

Second Year

Greek and Roman Literature and Literary Criticism

(2)

Dear students,

Please study the details of this summary in the book pages 6 & 7.

On pages 6 & 7 of the book, we have the following question:

What are the significant differences between the types of poetry according to Aristotle?

Pages 6 & 7 answer this question. The answer should include the following points:

Aristotle lists the various types of poetry: epic, tragedy, comedy, dithyrambic poetry, flute-playing and lyre-playing.

Aristotle remarks that all of these kinds of poetry are mimetic or imitative, but that there are significant differences between them:

1. The first kind of distinction is the means they employ. Just as a painter employs paint and a sculptor employs stone, the poet employs language, rhythm and harmony.
2. The second distinction is the objects that are imitated. All poetry represents actions with agents who are either better than us, worse than us, or quite like us. Tragedy and epic poetry deal with characters who are better than us like kings and queens, while comedy and parody deal with characters who are worse than us like fools.
3. The final distinction is with the manner of representation: the poet either speaks directly in narrative or assumes the characters of people and speaks through them. For example, in tragedy and comedy, the poet speaks exclusively through assumed characters.

Best luck