

Aristotle and Plato: Differences and Similarities

Plato was the most important literary critic before Aristotle. He was a teacher and had his own Academy. His literary criticism is contained in his Dialogues and in Republic. Aristotle was the great disciple of Plato, and it was he who took up the challenge to show that poetry was not only pleasant but also useful for man and society.

Differences between Aristotle and Plato

- Plato was a transcendentalist, whereas Aristotle was a scientist, biologist, and an experimenter.
- Plato was an idealist. Aristotle on the other hand believed in the reality.
- Plato's language is poetic. Aristotle is dogmatic.
- Plato was the first to use the word 'imitation' in connection with poetry but Aristotle breathed a new life and soul into it.
- According to Plato, poetry imitates only superficial appearance like a painter. But Aristotle believed that poetry not only imitates the external but also internal emotions.
- Plato condemned poetry on moral, intellectual and emotional grounds. Aristotle justifies poetry on moral, intellectual and emotional grounds.
- Plato defended philosophy, whereas Aristotle defended poetry.
- Plato regarded emotions as undesirable and so advocated its repression. Aristotle, on the other hand, stresses the need of emotional outlets. He is the first to use the word Catharsis.

Similarities between Plato and Aristotle

There are many dissimilarities between Plato and Aristotle but we do have some similarities.

- Poetry is an imitative art.
- Poetry rouses emotions.
- Poetry gives pleasure.
- Poetry affects personality and emotional behavior.
- Considered Poetry from practical and utilitarian view.