the gods of common opinion; (2) the Xenophontean Socrates, an unexciting didactician, who was quick to give advice concerning the most common matters and who was a paragon of common morality and religious practice; and (3) the Platonic Socrates, a nondogmatic, perhaps even skeptical, moral philosopher, who examined and exposed others' pretenses to wisdom, denied that he taught anything, and espoused the nontraditional theses mentioned earlier that 'no one ever does wrong willingly,' 'it is wrong to harm one's enemies,' and 'knowledge is virtue.' " He states that most scholars agree that the Plato's portrayal is the most historically accurate view of Socrates. However, Benson fails to point out: (1) Socrates' knowledge of Aesop's fables and his written adaptation of such a fable according to Plato in the *Phaedo* (60b, 60e, 61b) and his obedience to a dream calling him to cultivate the arts before his death; (2) his literary composition work and staging for Euripides according to Aristophanes and Callias; (3) his writing poetry to "clear my conscience" before departing this world in Plato's *Phaedo* (61b); (4) Socrates' silence on his Anaxagorean cosmology and ethics teacher for decades, Archelaus of Miletus and Athens, whom neither Plato nor Aristotle ever reference although both reference Anaxagoras numerous times; and (5) Socrates' views on logic and ethics cited on numerous occasions by the next-generation historian of philosopher, Aristotle, apparently gained from reading and discussion. Some of these omissions or denials (e.g., cosmology instruction) seem highly relevant to Socrates' trial and to his insistence under oath on hiding nothing.
- ⁴ A torpedo-fish is a flat manta ray which, if encountered in the sea, could numb a human being without numbing itself.
- ⁵ Plato, "Crito," *The Trial and Death of Socrates* [tr. G. M. A. Grube]. (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), pp. 43-54. Hereafter referred to as C.
- ⁶ See endnote 2.
- ⁷ The "standard elenchus" form detected by Vlastos may be schematized as follows: a) a sincere belief P about a virtue is advanced by the candidate C of an elenchus; b) under examination, candidate C accepts beliefs Q and R as true; c) beliefs Q and R entail the denial of P; d) candidate C's commitment to Q and R is so strong that, when confronted with the contradictory conclusion of not-P, he finds P problematic rather than Q and R; e) P is thus

refuted. See C. D. C. Reeve, *Socrates in the APOLOGY*. (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), pp. 40-41. For more on the three stages of Socratic elenchial activities, see Reeve, op.cit., pp. 45-47. These forms are logical models of the elenchus. However, the combined Toulmin-Kohlberg perspective is a moral psychological model of the elenchus.

- ⁸ This is compatible with the views of Brickhouse and Smith who argue against the view that Socrates did not undertake a serious and rigorous defense against the formal charges. See Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, "The Formal Charges Against Socrates," in Benson (ed.), op. cit., pp. 14-34.
- ⁹ The Past Masters CD-ROM Database on Aristotle's texts references Socrates more than one-hundred times, half on logic and half on ethics. A detailed study of the Aristotelian Socrates is needed to offset the Platonic Socrates. As Aristotle described (cf. *Metaphysics*, I.16) the gadfly he had read about but had never met—Socrates was one who was "busying himself about ethical matters and neglecting the work of nature as a whole."