

1. **Theory of the Soul**
2. **Socratic Method**
3. **Ethics**
4. **Epistemology**
5. **Plato**

1. SOCRATES THEORY OF THE SOUL:

Socrates believed that he had a mission to seek after wisdom. He died being faithful to that mission. He attempted to find a stable and certain truth and a wisdom that would serve as a guide for life. He attempted to lead others to real insight. He wanted to persuade others to look into themselves, to seek wisdom and virtue and to care for their noblest possession, their soul, before all else. He attempted this even at his trial and in his final days and hours. He used the dialectical method as a midwife to ideas to lead others to knowledge, truth and virtue. He used the dialectical process to arrive at universal definitions. Plato would develop the explanatory schema in which the universal definition is attainable due to a process of recollection through which all people can gain knowledge of what is within them, their minds from birth. Socrates himself believed in the universality of the inner rational being. He believed that:

The unexamined life is not worth living! The best manner to examine that life is through reasoning which employs the dialectical method of inquiry.

Plato inherits this belief, expands upon it and promulgates this belief.

2. SOCRATIC METHOD:

Socratic method and Scientific Method:

The Socratic legacy is in turning critical thought quite directly in the direction of humanity, human morality and virtue and the idea of a good life for a human. Socrates' theory of the soul and its virtue and the use of reasoning in the service of virtue were lasting contributions to humanity. His legacy to Philosophy is in two areas. Ethics and Epistemology.

3. ETHICS:

For Socrates the key to a virtuous life was knowledge of the GOOD and this links ethics with epistemology. If one knew the Good one would choose it. One always chooses the best of the options available. The question was, what is the Good? What is Best? Virtue would depend on knowledge. Knowledge itself is a virtue but knowledge of the GOOD and of Virtue was necessary for the GOOD Life. The soul must choose the GOOD but only if it knows what it is. Evil is the result of ignorance. The soul chooses what it thinks is the Good but it isn't the soul has made a mistake! Wrong doing is involuntary. Evil doers must be educated, instructed as to what truly is the GOOD and then they will choose it.

Socrates believed that no one does wrong voluntarily. Evil is the result of ignorance. If people knew what was the right thing to do they would do it. We always choose what we think is the best or good for us. So, if someone chooses to do what we think is wrong, then that person made a mistake and must be educated to see the error. They mistook evil for the GOOD.

Do you agree? Why or why not?

Socrates held that people know that OTHER PEOPLE think that it is wrong but they do not totally agree. The wrong doers think that there is something good in doing the evil act even if it is only good for them. So, they do it. If the wrong doers understood why the act was considered to be wrong they would not do it. They do it because they mistake the evil act for a good act in some way. Given options humans will choose the options that appears to be good for them. When they choose what other people call evil it is because they do not agree. They will continue to do the evil acts unless and until they no longer think of them as good. Socrates theory does NOT claim that people who do wrong do not know that the act is wrong.

Socrates theory does NOT claim that people who do wrong do think that it is correct or right to do.

The theory is that people who do wrong know that OTHER PEOPLE think that it is wrong but that the wrong doer does not accept that and does not agree because the wrong doer sees some benefit or good result for the wrong doer.

As long as the wrong doer continues to see some benefit or good result for the wrong doer then the wrong doer will continue to do the act that is considered wrong by OTHER PEOPLE.

When the wrong doer comes to understand and to know why the OTHER PEOPLE think of the act as being wrong and the wrong doer accepts that then the wrong doer will stop doing that act.

Person P does act X.

Person P knows that OTHER PEOPLE think that act X is WRONG or BAD or EVIL.

Person P does X anyway because person P thinks that X is in some way GOOD for P. X is fun or relieves pain or will bring money or power or fame to P.

P thinks that X will BENEFIT P. BENE = GOOD and FIT= Make or do. So P thinks that X will in some way make a good for P.

Unless and until P stops thinking of X as a GOOD P will continue to do X. P does X because people always choose what they think is on some way good for them.

For Socrates the soul always goes to the GOOD. The soul "volunteers" or wills to do the GOOD.

So P chooses X out of ignorance of what is truly GOOD as other people see the GOOD as different from X.

Further, Socrates held that all virtue is one! Virtue is GOOD. Truth is GOOD. Beauty is GOOD. Knowledge is GOOD. The true, good and beautiful are all GOOD and united in the GOOD as ONE.

How was one to teach others what the GOOD is? Socrates sought an answer to that and many other questions. The Sophists claimed to teach but they trained in technique. They dealt with specialized actions. Virtue is not specialized.

4. EPISTEMOLOGY:

Socrates Ideas concerning Knowledge and Wisdom

Socrates developed the dialectical process for gaining knowledge. He used an inductive method of argumentation in order to develop universal definitions. This was his approach to the truth that would be perfected by Plato. Socrates would examine theories (logoi) using

the dialectic method, which was similar to a conversational pattern with many questions. Socrates would challenge initial hypotheses and examine them for presumptions and assumptions. He regularly used two techniques:

1. What follows if...
2. What conflicts with ...

He did this in an effort to establish the truth of the hypothesis. He looked for a coherent and consistent set of ideas; a system of thought.

The pre-Socratic speculated, Socrates tested the ideas. Socrates looked to facts to test the theories. In this way he was somewhat similar to Sir Issac Newton and modern science. Socrates sought to deduce the consequences of a hypothesis in order to test it thereby.

The Sophists raised many questions in order to win debates and to gain power. Socrates did so to pursue truth. He did not achieve all of what he sought. Plato would go further and develop answers through the implementation of his theory of the Ideal Forms.

Socrates genius was in this:

he was the first to raise certain basic questions with a clear understanding of what he was doing.

5. PLATO

Were it not for Socrates, Plato would not have become a Philosopher and not only the western world but the entire world would have been a different place with a decidedly different history!

Now to consider Plato!