

Review

S's remaining problem: how does he know what constitutes the good life, and what constitutes right action? Is true belief enough?

I. Two Socratic Pictures of Knowledge of Virtue

A) Craft Analogy

Implications: If K of V is like craft knowledge, then virtue can be taught (is implied by the claim that a craftsman can offer an account of what he makes).

B) Elenchus

Implications: this method does not presume that one knows at the start what one is seeking to know, for example, what virtue is. So, if there are none who know what virtue is, we can still seek to discover what virtue is by using this method.

II. Meno's problem: paradox of knowledge acquisition

A) Plato's answer: the slave story. Theory of recollection (does not save CA, but does save Elenchos).

III. Next big problem: if Knowledge is Necessary for Virtue (KNV), and the craft analogy fails, is elenchos enough to secure the possibility of virtue?

A) Some efforts to address this problem in the Meno.

---

I. Two Socratic Pictures of Knowledge of Virtue

A) Craft Analogy: Only a craftsman has the kind of knowledge which permits him to offer an account (to a novice) of how the product of his specialty is generated. This knowledge is procedural...it means he can specify the steps to follow in making the product (and this applies both to crafts which produce artifacts, and crafts, like chess-playing, which do not). What distinguishes the craftsman from the pseudo-craftsman: the craftsman can justify his claim to knowledge by showing a novice how to make the product....thus, he can offer an account of the making of what he claims to have knowledge about. The pseudo craftsman (the poet, for example) lacks this capacity.

Implications: If K of V is like craft knowledge, then virtue can be taught (is implied by the claim that a craftsman can offer an account of what he makes).

B)Elenchus: this method does not presume that one knows at the start what one is seeking to know, for example, what virtue is. You begin with a generally accepted rule or principle (being moral is making the gods happy), attempt to see either if other accepted beliefs (the gods are not all made happy by the same things) are consistent with that principle, or known facts (Zeus and Hera disagreed about whether X was guilty of disobeying the gods) are consistent with it, and then make modifications to the principle which reflect these other beliefs/facts (being moral has nothing to do with making the gods happy).

Implications: If there are none who know what virtue is, we can still seek to discover what virtue is by using this method.

## II. Meno's problem: paradox of knowledge acquisition

A) Plato's answer: the slave story. Theory of recollection (does not save CA, but does save Elenchos).

Next big problem: if Knowledge is Necessary for Virtue (KNV), and the craft analogy fails, is elenchos enough to secure the possibility of virtue?

Meno's problem: how can we know that we have found the right definition of virtue, using the elenchos method, if we are not already able to distinguish that definition from everything else (the paradox of knowledge acquisition)? Plato answers this question with the slave story. This answer, in effect, rejects the Craft Analogy in favor of the elenchos method, and explains how the elenchos method is consistent with the paradox of knowledge. Note: the theory of recollection will not save the Craft Analogy, since the craftsman must know both what the final product is, and how to make it, in order to claim craft knowledge. But we do not know what the end product of virtuous action is (Socrates suspects it is a form of well-being of persons, but he does not know that he is right about this, as he admits in the Phaedo), nor do we know how to make it happen (although we have what may be true beliefs about this). So, if knowledge of virtue is craft knowledge, the theory of recollection will not save it. Why? Bec it is not enough for craft knowledge that you have knowledge buried somewhere inside your head, inaccessible to your awareness. It must be directly available to you (bec the craftsman is noted for being able to offer an account of what he makes, thereby proving that he has knowledge of it).

III. Big problem: if KNV, and the craft analogy fails, is elenchos enough to secure the possibility of virtue?

The argument for a) virtue must be a kind of wisdom

b) true opinion is as useful for eudaimonia as knowledge

1. Virtue, courage, intelligence, memory, mental quickness, moderation, justice, munificence are all parts of the soul.
2. Things in the soul are:
  - a. made beneficial when conjoined with wisdom
  - b. made harmful when not conjoined with wisdom
3. Virtue is never harmful, and is the only part of the soul which is never harmful.
4. Virtue must be wisdom or must have a part which is wisdom (since it is the only part of the soul that always yields something beneficial)  
(the only question is whether virtue is simply identical with wisdom, or whether virtue just has a part which is wisdom)

Subargument: no one can be virtuous by nature, since then they would be wise by nature, in which case we would attempt to find these children and lock them away from all possible corrupting influences until we could use them in adulthood so the city could benefit from their wisdom. If no one can be virtuous by nature, and virtue is knowledge (prior agreement), then it must be teachable (otherwise, how could anyone ever become virtuous?).

Problematic Argument #1:

- (i) If virtue can be taught, then there should be those who are teaching it and those learning it (application of the Craft Analogy to virtue=knowledge).
- (ii) In fact there are no teachers of virtue.
- (iii) Virtue cannot be taught.

Problematic Argument #2:

- (i) Perhaps the CA is wrong, and anyone who is virtuous is able to teach virtue to others.
- (ii) Themistocles (Aristides, Pericles) was virtuous, but his son was not.
- (iii) There is no reason to think Themistocles did not try to teach his son everything which he knew (evidence: taught him to be a good horseman).
- (iv) Therefore, though virtuous, Themistocles was not able to teach his son virtue.

Socrates concludes that there must be something wrong....why? Answer: Because if one cannot be virtuous by nature, and one cannot be taught to be virtuous, it begins to be quite mysterious how anyone can ever become virtuous.

Socrates realizes what is wrong: the claim that wisdom produces beneficial results does not

mean that only knowledgeable people can produce beneficial results. "Correct opinion" is just as good as knowledge in the guidance of affairs toward the beneficial.

What, then, is the difference betw knowledge and correct opinion? Answer: knowledge is correct opinion "tied down" (i.e., correct opinion with "an account of the reason why" it is true.....such an "account" is acquired through recollection....98a).

Good men who successfully guide their people to good results are "no different from soothsayers and prophets" when the latter are 'on a roll.' (99c) This capacity for correct opinion is a "gift from the gods" (100a).