

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?

At the start of the reading, Meno accuses Socrates of being able to make the weaker argument appear the stronger. Socrates interprets this criticism as an accusation of being able to make the worse argument appear the better. He then goes on to explain that he does not do this intentionally, but rather that he is simply trying to get to the truth of the matter. He explains that he is not trying to win an argument, but rather to understand the truth. He then goes on to explain that he believes that knowledge is innate and that it is not something that can be taught. He believes that knowledge is something that is already within us, and that we simply need to access it in order to gain understanding.

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/problem that Meno and Socrates talk about concerning enquiry and learning is that it is impossible to learn something new if one already knows it. This is because if one already knows it, then there is no need to ask questions or search for answers.

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.

Plato's theory of innate knowledge is the idea that all knowledge is already present within us, and that we simply need to access it. This theory is based on the belief that the soul is immortal and that it has existed since the beginning of time, and that it has already acquired knowledge from its past experiences. Plato believed that this knowledge is stored in the soul, and that it can be accessed through recollection. Socrates' conversation with Meno's servant boy is an attempt to demonstrate the truth of Plato's theory of innate knowledge. In the dialogue, Socrates asks the boy a series of questions about geometry, and the boy is able to answer them correctly without any prior instruction. This is meant to show that the boy already had the knowledge within him, and that Socrates was able to access it through his questioning.

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's view of how we gain knowledge is based on the concept of deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning is a form of logical reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn from a set of premises. This type of reasoning is based on the idea that if the premises are true, then the conclusion must also be true. A syllogism is a form of deductive reasoning in which two premises are used to draw a conclusion. A demonstration is a form of deductive reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn from a set of premises that are known to be true.

2. What point does Aristotle make about how deduction by itself doesn't lead to truth about the world?

Aristotle makes the point that deduction by itself does not lead to truth about the world. He argues that deduction is a form of reasoning that is based on logical principles and is used to draw conclusions from premises. However, he believes that deduction alone is not enough to gain knowledge of the world. He argues that deduction is only useful when it is combined with induction, which is the process of drawing general conclusions from particular observations.

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

The inductive process of gaining knowledge according to Aristotle is a method of reasoning that begins with observations and experiences and then moves to a general conclusion. Aristotle believed that knowledge begins with the senses. Through our senses, we are able to observe and experience the world around us. This sensory information is then stored in our memory, where it can be recalled and used to form generalizations. Aristotle also believed that generalization is an important part of the inductive process. Through generalization, we are able to draw conclusions about the world based on our observations and experiences.