

A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN PLATO & ARISTOTLE'S PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

The paper mainly focused on discovering how Plato and Aristotle's experience differ when both of them dealt with same concepts, such as, body and form, social-political system etc. The immutable point is they both purposed to quest truth. Implying comparative method, the research has been carried out. In 367 B.C.EAristotle took part in Plato's Academy in Athens as a student, where he came to be known as Plato's one of the best students being distinguished himself from Plato's view, eventually he became a mentor himself. Philosophically, Aristotle's research is more pragmatic than Plato, focusing on nature and real world. Plato's experience of 'artistic golden age' has made him more envisioned toward an 'ideal world' and being influenced by his father Aristotle prioritizes a philosophy depending upon rational world. The present study has discovered a comparison and contrast between two cornerstones of philosophy. Albeit Plato was Aristotle's mentor, we notice a number of prominent differences between their ideologies. Being Plato's favourite pupil in Academy, Aristotle has deliberately represented his own views. It seems both these ancient philosophers have put some efforts to enlighten the modern society approaching that two people with different moral perspectives still might be good to each other. Taking considering both of their ethics when one is materialistic, other is idealistic, the study accentuates that if pragmatically things can be done in accordance of Aristotle, Plato's 'ideal world' cannot be placed together because human world cannot be isolated from imperfection.

Keywords

Comparative Study, Plato, Aristotle and Philosophy.

INTRODUCTION

Plato, the Greek philosopher (427-347 B.C) in Athens was born to an aristocratic family. He eventually became a disciple of Socrates (469-399 B.C.), accepting his basic philosophy and dialectical style of debate. Apart from being monumental throughout the history of philosophy, Plato is known for his exploration of the fundamental problems of natural science, political theory, metaphysics, theology and theory of knowledge. The basis of Plato's philosophy is his theory of ideas, or doctrine of forms. Aristotle (384-322 BC) spent his early life spent in Stagira, northern Greece. He was brought up by his uncle due to the early deaths of his parents. In 367 BC Aristotle, at the age of seventeen, became a student at Plato's Academy in Athens. After being a student, Aristotle soon became a teacher at the Academy and he was to remain there for twenty years. In Western civilization Aristotle functioned as a dominant ephemeral figure. He accomplished his education as an ideal pupil of Plato at his Academy. Factually the motivation for writing his manuscript on rhetoric might have come from Plato's Phaedrus, a philosophical rhetoric (Smith, 1998, p.72).

Craig R. Smith posits that Plato with his chief mentor Socrates refused to accept the Sophists and their pedagogy. To wholly progress 'the art of rhetoric', it is significant to explore their refusal and Aristotle's response to it. Sophists in their own era lost their scripts when the library of Alexandria, Egypt combusted. It had the most important antique pieces of writing. In addition, the Sophists could not have the time to contradict the prolonged texts of Plato that vitiated their lust and deeply influenced medieval Christian apologists such as Augustine. Plato's Academy is incomparable to the splendor of the Sophists' schools, "it outlasted them and thereby got the last word" (Smith, 1998, p.56).



The present study has developed through 'comparative method'. It is a radical tool of analyzing any theory or study. David Collier says that Comparative Method "sharpens our power of description, and plays a central role in concept-formation by bringing into focus suggestive similarities and contrast among cases" (1993, p.1). More importantly Comparative method can often be applied in examining hypotheses, and it can evaluate the inductive findings of new hypotheses and theorybuilding (Collier, 1993, p.1). Aristotle's ideas have differed to those of Plato's and he has severely criticized Plato's Theory of Forms. In this essay I will discuss Plato and Aristotle's views and ideas of the forms, body, knowledge and soul. Subsequently, Aristotle and Plato's social system and political philosophy will be discussed following the aforesaid comparative method.

PLATO & ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF FORMS OR IDEAS

Usually 'form' is the visible structure of any object or body. Both Plato and Aristotle have illustrated the same term 'form' differently. Aristotle was hypnotized by the "natural world" unlike Plato. In lieu of Plato's classification of two separate realms, Aristotle discerns two ideas of ordinary things form and matter. According to Aristotle form only exists when it is shaped by matter with some information. Besides, Matter is prospective to be informed. Aristotle detects "matter" with "potentiality", "form" with "actuality". For instance, a statue made of wood, here the wood is the matter or the potential statue and the shape is the form, which makes it an actual statue; the matter/form complex is the individual thing, the statue. In the case of artifacts like statues, we impose form on the matter. But the form/matter in statues is just an analogy to help us understand the basic idea. Aristotle was actually aimed in analyzing the features transmute in growth and development of organic things. The reason behind why water boils when heated and freezes when cold, why some trees produce apples and others oranges, why human embryos develop into adult humans and dog embryos develop into adult dogs. This can't be described normally by their matter, but by the form that makes something water, or an apple tree, or a human in virtue of which the things are what they are. In 'On the Soul' we find Aristotle applying his wider metaphysical views to the topic of living things (Pojman et al., 2010, p.1).

Plato and Aristotle's theory of forms or ideas render the concept of true knowledge and concrete objects of perception. T. Z. Lavine posits that for Plato ideas such as the idea of a circle, justice, beauty, triangle including the things that constitute our daily vocabularies such as yellow, house, man possess two vital functions. First, they enable us to know the exact thing of the world and the entity of philosophy, science and mathematics. Second, they make it possible for us to assess and put a value to all these entities. Plato opines that to contemplate or communicate the main requirement is the use of concept. Concepts are meant to make the cosmos penetrable. Supposedly a short statement "there is a man" or "there is an apple" bring the concept of man or apple. Each concept bears some attributes or feature so we identify it accordingly, thereupon we can say what or how a man or an apple is. Aside from a concept not having any objectives, universal or any feature understanding would have been impossible. In that case, we might be incapable of cognizing the word man. We may relate Plato's theory of form with Socrate's of 'universally true definitions'. Plato thinks forms are unyielding, absolute and authentic portrayal of concepts. The form of a triangle represents all its features to define the concept. Plato more often combines form and essence implying that they make up some essence or essential features of specific things (Lavine, 1984, 37). Aristotle seems to have been devoted follower of Plato's theory of forms in is twenty years at the Academy but later in contrast to Plato's view he asserts the separation of the form or essence of an object from another angle than the actual existing material. Moreover, his point is not based upon universal forms for knowledge. Forinstance, anything or any particular substance, a man, dog or fog, is a unity, because none of them exists apart from its own essence. Aristotle believes a sole object is unison of form and matter. T.Z Lavine also posits Aristotle idea stating that "The form of a thing is imminent in it, it is the universal and eternal form or essence



which the thing shares with all other things of the same type orspecies" (Lavine, 1984, 71) comparing with other men, dog or fog. 'Matter' is the bodily object of the specified substance, which has been shaped by the substance's form. In a nutshell, matter and form both are conjoined factors of every definite component.

Plato discovers the reality of the world in the forms as it is perceived by intellect, On the other hand for Aristotle, the reality of the world lies in 'matter', the material the world is constructed. Aristotle asserts that all substances contain two parts: "material and structure" - or "matter" and "form". Matter and form lie in this world, not to a world out of this present world it is in accordance of Aristotle. Plato initiated with the intellect whereas Aristotle commenced with "perceptions of the natural world". Plato's visualization was mathematical. It deals with the concepts which can be functioned without linking to the natural world. Aristotle's verdict is scientific depending upon scrutiny, perception, and verification. Both Plato and Aristotle are regarded among the greatest philosophers, albeit they bear significant dissimilitude between their philosophies. Plato was more "other worldly" while Aristotle remunerates on concrete objects in the material world (Marked by Teachers, 2015).

PLATO & ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF BODY &SOUL

Body and soul both are integral two essences to be known as inhabitant. Without body there isnofunction of a soul in the present world or vice versa. Peter King says "...human being is a composite of two fundamentally different substances, one material (the body) and the otherimmaterial (the mind or soul)" (King, 2011, p.1). Again Plato and Aristotle have opined their views on the same term "body and soul' with different evaluation implying the concept of 'Dualism' and 'Materialism'. "Dualism is the view that souls and bodies are radically different kinds of things, separable from one another, independent from one another. Souls are immaterial, bodies are material. Plato's *Phaedo*seems to offer a version of dualism. *Materialism* (properly speaking: reductive materialism) is the view that there are only material bodies of one sort or another. If there are souls, they are to be identified with material bodies" (Pojman et all., 2010, p.1). Plato as a dualist philosophizes that body and soul both are separate entities in a single person. However, the soul is immortal and the body or physical part enables us to act or react. On the other hand, Aristotle accentuates that the body and soul both are interdependent. For instance, he states that without soul's intention a body cannot move itself except accidental phenomenon. According to Craig R. Smith, Plato's popular Academy in Athens was to teach Aristotle. Plato has constructed "truth" in another world finding it as beyond reality where perfect forms exist permanently. He asserts that the ideas and objects of present world are blemished imitations of "numeral forms", though they have sufficient affinity to render an illusion of reality. Being determined to take back philosophy to a "truth- based" step, Plato pioneered an analytical "scaffolding" that "bridged Heraclitus' notion of change and Parmenides notions of permanence". A world where our bodies are entrapped is the world of transformation, illusion and shadow and the world where our souls will world return is the eternity. Implementing this formula, Plato generated So critic view of "noble hetoric" whichever led that it is better totolerate 'pain' than to 'inflict' it and betterment lies in being a 'philosopher' who knows own self than to becoming a "man in the city", a term used by Protagoras and Gorgias for an established person. People can reach their way back to the truth of 'noumenal world' or an idealized heaven only by philosophical introspection (Smith, 1998, p.57). Unlike Plato, Aristotle directs human beings to present world and upgraded a system of categories contingent on his scrutiny. Aristotle's approach is to lead the modern era combining science and philosophy. Aristotle's contemplation on rhetoric made him believe that Plato's ideas of the world is impractical if human beings need to survive and progress. Following Isocrates, Aristotle was well aware of rhetoric's essentiality as an art with interdisciplinary integrity that could be instructed. He thinks



we must need to associate with the 'contingent nature of the world' if we are living to survive let alone succeed. In his rhetoric he including his leading pupils introduces the human being with the uncertain nature of life (Smith, 1998, p.72-73). To sum up we can say similar to five human senses, such as sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, which function for different reasons sensing organs associated to each sense, body and soul also work together. The focal point is probably without other organs human can still sense but without body no inhabitant canexist,in similar vein without soul there is no use of body.

THE SOCIAL SYSTEM OF PLATO & ARISTOTLE

Talcott Parsons says "a social system is only one of three aspects of the structuring of a completely concrete system of social action. The other two are the personality systems of the individual actors and the cultural system which is built into their action" (p.3).

In *Contemporary Social System Theory*it has been mentioned that "Social system theory is concerned with the second-order observation of differences, distinctions, relations, and boundaries—it is not interested in defining essences, laws, values, or ontology. This makes contemporary social system theory very different from both the general systems approach of the 1950's and from other mainstream sociological paradigms" (pp.4-5). Aristotle and Plato's paradigm of ethics and principles diverge in search of "an ideal society". Paola Peynetti Velazquez has discovered many impediments, commonalities and dissimilarities through both Plato and Aristotle's social system which make an alley to the optimum stage of human life. The intellection of the "highest good" obtainable by humans is familiarized in both The Republic and the Nicomachean Ethics. Plato's prime purpose is to etch equality and emphasize how to be a neutral and positive human being, whereas Aristotle's is to target on getting the road to 'eudaimonia' (happiness) and thus to a "virtuous" and active life with a unique 'ergos' (function).

Plato, following a dialogue of Socrates where he conveys his thoughts about human justice, the establishment of an ideal city, its education, just and biased tenures, and finally the proof that the autocratic person becomes despondent and unfair. On the contrary, the philosopher-king (the ruler of his "Republic") is the blessed and the fairest of all humans. Aristotle means his discourse on an analysis of morality, aptitude, cogitation, and hypothesis that should capacitate people to contrive his exclusive 'ergos', come through 'energeia', and achieve 'eudemonia'. Both manuscripts disclose that it is crucial for human to be "social and political", by virtue of human being cannot obtain the pinnacle stage of goodness residing in desolation. Thus, the main mission of both edifications is to grasp social and civil justice by conceding individual either to adorn their own skill in a community of good human beings, or by being a part of a political and social foundation greater than the individual with a rigid and artificially created order. At the end, the arguments of the Republic and the Ethics aim to gain an affinity of the soul or ethical mean. Both Plato and Aristotle's idea of the "highest human good" varies according to the activities in their assumed life. According to Socrates owing to the 'Noble Lie' human beings would believe that by born they are metallic and this has unified them as brothers and sisters in a same place. He also argues some unrealistic points that to legalize the inflexible 'social structure' in the town. The commitment of each individual as a crucial part of the polis, including an argument that all the persons over the age of ten should be killed and that the children should be educated in a complex system of his 'kallipolis' lead by 'philosopherkings'. The normal factor that he urges to establish spuriously is an unrealistic regime. He says his city would not match any unfair regimes that already sustains, but it has to be artificially formed, even though a society authorized by philosopher kings would be considered as the "best city". Aristotle's model of equitability is more rational because everybody gets an activity or a function in life via 'experience, imitation, and practice'. These skills define the men and women of the polis. Although the leaders are not essentially the best humans, they are incredibly virtuous (argos) at politics which is their function in life. A vital difference between the towns is that while Aristotle



envisages a nation where each person outshines at what he chooses as his/her function. On the contrary Plato portrays everyone has some inborn skills to function accordingly. Aristotle denies the point of leading a 'virtuous life' because that is the way to happiness. Noteworthy point is both cities need citizens to be both 'social and political' with a view to functioning as a 'city-state'. In such society, numerous peoples should accomplish all the social and political activities of the civic. Mutual amity between both cities is an essential part here. However, Plato considers such bond as 'utilitarian' Aristotle envisions for a true friendship which brings tranquility and benefits. He thinks it renders communal unity because being authentically positive these groups expect positive things for each other. In a nutshell, both of their social systems are effective to create politically active citizens who support each other to sort out any chaotic situation. The presumption of the both political systems is shortly anal yzed as follows:

Plato's model is grounded on a 'Utopian'schemes where the illuminated should lead in 'kallipolis' only. In the Republic, the metaphor of the ship is depicted as a prominent instance of the disruption of a society. The person who knows how to helm does not have the power to balance "the ship". Even he is also reluctant to do it because he is the "star-gazer", someone whois bewitched by foresight and apathetic in the subject matters of the 'city-state'. Philosopher-king, therefore, possesses the wisdom essential to conduct the state, but in reality, few of them will actually want to return to the cavern to enlighten the rest of the peoples (Velazquez,pp.74-76).

PLATO & ARISTOTLE'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Political philosophy first made its footprints in Athens. In fact, the meaning, connotation and features presently have been noticed since the aforesaid period. All political actions are subject to change or preservation. To welcome transformation we expect to make things better on the other hand in case of preservation we prefer preserving the existing norms and values to prevent any alteration to the worse. It is noteworthy that whether political activities become a matter of preservation or change, its primordial focus is to establish 'good'. "For the good society is the political good" (Strauss, 1957,p.343). There is a radical sense by which political theory is associated to philosophy. Philosophy alleges to corporate with 'truths' openly. Moreover, it is publicly demonstrable. Simultaneously one of the fundamental features of Political philosophy is it is rigorously shaped by political theorists with their subject matter to what is 'public'(Political Philosophy, p.4).

In the realm of political philosophy both Plato and Aristotle appertain to the same historical period. According to YlberAliu that period is enlivened by the inquisitive classical Athenians due to several issues collided by the peoples strived against nature. Resultantly, there were many experiments to delve into the various problems experienced by people. Sorting out the social problems with philosophy and wisdom became a condition. Both Plato and Aristotle were hooked on questing knowledge related to 'social phenomena'. They both inspected to come upon new legitimate systems through which society activates (Aliu, 2018, p.36). In addition to some of the similarities between them, Plato and Aristotle's political philosophy have some prominent differences. Notwithstanding that they both search 'truth'; they use different pathways to establish it. For Plato the validity of political philosophy can't be exhibitfollowing the writing style of philosophy. The exact political philosophy can only be demonstrated with 'literature and dialogues'. But the fulfillment of the dialogues is not unreachable from the actual mathematics. For this reason, Plato is firm for the style of literary writing to convey his ideas on politics. The language that Plato has marked is 'poetic language'. It is the language of poets which has been skillfully concreted. The premises in which Socrates' debates occur are articulated. Characters in the book are described similarly to the characters in any work of art. Through Socrates debates with his critics in the book, Plato reveals his political idea. Other philosophers in making their own political philosophy



generally do not corporate with political criticism. In contrast to them, Plato through his logics holds out every step of the expression of his political philosophy, and also levels criticisms of this philosophy. In this way his political philosophy becomes wholesome. Through the logic of debates Plato seeks to enlighten those thoughts that represent partial truth through hostile characters with Socrates at the same time by giving his truths about political philosophy. While Aristotle expresses his views on politics through common philosophical and analytical language. Aristotle contemplates that through this style the truth about politics is easily transmitted to the reader. Differences in methodology also go in the direction of changing the logical standpoints of explanation. Plato uses the logical deductive method whereas Aristotle prefers the explanatory method. Aristotle points that "... as in other domains, where the complexity should be broken down into simple parts, since they are the smallest part of the entirety, likewise, by examining the state we will see the constituent parts of and to get to know even more about them, what they differ between them, and whether something can be taken from what has been said to be important from the aspect of science". Thus, in the study of various political problems Aristotle through an analytical approach intends to transfix the main source of understanding such issues. In videlicet, it is observed that describing the components of which the state is impassive. For Plato such purposes can be pursued them through the 'deductive approach'. Plato's and Aristotle's views, except

research methodology, differ in terms of research categories as well. Plato and Aristotle have differ ent opinions with the political categories to be taken for consideration. Many political manuscripts which are learnt by Plato are not explored by Aristotle. In similar vein, many political Treatises which are learnt by Aristotle are not followed by Plato. Casually, a groundbreaking part of Plato's own political discussion includes it to the idea of justice'. Besides, Plato's political phi losophy is assembled inan attempt to illustrate justice and injustice. Aristotle almost utterlyignores this concept. Aristotle ruminates on the concept of slavery to probe the "rights" of the captives and their constraints. On the contrary, Plato does not acknowledge this issue. Plato almost entirely overlooks the slave league and affairs referring to them.

Then Aristotle describes the idea of the center layer and the continuance that cultivates the griping of power from this layer. Plato brings no description of this point. For these reasons of discriminated categories of analysis, there are more elements where the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle differ between themselves than they have commonalities. All the same, Plato and Aristotle's political viewpoints strike in many other issues, such as the creation of the state, the reasons for democracy hate, and the preference for aristocracy, and gender relations.

Plato and Aristotle provide different parallel not only when exploring the concept of state creation, but also several causes for the rationality of this creation. Aliuposited that Plato contemplates the state was concreted owing to insufficient peoples as an individual, whereas Aristotle thinks that the state was formed so that the highest community can pursue pleasure. For Plato the state is "a man of great proportions". For Aristotle, "the state is imitation of the family". For the Plato the state connects with the individual and brings comparisons between these subjects. For Aristotle the state connects with the family and makes comparisons between them. For Plato the individual has more resemblance to the state. For Aristotle, more resemblance to the state has the family. Plato thinks the state is created because people as individuals are inadequate to attain their necessities. While Aristotle thinks the state is created to achieve greater happiness, Plato contemplates that people in the state join in to complement each other's abilities. Aristotle thinks that people are united in the state because in this way they can manage to realize their happiness (pp. 35-38). In brief, Aristotle prefers metaphors in his political views.

THE DISCOVERY OF TRANSFORMATION IN THEIR PHILOSOPHY

The present study needs clarification to evaluate the transformation in the philosophy of both Plato



and Aristotle. In this segment I have discussed the reason. Vicente B. Leitch has posited that after the beginning of the twenty five years long Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta and just after the death of the great Athenian statesman Pericles Plato was born. He was a figure who has overly observed the city's 'artistic golden age'. Both of his parents were from distinguished Athenian families, and his stepfather, an associate of Percles, was a regular participant in the political and customary life of fifth century Athens. As a young man living inacity of war and in continual political turmoil he appears to have been fated for a political life. But when the Peloponnesian War ended in 405, with the defeat and humiliation of Athens, the activities of Athenian political rule under the rule of the so called Thirty Tyrants oligarchy (2001, pp.404-403) and restored democracy made Plato 'disillusioned with political life'. The execution of Socrates, on charges for the lack of reverence and violating the young, was a climax in Plato's life. Besides, the older philosopher was an intimate friend of Plato's family, and Plato's writing is clearly been influenced by Socrates. Although Socrates never wrote a single world openly his incalculable influence can be observed on his follower Plato is clear (pp.41-42).

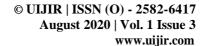
On the contrary, Aristotle's father was a personal physician to Amyntus II, the king of Macedonia. Some Scholars opine that his father's interested field inspired him to deal with 'biology and natural world'. In 367 B.C.E Aristotle took part in Plato's Academy in Athens as a student, where he came to be known as Plato's one of the best students being distinguished himself from Plato's view, eventually he became a mentor himself. Philosophically, Aristotle's research is more pragmatic than Plato, focusing on nature and real world. Plato's experience of 'artistic golden age' has made him more envisioned toward an 'ideal world' and being influenced by his father Aristotle prioritizes a philosophy depending upon rational world. It should be mentioned that Aristotle has invented the scientific method of analysis in the spectrum of treatises regarding physics, chemistry, zoology, biology, botany, psychology, politics, logic and epistemology unlike Plato who relied on philosophizing in a 'conversational literary form' (Leitch, 2001, pp.83-84).

CONCLUSION

Both Plato and Aristotle's philosophy is not devoid of shortcomings, while Plato thinks of philosopher king he might have paid less attention toward human instinct any human being may indulge in anything wrong, in a society a state man can be free from mistake. Plato views as Perfectionist, whereas Aristotle takes think as Materialist. Palto's worldview is 'utopian' which doesn't concern the readers with present world, rather it indicates them toward an ideal future world. The present study has discovered a comparison and contrast between two cornerstones of philosophy. Albeit Plato was Aristotle's mentor, we notice a number of prominent differences between their ideologies. Being Plato's favorite pupil in Academy, Aristotle has deliberately represented his own views. It seems both these ancient philosophers have put some efforts to enlighten the modern society implementing that two people with different moral perspectives still might be good to each other. Taking considering both of their ethics when one is materialistic, other is idealistic, the study accentuates that if pragmatically things can be done in accordance of Aristotle, Plato's 'ideal world' cannot be placed together because human world cannot be isolated from imperfection. Neither the philosopher king nor the citizens of a state will be perfect bearing the basic innate nature they may wrong. Supposedly if any one commits a crime s/he will try to escape from the situation instead of confessing it directly. In such case, practically Plato's 'conversational literary form' will not work, because material world is mechanical aswell.

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