

Aristotle contemplating the bust of homer by rembrandt

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Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer by Rembrandt van Rijn The painting is 143.5 cm by 136 cm in dimension, painted by Rembrandt van Rijn in the year 1653, painted on oil on canvas, and is currently located at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Theodore 149). In the painting, which is the imaginary portrait of Aristotle, there is a great Greek philosopher depicted resting his hand reflectively on Homer's bust. Homer is an epic poet of an ancient time. The painting depicts that Homer is blind, with his eyes brown voids, which guide the eye into a deep darkness. The sightless eyes of Homer's bust are innocent and profound, which depicts his face being humble and weak and wearing a simple shift (Theodore 149). Aristotle's eyes are black, and they look wanly, like he knows too much. It makes the viewer feel that time has collapsed, and the viewer is directly communicating with the philosopher the way he communes with Homer.

Alexander the Great is depicted in a medallion that hangs from a golden chain in Aristotle's neck, of whom Aristotle had tutored. It can be noted that Aristotle is contemplating the worldly success worthiness, which is material rewards, as opposed to upholding spiritual values (Theodore 150). The gesticulation of the hands, depicted by the sleeves that have cascaded and the shadow that is playing over the brow and eyes of Aristotle support the previous interpretation that he does not care about the spiritual values. The painting was painted for Antonio Ruffo, who was a great Sicilian collector who also referred the comparison of touch and sight by Aristotle as a means to acquire knowledge (Theodore 150).

The bust of Homer's portrait can be referred to as a legendary figure that comes from three centuries earlier. Therefore, it depicts that Aristotle is

contemplating on a portrait that depicts a remote past. Because the image of Homer is conventionalized in ancient statuary, the artist wants to acknowledge that to some degree any portrait is a fiction. And yet, since Rembrandt is a brilliant artist, one finds it hard dismissing Aristotle being a figment of paint. In this case, one can argue that Rembrandt depicts interior life of his subjects, a consciousness. Since Rembrandt painted this painting in his late 40s, one can argue that he contemplates the world's age. The centuries weigh on the viewer as the gold chain with its medallion of Alexander weighs on Aristotle (Theodore 150). The painting can be interpreted as a morality tale, whereby Aristotle is successful, a courtier who is well-dress, envies Homer, who is blind but a free artist.

In conclusion, the use of the painting can be said that it is to preserve the images of individuals' who are dead so that in many years later they can be looked and remembered. However, some scholars have denoted the piece of art physiognomic that was associated with Aristotle. In relation to this view, Aristotle has placed his hand on Homer's bust for physiognomic reasons. Moreover, it means that Aristotle is depicted as a physiognomist. Also, one can argue that Rembrandt wanted to depict the Greek antiquity greatest men in the painting (Theodore 150). In the painting, the philosopher compares two values; the first is everything he admired in Homer, which is humility, intellectual, gravitas and expression. The second is the sumptuous wealth and material achievement as depicted by the golden chain and Alexander the Great iconic image (Theodore 150).

Works Cited

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<https://assignbuster.com/aristotle-contemplating-the-bust-of-homer-by-rembrandt/>

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