

PHI 130

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“Introduction to Plato’s Moral Psychology” Read pages 8-21 in the *Great Traditions* textbook for a more in depth understanding of Plato’s moral psychology.

Philosophy is a Greek word that is made up of two words: “philo” and “sophia.” The first part “philo” is a Greek word for love that is used to refer to friendship love. An example of friendship love is the type of love a soldier may feel toward one of his fellow soldiers when in battle. This love is considered trustworthy and reliable. The second part “sophia” is literally translated as wisdom for life. This type of wisdom is not necessary conventional or practical wisdom but rather the type of wisdom needed to figure out how to live life to the fullest, so to speak. Wisdom for life pertains to how to be successful in relationships, how to spend money etc versus practical wisdom which pertains to knowing algebra or being literate.

These five things are considered wisdom for living:

- 1) MEANING (i.e. meaning of life)
- 2) PURPOSE (i.e. something to live or die for)
- 3) SIGNIFICANCE
- 4) ASPIRATIONS (i.e. a sense of vision, life calling)
- 5) LOVE

SOCRATES (470-399) is the father of Western philosophy. He was not the first to philosophize, but he is considered the first to do so in Western history. He gave philosophy its name. Socrates

is unique in that he had followers but never wrote anything. He was suspicious of the printed page and avoided it because he did not want to reduce his ideas to simple terms. Furthermore, he did not want to write his ideas down for fear that his teachings would be misinterpreted by those who read them. Socrates believed that teaching was best conveyed through conversation.

PLATO (428-348) is the architect of Western philosophy. He was Socrates' student and follower. Because Plato lacked a relationship with his biological father, Socrates was like a father figure to Plato and influenced much of his work. Plato, unlike Socrates, believed that there was merit to recording his teachings for future progeny. He understood that if there was not a written account of the teachings they were likely to disappear forever upon the death of the philosopher responsible for them. Plato wrote dialogues as a means of capturing Socrates' insights in addition to exploring and recording his own ideas. The dialogues were written in the format of a conversation and shed light upon various philosophical questions and topics.

Socrates' unique style of conversation is referred to as "DIALECTIC" which is the Greek root for the English word dialogue. Socrates engaged in conversation that had a systematic objective. He was not so much concerned with what people believed but why they believed it. According to Socrates, if people attributed their beliefs to one or more of four criteria—preference, inheritance, feeling, and/or bias—they had not provided acceptable answers to the query "why do you believe what you believe?"

The Greeks believe there are different categories of truth claims. Some are mathematical and seemingly indisputable, while others are merely agreed upon and vary from culture to culture.

Within philosophy there are 2 ways truth is conveyed: RELATIVISM and OBJECTIVISM.