

- Many would be dissatisfied with the story so far, feeling that knowing that P is more valuable than merely truly believing it
- Note: a number of philosophers don't share this feeling (Kvanvig, Kaplan,...)
- The problem of accounting for this alleged surplus value has come to be known as the **Meno Problem**
- The name stems from a discussion in Plato's *Meno*, in which it is noted that this surplus value appears hard to account for in practical terms

Socrates and Meno

S: ...A man who knew the way to Larissa..., who went there and guided others there would surely lead them well?

M: Certainly.

S: What if someone had a true opinion about which way was the right way, but he hadn't gone there himself and wasn't acquainted with the place. Wouldn't he also lead the way correctly?

M: Certainly.

S: As long as he has the right opinion concerning that which other people know, he will not be a worse guide than one who knows...

M: In no way worse.

S: So true opinion is in no way an inferior guide to action than knowledge...

Socrates and Meno (ctd)

- Socrates' observation:

Given that one has a true belief that *P*, satisfaction of any *further* condition necessary for knowing that *P* is irrelevant to the success of the actions that this belief would lead us to carry out

- Example:

- It is valuable that one's belief that *P* be justified: this arguably makes it more likely that it will lead to actions that are successful
- But that belief's being justified *on top* of being true does *not* make it more likely that it will lead to actions that are successful (because justification promotes success only via truth)

- Analogy: that a good cup of coffee was produced by a reliable coffee machine adds no value to the cup (Zagzebski 2003)

- This is sometimes known as the **Swamping Problem**

Added value for justification?

- Although, as we noted

a belief's being justified on top of being true *does not* make it more likely that *it* will lead to actions that are successful

it may well be the case that that

a belief's being justified on top of being true *does* make it more likely that *other beliefs* will be true and hence lead to actions that are successful

- Analogy:

having a good cup of coffee that was produced by a reliable coffee machine is valuable over and above having a good cup of coffee, as it makes one more likely to have good cups of coffee in the future

Added value for justification? (ctd)

- Clifford (1879) seems to have offered a related thought:

'if I let myself believe anything on insufficient evidence, there may be no great harm done by the mere belief; it may be true after all, or I may never have occasion to exhibit it in outward acts. But I cannot help doing this great wrong toward Man, that I make myself credulous. The danger to society is not merely that it should believe wrong things, though that is great enough; but that it should become credulous, and lose the habit of testing things and inquiring into them; for then it must sink back into savagery.'

A further value problem

- Suppose we grant that justification has added instrumental value in the rough way just suggested
- The fact remains that the JTB account provides insufficient conditions for knowledge
- We therefore haven't shown that knowledge is distinctively valuable over and above any proper subset of its parts
- Those who think there is added value to be accounted for here call this the 'secondary value problem'

A further value problem (ctd)

- Some (e.g. Hyman 2010) are pessimistic:
The post Gettier literature has yielded some 4th conditions whose added value is far from clear (recall Swain's proposal!)
- Possible response:
So much the worse for these. Attempts to answer the semantic/ontological question should have been more substantially guided by the need to answer evaluative questions.
- Williamson (2000) is more optimistic than Hyman, drawing loosely on further comments of Socrates' to suggest that No DEFEATERS provides a promising answer...

References

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