

Abstract

Interpreters have argued that, in the Socratic dialogues, awareness of ignorance concerning virtue is necessary and sufficient to motivate characters to engage in inquiry. This interpretation has shaped our understanding of the goals and scope of Socrates' method for, if awareness of ignorance concerning value *ipso facto* motivates someone to inquire, then the immediate goal of Socratic conversation must simply be to show interlocutors that they lack knowledge about value. I argue that in a series of Socratic dialogues, awareness of ignorance fails to motivate interlocutors to inquire. The *Alciabides*, in particular, supports the view that in addition to recognizing one's ignorance, having an independent commitment, drive, and resolve to know what is good is necessary to prompt inquiry. Socrates' protreptic conversations, then, aim to do more than merely show others that they lack knowledge.

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