

Kimberly Holmes

Response for 10/28

While Aristotle and Plato were both contemporaries and hold many similarities in their styles of philosophy, there are still marked differences between the two. While Plato might have taught Aristotle, I found that their styles of teaching were much different, much in the same way a daughter might inherit a different type of cooking than her mother might teach her.

I found that I preferred Plato's styling above Aristotle's. While having a native understanding of Greek would most likely be much more helpful than reading a rough translation of something as aged as their writings are, it is still a little bit hard to grasp the vague meaning of both. I found Plato's to be much easier to understand, however, because of the dialogs. Pointed questions lead to a much easier understanding of the script, whereas it seems like Aristotle's translation came out to be much more difficult to grasp because of the lack of clarity in the message brought by translation.

While the length of Plato's writings might have been condensed to simply the answers from the mentors, I felt that the clarified meaning in the way of a Socratic dialogue is what really makes his hit home with me. I feel that I am listening in on a conversation that actually happened (though the rhetoric might be a bit lengthy), like peeping through a keyhole to find out what is going on.

As far as substance goes, I really liked Plato's usage of the chariots and the souls. Aristotle seemed like he divided souls into the rational and irrational; I preferred the thought that souls were merely fragments fighting toward what beauty they could, whether that beauty happened to be in other people, or in art. While I can see that Plato did not like art because it

carried no expression, I feel that "love" was still a bit of a loose explanation for what the soul felt toward that beauty. It seemed more like it was a moth romanced by a porch's light moreso than the moth wanting a specific type of light.

I also noted that Aristotle seemed to believe that good people are, in general, drawn to good things. This is very similar to Plato's idea that the soul is drawn to love, but a contrast from what Plato saw as an expression of goodness. For Plato, this expression came through their rhetoric, that what people said showed whether or not they were truly good. He also makes a very interesting point about madness, stating that it has different sides and different expressions love, prophecy, poetry, and the religious rites practiced in those times.

For Aristotle, this came through the rational and irrational, which can be roughly agreed to be synonymous with madness as explained by Plato. These parts include the soul's attempt at caring for the body (with very little connection to virtue), and impulses. He elaborates mostly upon the three types of actions: those which are voluntary, involuntary, or nonvoluntary. I found these classifications to be interesting because Plato seemed to make it appear that people were made up of impulses which they had to overcome, while Aristotle seemed more concerned with explaining that some actions are the fault of the person, while others are the fault of otherse, or the faults of the gods. However, there is the similarity in that both explain that people must work toward their own happiness, and that as humans we must make rational choices for the goodness of our own happiness, and the goodness of the happiness of others.