

Plato, "Innate Knowledge" (Meno)- pp 3-12

Question 1) What does Meno accuse Socrates of at the start of the reading?

Answer: He accuses him of being a "Torpedo Fish," or Trouble Maker.

Question 2) Explain the paradox/problem (the "Learner's Paradox") that Meno and Socrates talk about on the second page, concerning enquiring and learning and interpreting what we know.

Answer: Meno becomes frustrated with Socrates and all the questions he asks. He says it seems like there is no learning. His view was "if you know you don't need to learn" and "if you don't know, you can't learn, since you won't know what to look for or when you have found it." But Socrates refuses to believe this, he says there is an "Innate Knowledge". It is already in you. As you reason, debate and analyse you are not constructing it, you are uncovering it.

Question (3) Explain Plato's theory of Innate Knowledge; and how Socrates conversation with Meno's servant boy is an attempt to demonstrate its truth.

Answer: Plato says that Knowledge is ultimately INNATE. Learning is really just RECOLLECTION. This he said was more than merely remembering. It is not "passive". It is Philosophical inquiry, analysis, definition, logic and debate. There are absolute and eternal Truths written in our IMMORTAL SOULS. He says you have conscience already in you. Through dialoguing, thinking and asking questions.

Aristotle "Demonstrative Knowledge", pp 18-21

Question: (1) In your own words, explain the deductive aspect of Aristotle's view of how we gain knowledge. What is Syllogism? What is demonstration?

Answer: Aristotle's view on Deduction is one based on logical demonstration, argumentation, analysis and application. He finds that having general knowledge or experience of things and getting a general understanding of them, analyse and give a conclusion to support your claim.

Syllogism is a special kind of argument that flows to support or establish a relation between two things connecting them to a third. Eg All feathers are birds

All birds are fowls

Therefore, all feathers are fowls

Demonstration: involves forming logical viewpoints/ opinions with TRUE statements that gives knowledge about the World.

Question (2) What point does Aristotle make about how deduction by itself doesn't lead to truth about the World?

Answer: Aristotle says that although points or conclusions may be deducted it may be valid but not truth. Validity and Truth are not the same. Truth is a property of statements which can be true or false. And Validity is a property of arguments (patterns, structure or logic).

Question (3) Present in your own words the inductive process of gaining knowledge according to Aristotle, including the role of the senses, memory and generalization.

Answer: Aristotle felt that the inductive process was one from basic points of reasoning through the senses. This could be via memory and was based on things we generally experienced. It did not have to be deep; it could just be a starting point. Something should grasp our senses.