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Professor Sanchez

Lesson 1 Reading Questions

Plato

1. What does Meno accuse Socrates of at the start of the reading? How does Socrates interpret this criticism?

Meno accuses Socrates of witchcraft in the beginning of the reading. He calls him a “torpedo-fish” who paralyzed his victims. Socrates interprets and tells him that it is nothing of witchcraft, but he describes who he is and how he is. He talks about virtue and the questions that are thought of based on the theory of knowledge.

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, I've gathered from the text that it means either we know something or we don't. If you already know something then there's no need to enquire about it. Socrates says recollection is just the knowledge we already have. “... when I am saying, there is no teaching, but only recollection.” (pg.4)

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.

Socrates states that we are born with “innate knowledge”. His conversation with Socrates was to find out if knowledge can be taught, so he began to attempt to teach the enslaved boy.

Aristotle

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 knowledge comes from our senses. That we don't have innate knowledge, but knowledge comes from the nature of our senses. Syllogism is a type of deductive argument where there are two premises, one general one specific which draws a conclusion. Demonstration is a deductive argument under syllogism that shows proof or reason by using an example of sorts to explain.

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

Aristotle states that inductiveness can lead to getting the answer. He goes on to say "No other kind of thought except intuition is better than scientific knowledge, and the starting points are more knowable than the demonstrations that proceed from them..." (pg. 21)

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 according to Plato is knowing something specifically and turning it into a general statement based on our observations and what we already can conclude. Inductive answers have the possibility to be wrong.