

Q- Aristotle was the great but ungrateful student of Plato. Elucidate.

### 1- Introduction :

Aristotle and Plato were the ancient Greek philosophers who studied ethics, politics etc. Aristotle remained a student of Plato for many years and was influenced by his work however, he criticized his work and gave different concepts including rule of law, supremacy of constitution, incentivization of citizens.

### 2- A Historical Glance at Aristotle and Plato :

Plato	Aristotle
Time period : 425-325 BC	Time period : 384-322 BC
Philosopher in: Greece	Philosopher in: Greece
Important work : Republic	Important work : Politics
Important concept : Theory of ideal state, philosopher king, Communism	Important concept : Classification of governments, rationality.

### 3- Aristotle : As Great Student of Plato:

Aristotle remained student of Plato at Academy in Athens for almost 20 years.

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There was a minute level of similarities between their work. Some of them are given below:

### i- Both Focused on State:

Like Plato, Aristotle was also interested in study of state. For this purpose, he proposed his theory of state just like his teacher's theory of ideal state.

### ii- Acknowledged Importance of Education:

Parallel to Plato, Aristotle had acknowledged significance of education for stability of state. Plato had given a proper scheme of education to differentiate between different segments of society.

### iii- Validated State Owned Education:

Resembling Plato, Aristotle was also in the favour of state controlled education to ensure fairness in the society.

### iv- Affirmed State as a Mean to End:

For Plato, justice is an end and state is a mean to end - "justice". Similarly Aristotle focused that end is morality in the citizens of the state.

### v- Division of Labour:

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To ensure efficiency in the state, both created division of labour in their own way. This will lead to effectiveness in the state.

#### 4- Aristotle : As an Ungrateful Student of Plato :

Despite being student of Plato for twenty years, the ideas of Aristotle were different from his teacher. Aristotle even criticised Plato's concepts, some of which are given below :

##### 1- Aristotlian' Rational State vs Plato's Ideal State :

Plato concept of state was based on the utopic idea whereas, Aristotle gave the rational concept of state. He was inspired by his father who was a physician. He applied scientific way to explain states. His system of government was itself a proof of rational concept of states.

Number of rulers	Good Form	Bad form
1	Monarchy	Tyranny
Few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Many	Polity	Democracy

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## ii- Aristotle Favoured Rule of Law Over Platonian's Philosopher King:

Unlike Plato, Aristotle was the supporter of democracy. Plato gave his theory of ideal state due to his teacher's death as well as he was against democracy. Hence, Plato favoured rule of Philosopher King. Whereas, Aristotle favoured rule of law that everyone is equal before law, thereby enforcing democracy.

## iii- Aristotle Preferred Incentivization Over Plato's Communism of Property:

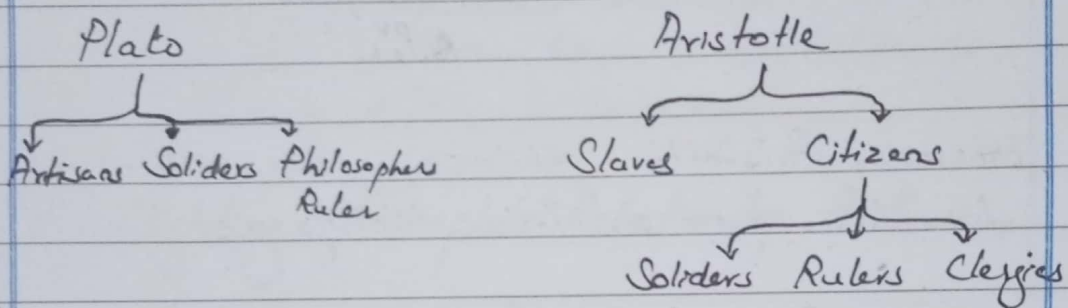
Plato gave concept of communism in order to ensure justice in the state. High classes i.e. Soldiers and Philosopher Kings were not allowed to keep private property. On the contrary, Aristotle favoured the incentivization of citizens as the reward for their services for the state.

## iv- Criticized Plato for Communism of Family:

Unlike Plato, Aristotle give importance to the concept of family. He criticized Plato for common ownership of family i.e. wife and children and considered it inhumane.

## v. Aristotle's Concept of Slavery was Against Notion of Plato's Gender Equality:

Plato promoted education for both genders as both can contribute to the welfare of state. However, the situation seems different in case of Aristotle, where he did not follow <sup>his</sup> teacher's legacy and gave concept of slavery.



## vi. "End" of Aristotle was Different From "End" of Plato:

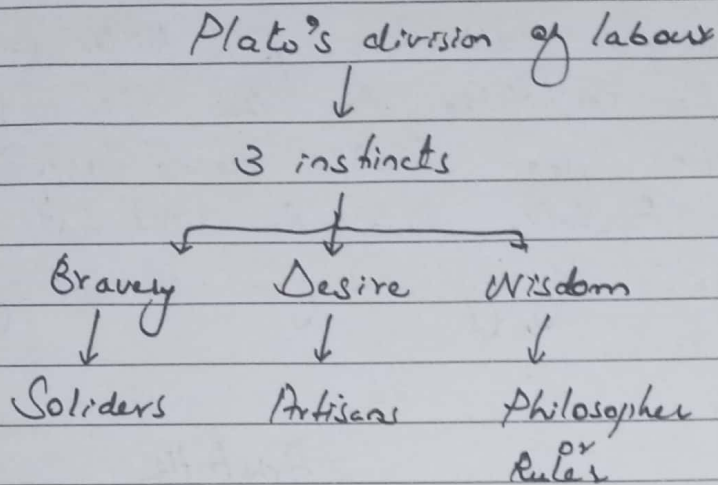
Though both used the notion of "end" as their output however, the "end" to both was different. For Plato, state is an end to achieve justice. Whereas, for Aristotle, state is an end to achieve morality in the state.

## vii. Difference in Division of Labour:

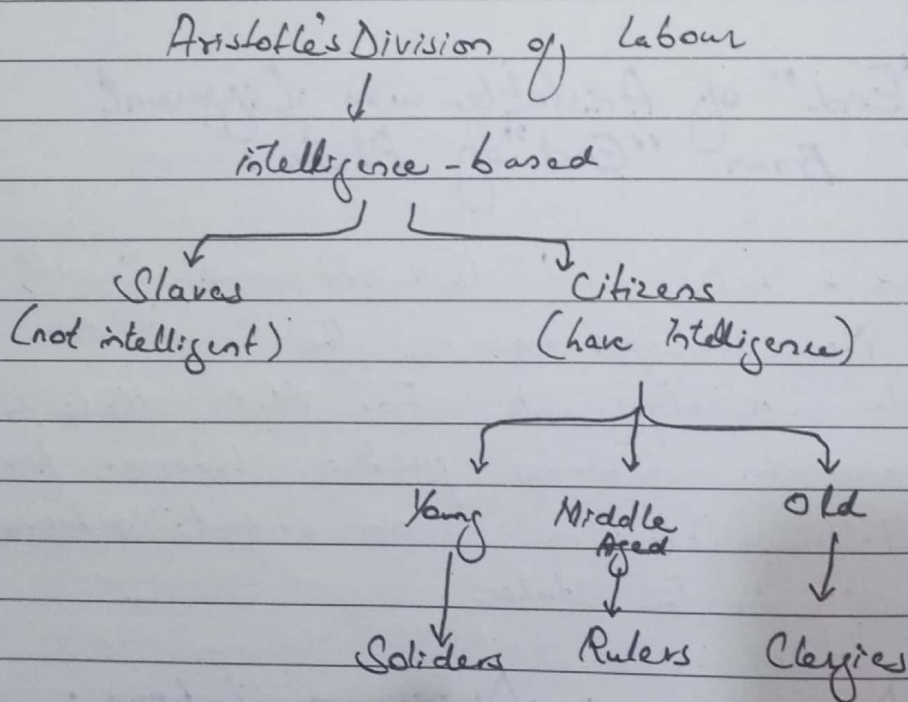
Aristotle's division of labour was totally different from concept of division of labour of Plato. Plato divided the

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state into three classes based on their dominant instincts.



Whereas, Aristotle divided the citizens of his states based on their intelligence.



Hence, there is a complete contrast of ideas between their notions. Aristotle's divisions are totally different from that of Plato's divisions.

### viii- Aristotle's concept of Eudaimonia as Criticism to Plato's notion :

Plato in his famous work "The Republic" argued that it is important to kill the disabled segment of state as they are not productive and they don't play their part in economics. However, Aristotle criticized his concept in his work "Politics" and gave concept of eudaimonia that every individual has the right to live life regardless of their potential ability to contribute.

### 5. Highlighting Complex Relationship Between Aristotle and Plato :

Aristotle was a brilliant thinker in his own right and was student of Plato. Aristotle gave significant contributions in the field of science, philosophy, and various other fields of knowledge. It does not imply that Aristotle followed his teacher completely rather he developed his distinct ideas which were divergent from Plato. He critically examined his teacher's philosophy and sometimes disagreed with his mentor.

### 6. Conclusion :

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In essence, while Aristotle learned much from Plato, he also ventured into his own influential body of work that often diverged from Plato's theory. This divergence is what's alluded as ingratiffulness of Aristotle.

