

Intro to Philosophy – Drexler – Philosophy as a Way of Life
Mod3 Activity #1: Defending Myself
“You May Say.../But I Say in Response...”
(Due Sept 18)



The Background:

Over the last couple of weeks, we been reading models of “apologies” to try to discern a structure that we could use when constructing our own Student Apologies.

The clearest structure comes around in Plato’s Apology, after the later charges have been tossed aside by Socrates with talk of horses and flute-playing: he moves into a “You May Say/But I Say in Response” structure, right? (“you may ask am I not ashamed, but I say...”, “You may wonder why I won’t beg, but I say...”, “You may ask if I will stop philosophizing, but I say...”, etc.). That same structure shows up in MLK’s Letter from Birmingham Jail (You may ask why I am an “outsider” in Birmingham, but I say...”, “you may insist that we “wait!”/but I say...”, “you may ask why we don’t seek negotiation instead of protest, but I say...” “You may ask why we advocate breaking some laws but not others, And I say...”, “ You may call me an extremist, but I say...”). The same structure shows up in deChristopher’s Statement at Sentencing (“You may say that you need to punish me because I caused financial loss, but I say...”, “You may say that you need to punish me to stop me and to deter others, but I say,” ...etc. etc. etc.).

The point of honing in on this structure was not just to see a point/counterpoint model of argument, of course, but more importantly to see that the “But I Say”s in Apologies are never just refuting a claim with any old counterpoint (like facts or data, say). Rather, these defenses are always grounded in values and worldview, which the writers explicitly bring into the service of their defense (in other words, that an apology is not just a defense, but a reflection on one’s life-actions as part of a Way of Life: a interconnected epistemology/metaphysics/ethics....at least ideally.)

The In-Class Workshop

In our in-class workshop, you took your Module2 Activity on “The Accusations Against Me” and tried to frame 4 or so specific “charges” into that “You may Say/Ask” structure.

Now, at Home (due Sept 18)

Work on your “But I Say in Response” sections for each imagined challenge. Remember that your points of defense should be explained in terms of worldviews and values.

You may say/Ask: _____

But I say: _____

You may say/Ask: _____

But I say: _____

You may say/Ask: _____

But I say: _____

You may say/Ask: _____

But I say: _____