

PLATO: The Arts and Social Order

Joseph Situma

Lecturer, Department of Philosophy,
University of Nairobi,
Kenya

E-mail: joseph.wanyama@uonbi.ac.ke

Abstract

Plato's aesthetics are derived directly from his moral theory and political theory. In Plato's moral theory, virtues are key to a wholesome human life and more so for the "attainment of enlightenment through rational inquiry and ultimately through direct encounter with Absolute Truth". The primary thesis of Plato's theorizing on dance, music, and poetry is that these could be inimical to the health of society because they have the potential to undermine the critical spirit of the citizens. This ambivalence to the arts was the motivation for his search for criteria of determining the permissible forms of arts and it remains a cause of concern to contemporary thinkers. Our response to Plato's and other thinkers' ambivalence to the arts is a reconciliation of the creative and critical dimensions of human beings.

Plato is a pioneer literary theoretician whose contributions on the function of the arts will never cease to deserve attention. In his dialogues, he strives to determine the nature of the arts generally and to prescribe forms of arts that befit the well conceived and organized *polis* and, later, republic. And in Plato's view the best *polis* is one in which "the good in human life" is realized and the good life is one in which there is justice in the society and in the individual members. In *Statesman*, the Eleatic Stranger searches for appropriate measurements that the statesman should employ in determining the appropriate means. In *Ion*, *Symposium*, and *Republic* his quest for social order focuses on drama, prose, poetry, and music for the obvious reason that architecture hardly affects social order. Painting and sculpture can affect social order, and so Plato examines these arts too. His views on the arts arise from his eudemonistic, aristocratic, and rationalist presuppositions.

In this paper, we understand social order to mean patterns of the lives of human beings who share ethos, certain fundamental interests and who by virtue these have obligations and rights. There is social order when members of a society adhere to the laid down rules of conduct, and vice versa.

Plato's concerns about the arts and their place in human life arise against a backdrop of a society he conceived to be the best suited for human beings, and that is one founded on virtues, governed by the statesman, and in which the pursuit of the highest wisdom is the highest good. This is a society of the philosopher-king, the guardians, and the merchants, and its dynamics are such that each class performs its best-suited role and justice is paramount. His contention is that such a well laid out society runs the risk of disintegrating if the integrity of its citizens is subverted, and the arts have the potential to do exactly that. From the outset, Plato has reservations on the capacity of the arts to bring about the good in the citizens of the *polis*. This is evident in the following assertion:

We shall say that the imitative poet...sets up a bad government in the soul of every private individual by gratifying the mindless part which cannot distinguish the small from the large but thinks that the same things are at one time small, at another large. He is a maker of images which are very far removed from the truth. (Republic, 248)

A notable aspect of this assertion is that it concerns the imitative poet, who in Plato's view generates images that are far from the truth. In Platonic epistemology and metaphysics, there are "four mental processes—noesis, dianoia, pistis, and eikasia" (Grube, (1974:164) corresponding with four realities, namely form, mathematical realities, objects of sense, and images or reflections. Physical realities are copies of Forms and therefore any assertions about physical things twice removed from truth. It follows that the outcome of imitation of physical things is thrice removed from the Forms and therefore too far from the truth and this implies the hierarchy of realities and corresponding mental processes.

Yet earlier, in *Phaedrus and Ion*, Plato had observed that self-control, rationality, and detachment, are incompatible with genuine poetic creativity, which requires sensitivity, genius, divine inspiration. Thus in *Ion*, Socrates asserts:

For the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him; when he has not attained this state, he is powerless and is unable to utter his oracles.

Moreover, in these early dialogues, Plato conceives an affinity between the poet and the madman, which is later vindicated by behavioral experts in detail and based on extensive empirical studies. About the artist, Plato asserts as follows:

It (possession and madness from the muses) takes hold of the tender and untouched, rousing it up and exciting it to frenzy in lyric and other kinds of poetry...But whoever comes to the gates of poetry without the Muse's madness, persuaded that art will make him a good poet, is ineffectual himself, and the poetry of the sane man is eclipsed by that of the mad.

Plato draws the conclusion that the poet recites as inspired, but he is not capable of exhibiting any specific skills. Indeed, as Zalta observes, it is common for artists to be unable to account for their prowess. Yet in *Symposium*, the artist is conceived as a revealer of ideal essences and, at least, as a guide to "the ideal Form of Beauty itself" by virtue of offering us the beautiful, which once we grow to love would form the basis of pursuing the ideal Form of Beauty.

However, it is easy to infer from Plato's equation of the artist to the madman that a society that boasts of many good poets is actually one deeming with citizens of various degrees, and the more loftier the artist the higher his degree of madness. Then, we can also be tempted to infer that the overall health of such a society is detracted due to the presence of the many poets and if the madness of the poets is contagious then it follows that the society is in danger of social anarchy.

Fortunately, Plato clarifies the link between the arts and the conditions of the citizens in his assertion that "words and character of style depend on the temper of the soul". Moreover, he asserts, the "beauty of style and harmony and grace and good rhythm depend on simplicity", which is the outcome "of a rightly and nobly ordered mind and character." This means, in effect, that the danger posed to social order has its genesis in the poetry and artworks that are inadequate in respect of style, harmony, grace, and rhythm.

Indeed, in the same dialogues, Plato's Socrates expresses appreciation of compositions that are perfect and therefore underlines the predominant view of classical aesthetics. Perhaps what needs

interrogation here is the direction of perfection. If Plato's Socrates appreciates the painstaking efforts of artists, then he is quite justified. Throughout the history of humankind, works of art have been classified between the masterpieces and the mediocre, and it is important to underline the agonies that artists go through to achieve their ends.

Still, we need a way out of the apparent inconsistency of Plato attributing madness to the poets and his appreciation and prescription of 'compositions that are perfect'. Eysenck (1995: 18) resolves the apparent inconsistency through his caution against understanding mania and depression in the sense of post-Freud meanings, because "in Latin there is no distinction between madness and inspiration".¹ Eysenck (1995) further argues that: "In all this we may detect an ambiguity, and ambivalence, and a paradox; the genius is mad, but the mad are not geniuses. Clearly this madness differs in kind from that observed so frequently in the unfortunate victims of madness; the genius is mad and not mad." Indeed, the word music has its etymological root in the Greek Muses, who were the demigods that inspired artists. That is how Titian conceived the painting *Venus and Music* in Renaissance.

In *Republic* and *Laws*, the mature Plato focuses on imitation as an aspect of life and the arts. He draws a boundary between good imitation and bad imitation, and asserts that, "youth upwards can imitate people who are courageous, temperate, just, and holy" and in order to do that they should not be exposed to people of contrary characteristics. He also conceives as good imitation, artistic presentations that have simplicity, invariable style, single harmony and rhythm. His argument for these prescriptions is that in the republic that he conceives: "we mean to employ for our souls' health the rougher and severer poet or storyteller, who will imitate the style of the virtuous only". Moreover, he conceives aesthetic cultivation as a process that should "instill in citizens a sense of harmony, proportion, and gracefulness..."

Now, in order for art to accomplish these important tasks, Plato prohibits portrayal of certain kinds. He raises objections against negative portrayures of the gods, and points out Homer's depiction of Apollo, Zeus, and other gods in compromising states. Plato's position is understandable because the gods, demigods, and rulers are the pillars of society and hence the concern of all societies about the portrayures that the artists wrought. Now, whether the gods are ever in compromised states in reality is not the issue, but rather the repercussions of the negative portrayures on society. What, for example, are the consequences of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* on the faith of Christians? Similarly, what does Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* effect on the spiritual state of Muslims?

These are weighty questions and they provide a degree of justification for Plato's proscription of indiscriminate imitation of acts, sounds, and states. Since his aim is to establish a republic in which men are good, it can neither be permissible for men to imitate women, nor for human beings to imitate animals and nature. Plato singles out pantomime for proscription arguing that it does not nurture virtue, but undermines it.

In dialoguing with Adeimantus, Plato applies the same line of thinking on melody and song. As we pointed out in the overview of classical arts, in the realm of music, there were various harmonies. Plato prescribes Dorian and Phrygian harmonies. Dorian harmony is considered appropriate for times of war/danger (or what he calls the strain of necessity/ the strain of the unfortunate/ the strain of courage). Phrygian on other hand is conceived to be suitable for times of peace and freedom of action (or what Plato calls the strain of freedom/ the strain of the fortunate/ the strain of temperance). The aptness of the word 'strain' in Plato's classification is reinforced by Alperson et al (2008:11), in the observation that philosophy of the mind experts refer to the synchronization of body movement to music as "muscular bonding". Alperson et al (2008: 11) adds "music does not only activate convergent movement impulses. It also stimulates sectors of the brain connected with affect".

From prescriptions and proscriptions on musical forms, Plato moves on to reflect on the kind of instruments that express the virtues and those that are contrary to the virtues. He arrives at the conclusion that only the lyre and harp produce the rhythms that express the virtues. The flute, that instrument of mellow sounds that figure prominently in the *Odyssey*, is excluded from the republic. In addition, pan-harmonic music is totally excluded from the republic. Plato considers complex meter to be a manifestation of confusion, which is contrary with his quest for grace and courageous, harmonious life.

Plato extends the role of ‘superintendence’ to all other creative artists, pointing out that they too are “prohibited from exhibiting forms of vice, intemperance and meanness and indecency in sculpture and building...because guardians should not grow up amid images of moral deformity.” Nevertheless, of all the arts, Plato (Bk. III, 398-402) is most concerned about music and so I cite his conclusion at length at this point:

And therefore, Glaucon, musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful, or him who is ill-educated ungraceful...

The contestable assumption that Plato makes is that the artist is engaged in faithful representation of activities, human states, and nature. However, Plato’s view of art is easily reconcilable with his concerns on the potential of art to undermine the moral development and fiber of citizens. It is true that music, drama, painting, and sculpture are sensually pleasurable and delighting in the wrong objects and acts can undermine a person’s integrity. Although Plato’s concern is understandable given that comedy and farce unmask and break the fragile basis of certain forms of existence, Burke offers a more inclusive perspective on imitation when he scrutinizes this aspect together with ambition. Reflecting on how imitation can be valuable and harmful, Plato poses the following question:

Did you never observe how imitations, beginning in early youth and continuing far into life, at length grow into habits and become a second nature affecting body, voice and mind?

Plato’s imitation account of what the artist does to actualize a work of art is open to many objections. However, before we look at some of the objections, we must distinguish between three levels of imitation: the level of the artist, the level of the performer, and the level of the audience.

It appears to me that Plato is guilty of the same charge that he accuses the artist of committing. The early Plato conceives the artist as inspired by the muses and this is a mystical rather than a rational account. In the maturity of *Republic*, Plato abandons the mystical account for an empirical account, especially in discounting the worth of mimetic arts in his ideal society. If indeed, the critical faculty were consistent, as opposed to the inconsistency of “the mindless part which cannot distinguish the small from the large”, there would be no variation between the early and later Socrates. Whereas this line of argument is fallacious, the point is, there are errors of perception and errors of conception, and no mortal being is infallible.

With respect to the performer, Plato’s view is that impersonation can result in the unhealthy situation whereby an individual breaches the boundary between make-believe and reality.ⁱⁱ The unhealthy state could more easily arise when the actor is compelled to rehearse his/her role and strive to render the actions and pronouncements of a particular person as accurately as possible. That danger is evident in Robert Jones’ (1941: 32) enunciation that:

If you are to play Hamlet...then you become his host. You invite him into yourself. You lend him your body, your voice, your nerves; but it is Hamlet's voice that speaks, Hamlet's impulses that move you.

What would happen if the actor is to play such negative roles as the prostitute, the pimp, the greedy shylock, and so forth? Is there no danger of some of the impersonated features becoming stuck in the actor? The invited guest could just refuse to leave, and in fact take over the actor's body, mind and spirit.

Weitz (Hospers, 1969: 216) responds to these concerns arguing that only failure to distinguish between the language of fiction and the language of reference can lead to the envisaged negative development. He points out that even children playing various roles recognize that they are engaged in games. That response is not adequate to Plato's objections to imitation of bad characters, because in his view and the view of eudemonia, people become honest, generous, and rational by imitating the actions of men and women who embody these virtues initially (that is, in their childhood). Moreover, I find credence in Bruce's observation that "Imitative adults will naturally engage in what psychologists call "role-playing"; in different circumstances they will act as if they are different people: they may act like Captain Bligh on Monday, like laid-back uncle Neil on Tuesday, and like someone else on Friday."

In my view, the degree of influence that imitation exerts on the actors is not absolute, being predicated on many factors, including the frequency, duration, and intensity of impersonation, socialization, maturity (which Plato acknowledges), and tradition. In our contemporary world in which individuals wear many hats, role-playing is pervasive. The problem with role-playing is that we can never quite be certain about the authentic identity of the person and yet Plato's ethics and ontology conceives human beings and other things to have definite identities and *telos*. In order to appreciate the concern of Bruce, let us suppose we have 'statesman' who also doubles as a merchant, a disc Jockey, and a member of a fraternity. When encounter him, we can never predict how he/she will behave.

It is also an undeniable fact that the arts have the potential to and do influence the audience variously. Weitz (Hospers, 1969:217f) offers one account of how the influence occurs by citing an excerpt from Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* in which the author offers 'generalizations about the world'. The same is true of Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, which offers the reader generalized statements about life, the nature of human being, values and so forth. Here is an excerpt from that novel (Rand, 1957:940):

Man's mind is his basic tool of survival. Life is given to him, survival is not. His body is given to him, its substance is not. To remain alive, he must act, and before he can act he must know the nature and purpose of his action. But to think is an act of choice....

Now, Plato has a problem with these claims because in his view the artist is not an expert on anything. Rand is not an expert on life, values, and human reality, and therefore her assertions could at best originate from observation of human beings and things. Indeed, the danger with generalized observations such as Rand's is that the average reader will not realize that they should subject them to the measure of truth, just as we do in all cases of referential propositions. The danger to the audience, in this respect, is that Proust, Rand, and other artist offer particular worldviews, disguised as mere narratives. Such an apparently harmless claim as "he must know the nature and purpose of his action," could effect massive change of life. The change could be positive or negative, and hence Plato's concern, which has to be understood in view of his pedagogical position in *Protagoras* (314b) that inappropriate teachings causes injury to the recipient and it is vital that the learner gets the appropriate teachings.ⁱⁱⁱ As Plato observes, in dialoguing with sophists, the 'generalizations' about virtue, justice, and knowledge that they endorse and give respectable garbs are

injurious to the souls of their pupils, and the same could be the case in the assessment of the generalizations that Proust, Rand, and other artists offer. In thus asserting, we give the allowance that there are artists whose 'generalizations' are the outcome of rigorous and deep reflection.^{iv}

Then, there is the fact that narratives and dramatic presentations do effect movement in the sympathetic nerves of the audience and that viewers develop uncontrollable desire for certain things or conditions of life or relationships. Novels, poems, plays, and paintings effect this movement in people because the arts are slanted to maximally bring in sharp relief the fundamental realities of life, love, happiness, suffering, bondage, and death. That is why the arts have the potential of effecting world-shattering changes in members of a society. The power of narratives in influencing the states and lives of citizens arise from another aspect: the role of the exemplar in human formation. Narratives present characters, who manifest various features as the narrative unfolds, and in the course of it the reader/listener grows to identify with one character and to desire to develop and embody the hero's features. Certainly, the effected changes could be affirmative of an existent state of existence and all its fundamentals, or be contrary to it. It is in view of the latter possibility that the contemporary world of electronic narratives have institutional procedures of determining the appropriate audience for the diverse narratives.

Critical Reactions

Plato is the forerunner of all revolutionaries who set out to establish a social order that has certain range of features. The ambivalence to the arts arises from the recognition of the capacity of the arts to induce, nurture, and maintain certain psychological states that, in view of a particular order of society, could be positive or negative. This is the reason why the revolutionary sets out criteria for permissible and impermissible arts. During the communist era, Eastern Europe artist and art scene witnessed draconian controls and sanctions. According to Camus (1953: 219), this aversion is rooted in the fact that, "Art is an activity which exalts and denies simultaneously."

In the same tenor, Alperson and Carroll (2008) observe that:

....the Arts are not divorced from the rest of our cultural practices. They are intimately bound up with moral education; political programs of every persuasion; spiritual matters; the articulation of ideals and purposes; the modeling of manners and sentiments; the exemplification of styles of gesture, carriage, fashion, and speech; the dissemination of general cultural *savoir fair*; and so forth

We certainly know artists who have also played the roles of social critic and visionary through their works, such as in the music of Woody Guthrie ("So Long, It's Been Good to Know Ya"), Bob Marley ("Get Up, Stand Up") and generally in punk and rap music such as 2Pac ("Brenda's Got a Baby"). Alpers et al (2008) gives the example of the Gregorian chant and Handel's *Hallelujah* in the Catholic Church. In literature, there is explicit social criticism in the works of Ray Brabury (*Fahrenheit 451*), George Orwell (*Nineteen Eighty Four*) Wole Soyinka (*Season of Anomy*), Toni Morrison (*Beloved*), and Andrea Dworkin (*Mercy*). A person capable of interacting with any of these works receives much more than aesthetic pleasure. In some cases, the boundary between art and propaganda is extremely thin. The arts offer much more than aesthetic pleasure, when they are employed as pedagogical materials, and when the works of art evoke reverence, love, sorrow, unity, disunity, and serenity. Literary works subtly raise questions on the 'normal' and in some cases offer visions of other sorts of order. Because of the intrepid manner in which the arts perform the various functions, the unwearied become transformed and could progressively be rendered incapable of playing their social roles.

Plato's ambivalence is justified, but then no social order suffices for all generations and, therefore, what one generation considers to be sacrosanct truths and values become questionable and even odious later.

In philosophy, even within the same generation and institution, practitioners too often hold divergent views. So it was that Plato's own pupil Aristotle advanced a less ideologically constricted conception of art and its functions in society. While the concept of mimesis remained central in that account, Aristotle elaborated other concepts relevant to art such as probability, necessity, design, theme, thought, language, and catharsis. Aristotle's view of catharsis creates a divergence between him and Plato. *Wikimedia* expresses that divergence as follows:

Plato argued that the most common forms of artistic mimesis were designed to evoke from an audience powerful emotions such as pity, fear, and ridicule which override the rational control that defines the highest level of our humanity and lead us to wallow unacceptably in orgies of emotion and passion. Aristotle's concept of catharsis, in all of the major senses attributed to it, contradicts Plato's view by providing a mechanism that generates the rational control of irrational emotions.

Thus, instead of the polar view of reason and passions that permeates Plato's dialogues, Aristotle articulates a state of complementarity between these two dimensions of human being. In my view, this is a more plausible position, and I will be offering the basis of making this assertion.

The concept of mimesis received adverse responses from Goodman (1976) and Gombrich (1960), both arguing that imitation is neither sufficient nor necessary for artistic representation. Gombrich argues that there can be no such things as an innocent eye and therefore no artist can faithfully copy reality. Implicit in Plato's conception of the artistic process and the status of art is the epistemological view that things are as perceived and therefore the mind plays no role. This is a position that Kant (1950) rejected in his argument that the mind through the categories and the process of apperception plays an active role enabling us to make sense of phenomena. The process of perception is "an active, creative process", and hence the differences in what we perceive even when we are fairly at one in time and space. More specifically, this brings to mind Wilfrid Sellars's criticism of the "myth of the given". It also invokes the debates that have led theorists, including Waugh (Fuller et al, 2004, 39) to the conclusion that "There can be no theory-free observation. . ."

Moreover, in the views of Hegel and Marx, Plato's conception of art belongs to a specific point in the unfolding of the universe towards the Absolute Spirit and in the unfolding of history towards Communism, respectively. Yet, even in the age of revolution that was to blossom from the germinal ideas of Marx, ambivalence to art remained. Thus, Alpers et al (2008) asserts:

There is, finally, also the view that the political threat of music comes not from its potential to goad political action but, to the contrary, from its soporific effects that can lead to political apathy. This view, too, was voiced in both ancient Greece and in more recent times. Vladimir Lenin, upon listening to a Beethoven sonata, is reported by Maxim Gorky to have said that he can't listen to music very often because it makes him want to say sweet, silly things and pat the heads of little people whose heads must be beaten if they are to make the revolution.

Even though at this point in the history of humankind the notions of the universe unfolding towards some utopia seem farfetched, Lenin's reaction to Beethoven's sonata affirms Plato's view on the power of art to subvert the rational dimension of even the best prepared statesman and guardian. And even though the Platonic emphasis of Beauty, Truth, and Good in art as in philosophy is skewed, does not seem to carry absolute weight.

On the other hand, Bakhtin (, 32) asserts that "novels are meant to do more—much more—than reproduce the intentions and images already available in everyday life" and to endorse imitation is to relieve the novel, "and ourselves, of the task of cognition altogether".

Indeed, the artist can only adhere to Plato's prescription that aesthetics should aspire to embody the idea of the Good, Beauty, Symmetry, and Truth, by engaging in active, selective, creative process. Plato's emphasis on clarity/ transparency, singularity of characters, and determinate location of space is outstanding, but these are only realizable through a process of selection, which must entail the artist's use of the critical dimension. In *Symposium*, he argues that beautiful things point to absolute beauty. The issue, in this conception, is how beautiful things arise from the labors of the artist. There is, moreover, an apparent disconnect between Plato's conception of artistic process as imitation and his assertion that the artist has closer affinity to the madman than the philosopher. How, then, would the artist comprehend absolute beauty if he so distant from the philosopher? If we understand Plato's analogy of the artist and the madman in the sense of a person carrying out an activity passionately and if the Muses are the determinants of what and how the artist operates, then the artist is not in charge. Conceived thus, the artist is like Hermes and the work of art is a message.

The Creative and Critical

The Socratic preference of the critical nerve, over the imaginative and creative is undeniable. The question that these preference raises is, are the two bifurcated aspects mutually exclusive? Based on my experience of creative writing, I assert that imagination and criticism are not exclusive. I nevertheless recognize the temporal exclusivity of the creative and critical nerves, because the one nerve inhibits the other. The creative nerve is prior because it is constitutive of the initial text on which the critical nerve is later applied.

In this respect, I find Fuller's (2004: 22f) account of art that reconciles the imaginative and creative process to be more plausible. Thus, Fuller points out that:

To play a musical instrument successful the performer must inhabit a work with an immersed and self-renunciatory concentration. But also required is a kind of living memory which enables every detail to be held always in a knowing and creatively shaped relation with the whole.

The complementary working of the creative and critical in ensuring art and social order is partly evident in the drafting and redrafting that artists carry out on their own works. It is also evident in the pivotal role that critics play in the production and even re-orientation of the various genres of arts in contemporary society. Indeed, Plato recognizes the need for such players when he expresses need for competent judges of 'artistic imitation', whereby these would know what a work of art should represent and the works accuracy. Yet time has frequently confounded judges' verdicts and this for obvious reason that their criteria for artistic excellence belong to their particular tradition. Thus, judges in the post-modern tradition exhibit a unique enthusiasm for journalese that would have been appalling to the judges of romanticism. Moreover, the limitation of the judges (the critical) is always attested by the fact that works of art adjudged deficient have turned out to pioneer new genres. What this means is that the creative spirit often soar beyond the boundaries of conventions, which too often form the basis for the critical. Lastly, contemporary scene of criticism as a 'science' provides ample evidence that the judges (the critical participants in aesthetics) have no unanimity on the criteria of evaluating literary texts. This means that the guardian mantle that Plato assigned 'competent' judges is untenable in this era of deconstructionism, postmodernism, New Historicism, and so forth.^v In fact, according to Stanley Fish (1980: 327), "Interpretation is not the art of construing but the art of constructing. Interpreters do not decode poems, they make them."

Conclusion

Again, it behooves us to remember that Plato's conception of the place of the arts in society was conceived to accord with his ideal republic. The search for harmony in the socio-political institutions dictated that the citizens must be molded strictly. With respect to the arts, this necessitated censorship and vetting of curricula texts. The fact that he had already formed the idea of the ideal republic dictated a particular prescription of aesthetics. It is in the same way that Plato's metaphysics and epistemology dictated his view that the artist is inferior to the artisan, the philosopher, and God.

However, in our contemporary society in which relativism reigns and in which interpreters look upon themselves as the constructors of texts, the arts and artists cannot be guilty of jeopardizing social order. The threat to social order has its genesis in the discordant constructions that 'interpreters' make of texts, in the process relativizing the concepts of truth, right, and value to the point of rendering them moribund.

Even though we are far from Plato's Athens and his ideal republic, the battle over the arts has never been more necessary. This is because the arts play crucial role in ensuring national and family cohesion, unity of purpose, individual and national integrity, appropriate psychological attitudes in religion, marriage, and communal endeavors. Ultimately, the arts enable us to celebrate life and be reconciled with death. In essence, the battle for the arts is the battle for minds of human beings.

REFERENCES

- Aristotle, *The Poetics of Aristotle*, tr. S.H. Butcher, Dover Publications, New York.
- Alperson, P and Carroll, N, (2008) "Music, Mind, and Morality: Arousing the Body Politic," in *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Volume 42, Number 1, Spring, Published by University of Illinois Press, pp. 1-15.
- Bruce, A (1998) *Plato's Objections to Mimetic Art*, Umass at Amherst.
- Camus, A (1953) *The Rebel*, Penguin Books, Middlesex.
- Eysenck, H.J (1995) *Genius: The Natural History of Creativity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Fish, S (1980) *Is There a Text in this Class*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Fuller, D and Waugh, P (2004) *The Arts and Sciences of Criticism*, Oxford, New York
- Gombrich, E.J (1960) *Art and Illusion*,
- Kant, I (1950) *The Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp, Macmillan, London.
- Marquez, X () "Measure and the Arts in Plato's Statesman," Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame.
- Plato, (1892) *The Dialogues of Plato*, tr. Benjamin Jowett, OUP, New York.
- Plato's Republic*, (1974) tr. Grube G.M.A., Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis.
- Proust, (1922) *Remembrance of Things Past*,
- Rand, A (1957) *Atlas Shrugged*,

ⁱ In view of this important clarification, this paper refrains from avoiding the gendered word 'madman'.

ⁱⁱ For more on reality and make-believe see Morris Weitz, "Truth in Literature," in *Introductory Readings in Aesthetics*, ed. John Hospers, The Free Press, Macmillan.

ⁱⁱⁱ I will not digress to expound on good and bad teaching, because it suffices that we have Plato's classification of mental states in his rationalist epistemology.

^{iv} It would be parochial for us to entertain a conception of the 'philosopher' or the 'wise' that excludes all artists.

^v The reader interested in the divergences that have emerged in the sphere of literary criticism can peruse Patricia Waugh's "Revising the Two Cultures Debate" in Fuller et al (2004) *The Arts and Sciences of Criticism*, Oxford, New York.