

_take your position:

>>>Are there things? Is there an outer-objective world?

>>>Follow the dialogue, do you agree with Socrates? Is there something as Knowledge? Is Socrates on the right path, when he asks for the one, and not for the many?

>>>Consider these statements:

“Truth is different for each person.”

“There are different truths for each person.”

“Truth is what ‘the powerful’ asserts to be true.”

“Truth is obtained through consensus.”

Could these kind of truths be “the Truth”? Could the Truth be different for every person? If so, could that be the Truth?

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The Project Gutenberg EBook of Theaetetus, by Plato, Translated by Benjamin Jowett, Produced by Sue Asscher (<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/1/7/2/1726/1726.txt>, 01.009)

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SOCRATES: In the first place, I should like to ask what you learn of Theodorus: something of geometry, perhaps?

THEAETETUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And astronomy and harmony and calculation?

THEAETETUS: I do my best.

SOCRATES: Yes, my boy, and so do I; and my desire is to learn of him, or of anybody who seems to understand these things. And I get on pretty well in general; but there is a little difficulty which I want you and the company to aid me in investigating. Will you answer me a question: 'Is not learning growing wiser about that which you learn?'

THEAETETUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: And by wisdom the wise are wise?

THEAETETUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And is that different in any way from knowledge?

THEAETETUS: What?

SOCRATES: Wisdom; are not men wise in that which they know?

THEAETETUS: Certainly they are.

SOCRATES: Then wisdom and knowledge are the same?

THEAETETUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Herein lies the difficulty which I can never solve to my satisfaction--What is knowledge? Can we answer that question? What say you? which of us will speak first? whoever misses shall sit down, as at a game of ball, and shall be donkey, as the boys say; he who lasts out his competitors in the game without missing, shall be our king, and shall have the right of putting to us any questions which he pleases...Why is there no reply? I hope, Theodorus, that I am not

betrayed into rudeness by my love of conversation? I only want to make us talk and be friendly and sociable.

THEODORUS: The reverse of rudeness, Socrates: but I would rather that you would ask one of the young fellows; for the truth is, that I am unused to your game of question and answer, and I am too old to learn; the young will be more suitable, and they will improve more than I shall, for youth is always able to improve. And so having made a beginning with Theaetetus, I would advise you to go on with him and not let him off.

SOCRATES: Do you hear, Theaetetus, what Theodorus says? The philosopher, whom you would not like to disobey, and whose word ought to be a command to a young man, bids me interrogate you. Take courage, then, and nobly say what you think that knowledge is.

THEAETETUS: Well, Socrates, I will answer as you and he bid me; and if I make a mistake, you will doubtless correct me.

SOCRATES: We will, if we can.

THEAETETUS: Then, I think that the sciences which I learn from Theodorus--geometry, and those which you just now mentioned--are knowledge; and I would include the art of the cobbler and other craftsmen; these, each and all of, them, are knowledge.

SOCRATES: Too much, Theaetetus, too much; the nobility and liberality of your nature make you give many and diverse things, when I am asking for one simple thing.

THEAETETUS: What do you mean, Socrates?

SOCRATES: Perhaps nothing. I will endeavour, however, to explain what I believe to be my meaning: When you speak of cobbling, you mean the art or science of making shoes?

THEAETETUS: Just so.

SOCRATES: And when you speak of carpentering, you mean the art of making wooden implements?

THEAETETUS: I do.

SOCRATES: In both cases you define the subject matter of each of the two arts?

THEAETETUS: True.

SOCRATES: But that, Theaetetus, was not the point of my question: we wanted to know not the subjects, nor yet the number of the arts or sciences, for we were not going to count them, but we wanted to know the nature of knowledge in the abstract. Am I not right?

THEAETETUS: Perfectly right.

SOCRATES: Let me offer an illustration: Suppose that a person were to ask about some very trivial and obvious thing--for example, What is clay? and we were to reply, that there is a clay of potters, there is a clay of oven-makers, there is a clay of brick-makers; would not the answer be ridiculous?

THEAETETUS: Truly.

SOCRATES: In the first place, there would be an absurdity in assuming that he who asked the question would understand from our answer the nature of 'clay,' merely because we added 'of the image-makers,' or of any other workers. How can a man understand the name of anything, when

he does not know the nature of it?

THEAETETUS: He cannot.

SOCRATES: Then he who does not know what science or knowledge is, has no knowledge of the art or science of making shoes?

THEAETETUS: None.

SOCRATES: Nor of any other science?

THEAETETUS: No.

SOCRATES: And when a man is asked what science or knowledge is, to give in answer the name of some art or science is ridiculous; for the question is, 'What is knowledge?' and he replies, 'A knowledge of this or that.'

THEAETETUS: True.

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