

## **Knowledge is not important when looking for the truths of the forms**

Chapter X of the book *The Ion* by Plato, Plato is involved with an initiative that is aimed at demonstrating that knowledge is not important when looking for truths of the forms. According to Plato's view, the career of artist is similar to that of illusionists since the two aim at positioning their knowledge as intense and of high magnitude even though in the real sense it is usually it is shallow. Moreover, Plato considers art irrespective of a poem or a drawing to be cheap versions of the forms and obsessive possessions that make the artist incompetent of having knowledge. But can such views be valid or is it that Plat did not see the intrinsic value that the knowledge and understanding of the artists can have?

In the book, Plato has differentiated the incompetence of an artist to precisely symbolize a form:

...the god, wishing to be the real maker of a real bed, not a particular manufacturer of one bed, created one which is essentially unique. So it appears. Shall we call him, then, the author of the true nature of a bed, or something of that sort? Certainly, he deserves the name, since all his works constitute the real nature of things. And we may call the carpenter the manufacturer of a bed? Yes. Can we say the same as a painter? Certainly not (Dickie 23-24)

Thus, it is clear that Plato never thought of an artist as been a maker of a bed since in his work, he never copied the utility as well as function of a bed as is the case of a carpenter. Rather, the artist as an illustratonly took a picture of a bed from the paint.

This painted bed when considering it in perspective of a bed that can be slept in fails in all features. Indeed, as pointed out by Plato, the bed is not indeed a bed. I cannot envision of an ideal example that Plato would concur with in contemporary times than the popular painting by Rene Magritte which is known as "The Treachery of Images". The painting features a pipe, which has words that can be translated that 'this pipe is not a pipe'. The artist of this paint has been clear with the message as he wants anyone who comes across the painting to understand that the pipe featured is only a representation of the pipe and not an actual pipe. Thus, since the pipe is not a genuine pipe it cannot be used as a genuine pipe. That is also the reason why if Plato could get to see the fountain by Duchamp, there is a high chance that he would ridicule it since it cannot function as a normal fountain irrespective of the fact that it was made from real urinal. Its initial function has been rendered useless after it became a piece of art and is no longer a urinal but just a representation.

In the book, Plato claims;

...these beautiful poems are not human, not even from human beings, but are divine and from gods; that poets are nothing more than representatives of the gods ; possessed by whoever possesses them (Dickie 14).

In Plato's view, the work of poets never emanates from them as they would like people to believe. Rather, it comprises of unprompted divinity the results to inspirations which Plato considers to be madness. In Plato's view, this ascertains that artists cannot be

trusted or even considered to be knowledgeable and should thus be overlooked when investigating on different types of knowledge. From that perspective, Plato advocates for realism over impracticality. As illustrated when Plato asks Ion asks who is going to be more knowledgeable in ascertaining whether the illustration of riding chariots has been well drawn.

That's enough. Who would know better, Ion, whether Homer speaks correctly or not in these particular verses—a doctor or a charioteer? A charioteer of course. Is that because he is master of his profession, or for some other reason? No it's because he's a master of it (Dickie 15)

Thus, according to Plato, apart from selecting the one to ride the chariot being the most logical, it also happens to be the most practical of the two alternatives due to the fact that the individual picked happens to be an expert in riding the chariot. To select a physician in this context is to select inferior knowledge as is the case with selecting an artist to comprehend how a computer functions since that would be an inferior alternative to a computer expert. In this context, probably the artist is absent even though that does not imply that the knowledge of the artist is not of use as Plato would like to argue. To expound on what I imply, I have to narrate a story of my own personal experience to elucidate the importance of artistic knowledge.

I recall being in Salvador Dali museum which is located in Saint Petersburg Florida. When I got inside the museum, a painting I saw a paint that was hanging in front of me. The height as well as the width of the paint were about ten feet. When

compared to other paintings that I had seen in the museum, this specific paint appeared to be different. In view of its content, it featured Dali's muse, his wife named Gala who was standing naked and peeping through the window. While walking past the painting and got almost to the end of the room, I found myself turning back before coming across another painting that was very similar to the first painting. I just couldn't believe my eyes. At the back, there was a digitized painting of Abraham Lincoln that was looking at me. I stood there amazed since the painting that I had considered to be worse than changed to be one of the richest in the gallery. Its brilliance aspect had been restricted, its form happened to have been concealed till I looked at it again. The truth of the painting was revealed to me when I looked at it closely and saw a Christian cross.

I got to experience it differently than I had before. I did indeed, went through what was anticipated from the recognized interaction with form even though the form did not make itself known to me. As each material is represented by the form, there is an immeasurable amount of possibilities that happen to lie ahead. For example, Plato's example of the bed implies that the bed could end up being a bed to anyone at any time. Indeed, the bed could end up being a symbol of love, sadness, impatience, tranquility, and even a symbol of desire. However, the artist's eyes are the ones that are capable of seeing past the forms. A normal bed maker only envisions the utility and function of what the product is composed of. It has to host bodies, offer comfort, fulfil its role to offer sleep since if it does not offer that, then the one who made the bed will be considered to have failed. Thus, the artist is the only one who can be able to ensure

that the bed surpasses its functions and even exposes new forms. For instance, a child can use a spoon as a catapult. Thus, the concept of art is founded on this specific notion. Nevertheless, when all is conceivable to the artist, not all is conceivable to the craftsmen, electrician, and blacksmith. A chair has a likelihood of being a table while a refrigerator could end up been a house. On the other hand, the utility and function do not matter to an artist since it is thrown to the likelihood of the infinite therefore providing the artist the outlook of inconveniency. In Plato's view, this unreasonable approach to the forms is what provides the artist the outlook of unwitting and of being influenced. However, it is their alchemical competencies to apply the representations of forms and exceed their utility and function that offers the artist's understanding significance in our daily life.