

**Janiya Burton**

**Intro to Philosophy**

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**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 being a "sophist" which in ancient Greece referred to a person who charged money for teaching others how to be persuasive in rhetoric and politics. Socrates interprets this criticism as a claim that he is skilled in the art of persuasion and manipulation, rather than in the pursuit of truth and virtue. He rejects this accusation, stating that he is not a teacher or a professional philosopher, but rather someone who is interested in learning and understanding the nature of virtue and the good life.

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 "Learner's Paradox" is a concept discussed by Meno and Socrates. In the dialogue, Meno poses the question of how one can acquire the knowledge if they do not already possess it. Socrates responds by pointing out that if someone already knows something, they would not need to seek it out, and if they do not know something, they would not be able to recognize it when they find it. This creates a paradox, as it seems that one cannot acquire knowledge unless they already possess it. This concept highlights the idea that our understanding of the world is limited by what we already know, and that we must actively question and challenge our own assumptions in order to gain a deeper understanding of the truth.

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 suggests that the human mind is born with certain knowledge and understanding of certain concepts, such as truth and justice. This innate experience, but rather it is a part of the soul's innate nature. In the dialogue "Meno", Socrates engages in a conversation with Meno's servant boy in order to demonstrate the idea of knowledge. Socrates asks the boy a series of questions about geometry, despite the fact that the boy has never been formally educated in the

subject. Through their conversation, Socrates is able to lead the boy to discover geometric truths on his own, suggesting that this knowledge was innate within him. This serves as an example of the theory of innate knowledge and how it can be brought to consciousness through the process of recollection. In this way, Socrates demonstrates that knowledge is not something that is acquired through experience or education, but rather it is something that is innate within the soul, and can be brought to consciousness through questioning and discussion.

**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 believed that we gain knowledge through a process of deduction, which involves starting with general principles and using them to deduce specific conclusions. For example, if we know that all men are mortal and we know Socrates is a man, we can deduce that Socrates is a mortal. This process of deduction involves using logic and reason to infer new information from what we already know.

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

Aristotle argues that deduction, or reasoning from premises to a logical conclusion, by itself does not lead to truth about the world because it relies on the truth of the premises. In other words, if the premises are false or uncertain, then the conclusion will also be false or uncertain. Therefore, Aristotle believed that in order to arrive at truth about the world, one must also use induction, which involves drawing general conclusions from specific observations and experiences.

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's view of knowledge acquisition is heavily influenced by his belief in the power of human reason to understand the world around us, and to make connections between different pieces of information.