

Plato and his theory of aesthetics argumentative essay examples

[Art & Culture](#), [Painting](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Book X. The Republic.](#) \n \t
2. [Thoughts on Plato's Aesthetics](#) \n \t
3. [Works Cited](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Book X. The Republic.

The philosopher, Plato, wrote The Republic in dialogue form using the Socratic method of questioning. Book 10 is about aesthetics; one of the branches of philosophy which is similar to the philosophy of art. Socrates, the narrator and his companion explore the meaning of imitation poetry from the beginning (Plato 658).

That is because true art is from the very soul of the creator not from making an imitation. So the artist must create from the soul to make true art. But Plato does not seem to think it is possible for a human to create from the soul. Only God the true Creator can create from the soul without making any imitation of a thing. (Plato 659-61)

Then Socrates asks if a painting is supposed to represent the appearance of a thing or the reality of a thing. He asks this because if the artist is going to paint a carpenter, the painter cannot really know what it is to be a carpenter, so he can only paint the appearance of a carpenter not the reality. (Plato 661-2)

A carpenter though can build a bed or table but an artist can only paint how the objects appear. The artist has no way to create the reality of the thing by painting it. (Plato 663)

Throughout this dialogue we realize that Plato does not admire imitating, mimicry or copying especially in art. He teaches that a poet who only writes poetry to please the crowds cannot be a true poet; he is only another type of imitation poet. An imitation poet can be identified by his preference for the passionate and fitful temper, which is clearly imitated." (Plato 673)

Thoughts on Plato's Aesthetics

A true artist needs to have patience. Plus a true artist understands that life is filled with both fortunes and misfortunes. Life challenges require accepting what we get from life; even if they are very difficult and making the best we can of life. An artist who is patient can appreciate the emotions experienced. By describing those in poetry or painting those emotions that are the closest way an artist can get to the real the reality. But still that isn't the reality; it isn't the true form so I don't think Plato would even appreciate that kind of sincerity in an artist. (Plato 677-78)

I don't agree with Plato about art always being mimicry or imitation. There was no abstract art in ancient Greece so maybe that is why Plato's opinion was so popular and so many people agreed.

For example, Jackson Pollock painted in a very deliberate and thoughtful way. People did not appreciate his work when he was alive because they

only saw something they considered different that looked like paint splashes on the canvas.

But Pollock's work has an attraction to many of the people who take the time to view his paintings. Different paintings make the people viewing the paintings feel differently. Each person sees or feels something unique.

When I look at Pollock's painting, Convergence I see a lot of interesting movement in the painting. When I look at the painting standing, sitting or from the side, I see new movement and suggestions of meaning depending on the angle of the light. (Pollock 1952)

I feel, though, like Pollock has made a painting about how nature is or how nature works. To me he has painted nature. It doesn't copy how a meadow or forest looks but still it is about nature. Maybe it is the energy of nature or the growth of nature; it is really hard to put into words.

But if Plato were here I would say that the painting Convergence is nature. Pollock has even said, "I am nature" (Kara para. 6). Nature created nature so the art is true and the artist is a true artist.

Works Cited

Kara. (2011). "Jackson Pollock and fractals: A study of creative genius."

Doing Nothing Design. [blog post] Web. .

Plato. (360 BCE) Book X. The Republic. The Portable Plato. Ed. Scott

Buchanan. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. New York: Viking Books, 1976. Print.

Pollock, J. (1952). Convergence. Oil on canvas. 93 ½ x 155 in. overall: 95 1/4 x 157 1/8 x 2 7/8 inches (241. 94 x 399. 10 x 7. 30 cm). Web. .