

What is knowledge according to plato philosophy essay



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Plato had a strong belief that what we know in this life is recollected knowledge that was obtained in a former life, and that our soul has all the knowledge in this world, and we learn new things by recollecting what the soul already knew in the first place. Plato offers three observations of knowledge and he puts Socrates to reject all three of them. Plato's first observation is that true belief is knowledge. Socrates rejects this by stating that when a jury believes the accused to be guilty by just hearing the prosecuting attorney's argument, rather than of any concrete evidence, it cannot be known if a defendant is guilty even if he is guilty. The jury's true belief is therefore not knowledge.

The second observation is that knowledge and perception are the same. Socrates rejects this by saying that we can perceive without knowing and we can know without perceiving. For example, we can see and hear a sound without us knowing what or where it is coming from. If we can perceive without knowing, then knowledge cannot be the same as perception.

Plato's third observation is that true belief along with a logical account is knowledge, but true belief without a logical account is different from knowledge. The only problem with this observation is the word account. All the definitions of the word account are not valid for this argument.

These observations are a great example of attacking the insufficient theories of knowledge, but Plato never gives a complete answer on what is the definition of knowledge.

Plato preferred truth as the highest value, stating that it could be found through reason and logic in discussion. He called this dialectic. Plato

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preferred rationality rather than emotional appeal, for the purpose of persuasion, discovery of truth, and as the determinant of action. To Plato, truth was the higher good, and every person should find the truth to guide his or her life.

Plato's doctrine of recollection says that rather than learning in the common sense, what is actually happening when people are thinking about a problem, and find a solution to that problem, is that they are recollecting things that they already knew. The reason that Plato came up with this theory was because of the learner's paradox. The learner's paradox is that how can someone learn something if they don't even know what it is. As Meno points out - if we don't know what something is then how will we know when we have it? When, for example, we say that we don't know what 946308 divided by 22 is, how can it be that we can find the answer to be 43014? If we don't already know that $946308 / 22 = 43014$ then when someone tells us this we should not be able to know that answer is right.

Aristotle also believes that knowledge is a form of recollection. He believes that there are universal causes and particular causes, however, unlike Plato; he believes that particulars carry an essence of the form. The four causes, or what makes an object what it is, are its efficient, material, formal, and final causes. The efficient cause is the primary source of the change. The material cause is the material of which it consists. The formal cause is its form. The final cause is its aim or purpose. Using the example of a skyscraper, the efficient cause is the act of building the skyscraper, the material cause is the material used to build it, the formal cause is the blueprint, and the final cause is using the skyscraper as a skyscraper. Everything has these four

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causes, but substantially changing any of them will cause the skyscraper to lose its skyscraperiness. If you know all of a particular's causes, you know its essence. Everything has to have a cause.

To truly understand something, we must know its explanation and that it cannot be otherwise. Demonstration must be from things that are true because deducing something from a falsehood would not give understanding of it. Things that are less general and closer to perception are prior relative to us. Things that are more general and further from perception are prior by nature. Demonstrations must be from things that are prior by nature. The premises of demonstrations must give the reason why the conclusion is true.

Aristotle defines syllogism as a discourse in which, certain things having been supposed, something different from the things' supposed results of necessity because these things are so. One syllogism that he used was: Socrates is a man, All men are mortal, therefore Socrates is mortal.

Plato and Aristotle's understanding of knowledge are complimentary in that they both believe knowledge is obtained by recollection. Also, they both value truth as the best way to obtain knowledge. What makes it contradictory is that Aristotle goes deeper into the subject of knowledge by stating that particulars have to carry an essence of the form and gives four causes that aid in finding the essence. Therefore, their understanding of knowledge is both complimentary and contradictory.

I think we have abandoned the dialectical and demonstrative methods to a certain extent, but not completely. Most classes teach in the way that

sophists teach, by just giving us the facts. An example could be my college <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-knowledge-according-to-plato-philosophy-essay/>

algebra class, that teaches me how to do a problem but it doesn't tell me why it is like that. But then we have other classes, for example Mr. Hindman's classes, that do use those 2 methods. I think we need to incorporate these valuable methods more into our public school systems and it might help in raising grades up.