



## Aristotle, Mitchell, Re-thinking thinking HON 201 A: Prompts for writing response #2

### Due Thursday, Feb. 7:

For this second response paper, choose from among the questions here. You can answer as many or as few as you like. Strive to incorporate the readings, including even previous readings.

☞ Aristotle believed that how one thinks about happiness depends on the assumptions one makes about human nature. Do you agree with this? If you do, what are some of your assumptions about human nature? (Here are a few cues or choices: For Aristotle, man is imperfect, yet strives for perfection. For Plato, man cares only about satisfying his animal instincts. Give him more stuff, more pleasure.)

☞ For Aristotle, beings should do what they do best. They should be exemplars. Giraffes should 'giraffe' (eat grass off tall trees, whatever). Man is best at reasoning, so he should reason. He should engage in abstract, speculative, even moral thought. In other words, he should learn. What role does or should education have in any pursuit of the good life?

**Richard Mitchell:** "Education, I am convinced, must be nothing more than this: The Journey toward the limits of Reason, if there be any. And if any there be, so that some other and even better condition than education may lie beyond them" (41). "Understanding what I do think, and why I think it, and whether I should think it, is, at best, an occasional and fleeting condition" (100).

☞ What does Aristotle intend when he instructs us to "hit the mean," or the Golden Mean? Give some concrete examples, either from the past or projecting into your own future.

☞ Certainly, virtue must play a role in this "Golden Mean" hitting. Human virtue deals with our feelings and actions, and in both we can go to excess or fall short or hit the mean. Again, provide some concrete examples of what Aristotle might mean with these distinctions, either from your own life or hypothesizing.