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THE DIVINE MOTIVATION: AN EXAMINATION OF SOCRATIC ETHICS

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this thesis, *The Divine Motivation: An Examination of Socratic Ethics* is the result of research undertaken under supervision. I thereby declare that except for references which have been duly acknowledged, this work is a product of my own research. I hereby take full responsibility for any shortcomings of this work.

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ABSTRACT

There are several drives, both internal and external, which influence people to act. Reason, fear, love, hate, money, and pleasure are a few of such driving forces. More often than not people are driven by the motivating forces which are not based on sound ethical reasoning. They end up disappointed or causing harm either to themselves or to others, depending on the consequences of their action. This study examines the motivations of Socrates’ ethical behavior, concentrating on the role of reason, and the daimonion, which is traditionally taken to be a divine or an extra-rational force. The main thrust of my argument implies that throughout human history, certainly from the time of Socrates in fifth century BC Athens to contemporary times, reason and extra-rational forces (whether this latter is seen as intuition, gut feeling, revelation or other) have been claimed by people as the motivating sources of their ethical behavior. The key issues here are whether Socrates’ daimonion is an external divine power and whether its role is complementary or superior or inferior to reason. The traditional interpretation in Socratic scholarship is that Socratic ethical behavior was centrally motivated by reason or rationality. This is the position I shall critique.

A substantive portion of this work is dedicated to the examination of the function of the Socratic daimonion and rationality. I hope to have shown that the influences of the daimonion override rationality. To provide a persuasive account of what it means to act morally rightly on the basis of divine or extra-rational motivation, I have used multiple qualitative research approaches, ranging from
semantic clarifications of concepts, to historical and textual analyses of texts on the
daimonion and rationality in Plato and Xenophon.
To

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Socratic ethics is established and accentuated by some moral motivations, such as the inspiration of the divine and rationality. Many Socratic scholars including Gomez-Lobo and Vlastos have argued that, Socrates acts mainly on the basis of rationality rather than on the groundwork of the daimonion. In this study, I argue that Socratic ethics is incomplete without the role of the divine in Socrates’ behavior and conduct. An examination of the role of the divine in Socratic ethics will not be complete without investigating Socrates’ daimonion—the divine sign. I rely on Plato and Xenophon because their works constitute the two main sources of Socratic thought and life. It is true that Plato and Xenophon sometimes contradict one another; but it is also true that they agree to a large extent on most of the things they say about Socrates, including matters relating to Socrates’ daimonion and rationality.

This chapter will include the clarification of key concepts, review of the relevant literature on the daimonion and rationality as far as Socrates’ moral motivation is concerned. I will then state the statement of the problem, define its scope, and determine the appropriate approach or method for dealing with the problem.
1.1 Clarification of Concepts

This section is devoted to semantic clarification of two key concepts central to this thesis, namely, ‘daimonion’, as understood in the context of Classical Greek culture, and ‘motivation’, as it applies to a drive for an action. According to Liddel and Scott, ‘Daimonion’ is a transliteration of the Greek word δαίμονιον,1 which means ‘divine power’.2 Hammond and Scullard believe that the daimonion has associations with the supernatural.3 They assert, ‘Daimonion appears to correspond with the supernatural power’.4 Generally scholars agree that daimonion connotes a supernatural power, or god. But Socrates described it as a voice or sign which characteristically warned him to desist from embarking on a harmful action.5 And whenever the warning does not come, Socrates would assume that a course of action he is about to undertake is good. 6 Socrates believed that the daimonion is divine. He asserts, ‘my divine sign has not opposed me’.7 Gomez-Lobo claims that,

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1 Liddel and Scott list the instantiations of daimonion in some works of Classical Greece. These include, Herodotus The Histories (Hdt.5.87), Euripides Bacchae (E.Ba.894), Isocrates To Demonicus (Isoc.1.13), Plato Republic (Pl. R.382e), etc. cf. Aristotle, Rhetoric (Rh.1398a15), and (1419a9). These references to the daimonion connote a divine supernatural being which seems to be causing its agents to behave in a particular way. See, Liddell, H. G & Scot, R. (1996). A Greek-English Lexicon. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 404
2 Liddell, H. G & Scot, R. Ibid.
3 ‘Daimonion’ in the English word ‘demon’ connotes an evil supernatural being. The negative connotation ascribed to it in English does not reflect the ancient Greek sense of the word as used in this study.
5 Apology 31d
6 Apology 40a-c
7 Apology 40a7
the common meaning of daimonion is god or divine being. Daimonion may be conceived as a representation or ‘speck’ of a mysterious agency, or god that influences mortals and help them to achieve some desired results. Thus, daimonion refers to a supernatural power which assists Socrates in the performance of moral actions. In chapter four I offer an in-depth explanation of the function of the daimonion from the cultural-historical perspective of the Greeks.

Motivation is derived from three words; the Anglo-French word *motif*, from the Late Latin verb *motivus*, and from the Classical Latin word *movere*. The word *motif* is translated as motive in English. In French *motif* connotes a ‘cause’ or ‘reason’. For instance, the French expression *motif de satisfaction* is translated as ‘cause or reason for satisfaction’. To have a ‘reason’ or ‘cause’ for satisfaction is to obtain a need based on something that is dear to kindle a choice of action. From the expression, *motif* implies some kind of incentive or encouragement to act in a particular way. On the other hand, *motivus* means ‘to move’. ‘To move’ may suggest movement from one location to another, movement in attitude, or to be in a state of action. Thus, we get the sense that ‘to move’ is to set in motion, so people can be moved to act in one way or the other. In Classical Latin, the word *movere* with the participle or the genitive *motus* is preferred as the root word for motivation. In Latin *movere* would then mean to move mentally, stir, influence, affect feeling,

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to excite, or to cause.\textsuperscript{10} The participle form \textit{motus} means ‘stirring (of a person or thing) to action, prompting, instigation or sim.’\textsuperscript{11} Stirring, prompting and instigating a person implies a cause ‘to do something’ or ‘to act in some way’.

When people act, they are believed to be moved, caused or influenced mentally, so technically when people claim ‘to be motivated’, they are referring to a drive for an action. The root words \textit{motif}, \textit{motivus}, and \textit{movere} are related, they all imply a kind of drive for action. In the sense that, their basic meanings connote a driving force which influences actions. Following from the seemingly related meanings of the root words, the English word, ‘motivation’ is used to describe a drive for acting in a particular way. When people claim to be ‘motivated’, in essence they are referring to a drive that influences them to act or do something. So people may be influenced by a want or need, or perhaps a mere desire to achieve an aim. What influences is the drive. For instance, people can be driven by fear, love, money, pleasure to behave in a particular way. Thus, the thing that drives people to act becomes the motivation. For the purposes of this study, motivation is conceived as a drive for an action or simply as a driving force that influences an action.

\textbf{1.2 Literature Review}

\begin{flushleft}
\end{flushleft}
Many events and features in Socrates’ life provide insight into Socratic ethics. For instance, while awaiting his death in prison, Socrates demonstrated his commitment to the divine sign. Socrates refused to escape from prison because he believed such action will undermine his moral principles; his obedience to the divine,\textsuperscript{12} and will not also bring him some good result\textsuperscript{13}. He asserts, ‘…the only valid consideration, is whether we should be acting rightly…’\textsuperscript{14} Socrates’ decision to stay in prison is founded on the principle that he ought to act rightly at all cost. He believes he should consider only the just thing to do. This leads to the question: Is Socrates acting rightly for its own sake? Even though Socrates distinguished himself in acting morally rightly, there were cases Socrates vividly demonstrated obedience to the divine, and there were instances where he appealed to rationality because he was determined to achieve some good results in case he makes it to the afterlife\textsuperscript{15}. He tells the Athenian jury: ‘in fact, my service to God has reduced me to extreme poverty’.\textsuperscript{16} He believes god has given him a service to live morally rightly and this service has made him poor. Perhaps, for Socrates to think god has given him a duty he cannot disobey, implies that god appears to be a crucial part of Socrates’ moral actions.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Apology} 29a3-4
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Crito} 49b9
\textsuperscript{14} Crito 48c8-9
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Phaedo} 112e-118a; \textit{Crito} 53a-54e
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Apology} 23a7-8
In an attempt to capture the exact nature of Socratic ethics, Gomez-Lobo samples some of Socrates’ ethical statements to the major theoretical frameworks of normative ethics—consequentialism, divine command, deontology, and rationalism. He finds that Socratic ethics is complex and cannot be given a simple theoretical label. Thus, he argues that Socratic ethics cannot be purely either consequential, divine command, or deontological; there are bits of everything in it. However, Gomez-Lobo argues that rationality is central as far as Socratic ethics is concerned. Further, Gomez-Lobo asserts that the ultimate foundation of Socratic ethics is not what a god chooses to command, but rather an objective order which binds even the divine will.\(^{18}\) He seems to suggest that the objective order which binds the divine will is moral rectitude;\(^ {19}\) and moral rectitude is an intrinsic attribute which an action possesses. It follows that actions have intrinsic value irrespective of what the gods approve or disapprove of, and moral rectitude is superior and even binds the gods.

I concord with Gomez-Lobo’s claims that Socratic ethics cannot be wholly consequential, divine command, or deontological; however, I disagree with his claim that Socratic ethics is centrally rational. Gomez-Lobo’s view of Socratic ethics is not wholly true and it will be a subject for investigation. Perhaps the most inadequate view of portraying Socratic ethics as centrally rational is evident in the assertion below. Gomez-Lobo asserts:

\(^{18}\) Gomez-Lobo, Ibid. p. 38  
\(^{19}\) Ibid. p. 40
Socrates showed his sincere commitment to this conclusion [rationality] when he decided to stay in his cell and drink the hemlock. He had the strongest possible reason a rational agent can have to face death rather than disobey a court order.20

Gomez-Lobo’s claim above supposes that Socrates remained steadfast to his moral beliefs due to his commitment to rationality. The reason why Gomez-Lobo’s assertion requires a further investigation is that, Socrates reiterated, ‘I owe a greater obedience to God…’.21 Socrates believed himself to be acting according to the interdictions of the divine. Socrates had cause to remain in prison because his divine sign had failed to oppose his decision.22 His conviction to remain in prison to die was because of his obedience to god to practice philosophy.23

20 Gomez-Lobo, op cit., p.117
21 Apology 29d1-6
22 Apology 40a3-c3
23 Obedience to the divine or god herein used refers to one’s motive to be moral in following or adhering to what god or the divine motive is. It is having a reason or cause to do something because the divine desires that it should be done. It is parallel to Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski’s Divine Motivation theory, where she reasons that “Divine Motivation theory makes moral properties derive from God’s motives”. cf: Zagzebski, L. T. (2004) Divine Motivation Theory. New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 258. Obedience to the commands of god as quoted from Plato’s Apology are interpreted as divine motivation. According to Zagzebski, ‘The right thing for humans to do is to act on motives that imitate the divine motives’. Zagzebski, ibid. p. 260. Obedience to the commands of god herein used is different from the normative ethical theory Deontology. In Deontology, the emphasis is on the rightness or wrongness of a moral act based on obedience to duty, whereas in Divine Motivation it is based on the motives of the divine. Divine Motivation is different from Divine Command, the latter places emphasis on the motives of god, the former focuses on the will of god which may appear arbitrary. ‘If something is good because God wills it, then it looks as if the divine will is arbitrary’, as asserted by Linda. cf: Ibid.
Gomez-Lobo concludes that Socratic ethics rests upon only two foundations. First, a choice is rational if and only if it is a choice of what is best for the agent. Second, something is good for an agent if and only if it is morally right. He further asserts that ‘Socrates is willing to do something only because he rationally sees it to be intrinsically right.’ These statements lead to one conclusion: that rationality inspires Socrates’ moral life to achieve some good result. Consequently, ‘the daimonion does not relieve Socrates of the need to voice rational moral judgments,’ as he puts it.

On the contrary, Gomez-Lobo is contradicted by the function of the daimonion. Socrates remarks in Plato’s Apology that since his divine sign has not opposed him, he is of the conviction that his death will be a good one. In other words, if his death were bad, his divine sign would have opposed him:

In the past the prophetic voice to which I have become accustomed has always been my constant companion, opposing me even in quite trivial things if I was going to take the wrong course. Now something has happened to me, as you can see, which might be thought and is commonly considered to be a supreme calamity; yet neither when I left home this morning, nor when I was taking my place in court, nor at any point in any part of my speech, did the divine sign oppose me. In other discussions it has often checked me in the middle of a sentence; but this time it has never opposed me in any part of this business in anything that I have said and done. What do I suppose to be the explanation? I will tell you. I suspect that this thing that has happened to me is a blessing, and we are quite mistaken in supposing death to be an evil. I have good grounds for thinking this, because my accustomed sign could not

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24 Gomez-Lobo, op cit. p. 116
25 Ibid. p. 53
have failed to oppose me if what I was doing had not been sure to bring some good result.\textsuperscript{26}

From the above, it can be explained that the daimonion does motivate Socrates with positive guidance on what is good and the blessed thing to do. Socrates believes his obedience to the daimonion will bring him some good result. If the daimonion does not oppose his decision to act in a particular way, then the assumption is that it is a good decision and not morally wrong. This experience makes Socrates confident in saying, ‘For I have realized that my whole life has been spent in righteousness towards God.’\textsuperscript{27} From the foregoing, it seems that Socrates’ motivation for living a good life is rooted in his obedience to the divine.\textsuperscript{28} Socrates is quite confident that the oppositions from the daimonion will only lead him into doing what is good.

Further, the daimonion plays a vital role in Socrates’ ethical conduct. If the silence of Socrates’ daimonion implies that an action is not wrong, then it seems Socrates’ moral life is founded on the confidence in obeying the daimonion. More so, we get a confirmation of this unflinching obedience to the divine from Xenophon’s \textit{Apology}, where Socrates says that god counsels him. Socrates asserts:

\begin{quotation}
\textit{Apology} 40a3-c3
\end{quotation}

\begin{quotation}
\end{quotation}

\begin{quotation}
\textit{Memorabilia} 1.1.20
\end{quotation}
Now that I do not lie against God I have the following proof: I have revealed to many… the *counsels* which God has given me, and in no instance has the event shown that I was mistaken (my emphasis).²⁹

Vlastos has argued for the status of the daimonion as extra-rational and for its role as complementary to Socrates’ critical rationality. According to him,

All he [Socrates] could claim to be getting from the daimonion at any given time is…a “divine sign,” which allows, indeed requires, unlimited scope for the deployment of his critical reason to extract whatever truth it can from those monitions.³⁰

Vlastos suggests that the daimonion assists Socrates in reasoning. For the daimonion to allow ‘unlimited scope for the deployment of critical reason’ seems to suggest that, the daimonion through it monitions assist its agents to reason critically. McPherran’s position is closer to Vlastos’, when the former warns that ‘the gift of the apotreptic daimonion is not to be denigrated; it marks Socrates out as a man who enjoys the unique assistance of a divinity’;³¹ and that ‘it is natural that even with his last words Socrates gave thanks to a god for the extra-rational signs that gave him a life of extraordinary rationality.’³²

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²⁹ Xenophon, *Apology* 12-14
³² Ibid., p.30
Brickhouse and Smith argue that it is only the concoction of speculative history that can warrant the notion that, Socrates at first has no understanding of what the ‘sign’ [daimonion] meant and was only able to figure this out for himself by the use of ‘critical reason’. If this were so, Socrates’ claim to have experienced the presence of the daimonion since his childhood would be implausible, because in ancient Greek culture it is ‘unlikely that children would ever be counted as adequately skilled practitioners of critical reason.’

Thus in the view of Brickhouse and Smith, Socrates did view ‘his daimonion with a degree of assurance and acceptance that was prior to and thus independent of the application of critical reason.’ While this view implies the influence of the daimonion on Socrates’ ethical life, it has the effect of separating Socrates’ daimonion from critical reasoning.

From the foregoing, it will be difficult to know Socrates’ ultimate motivation for acting morally rightly. If we ask the question: What is Socrates’ ultimate motivation for acting morally rightly? Challenging to unravel or not, the divine motivation of Socrates is relevant to the larger picture of who Socrates was, what he said concerning the daimonion and what he demonstrated, because we can talk of Socrates’ daimonion influencing Socrates’ ethical life. Plato’s Apology contains all the necessary information about Socrates’ divine motivation, other mentions of the daimonion also occur in Euthydemus, Euthyphro, Phaedrus, Republic, and Theaetetus. Yet, the daimonion only opposes what Socrates is about to do wrong,

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33 Brickhouse and Smith, Op cit. p. 247
34 Brickhouse and Smith, op cit., p. 250
35 Euthydemus 272e, Phaedrus 242c1, Euthyphro 6a6-b6, Republic 6.496c and Theaetetus 151a4.
and never directly supplies him with reasons to do something. From the examination of some of the texts from Xenophon and Plato, Socrates paid attention to his daimonion: he made sure he does nothing the daimonion did not approve, and he was confident to act only when the daimonion did not oppose him. In the rest of this thesis, I am going to argue in detail about the status and role of the daimonion in Socrates’ mission and ethical life, and also argue that the daimonion is influential as far as Socrates’ motivations are concerned.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Gomez-Lobo has characterized Socratic ethics as ultimately driven by rationality, a position I argue against in this study. The research attempts an examination of Socrates’ moral motivations as I seek to address some unresolved questions: Is Socrates’ daimonion and rationality separate sources of his moral motivation? To what degree does Socrates’ daimonion help Socrates to act morally rightly, or to what degree was Socrates a rationalist? I further argue that Socrates’ daimonion is more influential in driving Socrates to act morally rightly as far as Socrates’ moral motivations are concerned.

1.4 Scope of Study

The research focuses on Plato’s Apology and Xenophon’s Memorabilia and Apology to argue that Socratic moral action is motivated by the divine and
rationality. Textual references concerning Socrates’ drive for acting morally rightly are investigated and analyzed to secure an understanding of Socrates’ motivations: the daimonion and rationality.

1.5 Significance and Aim of Study

This is a work on what motivates morally right actions, the conclusion I draw have the potential of contributing to the understanding of human actions, especially of the influences that affect decision-making and life in general. The research also provides an alternative understanding of the literature, which brings a fresh perspective on this age-long scholarly problem of what motivates Socratic moral action.

It is expected that the results of this work will contribute to Socratic scholarship and unravel Socrates’ motivations for acting morally rightly. In general, the research will also help in understanding sources of motivations for acting morally rightly. In view of this, the research will look at what constitutes Socrates’ moral motivations, taking into account his obedience to the divine and adherence to critical reasoning.
1.6 Research Methodology

This research is a qualitative research which uses multiple approaches to deal with the different qualitative aspects of the issue under examination. Thus, I shall use a historic-semantic analysis to clarify words whose understanding is key to the entire thesis. I will also use textual analyses to examine the relevant passages in Plato’s and Xenophon’s works. Finally, I will critically engage works already done by scholars discoursing on Socratic daimonion and rationality, showing their limitations and what needs to be done to advance understanding of the subject-matter.

1.7 Outline of Chapters

This thesis consists of four chapters. The second chapter is titled ‘Socratic Rationality’. The chapter concerns itself with the examination of the notion of rationality attributed to Socrates by Socratic scholars discoursing on Socrates’ rationality and daimonion. The concept of rationality is studied, investigated and analyzed to offer an understanding of the notion of Socratic rationality. The third chapter focuses on Moral Motivations and Socratic Mission. The focus is to show by way of analyses Socrates’ motivation for acting morally rightly, whether he was driven by the divine or rationality. Chapter four examines Socratic Daimonion and Rationality. The orientation of this chapter intends to secure an understanding of the role of Socrates’ daimonion from the broader context of Greek culture. I argue that knowledge acquired from the daimonion and rationality constitutes Socrates’
motivation. I further argue that, the drive from the daimonion is greater in influence as far as Socrates’ moral motivations are concerned.
2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the concept of rationality in Socratic ethics. This is important because scholars such as Kraut, Gocer, Gomez-Lobo, Brickhouse and Smith, have ascribed the concept of rationality to Socratic ethics. Gomez-Lobo for example, argues that Socratic ethics predominantly revolves around rationality. He further asserts that, “Socrates is willing to do something only because he rationally sees it to be intrinsically right.” Consequently, Gomez-Lobo believes that Socratic ethics is essentially about rationality. This chapter intends to investigate into the concept of rationality and its related notions. This is intended to lead to an in-depth understanding of rationality in Socratic ethics. I further explore the works of scholars discoursing on Socrates’ daimonion and its relation to rationality.

2.1 The Concept of Rationality

36 Gomez Lobo, op cit., p.53
37 Ibid.
The concept of rationality has many notions in different fields including; political, rhetorical, historical, ethical, and social fields.\textsuperscript{38} Generally, rationality is considered as being consistent with one’s belief. But in this study, the focus will be on rationality as used within the context of ethics. In ethics rationality has many senses; the quality of reasoning well, the state of having good and sound judgement, and being guided by the intellect in decision making. The many senses of rationality imply the capacity to act base on reasoning. Through the process of reasoning people are able to know the best course of action to take. What appears central about the concept is the means by which people make decisions through reasoning about beliefs to decide on an action. For the purposes of this study, rationality is understood as the outcome of reasoning to decide on how best one ought to behave. Thus, rationality is the result of an activity or process of reasoning intended to lead to a decision about which action is to be taken.

Davidson affirms this when he claims that rationality is established through reasoning; reasoning with justifications in the performance of an action, or reasoning to make a decision about what is good or what ought to be done, or what is in the interest of an agent.\textsuperscript{39} Reasoning is thinking that is consistent with beliefs.


Through reasoning people are able to form justifications about beliefs in the performance of an action. Thus, a belief is rational if it is held as the conclusion of a consistent or reliable method of reasoning. Again, when people think, they are able to formulate arguments that are consistent with their beliefs in order to guide their actions. So, arguments are also rational if they are consistent with reasoning, and accepting that which we have explanation(s) or justification(s) to believe. Rational is the adjectival form of the word rationality, to be rational is to be capable of reasoning consistently with arguments about one’s belief in order to arrive at sound judgement of actions and situations.

Davidson further notes that, reasoning justifies an action if it leads to what the agent wants to achieve which may be desired, prized, held dear, thought dutiful, beneficial, obligatory, or agreeable. In Davidson’s view when people conceive of justifications for action which lead to some intended outcome, perhaps, they can be said to be rational. On the contrary, having mere reasons in support of a belief may not necessarily lead to what is morally right. An agent may have justifying reasons in the performance of an action, yet, that may not be consistent with what is right and good. Rationality, then, is reliable if it conforms to one or another standard; perhaps what is good and morally right. Following from Davidson’s claim, what may be rational is what is in the interest of the agent, irrespective of the rightness

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40 Nickerson, Ibid
Accessed: 24-05-2016 23:52 UTC
or wrongness of the action.\textsuperscript{42} Ones reason in support of a belief may either be good or bad, and as a result, having mere rational reasons in support of a belief may not be sufficient to evaluate an action. This notwithstanding, I argue that actions can be evaluated through rationality.

Actions of people are generally evaluated based on some decisions taken about what ought to be done or what ought not to be done. In effect, humans are referred to as ‘rational animals’ on the presumption built on the thought that humans are rational, perhaps distinctively so, because we possess the means of reasoning to decide on moral actions whether right or wrong. Human beings are called rational if we think they reason well or have better judgement of situations.\textsuperscript{43} So, ‘rational’ and its complement ‘irrational’ are standardly used, both in ordinary speech and across a variety of disciplines, to describe persons, beliefs, actions, plans, policies, decisions, and a host of other things. We describe or evaluate actions, beliefs, or decisions as irrational when they are not consistent with reasoning about what ought to be done or in tune with what is right and good. For instance, through reasoning an action thought to be rational can be demonstrated to be inconsistent with what is right and good. It is therefore appropriate that what is rational should be in line with what is morally right and good.

It has been considered from previous paragraphs that, rationality is different from having just consistently justifying reasons in the performance of an act. On

\textsuperscript{42} Davidson, op cit., p.686

the assumption that, what is rational is an activity of reasoning to provide justifications in the performance of an action. I propose that the concept of rationality would be more appropriate if it is in tune with what is morally right and good in the performance of an act. Possibly, a rational action must lead to what is good, satisfy the interest of the agent and must as well be morally right. The study adopts the concept of rationality as the result of the process of reasoning consistently with justifications about beliefs to arrive at what is morally right, given that what is morally right is also good for the agent.

2.2 Rationality: Socratic Perspective

This section discusses rationality from the Socratic perspective. Our discussions will take into account the analysis of the Crito and Apology to provide the research a conception of Socratic rationality. In the Crito while Socrates was awaiting his death, his friend, Crito, visits him to convince him with reasons to escape from prison; yet, such reasons proved to be non-rational after cross examination. Socrates reasoned to demonstrate to Crito that, it will be morally wrong to escape from prison and also it will not be good. Even though Crito seems convinced with justifying reasons for Socrates to escape from prison, Crito’s reasons could not be sustained by rationality. Socrates demonstrated to Crito that what is rational is not just providing justifying reasons, but rather, providing

\[44\text{ Gomez-Lobo, op cit., p.116}\\ \text{45 Crito 48b9-54e2}\]
justifications for actions which are morally right and good. In what follows, the study shall establish the notion of Socratic rationality taking into account a discussion of Gomez-Lobo’s analysis of the *Crito* and *Apology*.

Socrates in the *Apology* is faced with hypothetical crossroads, and his options are either ‘to obey the Athenians, cease to philosophize, and live; or to obey the god Apollo, continue to philosophize’ and die. Gomez-Lobo asserts that Socrates chooses the second alternative, to obey the god Apollo and continue to philosophize and die. He believes Socrates is convinced that his knowledge of what death holds for him is inadequate, hence, Socrates disavows knowledge of death. He further asserts that, Socrates provides justifications to demonstrate that the rational thing to do is not to fear death. However, Socrates is at least sure of one thing, to do injustice and disobedience to one’s superior is bad and shameful.

That to do what’s unjust and to disobey one’s superior, be he god or man, is bad and shameful, that I do know. Hence, I shall never fear or flee from things of which I do not know whether they even happen to be good instead of from bad things which I know to be bad.

Socrates believes that choosing to do what is unjust and disobeying one’s superior is bad. He believes Apollo is his superior so he must obey Apollo, because it would be bad and wrong to disobey his superior. Gomez-Lobo asserts that, ‘Choosing to

46 Gomez-Lobo, op cit., p. 42
47 Ibid. p. 22
48 Ibid.
49 *Apology* 29b 6-9
50 Gomez-Lobo., op cit., p. 42
avoid death entails the certainty that death is bad, whereas choosing to avoid disobedience entails the certainty that failure to obey is bad’.  

The upshot of our discussions is that, Socrates’ decision to avoid disobedience to Apollo means that he is convinced such actions are morally wrong and bad. Whereas choosing to fear death is neither good nor bad, since he has no knowledge of death. Through reasoning, Socrates has been able to provide justifications as to why he must not disobey Apollo and avoid death. His justification is founded on the belief that disobedience is morally bad and shameful. Socrates provides reasons to demonstrate that the rational thing to do is not to fear death, which he does not know whether it happens to be good or bad, but rather avoid doing wrong.

Gomez-Lobo further argues that, Socrates is of the conviction that injustice and disobedience are not only morally shameful, ‘but also bad; i.e., they are things that harm us, just as an accident or sickness would harm us’. Socrates believes that an individual is made up of body and soul, and the soul is the most important part of the individual. He claims that, the same way people suffer from bodily sicknesses, wrong doing and injustice also affects the soul. For Socrates, lack of knowledge of the harm we cause ourselves is the cause of all wrongdoing. In effect, Socrates would obey Apollo and die because he has enough justifications to support his beliefs: moral reasons to avoid disobedience and non-moral reasons to avoid harm. Thus, Socratic rationality is characterized by Socrates’ ability to pursue

51 Ibid
52 Ibid
53 *Críco* 49a3-b
54 Gomez-Lobo, ibid.
moral actions with rational reasons, and with the prospect of achieving some good which is also morally right.

Yet, it seems Socratic rationality will not always lead to what may be described as ‘good’ for oneself. Socratic rationality requires that the best rational action should be morally right and best for oneself. Scholars like Young have argued that, Gomez-Lobo’s interpretation of Socratic rationality is centered on self-interest theorist which necessitates the need to choose what is best for oneself.\textsuperscript{55} Young argues that, Gomez-Lobo thinks that Socrates will only use rationality to arrive at what is in his best interest.\textsuperscript{56} He asserts, it is unclear whether ‘something is good for an agent if and only if it is morally right’, can be attributed to Socrates in the \textit{Crito} (or the \textit{Gorgias}) without significant qualifications.\textsuperscript{57} In the \textit{Crito} Socratic ‘goods’ seems to be different from the \textit{Gorgias}. The former seems to qualify goods that are not material (truth, courage, temperance and justice), while the latter seems to include physical goods (wealth and good health).\textsuperscript{58} The study agrees with Young when he asserts that ‘something is good for an agent if and only if it is morally right’, must be understood in a manner that allows physical properties such as wealth and beauty as goods which are sometimes good for

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p.233
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p.234
\textsuperscript{58} Young, op cit
people.\textsuperscript{59} Gomez-Lobo himself notes at one point that Socrates in \textit{Crito} 47d7-e5 apparently believes that ‘one’s physical condition can be reduced to such a level that one’s life is not worth living’.\textsuperscript{60} Following Gomez-Lobo’s claims, one’s physical condition may have an effect on the sort of quality life to live. Hence if indeed Gomez-Lobo’s view is correct, then, in situations where one must choose between what is right and that level of deplorable physical condition, what may be morally right would not seem to be good for oneself.\textsuperscript{61}

Further, Gomez-Lobo asserts that the encounter between Socrates and Crito where the latter provides reasons for Socrates to escape from prison confirms and identifies the central element in Socratic ethics which is rationality. According to Gomez-Lobo, Crito is aware that ‘Socrates will not leap at the offer to escape [and] he knows that Socrates must be persuaded’.\textsuperscript{62} He asserts that Crito attempts to convince Socrates to escape from prison, Socrates intends argues with rational reasons to show that it is an inconsistent and unimaginable pathway to take. Thus, through reasoning, Socrates is convinced that escaping from prison would be bad and morally shameful. ‘The upshot of these arguments is that Socrates’ execution would not only be bad. It would also be morally shameful, both for him and for his friends’.\textsuperscript{63} Gomez-Lobo believes that, Socrates is convinced that obedience to the laws of the state he has lived all his life is the surest way a rational agent should

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{60} See also \textit{Gorgias} 512a2-4

\textsuperscript{61} Young, ibid., p. 234

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p. 46

\textsuperscript{63} Gomez-Lobo, op cit., p.47
take. As cited in Gomez-Lobo, instead of arguing about what the laws require Socrates to do by staying in prison, Socrates asks Crito to imagine the laws

64 Scholars like Luban and Congleton have mistakenly interpreted Socrates’ disobedience to the Thirty Commissioners in the *Apology*. (Luban, David, (1989). “Difference Made Legal: The Court and Dr. King,” *Michigan Law Review* 87, no. 8, 29. And Ann Congleton, “Two Kinds of Lawlessness: Plato’s Crito,” *Political Theory* 2, no. 4 (November 1974): 433). While Athens was under the rule of the Thirty Tyrants, Socrates did not obey the Tyrants’ order—given to him and four others—to arrest the wealthy Leon of Salamis, reputedly a just democrat, for execution, in order to confiscate his large estate. Socrates refused and went home. The other four captured Leon, who was executed as a traitor to Athens. Socrates believed the action to arrest and execute Salamis was wrong so he disobeyed not because of the fear of death or of any punishment, but because he will not submit himself to any wrongful act. “On this occasion I was the only member of the executive who opposed your acting in any way unconstitutionally, and voted against the proposal; and although the public speakers were all ready to denounce and arrest me, and you were all urging them on at the top of your voices, I thought that it was my duty to face it out on the side of law and justice rather than support you, through fear of prison or death, in your wrong action”. *Apology* 32b5-c3.

Socrates continues by asserting that “…I gave all my attention to avoiding doing anything unjust or unholy. Powerful as it was, that government did not terrify me into doing a wrong action…” *Apology* 32d3-5. From the above, it is common to interpret the arguments Socrates presents in the *Apology* to demonstrate his commitment to civil disobedience as long as the agent is acting morally and is willing to accept punishment. However, such interpretation would be wrong and inconsistent.

In the *Crito*, Socrates makes it clear that his agreement is with Athenian Laws, not with the government or the court. In the *Apology*, when Socrates talks about ignoring an order of the Thirty Tyrants, Socrates would argue that he kept his agreement with Athenian law, while the tyrants violated it. As Woozley points out in Marchevsky, “While the initial appointment of the Thirty to the government of Athens following final defeat in the war had been legal enough, their administration became more and more arbitrary and tyrannical…It would have been impossible for Socrates to believe that in disobeying their order to bring in a man for summary execution he was disobeying the law”. (Marchevsky, Masha (2004) "Socrates Misinterpreted and Misapplied: An Analysis of the Constructed Contradiction between the *Apology* and the *Crito.*" *Macalester Journal of Philosophy*: Vol. 13: Iss. 1, Article 4. Available at:http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/philo/vol13/iss1/4)

In the context of Athenian history, knowing that the bloody reign of terror by the Thirty was so universally condemned, it is clear that his opposition to their order was not an action contrary to law, but rather a message that despite arbitrary orders, one must always obey the law. Ibid.
themselves delivering a defense of their injunction.\textsuperscript{65} Below let us consider the personified laws in a dialogue with Socrates as evinced by Gomez-Lobo:

[Laws]: Tell me, Socrates, what do you intend to do? By this action you are attempting, don’t you intend to destroy us, the laws, as far as you are concerned? Do you suppose a city can survive and not be subverted if the verdicts of its courts have no force and are nullified and destroyed by private individuals?\textsuperscript{66}

[Socrates]: What shall we reply to this and to similar, Crito? Anyone, but especially an orator, would have much to say in defense of this law we are destroying which requires that the verdicts of the courts remain in force.\textsuperscript{67}

In the above dialogue, Socrates categorically defends a position that it is a duty to obey the laws of Athens.\textsuperscript{68} It must however be noted that Socrates’ position is as a result of his interlocution with Crito, characterized by justifications to avoid acting morally wrongly. Even though Socrates is offered an opportunity to escape from prison, he nonetheless takes his time to argue out the best course of action, taking into account his decision to act morally rightly. Through the process of reasoning he is able to know the best course of action to be taken.

\textsuperscript{65} Gomez-Lobo, op cit., p.58
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., p. 58. cf. \textit{Crito} 50a 8-b5
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., cf. \textit{Crito} 50 b5-9. For a different interpretation of the dialogue cf. Gomez- Lobo (1994: 58). “The reasoning [the argument offered by Socrates] also requires generalized disobedience for the undesirable consequence actually to follow”. Here, the dialogue assumes a consequentialist point of view where Socrates weighs the consequences of Crito’s escape plan.
Again, Socrates is convinced about his decision to obey the laws of the state, even though he acknowledges his sentence to death was unjust. He will not follow Crito’s escape plan since it is bad and wrong to disobey the law. Socrates first makes an argument from agreement, which suggest that if citizens decide to live in a state, there is a tacit agreement of the citizen to follow the laws of the state.\(^{69}\) He then makes an argument that breaking the laws of the state would result in the destruction of the rule of law, because if everyone decides to break laws they perceive to be unjust, there would be total destruction of the rule of law in Athens.\(^{70}\) Gomez-Lobo believes that Socrates had the strongest rational reasons to debunk Crito’s proposal and do what is morally right by staying in prison.\(^{71}\)

Further, Socrates argues that the citizens must demonstrate the appropriate respect, by either persuading or does what the state orders. He claims that the citizen fails to show the appropriate respect when he fails to either obey or persuade the state.\(^{72}\) Gomez-Lobo claims that, for Socrates fairness demands that people obey the state from which they get benefits.\(^{73}\) He further notes that, Socrates’ aim is to convince Crito that obedience to the law is a duty that every moral citizen must follow. Hence, Socrates cannot disobey the law and commit the morally wrong act by escaping from prison, because reasoning has demonstrated to him that it is not

\(^{69}\) *Crito* 52b-53c  
\(^{70}\) *Crito* 50b  
\(^{71}\) Gomez-Lobo, Ibid  
\(^{73}\) *Crito* 50e-51c
the best course of action.\footnote{Gomez-Lobo. ibid., p.48} For Gomez-Lobo, Socrates seems to be doing one thing, which is providing justifications through reasoning to avoid wrong doing and acting morally rightly. Here, Socratic rationality is evident from the arguments of the personified Laws. Socrates consistently maintains a position that breaking the law is unjust and bad by providing rational reasons to support his argument.

In light of the foregoing discussions the research agrees with Taylor when he asserts, ‘… I retain some doubts as to whether the system so clearly expounded is as complete as it should be…’.\footnote{Taylor, C. C. W. (1997). [Review of the book Foundations of Socratic Ethics, by Alfonso Gomez-Lobo] The Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. 47, No. 187, pp. 257-260. Oxford University Press on behalf of the Scots Philosophical Association and the University of St. Andrews Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2956341 Accessed: 04-05-2016 17:34 UTC} Taylor suggests that Gomez-Lobo’s claims to principles constituting Socrates’ moral systems are not complete. In the \textit{Crito}, Socrates and Crito think it is undesirable for the soul to suffer injustice. The effect of injustice on the soul is compared to a chronically painful disease. Thus, when the soul is tainted with injustice, life is not worth living.\footnote{\textit{Crito} 47e3–5} Socrates claims that, ‘…the soul is more valuable than the body, and injustice is an even greater evil than chronic and debilitating disease.’\footnote{\textit{Crito} 47e6–7,47e7–48a2} He draws Crito’s attention to one thing, the condition of the soul after death. He further reminds Crito to consider whether they will be acting justly or unjustly,\footnote{\textit{Crito} 48c7-d8; 49b9–10; 49b10–11; 49e2–3; 49c4–6; Weiss, op cit., p.66} because if the soul suffers from injustice, the condition of the soul after death would not be pleasant. Yet, Gomez-Lobo’s...
exposition of Socratic rationality in the *Crito* seems to have ignored the condition of the soul after death, which has the effect of demonstrating Socrates’ commitment to the divine.

So far, clarification of Gomez-Lobo’s notion of Socratic rationality has revealed two major issues. First, Gomez-Lobo argues that Socrates had enough reasons to believe that disobedience is bad; if this is indeed his view, then, it means despite this knowledge Socrates still disobeyed the Athenians. Recall that Socrates in the *Apology* is faced with the options either, to obey the Athenians, cease to philosophize, and live; or to obey the god Apollo, continue to philosophize and die. As already noted, Gomez-Lobo believes Socrates will choose to obey Apollo and continue to philosophize, because disobedience is not only morally shameful but also bad. If our understanding of Gomez-Lobo is right, then, in each case, one must disobey and commit the morally shameful and bad act by either disobeying Apollo or the Athenians. Hence, Socrates still disobeyed the Athenians at the expense of his obedience to the god, Apollo.

Second, Gomez-Lobo believes that Socrates will obey the laws of Athens base on moral grounds: the prevention or the destruction of the rule of law. However, Socrates is quite convinced that his obedience to the law to stay in prison and die will not cause him harm. Later in the *Apology*, Socrates tells the jury that neither Meletus nor Anytus, his accusers would harm him. Socrates believes that his divine sign would not allow his accusers to harm him.  

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79 *Apology* 30e6-d5
Neither Meletus nor Anytus can do me any harm at all; they would not have the power, because I do not believe that the law of God permits a better man to be harmed by a worse. No doubt my accuser might put me to death or have me banished or deprived of civic rights; but even if he thinks, as he probably does (and others too, I dare say), that these are great calamities, I do not think so; I believe that it is far worse to do what he is doing now, trying to put a man to death unjustly.  

Socrates acknowledges in the extract above that, God will not allow a better man to be harmed by a worse. Even though it seems Socrates will suffer death, he nonetheless believes that it is worse to do what is bad and wrong than suffer wrong. It follows that, Socrates would not only have moral reasons to avoid disobedience to the laws, but also religious reasons to obey the laws of Athens. Thus, Socrates’ reason to obey the law and die is also dependent on his obedience to the god, Apollo. He is quite sure that neither death nor any form of penalty would harm him, because god will not allow that he is harmed.

Discussions of Gomez-Lobo’s explanation of Socratic rationality has demonstrated that, in the light of arguments from Crito that Socrates was sentenced unjustly and therefore he had to escape from prison. Socrates was able to reflect consistently about beliefs which are morally right, given that, what is morally right is also good for him. Socrates and Crito seems to have concluded after their interlocution of the proposal to escape from prison that, it would not be morally right and good for Socrates to escape. Yet, they could not have come to this
conclusion without the process of reasoning. Through reasoning Socrates is able to reflect about what is good, morally right, and what is best. It follows that, Socratic rationality is the state of reasoning correctly about ethical beliefs in order to arrive at morally right and good actions.

Similarly, Socratic rationality can be established in the *Euthyphro*. In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates implicitly leads Euthyphro on to demonstrate to him the inconsistencies in his reasoning through the elenchus. By pointing to Euthyphro the inconsistencies in his reasoning, Socrates is indirectly leading him to do the morally right action and avoid doing wrong. He asked Euthyphro,

Hence you also believe there is really war among the gods themselves, and quarrels and battles and other such things told by the poets and with which our temples are adorned by our good friends the painters?

In the extract above, Socrates attempts to draw Euthyphro’s attention to the fact that what he claims he is doing by prosecuting his father is founded on inconsistent beliefs which are not morally right. According to Socrates, stories given by poets such as Homer, lacks consistency in beliefs. For instance, in the extract we see Socrates questioning the belief that there is war and other negative things among the Greek gods. Yet, Euthyphro alludes to these negative beliefs about the gods to

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81 Instances of Socrates’ disagreement with the stories of the gods by the poets are evident in other Platonic dialogues, such as the *Ion*, *Republic* Books II, III, X, *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias*. Apart from the *Apology*, *Euthyphro* and *Crito*, which are taken from H. Tredennick, & H. Tarrant’s translations, all other dialogues are taken from, *Plato Complete Works* (John M. Cooper D. S. Hutchinson Eds.; G.M.A. Grube, rev. C.D.C. Reeve, Trans.), unless otherwise indicated.
justify what he claims to be holy and good. In explaining Euthyphro’s supposed ‘holy’ act to Socrates, Euthyphro compares his action of prosecuting his father to that of the myth about Zeus imprisoning his own father, Cronus, and Cronus’ earlier castration of his father, Ouranus. Euthyphro protests that people acknowledge that, ‘Zeus is the best and most just of the gods, and they admit that he imprisoned his own father because he had unjustly swallowed his sons; and the latter too had castrated his father for similar reasons’. Euthyphro’s comparison of his action to that of the gods is very surprising, as he seems to be appealing to actions of the gods which are not moral to justify his ‘holy’ act. Through reasoning Socrates is able to point to Euthyphro the weaknesses in his beliefs about the gods and the basis of his reasons for prosecuting his father, because they are not consistent.

In furtherance, though Socrates does not directly reply Euthyphro when he compares his action to that of the gods, he nonetheless implicitly points out that, ‘Could this be why I’m defending a prosecution, Euthyphro, that whenever somebody talks like this about the gods, I find it very difficult to accept?’ Socrates points out to Euthyphro that, the inconsistencies in actions of the gods cannot be used as standards for measuring the conduct of humans, in anyway such actions are not morally right and good. As cited in Brickhouse and Smith:

The logic of Euthyphro’s [comparison] argument, then, is elusive at best: is he proposing that his family members would not or should not be angry with

82 Euthyphro 5e-6a4
83 Euthyphro 6a7-9
84 Euthyphro 6e1-9
him if he imprisoned or castrated his father? Or is it, rather, that if they deplore what Euthyphro intends, so, too, should they deplore the actions of gods?\(^{85}\)

Euthyphro’s reason for prosecuting his father is inconsistent with the action he seeks to achieve. This leaves Socrates to question Euthyphro’s believed duty of prosecuting his father because, he might also get accused of family impiety.\(^{86}\) Euthyphro is comparing his action to Greek gods who are portrayed in popular myths as behaving in a way humans would term wrong, which may even attract penalties, such as the death penalty and so on.\(^{87}\) From Socrates’ perspective, if the gods can do unspeakable things to themselves, on what basis can Euthyphro who is a mortal judge some of their actions. Assuming Euthyphro approves that the actions of Ouranus, Cronus, and Zeus are not the sort that we should associate with gods, then Euthyphro cannot simply point to such gods and their actions as moral models for his own behaviour.\(^{88}\)

Socrates is able to provide justifications as to why Euthyphro’s believed prosecution of his own father may be wrong through the process of reasoning. Supposed Euthyphro’s prosecution is ‘holy’, then perhaps it must be consistent with what is good and morally right. Socratic rationality has shown that inconsistent beliefs that are not morally right can be exposed through reasoning to avoid doing wrong. Euthyphro’s reference to actions or beliefs of the gods as standards for his

\(^{85}\) Brickhouse and Smith, 2004, pp. 19-20  
\(^{86}\) *Euthyphro* 4e7–8, 9a1–b4, 15d4–8  
\(^{87}\) Brickhouse and Smith, 2004, p.19  
\(^{88}\) Ibid
actions must be consistent with what is morally right and good. Socratic scholars are likely to insinuate that Socrates rejects traditional religion. But they would be wrong. What Socrates rejects is the implication that gods can be immoral. Socrates’ implied position is that only morally good actions are motivated by gods.

CHAPTER THREE

89 Gocer, p.115
SOCRATES’ MORAL MOTIVATION

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I investigate Socrates’ moral motivation; that which drives Socrates to act morally rightly. On one hand, Socrates claims to be driven by the daimonion to live morally rightly. On the other hand, he claims to be driven by the best argument upon reflection. The investigation into Socrates’ moral motivation will begin with a clarification of the concept of moral motivation. The understanding of this concept is intended to guide the explanation of that which drives Socrates to act morally rightly. I further examine Socrates’ mission by taking into account references from Plato’s Apology and Xenophon’s Apology and Memorabilia, to offer an explanation to Socrates’ motivation for living morally rightly.

3.1 Moral Motivation

The focus of this section is to clarify the concept of moral motivation. Having established in the introductory chapter the notion of motivation,90 in this section, I offer a clarification of moral actions and non-moral actions.91

90 Motivation is a drive for an action or simply a driving force that influences an action. The notion of motivation as conceived shall be applied to moral actions.
91 Cf, pp.3-4
actions are those events where moral categories such as right or wrong may not be applied. For instance, wondering whether to wear a blue shirt or a red shirt. In a strict sense, moral categories or properties such as right or wrong may not be applied here. On the other hand, if wearing a blue shirt is against the safety of another, then moral categories such as right and wrong are considered.

A moral action can be explained as an act which is right or appropriate. For an action to be considered right or appropriate, it must accord with a moral principle or standard; a moral principle to protect the safety of people or to enhance the rights of people. For instance, ‘P’ may have the quality of being truthful. ‘P’ being truthful to ‘Q’ becomes a moral action if it is right or appropriate by virtue of its relation to a moral principle or standard, perhaps that which protects the safety and well-being of ‘Q’. So, telling a lie would be considered as a morally wrong action if it threatens or infringes upon the safety of people.

Moral actions are constituted by beliefs: beliefs about what ought to be done, how it ought to be done, beliefs about right and wrong, beliefs about what is valuable and worthless, beliefs about what enhances human interest or good, and beliefs about virtue and vice. With such beliefs, people are able to judge and evaluate moral actions. We can admit that some character traits are better than

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92 It seems clear that it is possible for non-moral actions to have moral consequences. Even though it can be argued that an action seizes to be non-moral if it has moral consequences, how we answer the distinction between non-moral and moral actions may depend on the results of human actions; since most of our actions are described in terms of what is right and wrong in a given society.

others, or we can judge some actions as good or wrong, because they either threaten or enhance human safety and well-being. On the contrary, people who fail to follow these beliefs or ideal standards, or the requirements of a community they belong to can be said to be immoral. What the immoral person does is considered morally wrong. So, an action is morally wrong if it fails to satisfy a moral requirement, say, what is generally considered to be good and right and protects the safety of people. The moral standards accepted to be good and right determine actions which are considered morally wrong. If our conception of what is moral is right, then moral motivation can be said to be a driving force for action which is generally accepted as good and right in virtue of what enhances human safety and well-being. But the question is: What drives an agent to act morally rightly?

Scholars have attempted to explain moral motivation by classifying it into internalists and externalists schools of thought. The views of these two schools of thought shall be examined to know what drives an agent to act morally rightly. The internalists school of thought regard moral motivation as deriving from rationality, where rationality involves beliefs that are justifiable through a method of reasoning to arrive at a good and sound judgment. The externalists school of thought also regard moral motivation as having external sanctions. External sanctions are

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94 According to Brink, the classification of theories of moral motivation into those that are internalist and those that are externalist began with W. D. Falk, however more recent discussion of the distinction revolves around Thomas Nagel’s earlier works.


factors outside moral considerations themselves. For instance, the driving force from a divine or supernatural order may cause an agent to act in a certain manner.

Mackie, who ascribes to the internalists school of thought, asserts that moral motivation springs from moral properties or moral categories. He maintains that it is these properties that move or drive an agent to act morally rightly, ‘because moral properties like rightness and goodness themselves motivate us…’ He explains that knowledge of moral properties like rightness and goodness is acquired through education. For instance he argues that, Plato thinks the philosopher-king by the education he has received and the knowledge acquired, will not need any other motivation to act morally rightly. And also, through reasoning the philosopher-king will gain knowledge of the ideals (Forms of the Good, Justice, Beauty and many others) to act morally rightly. If knowledge of moral properties is what motivates an action then, it means moral motivation is a capacity that must be acquired through reasoning and the application of such knowledge. Thus, for the internalists the source of moral motivation is derived from the method of reasoning with justifications about what is right and good. Following from Mackie’s explanations, it means that the motivational power of acting morally rightly is derived from knowledge through education. Thus, knowledge of what is right and good is enough motivation for acting morally rightly.

97 Cf. pp. 2-4
99 Mackie, Ibid., p. 24
100 Ibid
Nonetheless, I do not agree with Mackie’s view because, there can be cases where an agent’s knowledge of moral properties may not necessarily motivate him to act morally rightly. People may have knowledge of the right thing to do, yet they would end up doing what is wrong. Scholars like Pinkert think that, in such cases then the knowledge needed is not ‘intact’ to cause one to act.\footnote{Felix Pinkert, (2013). Internalism and Externalism [Power Point Slides]. Retrieved from http://www.felixpinkert.com/uploadfiles/EthicsMetaethics_MT2013_Week6.pdf. 7/2/2016} He explains that if people end up doing the wrong action, then it means they do not have the required knowledge needed to cause one to act morally rightly. But how does one acquire the knowledge required to cause one to act in an acceptable manner? Following from Pinkert’s claim, when people act morally rightly, the assumption is that they have the required knowledge to cause them to act. However, this may not entirely be the case because it is possible for people to act morally rightly without having the necessary knowledge to do so, and may even do it out of faint-heartedness. For example, a person may fail to retaliate an injustice meted out to him due to his lack of courage, but his inaction might be misinterpreted as morally right. When people act morally rightly they are sometimes expected to give reasons for their actions. Therefore, if we require that those who act morally rightly should explain or give reasons for their actions, then perhaps they may have an ulterior motive for acting morally rightly and not necessarily because they abound in knowledge to act morally rightly.

On the other hand, scholars like Nagel, Platts, Dancy, and Shafer-Landau offer explanations to the externalist view of moral motivation. For the externalist,
what drives an action is external to the agent. Externalists claim that what causes an agent to act morally rightly is outside the agent; the driving force of an action depend on factors external to the moral considerations themselves. 102 Brink asserts that, what is needed in the performance of an action is something different from rationality itself. 103 He appears to argue that, people can be motivated based on something different from having justifying reasons that are consistent with beliefs. 104

Further, Nagel in his explanation of the externalist view of moral motivation asserts that, ‘…the necessary motivation is not supplied by ethical principles and judgements themselves, and that an additional psychological sanction is required to motivate our compliance’. 105 According to Nagel, actions are not necessarily driven by knowledge of ethical principles and judgements. 106 He claims that, an additional psychological sanction is needed to motivate actions. But what exactly is Nagel referring to as ‘an additional psychological sanction’? In his explanation of Nagel’s claims, Dancy clarifies that motivation is provided by one’s belief. 107 According to Dancy, reference to an additional psychological sanction is perhaps a mere belief.

102 Brink, op cit., p. 42
104 Alvarez, op cit., p. 89
107 Ibid. p.1
Nagel’s reference to an additional psychological sanction appears to be outside or coming from outside of the agent, which can influence people to act in some particular ways. Perhaps, if an agents’ knowledge of ethical principles is not enough to motivate an action, then an additional psychological sanction cannot be from the agent, but from something outside the agent; maybe a mere belief or a divine injunction that can influence people’s mind to undertake certain actions. For example, some people hold on to certain beliefs that serve as driving force for acting morally rightly. Yet, to be caused by something different from ones’ knowledge of moral properties makes it very difficult for such actions to be explained. Such external sanctions usually rest on mere beliefs which are sometimes difficult to logically comprehend.

Discussions of the externalist and internalist view of moral motivation have shown that, what is fundamental to the two views is just a driving force, either ‘from the agent’ or ‘outside the agent’.  

108 For example, religious people are mostly motivated to act based on some beliefs. These beliefs are normally what drives them, and are sometimes difficult to be explained by rationality because the driving force ensues from ‘outside the agent’.  

109 Yet, rationality does not also entirely offer a conclusive account of all moral actions. In my view, both positions are plausible to drive one to act. However, it would be more plausible if the views of both the

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109 Ibid, pp.3-4
internalists and externalists are merged. It helps to resolve any challenge in understanding an agent’s motivation for acting morally rightly.

### 3.2 Socratic Mission

In this section, I investigate Socrates’ mission with the aim of unravelling that which drives Socrates to act morally rightly. This investigation will take into accounts textual analysis of the *Apology* and the *Memorabilia* to secure an explanation of Socrates’ driving force(s) for acting morally rightly, whether through the daimonion or rationality, or a combination of both.

According to Socrates, his mission is to lead the philosophic life, examining himself and others.\(^{110}\) He asserts, ‘God appointed me[Socrates], as I supposed and believed, to the duty of leading the philosophic life, examining myself and others.’\(^{111}\) The challenge is that it does not seem too clear how Socrates conceived of this mission to live morally rightly out of what happened between Chaerephon and the oracle of Apollo, or how Socrates was driven to lead the philosophic life,\(^{112}\) and what constitutes the philosophic life? To know the nature of Socrates’ mission, I offer a clarification of what happened between Socrates’ friend, Chaerephon, and the Pythia of Apollo.\(^{113}\) Chaerephon inquired from the Pythia, who was the wisest

\(^{110}\) Brickhouse, T. C., & Smith, N., 2004, p. 242

\(^{111}\) *Apology* 28e4-7

\(^{112}\) Brickhouse and Smith, Ibid

\(^{113}\) Apollo is believed to be the most authoritative source of divine word in Ancient Greece. See also Rudebusch, op cit., p.19
of men in Athens (Apology 20e9) and Apollo answered through the Pythia that there was none wiser than Socrates.\(^{114}\) However, Socrates acknowledges that he is worthless in wisdom (Apology 23b2-3), and admits that he does not possess wisdom (Apology 23a8).

Socrates further claims that since he does not possess wisdom (Apology 23b3-4), he has good reason to pursue wisdom (Apology 23b5-6). Thus, Socrates seems to be making two claims which are central to our understanding of his mission. First, he claims he does not possess wisdom, contrary to the claim by the Pythia of Apollo that, ‘Socrates is the wisest man in Athens’. Second, Socrates believes that since he does not acknowledge that he is wise, he has a mission to pursue wisdom. For him, the first step to knowledge was the recognition of his own ignorance. In what follows, I offer an explanation on what constitutes Socrates’ pursuit of wisdom.

The philosophic life is the pursuit of wisdom, so to practice philosophy is to devote oneself to the search of wisdom to act virtuously or morally rightly (Apology 28b8-c1). Through the search for wisdom, Socrates was also asking and finding basic answers to human life, the goal of life, how Athenians ought to live well, and also inquiring about the nature of their gods. He claims that ‘the greatest good for man is to discuss virtue...’\(^{115}\), while acknowledging that virtue is itself knowledge. He further argues that the goal of life is to be happy, hence, by acquiring knowledge to distinguish good actions from bad ones is to pursue virtue. For

\(^{114}\) Apology 21b2-5
\(^{115}\) Apology 38a3-7
Socrates, knowledge implies doing, so to have knowledge of what is good and right is to do that which is good and right, because injustice and wrong doing harms the most essential part of human happiness, which is the soul. But how did Socrates pursue wisdom?

According to Socrates, he took to the task of examining people by asking questions and seeking answers through the use of logical arguments or, a method referred to as the elenctic journey or dialectics. He claims he examined those reputed to be wise in Athens like the poets, politicians and craftsmen. He further asserts that, the crux of his examination of those believed to be wise only demonstrated to him that, he recognises his own ignorance, while those who did not know, did not know that they did not know (Apology 21c-22e).  

By examining those reputed to be wise, perhaps Socrates was seeking justifications to the wisdom they are reputed for, and also learn from them. To his dismay, they were neither able to provide justifications to the wisdom they were reputed for, nor knew that they did not know. The people he examined could not explain or understand the knowledge they avowed. Socrates is able to discover that what they claim to know is inconsistent with their beliefs. But how exactly did Socrates know that those reputed to be wise were not actually wise? Reasoning had demonstrated to him that they ought to be consistent with their beliefs, to establish that they have knowledge of what they are reputed for. But as principles of knowledge and wisdom have an idealistic character, the one in pursuit of

\[\text{Rudebusch, ibid., p.20}\]
knowledge or wisdom never claims to know or to have wisdom, but only to be pursuing or searching for wisdom.

From the foregoing, it becomes evident that Socrates was driven by rationality. Reasoning had demonstrated to him the best action to be taken, and he had also discovered that the greatest good for man is to discuss virtue (Apology 38a3). He asserts, ‘the greatest good for man is to discuss virtue every day…, for the unexamined life is not worth living’. Socrates had come to unravel that virtue or moral excellence is the greatest good for man. However, he could not have known that moral excellence is the greatest good for man without rationality. Through reasoning and examining basic questions about human life, Socrates is able to provide justifications about the best way to live. For Socrates, virtuous living derives from critical reasoning. By examining those reputed to be wise about the goal of life, about what is good, what is morally right, and what is best, perhaps he pursued the greatest good by reasoning correctly about the questions of life. Conceivably by seeking wisdom through reasoning, he also acquired wisdom to live an excellent moral life.

On the other hand, Socrates also believes that his mission to pursue wisdom to act morally rightly is driven by the daimonion, he thinks that he was divinely inspired. He asserts, ‘I shall call upon the god at Delphi as witness to the existence and nature of my wisdom’. According to Socrates, the nature of his wisdom to live morally rightly is as a result of the god at Delphi, Apollo. Through Apollo’s

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117 Apology 38a-b
118 Apology 20e6-21a1
testimony to Chaerephon, Socrates seems quite convinced that the god has given him a duty to live an excellent moral life. He further asserts:

This duty [the duty to lead the philosophic life] I have accepted, as I said, in obedience to God’s commands given in oracles and dreams and in every way that any other divine dispensation has ever impressed a duty upon man.119

Socrates claims that through dreams and other ways the divine could assign duties to men, he accepted the duty to lead the philosophic life. Socrates experienced divination which made him think he has a duty to live a morally right life through divine revelations, visions and dreams. He seems to have experienced inductive and inspired divination.120 Inductive divination is grounded on interpretations and meanings of divinely inspired signs, such as streaks of lightning and birds in flight, which the Greek gods themselves chose people who really hear such messages and understands them.121 While inspired divination was communicated through priests and priestesses whose minds were believed to have been seized directly by the gods in times of divination.122 For instance, ‘…where the oracle responded, for example, with a riddle, the answer was deduced…’ 123

I argue that Socrates’ inspiration to lead the philosophic life is because of the testimony from Apollo. Recall, the genesis of his pursuit of wisdom was as a

119 Euthyphro 33c1-7  
120 Bonnecherre., ibid., p.149  
121 Finley, op cit., p.50. cf. Bonnecherre, ibid., 150  
123 Bonnecherre, ibid., p. 149
result of Apollo’s testimony given to Chaerephon. Through the testimony, Socrates experienced both inspired and inductive divination. He was able to discover his mission to pursue wisdom, thereby living a morally excellent life out of a mere testimony. Had he not received the testimony, probably he would not have engaged in reasoning in order to know the best course action and live morally rightly. The testimony from Apollo through a message to Chaerephon is what drives him at first, and inspires him to embark on a mission; a mission to pursue wisdom by examining those reputed to be wise, and asking basic questions about human life in general.\textsuperscript{124} From the above, Socrates’ conviction to live morally rightly was because of his obedience to god to practice philosophy. In the \textit{Apology}, Socrates is credited with many references to the divine,\textsuperscript{125} references which seems to suggest that his life in Athens is divinely ordained to cause people to live the examined life. He claims in the \textit{Apology}:

\begin{quote}
God has attached me to this city to perform the office of such a fly; and all day long I never cease to settle here, there, and everywhere, rousing, persuading, reproving every one of you.\textsuperscript{126}
\end{quote}

Further, had Socrates lacked respect for Apollo, probably he would have treated Apollo’s testimony to Chaerephon trivially.\textsuperscript{127} According to Xenophon, Socrates believed that not all things are within the grasp of the human mind, yet, the gods have granted humans mind to grasp things within its limits (\textit{Memorabilia})

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Apology} 28e5-30b3
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Euthyphro} 33c1-7
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Apology} 31a
\textsuperscript{127} Rudebusch, ibid.
He believes that what the gods have granted us to do by help of learning we must learn, and find out from the gods by divination what is hidden from mortals (Memorabilia I. I. 8-10). That is why he will say, ‘I still go about seeking and searching in obedience to the divine command’ (Apology 23b5-6), because he believes he is driven by god to live an excellent moral life.

Many have also speculated how Socrates could possibly derive such a complex injunction from Apollo’s testimony. Hackforth believes there is no command from Apollo’s testimony that could cause Socrates to believe he is on a mission on behalf of Apollo. However, Brickhouse and Smith argue that Socrates’ mission from Apollo’s oracle is mysterious, and they also believe that Socrates attached seriousness to the testimony from Apollo. They assert that the oracle’s response must be considered as the primary mission of Socrates’ duty on behalf of Apollo. According to them, the testimony from Apollo is what actually drives Socrates to pursue wisdom thereby living an excellent moral life.

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128 Cf. Apology 23a8
129 See also in Plato’s Euthyphro as cited by Rudebusch, “What the gods give to us is evident: we possess no good that they did not give” (Euthyphro 14e11–15a2). Cf. Rudebusch, p. 173
130 God herein used refers to a supernatural divine being, in this case the Greek god Apollo, who is believed to be very powerful when it comes to prophesies.
133 Ibid., p.666
I agree with Brickhouse and Smith when they assert that, even though Socrates’ mission may appear mysterious it is actually what led him in the pursuit of wisdom. In Socrates’ deployment of his mission, Brickhouse and Smith emphasize that, it is through Socrates’ use of critical thinking that he could conceive such injunction from Apollo. It is evident from the claims of Brickhouse and Smith that, Socrates’ use of critical thinking to examine himself and others is because he is caused by Apollo to do so, not because he loves to do so (Apology 21b7, 31a). That is why Socrates would say, with pain and fear, he still goes about the god’s business (Apology 21e3-6), because he believes his mission is caused by Apollo.

Further, Socrates seems to be making a significant point on how he is directed to go about his mission. Socrates asserts, ‘This duty I have accepted, as I said, in obedience to God’s commands given in oracles and dreams and in every way that any other divine dispensation has ever impressed a duty upon man’ (Apology 33c2-4). To effectively appreciate Socrates’ assertion, it is necessary to know the ways by which divine manifestations assign duties to men in Greek society. Divine manifestations play a crucial part of Greek theology:

…epiphanies play a crucial role within Greek ‘theology’ in that they provide what I have elsewhere defined as ‘cognitive reliability’...epiphanies are

fluid and extraordinary events that have the potential to surprise, confuse, and unsettle their recipients...

From the quotation we can explain that, divination in Greek culture sort of provides basis for people to act. It is far from an unreasonable, irrational outgrowth in Greek thought which seems to provide ‘rational’ foundation for people to act. For instance, the very fact of Apollo’s testimony, is enough to make it clear to Socrates that the god has imposed a duty upon him. According to Bonnechere, divine testimony is a way the divine grants mortal men the power of reason and attain knowledge. ‘The gods agreed to communicate some of their absolute knowledge with men, and divination was simply one privileged means of enabling this’. Divination or oracular responses in Greek society are necessary in clarifying specific point, present, future, or past events in the lives of people who seek such manifestations in order to attain knowledge. Socrates’ disposition in living the examined life is grounded on his oracular response from Apollo. His testimony from Apollo is not also alien to Ancient Greece divination, it marks him out as a man assigned with a mission.

137 Ibid
138 Platt, ibid.
Consequently, Socrates conceives of his mission as a full-time profession which eventually leads to his death. As Socrates embarks on his mission to live the philosophic life, examining himself and others, he realizes he is becoming detested because of the god’s business. He asserts, ‘I realized with distress and alarm that I was making myself unpopular, but I felt compelled to put the god’s business first’ (Apology 21e3-6). Remarkably, with fear, distress, and pain, Socrates felt obligated to live the philosophic life. He believes his task by Apollo is like that of a military general commanding him. He must obey Apollo like he did when he was commanded a position at Potidaea, Amphipolis and Delium. Socrates asserts:

This being so, it would be shocking inconsistency on my part, gentlemen, if when the officers whom you chose to command me assigned me my position at Potidaea and Amphipolis and Delium, I remained at my post like anyone else and faced death, and yet afterwards, when God appointed me, as I supposed and believed, to the duty of leading the philosophic life, examining myself and others, if I were through the fear of death or of any other danger to desert my post.  

Socrates believes his task is to spend his life in philosophy, examining himself and others. It seems Socrates is quite aware that this profession is likely to result in his death (Apology 21e3-6). However, he is quite convinced that the god who spoke at Delphi cannot be lying, so that, to cease to philosophize is to disobey the god which is impossible for him (Apology 37e6–7).

Socrates further asserts that, it does not seem human for him to neglect his own affairs and endures the humiliation of allowing his family to be neglected, as

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139 Apology 28d9-29a1
he goes around urging people on to pursue goodness (*Apology* 31b-c). He provides two reasons why he must live as he does, examining himself and the lives of others:

This is the hardest thing to make some of you believe. For if I say that to keep quiet is impossible because it is disobedient to the god, you will think I am being sarcastic and will not believe me. If I say that the greatest good for a human being is to reason every day about human excellence and the other things that you hear me examining in conversation, and that the unexamined life is not worth living for a human being, you will believe me still less. It is as I say, gentlemen, but it is not easy to make you believe it.  

Socrates believes that the examined life is the greatest good and any other life apart from it is worse than death. He seems to have understood perfectly what the oracular response meant, and it has aroused him to pursue the god’s testimony. As Socrates continues to explain to the jury how he has lived the examined life, he introduces a salient point in his reference to the Greek heroes which seems to suggest that he epitomizes the character of a typical Greek hero. Though the typical Greek hero must demonstrate excellence in character during wars, Ackah notes that, ‘the intellectual aspect of heroism became dominant in Classical Period, when culture almost came to mean intellectual culture’. Ackah claims that a Greek hero exemplify certain traits including, physical excellence, mental excellence, and an extraordinary capacity and strength for selfless and relentless pursuit of

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140 Rudebusch, ibid., p.22. See also *Apology* 37e4–38a8

acknowledged principles.\textsuperscript{142} Socrates in the \textit{Apology} believes that he has demonstrated all these traits.\textsuperscript{143}

According to Socrates, ‘where a man has once taken up his stand [like Achilles and Hector in the \textit{Iliad}], either because it seems best to him or in obedience to his orders, there I [Socrates] believe he is bound to remain and face the danger’ (\textit{Apology} 28d5-8). In the face of death, Socrates is guided by \textit{aidos},\textsuperscript{144} shame, to continue in his quest to live the examined life. He feels obliged to obey Apollo despite imminent death to pursue acknowledged principles to live morally rightly. Socrates’ friend and follower, Xenophon, believes Socrates was favoured with high level of wisdom. Xenophon in his epithet to Socrates claims that, Socrates was good in character and made virtue his aim.\textsuperscript{145}

It is also worth noting that, as Socrates continues to defend his mission to the jury he notices some level of humour in the court as he makes his submissions. Evidently Socrates asserts, to say it bluntly, ‘even if it appears comical’ god has attached him to Athens in rousing, persuading, and reproving them (\textit{Apology} 30e2-31a). This seems to confirm Platt’s assertion that, ‘… for mortals to experience an epiphany may be a sign of special status, a privilege granted to mythical heroes and

\begin{itemize}
\item[Ibid.p.142]
\item[Recall Socrates served in the military.]
\item[Aidos, is often translated ‘shame’, was that feeling of reverence or shame which restrains men from wrong. For instance, it was aidos that made Hector, the greatest of hero of the Trojans to feel obliged to out and battle Achilles to death, knowing the odds are not in his favor. See, Ackah, op cit., p.142]
\item[Xenophon \textit{Apology} 33-34. Xenophon’s claims seem to advocate that, Socrates was blessed with such powerful use of the mind.]
\end{itemize}
those who are particularly pious, blessed, or desired by the gods.\textsuperscript{146} Perhaps, the jury felt Socrates was boastful of his divine signs and made humour out of Socrates’ submissions. However, Socrates was quite sure of his divine manifestations and did his best to explain his mission to the jury. He believes no greater good ever came to pass in Athens than his service to the god, Apollo (Apology 30a5–7). That notwithstanding, Socrates was able to realise his mission through the process of reasoning, he had to reflect every day about human excellence, examining himself and others (Apology 38a2–6). Evidently, the daimonion and rationality are both essential to Socrates’ mission. In chapter four, I examine the functions of Socrates’ rationality and daimonion.

\textbf{CHAPTER FOUR}

\textbf{SOCRATIC DAIMONION AND RATIONALITY}

\textsuperscript{146} Platt, ibid., 493
4.0 Introduction

In chapter four, the research examines the role of Socrates’ daimonion, otherwise referred to as the divine sign. Socrates claims to have a divine sign which turns him away from doing the wrong thing. Scholars like Gomez-Lobo, Vlastos, and Brickhouse and Smith argue that Socrates’ daimonion is inadequate to influence his moral actions. Yet, Socrates submits to the daimonion’s oppositions. In spite of Socrates’ rational abilities, it appears that the daimonion has overriding influence anytime its presence is experienced by Socrates. The problem then is squaring: What is the function of the daimonion? To attempt this question, the study undertakes to do a historical examination of the role of the daimonion. Basically, the focus is the examination of the relationship between Socratic rationality and daimonion, with the intent to determine which of them is more influential as far as Socrates’ moral action is concerned.

4.1 Daimonion in Ancient Greek Culture

Daimonion in Greek culture is a divine or supernatural power which is made manifest through oracular responses, dreams, prayers, voices and warning signs. The ways through which people experience the daimonion in Ancient Greece is referred to as divination. Divination in Greek tradition was not merely to reveal future outcomes; however, they bear clarification on the future, present, or past of
people and of the society. In Ancient Greece the god, Apollo, was without contest the god of divination. Homer in 850BC and Aristotle in about 384BC have acknowledged the inspiration of the daimonion in the lives of well-known individuals in Greek society.

The Greek epic poem *Iliad*, is believed by many scholars including Finley to be an authoritative source of Greek culture and tradition. In the *Iliad*, Homer presents countless scenes where divine power determines the course of men. For instance, at the beginning of Book II of the *Iliad*, Agamemnon is visited by a dream sent by Zeus to inspire him to wage war against the Trojans. When Agamemnon was released from sleep, the divine voice was still with him, hence, he carried the instructions offered to him in the dream. Agamemnon’s encounter with the power of Zeus supposes a conviction that the divine could cause him to wage war through a dream. Similarly, in Book V of the *Iliad*, Diomedes is also endowed with supernatural power and strength from the goddess, Athena, as he kills Pandarus and

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147 Bonnecherre, op cit., p.145. See also *Iliad* 1.69–70
148 Bonnecher, ibid., p.146
149 The period Homer lived remains a mystery, however, Herodotus ‘estimates that Homer lived no more than 400 years before his own time, which would place him at around 850 BCE or later’. See, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer 6/3/2016
wounds Aeneas.\textsuperscript{152} In Diomedes’ encounter with Athena, he requests for strength from the goddess. It is evident from Diomedes’ experience that men could ask for a sign from a deity and get it.\textsuperscript{153} The daimonion’s intervention in the Homeric world presents a culture of the Greeks where the supernatural influences people through a voice, dream and prayer.\textsuperscript{154} Through divination the power or inspiration of the divine was experienced.

According to Cicero, Pythagoras claimed to have ‘personally met with the gods and learned from them…’.\textsuperscript{155} From Cicero’s account, Mikalson supposes that Pythagoras might have been inspired by words from Apollo himself, and ‘that they

\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Iliad}, Book V
\textsuperscript{155} Mikalson, J. D. (2010). Divination and Its Range of Influence. In \textit{Greek Popular Religion In Greek Philosophy}. (pp.110-39). Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.111. Zeno and Stoic followers seemingly accepted all forms of divination. However, Epicurus and Xenophanes rejected divination and divine inspiration in human life. Xenophanes of Colophon lived around 6\textsuperscript{th} and early 5\textsuperscript{th} centuries BCE. As a poet, he is most commonly remembered for his critiques of general Athenian popular religion, particularly conceptions of the divine that are a byproduct of the human propensity to anthropomorphize deities. Xenophanes believed that humans have been severely misled by this tendency, he seemed intent on leading his audience toward a perspective on religion that is based more on rationality and less on traditionally held beliefs. See http://www.iep.utm.edu/xenoph/6/3/2016. Epicurus is also one major philosopher who lived during the Hellenistic period, the three centuries following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E. (and of Aristotle in 322 B.C.E.). Epicurus taught that the point of all human actions is to gain pleasure. He was a skeptic who believed that gods or divine intervention did not have any influence in human life. Ibid.
[gods] gave him the laws for his idiosyncratic religious community’.\footnote{Ibid, cf, \url{http://philoctetes.free.fr/parmenidesunicode.htm} 3/27/2017. It is generally acknowledged that Parmenides also claimed to have been inspired by a divine sign, during which he was revealed with the truth as he wrote his work \textit{On Nature}. Parmenides claims that a goddess taught him about nature of reality and assures him of the certainty of her revelations.} 156 It is not exactly clear how Athena met with Pythagoras and gave him the laws, however, for Pythagoras to claim he met the goddess demonstrates a belief in the supernatural. Pythagoras believed himself to be caused by Athena. For a goddess to teach Pythagoras suggests some form of tradition that divine power could stir and influence the minds of its agents.\footnote{The chorus in Euripides’ \textit{Bacchae} also laments on the strength of divine power which sometimes revives mortals with some difficulty. The chorus taunts divine operation in the lives of mortals by cunningly concealing things, as a way of causing mortals to search for the will of their deities. Though in the \textit{Bacchae} the chorus seems dissatisfied with the intervention of the \textit{daimonion}, it nonetheless helps to appreciate the ways in which \textit{daimonion} was perceived in Ancient Greece. Euripides, (1850). \textit{The Tragedies of Euripides} (T. A. Buckley, Trans.) London. Henry G. Bohn. \textit{Bacchae (E.Ba.894)}\footnote{Similarly, Herodotus, Greek author of the first great narrative of the History of the Greco-Persian Wars, makes us understand that the Greeks popularly acclaimed divine inspiration. Herodotus in the \textit{Histories} reports of a popular story by the Argives, Aeginetans, and Athenians. It is believed that only one man survived from a war between the Aeginetans and Athenians, and this man was able to return safely to Attica, his home. According to the account by Herodotus, the Athenians claimed that it was a \textit{daimonion} which assisted the man to return home safely. See, Herodotus, (1920). \textit{The Histories}. (A. D. Godley, Trans.). Cambridge. Harvard University Press. Hdt.5.87} From the forgoing, the Ancient Greeks believed in the

Investigations into Greek tradition reveal many instances where men are influenced by the divine or gods to undertake certain actions.\footnote{On the other hand, Isocrates a Greek rhetorician who is believed to have made contribution in education and rhetoric wrote in his \textit{To Demonicus}, a representation of a mysterious agency and} Socrates is a vivid example of such men who received such manifestations through dreams and voices to act morally rightly.\footnote{On the other hand, Isocrates a Greek rhetorician who is believed to have made contribution in education and rhetoric wrote in his \textit{To Demonicus}, a representation of a mysterious agency and}
influences of the daimonion through oracles, voices and warning signs,\textsuperscript{160} which are some of the ways gods inspired or communicated to man on what to do.\textsuperscript{161} The function of the daimonion is to influence its agents to act in a certain manner.

4.2 Socratic Daimonion as a Source of Knowledge

Socratic scholars have offered various, often conflicting, interpretations of the daimonion. These range from those who give the daimonion a rationalistic gloss,\textsuperscript{162} to those who gloss it as a supernatural force (Reeve 2000).\textsuperscript{163} For instance, Vlastos\textsuperscript{164} thinks that the daimonion complements rationality, while others like Brickhouse and Smith\textsuperscript{165} think that it trumps discursive reason. In this section, Xenophon’s and Plato’s accounts of Socrates’ daimonion are investigated to unravel the role of the daimonion as a source of knowledge for Socrates. I shall argue that the daimonion is a credible source of knowledge for Socrates, considering Apollo’s oracle given to Chaerephon, and in the ethical orientation of his philosophy. In view of Socrates’ personal experience of the daimonion since

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{160} Bonnecherre, Op cit., p.147
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{163} Reeve 2000: 24-39
\textsuperscript{164} Vlastos 1996: 144-166
\textsuperscript{165} Brickhouse and Smith 2000: 24-39
\end{flushleft}
childhood, it becomes almost impossible to neglect the knowledge he gets from the daimonion as far as Socratic ethics is concerned.

Both Plato and Xenophon agree that Socrates was prosecuted because of the knowledge he was receiving from the daimonion. Plato claims that, it is through a kind of wisdom that has resulted in Socrates’ prosecution for which he attributes to the god, Apollo (Apology 20d7-8). Xenophon also believes that, Socrates had become detested as a result of the knowledge from the daimonion, and for this reason, the accusers sought to prosecute him. Perhaps, Socrates’ accusers believed he was receiving too much knowledge, which made him stand out as highly favoured by the god, Apollo. The daimonion gave Socrates knowledge of the best course of action in order to live morally rightly. But how is this possible that the divine gives Socrates knowledge to live an excellent moral life?

Socrates’ ability to know the right course from the admonitions of the daimonion can be understood from the perspective of the form of learning referred to as operant conditioning in behavioural psychology. Coon asserts, ‘In operant conditioning, learning is based on the consequences of responding.’ Operant conditioning is a form of learning that attempts to modify behaviour through the effects of responding to situations. Learning becomes a function of an obvious

166 Other translations use ‘deity’ or daimonion in place of Apollo, my choice of Apollo I believe presents a credible reference and take out any form of ambiguity or vagueness.

change in behaviour. So, when there is an overt change in situations, the effect is that, people’s behaviour also changes. Socrates’ experiences with the daimonion is a form of learning that informs Socrates’ subsequent thinking and behaviour. The daimonion only opposes Socrates when he is about to do wrong or seems to be off-track in his moral actions or decisions, the reverse, or perhaps the absence of the opposition of the daimonion makes Socrates believes that his actions are good. Through the oppositions of the daimonion, Socrates’ behaviour of acting morally wrongly is changed.

Further we note that, Xenophon marvels how the Athenian jury could prosecute Socrates for behaving contrary to sound religion (Memorabilia 1. 18-20), because Socrates demonstrated his commitment in doing things right under the knowledge of the daimonion.\(^{168}\) Xenophon recounts Socrates’ action when he [Socrates] was on the counsel which sought to kill Thrasylus and Erasinides and their colleagues unjustly (Memorabilia 1. 15-18). It is reported that Socrates refused in spite of popular rancour, because he was mindful of his daimonion. To be mindful of his daimonion to live morally rightly gives the impression that, if his action (refusing to be part of the killing of Thrasylus and Erasinides unjustly in spite of popular rancour) was not good, he would have received a divine sign cautioning him. However, since he did not receive the admonitions of his divine sign, then he is on the right course. The absence of the divine sign sort of propels Socrates to act in a certain way.

\(^{168}\) McPherran 1996:137, has argued that ‘the god’ responsible for Socrates’ daimonion was Apollo of Delphi.
Again, the daimonion gives Socrates knowledge of the right course of action to live morally rightly. According to Socrates, the daimonion gives him signs to cause him to lead the philosophic life. The divine sign revealed to Socrates warnings which helps him to follow the right course. He believes that Apollo has caused him to lead the philosophic life, and he trusts that the knowledge he has about Apollo cannot be mistaken (*Apology* 21b7), hence his confidence in Apollo is unshaken.\(^{169}\)

Socrates said… that the deity gave him a sign. Many of his companions were counselled by him to do this or not to do that in accordance with the warnings of the deity: and those who followed his advice prospered, and those who rejected it had cause for regret. … his counsel was in accordance with divine revelation. …Another way he had of dealing with intimate friends was this: if there was no room for doubt, he advised them to act as they thought best; but if the consequences could not be foreseen, he sent them to the oracle to inquire whether the thing ought to be done. …If any man thinks that these matters are wholly within the grasp of the human mind and nothing in them is beyond our reason, that man, he said, is irrational. But it is no less irrational to seek the guidance of heaven in matters which men are permitted by the gods to decide for themselves by study. … what the gods have granted us to do by help of learning, we must learn; what is hidden from mortals we should try to find out from the gods by divination: for to him that is in their grace the gods grant a sign. (*Memorabilia* 1.1.3-10)

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There are two major points the extract seems to emphasize. First, that the daimonion is vital as far as Socrates’ moral actions are concerned. Second, Socrates’ friends are believed to have also benefitted from the knowledge of the daimonion (Memorabilia 1.3.3.2). If Socrates sought counsel from Apollo in his actions, then perhaps his commitment and trust in Apollo as a source of knowledge cannot be doubted. For Socrates, the divine sign from Apollo was a sort of guide to live morally rightly. (Memorabilia 1.4.8.11). Recall from the extract Socrates was warned by the divine sign to do one thing or other. Probably had Socrates not received the divine signs in acting morally rightly, he would not have acted exceptionally to attract admiration from most contemporary scholars.

On the second point, Socrates’ companions also benefitted from the knowledge of the daimonion. Socrates’ friends are believed to be saved by the daimonion to avoid calamity based on its warnings. The daimonion seems to be playing an active role in helping Socrates and his friends pursue that which would be good for them. Daimonion provides Socrates with cautions to be given to his friends and those who disobeyed had cause for regret:

Many of his companions were counselled by him to do this or not to do that in accordance with the warnings of the deity: and those who followed his advice prospered, and those who rejected it had cause for regret.172

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170 Xenophon was one of those who benefited from the counsel of the Delphic Oracle when he attempted a military expedition (Anabasis 3.1.4–8 & 11–12).

171 Bonnechere, op cit., p.114

172 Memorabilia I. I. 4-5
From the extract above, Socrates’ companions seem to have flourished from the knowledge of the daimonion to foresee future outcomes. Here, his friends are ‘daimonically’ propelled to save themselves and avoid any calamity. The underlying motivation for Socrates’ companions to obey the daimonion is to avoid harm. Two things are clear from the daimonion. First, the daimonion through its warnings is able to prevent calamity, by revealing future happenings to Socrates and his companions. Second, the oppositions of the daimonion, if obeyed, is good for the agent because it will lead to some good results. The fact that Socrates believes his friends who obeyed the warnings of the daimonion benefitted, suggests that they must have had a long experience of the daimonion which has proven to be a reliable source of knowledge. The daimonion typifies Socrates as a man who was deeply inspired by the god, Apollo, to live a good life by accepting the counsel of the divine and also reasoning to know the best course of action when necessary (Memorabilia 1. 3. 3-5).

4.3 Socratic daimonion a paragon of Socratic rationality?

In this section, I shall attempt to answer the question: Is Socratic daimonion a paragon of Socratic rationality? The goal of this section is to discover whether Socrates’ daimonion is a part of Socratic rationality or not. I argue that Socratic rationality and daimonion are closely connected. To do this, the works of scholars discoursing on Socrates’ daimonion and its relation to the notion of Socratic rationality shall be investigated.
Socratic scholars like Kraut, Gocer, Vlastos and others have expressed different views on why Socrates was convicted. For example, McPherran and Kraut believe that Socrates was convicted because of his divine sign and his conception of the Athenian gods. Nevertheless, recall Socrates could not have conceived of the Athenian gods without the process of reasoning.\(^\text{173}\) Reasoning has demonstrated to him that beliefs about the Athenian gods must be consistent with what is morally right and good, since the Athenians themselves claim that the gods are just. McPherran affirms this when he claims that, Socrates’ view of the Greek gods is that of moral gods, a position I agree with.\(^\text{174}\) He believes Socrates’ propensity to conceive of the Greek gods as moral gods was a threat to Greek religious cult.

Similarly, Kraut also argues that Socrates’ experiences with the daimonion provide a satisfactory account of Socrates’ trial and conviction. He claims Socrates was mainly convicted based on the claim that he had admonitions from the daimonion,\(^\text{175}\) which appears to be placing him above every Athenian.\(^\text{176}\) ‘Once the divine sign is viewed as part of a pattern of arrogance, Socrates begins to look

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\(^{173}\) Cf. pp. 20-34. We note from chapter two that Socrates’ conception of the Athenian gods is in sharp contrast to the general Athenian beliefs. Socrates seems to have a conception that the gods are by nature good. From Socrates’ encounter with Euthyphro, it becomes evident that he [Socrates] could not have conceived of the gods as univocally good without the use of reasoning and pointing out the inconsistencies in the stories of the gods to Euthyphro. If Euthyphro claims that the gods are just and good, then only good acts should proceed from them. Not the kind of negative and bad actions Euthyphro associates with the gods. Thus, reasoning consistently about beliefs of the gods in order to arrive at what is good and moral, could not have been possible without the use of Socratic rationality.

\(^{174}\) Brickhouse and Smith, 2004:22

\(^{175}\) Kraut, ibid. p. 16

\(^{176}\) Ibid.
very dangerous indeed. He does not even attempt to hide his sense of superiority…” Socrates’ claim to divine guidance looks like a proclamation of the insignificance of Athenian religious practices and beliefs, and the superiority of one individual over the political decisions of the whole city which led to his death.

Socrates’ daimonion and rationality are closely connected in the sense that, they both lead Socrates into acting morally rightly. Socrates’ experience with the daimonion had proven that, his obedience had led him to the right course of action, and that alternative course would have led him to the wrong choice. The views of both Kraut and McPherran suggest that the daimonion presented Socrates as superior due to the signs he was receiving which assisted him to live exceptionally. His commitment to rationality has also shown from previous section that he possesses the capacity to reflect on acting morally rightly. After considerable exposure to his divine sign, Socrates came to the reasonable conclusion that he was receiving divine guidance in making right choices. The daimonion and rationality has demonstrated to him that they both lead him to the right course of action.

Further, it seems Socrates’ obedience to the daimonion is a blend of the use of rationality in order to know the right course. Reasoning had proven to him that obedience to the daimonion’s oppositions is the right thing to do. Kraut explains

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177 Ibid. p.17
178 Kraut, op cit. p. 16
179 Ibid
180 Ibid
that Socrates’ obedience to the divine sign does not mean Socrates was abandoning reasoning and critical thinking.

In obeying the sign, he [Socrates] was not abandoning his critical faculties, because the divine sign had stood up to a lengthy critical examination: reason itself had shown him that the strange signal from the god had always led to wise choices.\textsuperscript{181}

Socrates had justifications to trust the admonitions of the divine sign and follow it course. Kraut further explains that, justifications that led Socrates into obeying the daimonion only prove that his long experience with the daimonion only leads to what is good and what is morally right. Due to Socrates’ constant experience with the daimonion, Kraut asserts that ‘he [Socrates] thinks that obedience to god takes precedence over a merely human and therefore highly fallible document.’\textsuperscript{182}

Also, Gocer in his assessment of the traditional and religious practice in Athens argues that, Socrates rationalizes morality and religious piety. He thinks that Socrates’ insistence on philosophical reason for both morality and religious piety puts him in a position to be rationalizing vulgar theology.\textsuperscript{183} He thinks Socrates believes in the efficacy of his daimonion, and that Socrates’ daimonion supposed threat to Athenian religion is uncertain.\textsuperscript{184} Gocer claims that Socrates’ reference to the daimonion refers to a general supernatural messenger between gods

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid
\textsuperscript{182} Kraut, op cit., p. 21
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid. p.116
\textsuperscript{184} Gocer, op cit., p. 126
and man such that it conception does not seem an invention.\textsuperscript{185} Gocer further claims that, Athenian religion considers divine revelations such as dreams, signs, trances as ways the divine communicates with mortals.\textsuperscript{186} He further asserts that, Socrates being an Athenian believed in divine revelation, with a unique special sign from god, a daimonion, which Socrates relies for taking actions.\textsuperscript{187} Gocer’s claims also imply that, the daimonion assists Socrates in acting morally rightly. He claims that Socrates believes that living morally good life is the essence of the examined life, and he considers the philosophical life very essential in living the moral life.\textsuperscript{188} He further asserts that, Socrates’ philosophical arguments is his service and duty to the god.\textsuperscript{189} Gocer seems to asserts that with the use of rationality Socrates is able to accomplish his philosophical duty.

However, Vlastos is of a different view. Vlastos believes that Socrates’ daimonion does not influence Socrates’ actions and decision making.\textsuperscript{190} In response, McPherran posits that, Socrates sometimes acts on some moral axioms such as, ‘wrongdoing is bad and shameful’, ‘the law of god does not allow a better man to be harmed by a worse’ and yet, Socrates does not provide arguments for such claims.\textsuperscript{191} It can be inferred from McPherran’s response that, perhaps it seems

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid. p. 125  \\
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid. p. 124  \\
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid  \\
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., pp. 123-4  \\
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid; \textit{Apology} 28d-e  \\
\textsuperscript{190} Vlastos 1994:18-29  \\
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid
\end{flushright}
Socrates’ principles are based on some assumptions which consolidate his belief in the Greek gods, that they know the course of men.

Scholarly discussions of the daimonion and rationality demonstrates that they are closely connected. However, it will be a mistake to assume that the daimonion is an architype of Socratic rationality. Socrates’ daimonion is not part of rationality, in any way it is a supernatural power or god which assists Socrates towards the right course of action.192

4.4 Socratic daimonion: a moral conscience?

Plato’s account of Socrates’ daimonion has led scholars to regard Socrates’ daimonion as a ‘voice’ or ‘sign’ which had very little or no role to play as far as Socrates’ moral actions are concerned. For instance, Gomez-Lobo thinks the daimonion does not serve as Socrates’ moral conscience.193 In other words, he thinks Socrates’ daimonion does not motivate Socrates in the performance of moral actions. In this section, I clarify that Socrates’ daimonion had impact on Socrates’ moral sense of doing the right thing.

Gomez-Lobo argues that, the daimonion does not assist Socrates in undertaking moral actions.194 He claims that Socrates’ rationality is what drives

192 Cf. p.2
193 Gomez-Lobo, op cit., p.50
194 Ibid. p. 52-3
him in his moral actions. In his explanation of Socrates’ daimonion, Gomez-Lobo asserts that Socrates’ reference to the daimonion refers to a mere sign which does not influence his moral actions. He holds the view that, oracles and divinations are not enough to discern if what Socrates is about to do is right or wrong.\textsuperscript{195}

Similarly, Gregory Vlastos in his article, ‘Socratic Piety’ defends the position that rationality is the final arbiter of truth as far as Socrates’ moral actions are concerned.\textsuperscript{196} Vlastos acknowledges that Socrates harmonizes the knowledge he gets from his daimonion; ‘he adhered uncompromisingly to the authority of reason, brooking no rival source of knowledge on any matter whatever’.\textsuperscript{197} Vlastos believes Socrates could not have harmonized the knowledge of his daimonion in his moral actions if he had not subjected it to rationality and hence, Socrates has rationality as the only source of knowledge.\textsuperscript{198} Vlastos further claims that Socrates’ dreams and divine instigations cannot be sources of knowledge.\textsuperscript{199} He agrees that the daimonion has its source from the divine. However, he maintains that the daimonion does not trump over reason.\textsuperscript{200} So in Vlastos’ interpretation of Socrates’ piety, there is no conflict between critical reason and daimonion, as only by the use of reason can Socrates determine the meaning of signs and extract truth from them.\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Vlastos, 1996, p.144
\textsuperscript{197} Vlastos, ibid., p. 150
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., p. 152
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., p. 150
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., p. 151
\textsuperscript{201} Vlastos, op cit., pp. 151-2
On the contrary, I establish that Gomez-Lobo’s and Vlastos’ claims cannot be entirely true. For example, Vlastos believes that the daimonion assists Socrates with some knowledge through dreams and oracular responses, while also disputing that the daimonion cannot be a source of knowledge. His claims are founded on the belief that, what Socrates claims to be receiving from the daimonion can only be known and acted on through the process of reasoning. Yet, he acknowledges that the daimonion is not a source of knowledge for Socrates. I argue that perhaps Vlastos is contradicted by his claims about Socrates’ daimonion. How is it possible that the daimonion is not a source of knowledge and yet, Socrates harmonizes the knowledge he gets from the daimonion? In anyway, there is knowledge received from the daimonion. He further asserts that the daimonion complements rationality.202 For the daimonion to complement rationality implies that the daimonion makes complete or perfect Socrates’ adherence to rationality. Perhaps without the complement of the daimonion, Socrates’ rationality cannot be properly effective.

Gomez-Lobo is also mistaken to think that rationality is the sole foundation for Socrates’ moral actions. As Socrates puts up his defence in court, he asserts, ‘The reason for this [Socrates’ life] is what you have often heard me say before many occasions: that I am subject to a divine or supernatural experience...’ 203 The very fact of attributing his sign to the divine is enough to infer that, it is resulting from a supernatural providence or god which is trustworthy in nature for Socrates

202 Vlastos 1996: 144-166
203 Apology 31c7-d1
(Apology 31d1-4). Gomez-Lobo at some point notes that, the meaning of daimonion connotes a ‘god’.\textsuperscript{204} It is therefore difficult to accept that, any person believed to be subject to a supernatural experience does not regard divinations in determining the rightness or wrongness of some actions. It is through divinations and oracles that Socrates believed himself to be subject to a supernatural experience.

Socrates is quite sure that, the oppositions of the daimonion are good and he is positive that they are true. It is fair to regard the oppositions from the daimonion as sound.\textsuperscript{205} Socrates is confident through divine signs, such as dreams and oracular responses to live morally rightly. The extent of his trust in Apollo’s guidance through the daimonion is revealed when he faced death after his trial. Recall he was killed because of his trust in the admonitions he received from the daimonion which made him unpopular to attract legal action against him.\textsuperscript{206} As might be expected, Socrates himself asserts that his daimonion is quite unique. In Plato’s Apology, Socrates says that his daimonion in earlier times occurred frequently and even in very small matters if he was going to act ‘not rightly’ (Apology 40a4–7).

Socrates’ daimonion is exceptional, in that, it causes him to act morally rightly. In Greek tradition, the divine sign could influence people to act in a way that others could consider morally wrong; however, in Socrates’ view, it is more like a personal experience he claims to have been receiving from Apollo with the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{204} Ibid., p.49
\item \textsuperscript{205} McPherran, 1996, p. 178
\item \textsuperscript{206} Mikalson. op cit., pp.114-5
\end{itemize}
command to persuade the Athenians to live an excellent moral life. Socrates acclaims at Republic 496c2-4 how he has been gifted by the daimonion in attaining the status of a philosopher and insisted that only him or a few have experienced his divine sign. Socrates’ daimonion is unique to Socrates because it influences his sense of reasoning, causing him to act morally right. The sort of divine manifestations which he experienced through dreams and oracular response are not different from the Athenian practice of divination and daimonion.

Vlastos and Gomez-Lobo cite Socrates’ claim that says, he is ‘persuaded by nothing in me except the proposition which appears to be the best when I reason about it’, as their foundation to argue that rationality is the moral conscience of Socrates. In other words, they believe that Socrates’ daimonion does not influence his moral actions. I argue that, Vlastos’ own translation of the passage in the Crito 46b does not help his argument. The passage which appears to be the only evidence Vlastos offers in supporting his argument is as follows: ‘…for the first time, but always, I am the sort of man who is persuaded by nothing in me except the proposition which appears to me to be the best when I reason about it’. I offer two reasons why this passage does not accord with Vlastos’ reductionistic argument for Socrates’ daimonion.

First, Socrates asserts that he is persuaded by nothing in him other than the best argument on reflection. The phrase, nothing in him, may implies ‘things that come from him’. It is possible that perhaps the knowledge he gets from his daimonion are things which are not from him or in him. The passage does not

207 Ibid
clearly support Vlastos’ claim that Socrates’ rationality trumps over the daimonion. Similarly, in the translation of Tredennick and Tarrant the passage does not seem convincing that rationality trumps over Socrates’ daimonion. The translation reads as follows: ‘…it’s always been my nature never to accept advice from my friends except the argument that seems best on reflection’. Socrates emphatically asserts that he does not accept advice from *his friends*, the reference for this claim is his *friends or colleagues* who may be blinded by emotions and pity rather than pursuing what is right, irrespective of the pain and displeasure it may bring.

Second, the other conjunct that says he is persuaded by the *arguments that seems best on reflection*; again, this does not seem to suggest that rationality is the only arbiter of truth for Socrates. Irwin notes that the elenchus is used to test claims of other people’s beliefs and not Socrates’ own beliefs. What Socrates reflects about are arguments, however what the daimonion offers Socrates are not arguments. The daimonion rather offers him guidance through its oppositions in order to lead Socrates towards the best course of action. From Socrates’ assertion, the clearest meaning could be that he is only persuaded by the best arguments when it comes to advice from his friends; there is no claim that says he does not accept the guidance and knowledge of the daimonion.

Mark McPherran disagrees with Vlastos’ interpretation of Socrates’ daimonion. He believes Socrates’ daimonion trumps over rationality. While McPherran maintains that Socrates’ use of the elenchus is important in matters

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208 Irwin, op cit., p. 38

which demand that he exercises that method, he also maintains that, when it is impossible to resort to reason, Socrates accepts the guidance of the daimonion.\textsuperscript{210} McPherran admits that there are some beliefs that come from sources that are extrarational which helps Socrates in his moral actions.\textsuperscript{211} Though Vlastos regards daimonion, poetry, and dreams as one and performing the same function, McPherran separates them. According to McPherran the daimonion is a supernatural factor different from dreams and has practical certainty.\textsuperscript{212} For this reason, he believes Vlastos’ claim that reason trumps rationality is mistaken.

According to McPherran, rationality’s role in interpreting the daimonion is very slim. He claims the presence of the daimonion in Socrates moral life is vital, a position I agree. For instance, in the \textit{Phaedrus} the divine sign came to Socrates when he had reasoned wrongly about love, he could not rationally argue consistently if the divine had not opposed him.\textsuperscript{213} Thus, rationality is actually constraint when it comes to interpreting the right course than the daimonion. McPherran believes that rationality and daimonion support each other in the quest for knowledge.\textsuperscript{214}

Perhaps scholarly distinction between the function of the Socratic conception of rationality and the daimonion is mistaken. The only dialogue where it is believed that Socrates demonstrated his uncompromising adherence to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{210} Ibid., pp. 347-8
\item \textsuperscript{211} Ibid., p. 348
\item \textsuperscript{212} Ibid., p. 361
\item \textsuperscript{213} \textit{Phaedrus} 242b8-243d3
\item \textsuperscript{214} McPherran, 1991, p. 372
\end{itemize}
rationality may have been wrongly understood. The dialogue in question, the *Crito*, in which Socrates examined Crito’s escape logos to justify the fact that escaping from prison will not be morally good and just seems to have been misinterpreted, to demonstrate Socrates’ utmost commitment to rationality. I offer a different interpretation to the literature. Recall Socrates subjected Crito’s escape logos to elenctic examination. The outcome of the examination shows that Socrates will not be acting morally rightly and justly should he escape from prison. According to Tarrant, Socrates will achieve nothing by escaping from prison: ‘the stigma of a law-breaker will attach to him wherever he goes, it will make a mockery of his past moral views, and it will not help his sons.’\(^{215}\)

Socrates’ last remarks in the *Crito* make it difficult to accept as true that there could be distinction between the function of the Socratic daimonion and rationality. Socrates offers an argument for the condition of his soul after death. He claims that escaping from prison will put him in a difficult position to defend himself in the netherworld (*Crito* 54b2-d1). In Furtherance, Socrates’ final words to Crito, ‘Then give it up, Crito, and let us follow this course, since God leads the way’\(^{216}\) suggest that throughout his reasoning perhaps the daimonion had been at the background. To end with the expression ‘God leads the way’ does not put Socrates in a position as reflecting his commitment to rationality, while considering as irrelevant the function of the daimonion which since childhood opposed Socrates in even small things, when he is about to act morally wrongly. Rather it seems

\(^{215}\) Tredennick, H. and Tarrant, H., op cit., p. 90

\(^{216}\) *Crito* 54e1-2
anytime Socrates reflect to arrive at the best course of action, the influences of the daimonion is phenomenal, such that its silence reflects the quality of the act.

4.5 Socratic Knowledge as a Motivation

In this section, I argue that Socrates’ knowledge of the right thing is a drive which influences him to live morally rightly. Socrates believes that right moral actions depend on one’s knowledge of what is right. There are two key sources of knowledge for Socrates, these are rationality and daimonion. Knowledge of what is morally right from these two sources are necessary and sufficient motivations for Socrates to act morally rightly.

Socrates believes that man is endowed with the faculty of reasoning (Memorabilia 4. 7. 3-6), yet, not all things are within the grasp of the mental faculty (Memorabilia 4. 3. 2-6). According to Socrates, Athenians and all Greeks have been given the faculty of reasoning (Memorabilia 1.4.14–15; cf. Symposium 4.47–8). He further claims that man is gifted with the faculty of reasoning so as to reflect to know the best course of action. Perhaps, by virtue of reasoning, Socrates believed that the gods have endowed man with senses adapted for the perception of every kind, so that there is nothing good and right that man cannot be enjoyed. Through reasoning people are able to think about the objects of their actions, and they come to know what advantage and good every kind of action can yield. By this knowledge, they are able to appreciate the good and avoid morally wrong and bad actions. (Memorabilia 4. 3. 9-12). By means of reasoning, people are able to pursue
that which is good and best upon reflection. For Socrates, knowing what is right and good through reasoning is a drive to cause one to act morally rightly.

The daimonion possesses ‘extrarational’ knowledge of what cannot be grasped within the limits of the human faculty, which serves as a driving force for Socrates to act morally rightly. Socrates asserts that, somethings are beyond the limits of the human faculty and can only be known by the help of the daimonion. According to Socrates, humans are powerless to see future happenings, hence, it is only through the daimonion that such knowledge can be attained. Socrates asserts that, incapable of man to see what is expedient for the future, the gods lend us their aid, revealing the issues by help of divine signs to inquirers, and teaching them how to obtain the best results (Memorabilia 4. 4. 12-14). The daimonion has the function to see future happenings. With this function, it is equally possible for the daimonion to possess knowledge of moral actions yet to be undertaken in future. By the help of the daimonion, those to whom the daimonion have influence on are able to obtain best results in their actions.

Further, knowledge obtained from the daimonion implies a manifestation of a drive to live morally rightly. According to Xenophon, divine sign is a mark that the receiver is special and unique, an indication that he is honoured (Xenophon, Apology 14) and dear to the gods to see that which cannot be comprehended by the faculty of reasoning (Memorabilia 4.3.12). He further claims that, the best men are the dearest to the gods,\textsuperscript{217} because they are guided by the daimonion through

\textsuperscript{217} Memorabilia 3. 9. 10-13
divination and wisdom to act morally rightly (Memorabilia 4. 7.10. 3). So, to know the right course is a sign that god has caused Socrates to live morally rightly.

Socrates demonstrated his motivation to live morally rightly and face death. He remarks in Plato’s Apology that he thinks his death will be a better one, not a calamity: ‘I have good grounds for thinking this, because my accustomed sign could not have failed to oppose me if what I was doing had not been sure to bring some good result.’ This is based on the conviction that his divine sign could not have failed to oppose him if the consequences will not result in a desirable one. For Socrates, the underlying motivation for opting to die is because his death would be better insofar as his conviction remains in the daimonion.

4.6 Socratic Divine Motivation

Our discussions so far have revealed an ongoing debate about Socrates’ moral motivations: the daimonion and rationality. I argue in this section that Socrates’ divine motivation is more influential as far as Socrates’ moral actions are concerned. Socrates claims he has been guiltless of wrong-doing all his life; and when he attempted to consider the finest preparation for a defence the daimonion opposed him. In his preparation to appear before the Athenian jury, Socrates reflected on conducting himself in a manner that would promote his acquittal, however, Socrates claims his divine sign opposed him in that regard.

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218 Apology 40c1-3
219 Ibid
Do you not observe that the Athenian courts have often been carried away by an eloquent speech and have condemned innocent men to death, and often on the other hand the guilty have been acquitted either because their plea aroused compassion or because their speech was witty?... I have tried twice already to meditate on my defence, but my divine sign interposes.\textsuperscript{220}

Socrates notes that often the jury is aroused by making compassionate defence by the respondent in order to secure his or her acquittal. However, he is of the conviction that making such pitiful remarks is not honourable. How could Socrates possibly know that making pitiful and witty speech in court was not right? Socrates had reason about his defence; in the extract, he seems to have considered acting in line with the common Athenian practice in court by resorting to witty and pitiful appeals to secure his acquittal. Yet, Socrates’ daimonion opposed him when he reflected on his defence and wanted to defend himself by making pitiful appeals.\textsuperscript{221} Perhaps left for human reasoning Socrates would have conducted himself in a wrong way by making pitiful appeals to secure his acquittal which would have been wrong and shameful.\textsuperscript{222} The oppositions from the daimonion have demonstrated that reasoning could not lead Socrates to the best course of action.

Similarly, Socrates asserts that, ‘does it seem human that I should have neglected my own affairs and endured the humiliation of allowing my family to be neglected…’.\textsuperscript{223} What does Socrates mean when he asserts ‘does it seem

\textsuperscript{220} Xenophon \textit{Apology} 4-7
\textsuperscript{221} See also Brickhouse and Smith, \textit{Socrates}, op cit. p. 235
\textsuperscript{222} \textit{Apology} 35a1-c7
\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Apology} 31b1-3
human…”? Or is it what probably many people would consider rational? People normally would not neglect their family and allow themselves to face humiliation at the expense of another thing. So for one to neglect his or her family is usually against common societal practice, which may be considered wrong by society. Possibly, Socrates’ thinking is that, it would be good for him to consider the finest argument by reasoning correctly about what would secure his acquittal. Though an ardent devotee to rationality, Socrates’ divine sign would frequently oppose him should he attempt to do wrong. Recall, Socrates’ daimonion only opposes Socrates when he is about to act morally wrongly. In other words, the opposition from his daimonion only demonstrated to him that, what he was reflecting about would not be morally right and good. He asserts, ‘Do not deem it right for me, men of Athens, that I should act towards you in a way that I do not consider to be good or just or pious, especially, by Zeus’.

Further, as we have noticed in the assertion, ‘…I have tried twice already to meditate on my defence, but my divine sign interposes’, it is quite surprising that Socrates after being opposed by the daimonion, reflected again on defending himself in line with the common Athenian run. After being sure of his daimonion’s opposition, Socrates reiterated in his defence that he will tell the jury the truth. Possibly to draw the jury’s attention to the fact that if it were about arguments to secure his acquittal, he would not have hesitated. He claims, ‘It is not a lack of arguments that has caused my condemnation, … I have refused to address you in

224 Apology 35d1-3
225 Xenophon Apology 4-7
226 Apology 17b5-9,18a7, 20d4,22b6,28a3,28d5,31e1,34b4
the way which would give you most pleasure.227 It is clear that the daimonion assisted Socrates while he was considering the type of argument to present in court. The daimonion opposed Socrates twice in order that he would be able to pursue that which is morally right and good. That is why he would constantly say he would tell the truth.

It becomes obvious in Plato’s Apology that, Socrates believes his jail sentence is a blessing, because his daimonion does not oppose him in the course of his defence. Socrates being aware of having said the truth believes his daimonion would not fail him.228 Socrates asserts:

In the past the prophetic voice to which I have become accustomed has always been my constant companion, opposing me even in quite trivial things if I was going to take the wrong course. …yet neither when I left home this morning, nor when I was taking my place here in the court, nor at any point in any part of my speech, did the divine sign oppose me. In other discussions it has often checked me in the middle of a sentence; but this time it has never opposed me in any part of this business in anything that I have said or done…. I suspect that this thing that has happened to me is a blessing….229

Socrates’ daimonion is active as far as his moral actions are concerned. He is of the conviction that his accustomed sign could not have failed to oppose him, if he was on the verge of doing wrong which will not result in something good.

227 Apology 38d6-9
228 Apology 31d, 40a, 40c.
229 Apology 40a-c3
According to Smith, when Socrates says something wonderful has happened to him in *Apology* 40a-c after his sentence to death, it seems that Socrates had considered everything that had occurred during his trial and was convinced of his daimonion.\(^{230}\) In cases where Socrates’ daimonion and rationality seems to be influencing his actions, the daimonion has the overriding motivating force as far as his moral actions are concerned. Socrates’ long experience of the daimonion has never been shown to be unreliable.\(^{231}\) He believes the gods know the course of man and are superiors (*Apology* 20e3 & 33c4-7). By adhering to the oppositions of the daimonion, Socrates is doing the best thing (*Apology* 29b). He has adequate reasons understanding the daimonion and obeying it in his moral actions.

### 4.7 Anticipated Objection

Perhaps, Vlastos would argue that, it is mistaken to claim that Socratic daimonion is as fundamental as Socratic rationality. On the assumption that Socrates believes in two separate sources of knowledge: rationality and daimonion.\(^{232}\) For Vlastos, the latter is void of rational ‘know how’ because it is only the deployment of the former that daimonion’s oppositions make sense.\(^{233}\)

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\(^{231}\) Ibid. See also *Apology* 40a2-c3 and Xenophon *Apology* 13.

\(^{232}\) Vlastos, 1996, pp. 149-50

\(^{233}\) Ibid., p. 152
4.8 Responses to the Objection

For Vlastos’ ‘supposed’ contentions, recall, Vlastos believes the daimonion is a rational ‘inspirer’ which only assist Socrates in his deployment of rationality. But if the daimonion is a rational ‘inspirer’ which helps Socrates to reflect in his deployment of rationality, then perhaps it has an important role to play in Socrates’ moral actions. On the contrary, it is the inspiration from the daimonion which makes Socrates standout in his moral actions. Combining the influences of the daimonion and his own ability of reasoning about the best course of action makes his actions seem infallible, morally right and good.

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated Socrates’ motivation for acting morally rightly. Discussions of the subject matter reveal that scholars like Gomez-Lobo and Vlastos have characterized Socratic ethics as centrally driven by rationality. This study has provided a critique of that position. In light of the literature, I have attempted to clarify the following fundamental issues: Socrates’ conception of rationality and the function of the Socratic daimonion. The study has looked at the dual role of rationality and the daimonion in Socratic ethics, and has found that they complement each other as far as this is possible, but in situations of conflict the daimonion has overriding motivating force.

The Crito shows that Socratic ethical rationality is the outcome of reasoning by providing justifications for what the best course of action is. The Crito and
*Euthyphro* demonstrate Socrates’ ability to examine correctly ethical beliefs in order to arrive at what is morally right and good. Discussions of the Socratic mission revealed that Socrates’ motivation for acting morally rightly is from two primary sources: the divine and rationality. It has been argued that Socratic daimonion is a valuable aid in arriving at a moral action by opposing Socrates when he is about to act morally wrongly.\(^{234}\) Socrates’ long experience of the daimonion has never been shown to be unreliable as far as his moral actions are concerned.\(^{235}\)

I have also argued that perhaps scholars may be wrong about drawing a categorical distinction between the Socratic daimonion and rationality. In the *Crito*, for example, when Socrates had concluded his argument that it is morally wrong to escape from prison by saying that ‘God leads the way’ (*Crito* 54e1-2). I have argued that this concluding remark has implication for the role of the daimonion in Socrates’ ethical motivation. If God leads the way of sound ethical arguments, then the Socratic daimonion, which is a divine guide to right ethical conduct, cannot be different from this. If so, the daimonion can be taken to facilitate, rather than merely endorsing the outcome of Socratic ethical reasoning or occasionally intervening to oppose potentially wrong actions. Otherwise, it makes no sense for a purely rational argument to end with the invocation of God as leading the way of the argument.


\(^{235}\) Ibid. See also *Apology* 40a2-e3 and Xenophon *Apology* 13.
Unfortunately, there is a growing understanding of ethics and religion which seeks to concentrate on ethical theories to the detriment of giving persuasive account of divine motivations. Truly such theories tend to underrate the value of divine or religious motivations and assume that there cannot be divine motivations in the performance of moral actions. Such traditions and religious motivations should not be devalued in ethical theories, because they present true reflections of individuals, societies and cultures.

REFERENCES

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


