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Title: Socrates and ‘Socratic Intellectualism’ in Three Vignettes in Epictetus

Abstract: In *Diss.* 3. 24, Epictetus uses the language of training, hardening oneself, and military exercise in a way that suggests he is committed to the idea of *a kind of non-rational conditioning of the non-rational part, or parts, of the soul*—an idea incompatible with official Stoic doctrine, which embraces ‘Socratic intellectualism’, the view that there are *no* non-rational sources of motivation. Instead, *only cognitive states can motivate*. It is the knowledge or belief that something is good (beneficial) that motivates doing it; just as it is the knowledge or belief that something is bad (harmful) that motivates refraining from doing it. The denial that *akrasia* is possible is, famously, likewise a part of Socratic intellectualism: rather than holding that some non-rational motivation ‘overcomes’ a judgment of reason about what it is best to do, Socratic intellectualism sees so-called *akrasia* as a purely cognitive failing, a matter of ignorance or misjudging things (e.g. taking the lesser pleasure to be the greater pleasure, or taking a small amount of short term pain to outweigh a greater amount of long term suffering). Plato’s *Protagoras* is the locus classicus for this kind of view.

On the other hand, Epictetus’s discussion of Medea (at *Diss.* 1. 28, 4–9) shows that he fully understands and indeed avows intellectualism—together with some of its counterintuitive consequences, e.g. we should pity rather than condemn Medea for killing her children, and she would need to correct her thinking (rather than retrain the non-rational part, or parts, of her soul), in order not to go astray in this way.

What about Socrates himself? In three passages that stand out for their detail and nuance (*Diss.* 4. 1, 159–170; 2. 12, 1–14; and 2. 5, 4–20), Epictetus presents a considerably less intellectualistic picture than one might have expected, relying on a more ‘Xenophontic’ portrayal of a ‘strong’ Socrates, who is as he is as a result of training and self-mastery, rather than through his secure knowledge of (or at least correct beliefs about) what is good. I will end by suggesting some reasons why Epictetus may have wanted to portray Socrates in this less than fully Socratic way.