

Nicole Blanch

Professor Sanchez

PHI101

January 25, 2023

Week 1: Plato & Aristotle

Plato

- Meno makes fun of Socrates for criticizing people's thoughts when they are unclear and their beliefs lack substance. Meno charges Socrates with causing others to doubt themselves in the same way that she does. He claimed that she was using a spell on him to make him and other people numb, making it difficult for them to understand the inquiries. Socrates takes this to be a compliment and concludes Meno was pleading with her to use a simile to describe him as well. She was extremely forthright, admitting that she sometimes makes people feel perplexed, but not in a superior manner.
- Meno raises the issue of how one can inquire of another about something which one does not know. He emphasizes that it is impossible to come up with a conversation topic when you are ignorant about the subject, and it is impossible to know whether the conclusion you reached is accurate if you didn't know the subject to begin with. Socrates challenges the idea that someone might be aware of something yet choosing not to challenge it because there is "no need" to do so. On the other hand, because they are ignorant of the issue, they are also unable to challenge things about which they are knowledgeable.
- A subfield of epistemology, or the study of how a human might know something, is innate knowledge. This has a significant impact on how philosophy of knowing develops. They mention that since a soul is immortal and cannot perish, it knows everything and experiences everything. It is demonstrated in Socrates' dialogue when she asks questions to demonstrate accurate memories and genuine thoughts. An opinion isn't really definite enough to stick with us, but understanding the "why" is crucial because it will lead to knowledge, which is concrete. She asks thoughtful, methodical questions to get the truth, which is what philosophy is all about. She instructed Meno to keep an eye on the

situation and observe carefully in order to avoid giving the boy any hints and to follow the predetermined line of questions.

Aristotle

- In Aristotle's deductive theory of knowing, a conclusion follows a true premise because it makes logical sense to do so. A syllogism is used to evaluate the strength of an argument. It follows the formal rules for a good argument. Scientific knowledge is produced by demonstration. If the premises are not true, fundamental, and obvious, the argument can be a syllogism but not a demonstration. Those are timeless truths.
- Without strong, immediate premises and starting points, deduction cannot reach the truth on its own. It cannot serve its goal and is meaningless if the beginning points do not lead to the truth and are not based on the necessary stances.
- Deduction cannot get to the truth on its own if its premises and starting points are not firm, obvious, and instantaneous. If the starting points do not lead to the truth and are not based on the necessary stances, it cannot serve its purpose and is worthless.