

Key Concepts Of Seven Philosophers

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Socrates

Socrates' works survive thanks to the diligence of his students; most of the work was recorded by Plato himself in dialogue. Through these dialogues, the three concepts that can be taken away are; "Question everything, if you do not know something, admit it, and never stop pursuing wisdom". Through questioning, a person learns the secrets of life, and he has set himself on the path of morality. When a person does not possess knowledge regarding a certain subject, he should not pretend to know. Rather, he should admit that he lacks the knowledge. Admitting that one does not know makes him wise, but pretending to know makes him a fool. The pursuit of knowledge and wisdom will always keep him on the right path. Socrates' concepts complement each other, as one paves the way for the other concept. If one always questions, he is always learning, so when he comes across a new concept, it will allow him to keep on learning (CORNFORD, 1941a).

Plato

Just like Socrates, Plato's work was recorded in the form of dialogue, and during his time, he presented numerous philosophies. In his book "The Republic", Plato sought to define a just person, so he provided three key concepts using the soul. He said that a soul has three forms; the first part of the soul is rational, which is the pursuit of truth and allows humans to think philosophically. The second part of the soul is the spirited one that strives to earn honour in life, and it is also the reason humans feel anger and indignation. The third part of the soul is its appetite, which chases after materialistic things. If a person is just, then the rational part of the soul will be dominant, and the other two parts of the soul will be under his control as he will be strong enough not to give in to worldly desires. Plato's concept of a just person allows the readers to understand that if one strives to be just, then he should be emotionally stable and rationally sound (CORNFORD, 1941b).

Emerson

Self-Reliance is an essay that Emerson wrote that societal norms harm the growth of a person's individuality. He implored his readers to become self-reliant so that they could gain true freedom. Emerson outlined three concepts to help people become self-reliant: non-conformity, individualism, and personal responsibility. In regards to non-conformity, Emerson held the opinion that social institutes such as the church prevented people from knowing their true selves as these institutes did the thinking for the people by providing them with a way of life to follow. By ending one's reliance on such institutes, a person was free to explore their ideas and personality. Emerson guides the readers

to take responsibility for themselves as they owe it to themselves to understand their true essence. These concepts were outlined so that the readers will learn to be themselves and not be the imitations of others or follow the path set by others. Emerson stated, “Envy is ignorance, imitation is suicide”, which meant that envying another stops you from understanding, and imitation of another kills off your self-expression (Emerson, 1841).

Descartes

“Discourse on Method” was written by Rene Descartes to present a new way of thinking; this method was developed to provide an orderly approach to solving a problem. He developed four key steps for this; the first was to never believe in something unless you can prove it to yourself. Second, the problem should be made as simple as possible by eliminating its complexity. Third, always have an orderly approach to a problem by solving the simplest part first and then moving towards the harder parts. The fourth step was to have extensive reasoning and take everything into account while solving a problem, as this reduces the probability of error. While formulating this method, Descartes used the fourth step repeatedly until he came up with these four steps. Overthinking is a problem faced by many humans; however, Descartes’s method helps you arrange your thoughts and develop rational thoughts. Descartes stated that with this method, the most complex problems could be solved as well (Descartes, 1998).

Nietzsche

In his essay “On Truth and Lies in a Non-moral Sense”, Nietzsche stated that truth was impossible to achieve as it differs for everyone according to their perspective and interpretation. It is driven by their self-interest, so the truth cannot be achieved. He presented these ideas to strengthen his argument: humans act in their self-interest and are extremely self-focused. Their pursuit of knowledge also stems from their self-interest, where truth is seen as social contact. Language is not a tool for truth. Rather, it is a tool that hides the truth. Nietzsche’s opinion was that people only saw what they wanted to see; everyone’s interpretation of an event was different, and their perspectives were different. In this way, they all had their own definition of truth, which made truth impossible as it existed in fragments and not in a singular form. Pure truth can never be attained as long as multiple perspectives and interpretations exist, so the probability of it being attained is next to none (Nietzsche, 1873).

Weil

Simone Weil’s “The Iliad, or The Poem of Force” provided a new perspective on Homer’s famous poem “The Iliad”. The poem was presented as a tale of glory in which two cities fought for victory, but Weil thought otherwise. She stated that the true master of war was force. She presented these ideas to

back up her concept; whenever world-altering incidents occur, force is behind them. Through force, wars are fought, people are enslaved, and lives are taken. Weil uses the events of the Iliad to present force as the epic hero of the poem, not the men involved. Force has always been the real reason behind the change, and it is in human nature to use force to attain the things they desire, as Prince Paris did when he took Helena with him. Behind every change, there is force, and behind every force, there is desire. Force and desire make a man lose his rational thought and turn him into an obsessed being. The desire for power, money, fame, etc., makes him use force to get what he wants (Weil, 1965).

Heidegger

He was a 20th-century philosopher who was interested in understanding technology as he claimed it was a key element in understanding modern culture. He assembled his thoughts in his book “The Question Concerning Technology”, in which he made three key concepts. The first was that technology was a tool only to be used to understand the world. Second, it can be developed beyond human control, and third, it also poses the greatest threat to humans. These concepts are easy to understand as we are experiencing the advancement of technology every day. Humans have reached beyond space using technology to understand the universe and everything in it. Weapons of mass destruction have also been developed using technology, and these weapons, if deployed, threaten our very existence. Technology has made our lives easier, but it has also created problems. Heidegger stated that technology is not an instrument to be played with carelessly, and this statement holds immense truth (Heidegger, 1977).

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