

Book I: weakness of elenchos and craft analogy displayed
 Common sense beliefs are shown to be inconsistent, but
 elenchos does not force you to give up a particular premise.

Look at T's arg:

- a) Justice is a virtue (trivially true)
- b) My virtue always benefits me
- c) My being just benefits other people
- d) What benefits others sometimes harms me & vice versa

Elenchos does not require T to abandon the premise that S would like him to abandon (d). T chooses to abandon (c). This shows that Elenchos is of no use if both interlocutors are willing to abandon common sense beliefs (and both T and S are).

Problem with Craft Analogy

Both S and T presume that the craft analogy applies to just action/virtuous action. So, every just action is prescribed by a craft (i.e., there is some end which is served by just action qua just action, just as there is a particular end served by shepherding qua sheep herding, namely the well-being of the sheep).

The Craft Analogy, however, can be used to undermine both S and T, separately. The reasons are obvious: S is vulnerable to the fact that sheep are not always benefitted by shepherding (so even if he gets his way, and shepherding is construed narrowly as concern for the wellbeing of sheep, it will not nec result in the wellbeing of sheep...but then, on the analogy to justice, sometimes acting justly will not benefit others, which favors T's view), and T is vulnerable to the fact that the agent (shepherd) is not always benefitted either (and then, if justice is the interest of the stronger, the stronger will not benefit from it, which favors S's view).

WE CAN'T DECIDE WHO IS RIGHT, CAN WE? And notice that elenchos (the demonstration that a set of beliefs are inconsistent) does not tell us which of these views is correct (and there seems to be good empirical evidence, if the craft analogy is supposed to apply to just action, that supports dropping both the premise (b) and the premise (c) above). So what can we do?

Two conclusions:

- 1) Bk I gives us more than a merely implicit challenge to elenchos--this is an open attack in which the Craft Analogy itself, formerly employed in tandem with elenchos, is used to show the weakness of the method.
- 2) elenchos brings you to a contradiction but does not indicate or require a particular premise be given up. Anyone willing to abandon common sense can use elenchos to serve their own preferences, as T does in Bk. I.

Introduction to Book II

Book II is a new beginning, and a nec one since Bk I leaves us without a method or with the formerly favored framework for virtue: the analogy to crafts.

Scholarship: Bk I written long before the rest of the Republic. Books II-IX are complete, X is summation.

Book II offers:

- 1) new ways of expressing problems
- 2) new methodology for answering What is F?

Elenchos gives way to a new, positive method (Plato's Dialectic--elenchos is never mentioned again after Book I)

The Challenge of Republic, introduced in Book II:

Justice is a sort of compromise...I would avoid justice if I could.

To understand, first must understand the distinction Plato draws among the kinds of good things:

- 1) intrinsic goods: good for own sake (simple pleasures, joy, harmless pleasures)
- 2) goods which are both intrinsic and instrumental: good in themselves and for their consequences (knowledge, health)
- 3) instrumental goods (money)

Look at category #2: why do we wish to learn? Both because the resulting knowledge can be used for further ends and because we enjoy the activity of learning itself.

Now we can see the nature of the challenge posed by Glaucon and Adeimantus that appears in Book II. It is clear that people really think that justice=type 3 good.... instrumental... what do I get?

The picture:

- 1) doing wrong is desirable
- 2) but if I do wrong, others will do it
- 3) the harm from undergoing wrongdoing is worse than the benefits from wrongdoing (since the majority are weaker than some minority of strong men, the latter will dominate)
- 4) therefore, it is best to band together and agree, due to our weakness and consequent inability to gain from the wrongdoing we would rather pursue, to form a contract against wrongdoing

So, Justice arose from a Social Contract (Hobbes' state of nature): the weak majority impose will on the strong.

Notice that this does not guarantee that wrongdoing will always be avoided, and thus is no guarantor of just action. It only means that just action will be pursued where one feels one would get caught if you did what you really want to do (Gyges Ring).

Notice that this pics people as having a natural desire for wrongdoing, which is only held in check by the possibility of punishment. So, both the Just and the Unjust would end up in the same place, Injustice, if they had Gyges Ring. **NOBODY REALLY WANTS TO BE GOOD.** True?