

Plato, "Inate Knowledge" (Meno)

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

Meno taunts Socrates for his role as a stingray or torpedo fish. Meno thinks Socrates paralyzes his victims by relentlessly attacking their confused and inconsistent beliefs. Socrates then interprets this criticism by talking about learning. He says that learning is not a matter of discovering something new but rather recollecting something the soul knew since birth but something they forgot.

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.

A] man cannot search either for what he knows or does not know[.] He cannot search for what he knows—since he knows it, there is no need to search—nor for what he does not know, for he does not know what to look for. – Socrates

The learning paradox is the conflict in organizations between the desire to maintain a predictable and stable environment and the need to adapt, innovate, and improve to solve problems and achieve results.

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 Knowledge is that it is formed in a special way to distinguish it from a belief, in the case of Socrates and Meno. Meno calls one of his slave boys, draws a square with sides of two feet, and asks the boy to calculate how long the side of a square would be if it had twice the area of the one he just drew. The boy suggests four feet and then three feet, and Socrates proves him wrong both times. Socrates then helps the boy recognize that a square of twice the area would have sided with a length equal to the diagonal of the present square—but Socrates leads the boy to this point without actually explaining anything, instead forcing him to think the problem through himself. Since the boy reached this conclusion (more or less) on his own without any direct teaching, he must have been recollecting something he already knew.

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 is known for being the father of deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning is the mental process of drawing out deductive inferences. His view on how we gain knowledge is that the object of knowledge must be objectively true and necessary. It must subjectively be seen as necessary; the true cause has to be known, and the necessity of the causal connection must be perceived. The most important criterion for knowledge is an objective necessity.

A syllogism is a logical argument that applies deductive reasoning to arrive at a conclusion based on two propositions asserted or assumed to be true.

The Definition of demonstration is the action or process of showing the existence or truth of something by giving proof or evidence.

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

Aristotle was a philosopher in Greek, not only that, but he also was a polymath. He is also known as the father of deductive reasoning. He says this about truth, to say what of what that it is, or of what is not that is not is true.

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 mind adds conceptual content to particular sensible forms. This is the fundamental role of induction in Aristotle's philosophy of mind. Using the intermediary of language, inductive reasoning devises concepts and definitions, rules of syntax and logical order, and ultimately propositions and arguments