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Philosophy
29 January 2023

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

1. What does Meno accuse Socrates of at the start of the reading? How does Socrates interpret this criticism? Meno accuses Socrates of acting as a sting ray and paralyzing his victims by relentlessly attacking their confused and inconsistent beliefs. He says that he is always doubting himself and making others doubt him. He continues by accusing him of casting spells over him and bewitching him. Socrates interprets this criticism as a compliment. He interprets it as Meno fishing for compliments and wanting Socrates to make a simile about him in return.

2. Explain the paradox/problem (the "Learner's Paradox") that Meno and Socrates talk about on the second page, concerning enquiry and learning and interpreting what we know. The paradox they refer to is that it is impossible to seek what you do not know because you will not know whether you have found it. Socrates responds with the idea of recollection. He says that we do not learn, instead learning is only a process of recollection. Socrates thinks that the soul collects knowledge from previous lives when exposed to it in this life.

3. Explain Plato's theory of innate knowledge, and how Socrates's conversation with Meno's servant boy is an attempt to demonstrate its truth. The theory of innate knowledge includes the concept that people have answers, truth, and knowledge inside their heads that merely needs to be brought out, which Socrates tries to prove with Meno's servant. When he talks to Meno's servant, he asks him all sorts of questions that test his knowledge of a shape. He continues to answer Socrates' questions about it, which shows how much knowledge he had inside of his head, he just didn't think he knew because no one was asking the right questions him before. Socrates says that all of the answers he gave came from his own head. The idea that Socrates proves by this is that his knowledge is recovered from asking questions and that this spontaneous recovery of knowledge in him is a recollection. No one ever taught the boy geometry or anything that would guide him to answer the questions, therefore, it must be a recollection from previous lives that led him to be able to answer all the questions. Socrates overall conclusion is that you try to recollect not what you do not know, but rather what you do not remember.

Aristotle, "Demonstrative Knowledge", pp. 18-21:

1. In your own words, explain the deductive aspect of Aristotle's view of how we gain knowledge. What is a syllogism? What is a demonstration? Aristotle believes that all teaching and intellectual learning arise from pre-existing knowledge. He believes that there is knowledge

through demonstration, which he also refers to as scientific syllogism. Syllogism is when there are two given or assumed propositions in which both share a common theme but a new conclusion is drawn from it connecting the two. Demonstrative knowledge is the knowledge we have by virtue of having a demonstration, which Aristotle defines as a syllogistic deduction from necessary premises. The demonstration is the process of showing the existence of something by giving proof, which Aristotle believes is how people come of knowledge.

2. What point does Aristotle make about how deduction by itself doesn't lead to the truth about the world? He says that deduction itself through demonstration can not achieve scientific knowledge unless we know the premises that are primary and immediate. Starting points are required to lead to truth. There can be no demonstration with respect to perishable things because if the premises of a syllogism are universal then the conclusion of such a demonstration must also be an eternal truth. He explains that demonstrative knowledge must depend on premises that are true, primary, immediate, and better known than, prior to, and causes of the conclusion because, without those conditions, there can be syllogism but not a demonstration since it would not produce knowledge.

3. Present in your own words the inductive process of gaining knowledge according to Aristotle, including the role of the senses, memory, and generalization. Aristotle believes that previous knowledge comes from the innate power of discernment, or in other words sense perception. He believes that from sense-perception there arises memory, and when there is repeated memory of the same thing then arises experience. Then from experience the whole universal now established in the mind, which there arises the beginning of a skill, or of scientific knowledge.