



## THE RELEVANCE OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS THEORIES OF ART

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### ABSTRACT

Art is one of the cultural activities of man through which he reaches his ideas, values, feelings, aspirations and reactions to life. The generic purpose of art is to provide aesthetic experience and enjoyment to the recipient. Art give outlet to the artist himself to reveal and express his innermost aspirations, feelings, sentiments and also the impressions of life. Aesthetic experience in its essence is indescribable and it does not occur in terms of conscious thought. The theory of art in West begins with the Plato's imitative theory which proposed that art is imitative in nature. Aristotle also argued that art is representation of the ideal. Both Plato and Aristotle were forced to establish a theory of art based on their metaphysical views about the nature of the world. Immanuel Kant, representative of intellectualist theory said that art and beauty gives only a subjective satisfaction, we cannot speak of the beauty for the object them. Schopenhauer profoundly presented the theory of art as the withdrawal of the will.

**KEYWORDS** : aisthannomia, aesthetics, philosophy of art, imitation, emotion

### INTRODUCTION

The philosophical support of art is traditional. It represents the complete fusions and synthesis of the consciousness for art and beauty that had been expressed in the very beginning of philosophy and it is continuous to the present day in different forms. Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy devoted to conceptual and theoretical enquiry into art. The recognition of aesthetics as a separate branch of philosophy coincided with the development of philosophy of art. German thinker Alexander Baumgartner coined it stands in the name for the study of sensory experience coupled with feeling. He derived it from the ancient Greek term '*aisthannomia*' means to perceive and aesthetics has always being intimately connected with sensory experience and the kinds of feeling arouses. His explanations and illustrations mark the beginning of aesthetics as a special field of investigation. There are differences of opinion among philosophers as to whether aesthetics is an independent science or a distinct branch of philosophy dealing with certain issues related to art. This gives rise to different definitions and approaches to aesthetics. Art thus is a human activity with a variety of functions including creating objects of beauty. The arts are an important part of human life. Art is linked with culture and history of the people. It is not an isolated phenomenon; it is a faithful mirror of the life and civilization of period and can be described as a category of cultural activity concerned with intrinsic values. This display of feeling is called art. The aim of all arts is to take temporarily the listener to oblivion and supersensory plane. Art is a byproduct of artistic creation Arts or artistic creation is an expression of the inner urge of man to communicate with his fellow beings not only to understand or to be understood, but also to feel and to be felt and to share and partake. Art is a sound phenomenon. It is a silent dialogue between one and each of the many, an invisible bridge built to reach another human heart.

### PLATO - IMITATIVE THEORY OF ART

Plato is the first philosopher who made a systematic analysis of the mimetic tendency in art. He had two theories of art. One is the imitative theory may be found in his dialogue The Republic, and seem to be the theory that Plato himself believed. His imitative theory is based on metaphysical ideas. The greatest sign of art was its imitative nature according to him. For him, work of art is the imitation of the most beautiful and best life. According to Plato, all artistic creation is a form of imitation that which really exists in the world of ideas in a type created by God, the concrete things man perceives in his existence are shadow representation of this type. Plato says art imitates the objects and events of ordinary life. In other words a work of art is a copy of form. For Plato, form is perfect ideal, but they are also more real than physical objects. He called them the really real. The world of the form is rational and unchanging; the world of physical object appearances is changeable and irrational, and only as reality to the extent that it succeed in imitating the form. The mind or soul belongs to the ideal world; the body and its passion

are stuck in the muck of the physical world. So the best human life is one that strives to understand and imitate the form as closely as possible. The first art theory of any scope is that of Plato, who believed that reality consists of archetype, or form, beyond human sensation, which are the models for all things that exist in human experience. Plato's second theory of art is hinted at in his shorter dialogue Ion, and in his exquisitely crafted Symposium. According to this theory the artist, perhaps by divine inspiration makes a better copy of the true than may be found in ordinary experience. Thus the artist is a kind of prophet. Plato made certain statements about art which are considered to be of utmost value to the later thinkers on art. These statements are mentioned here under.

- Art is an imitation of nature.
- Art is a product of emotional propensity and not intellectual faculty of man.
- Art shows a mirror-like reflection of all the aspects of outer forms of life but does not enlighten the viewer about the essential and inner truths about reality since such essences can never be imitated by the artist.
- Imitation is always of the external form of the object and cannot be anything more than that creation of art, poetry in particular, is not in a normal state of the mind, but in a state of 'muse' or some kind of fit of madness.

### ARISTOTLE - REPRESENTATION THEORY OF ART

Aristotle, disciple of Plato, while speaking the same language of his predecessors, modifies the theory of imitation into a theory of representation. Aristotle art has the potentiality to represent the essence and hence it can lead us to the real in a way. Art attains its complete being only within the mind of a person for whom it is created. But the subjective emotion felt by a person is deeply grounded in human nature and so it has a sort of objective validity. Thus, the truth of art is subjective because art is an immediate experience of an experiencing mind. It is impossible to imagine a form that can be without matter and matter without form. It is evident that forms in nature are not copies or appearances of ideas in Aristotle metaphysics. Art is of course an imitation or emulation of forms in nature. Artistic creation, says Aristotle, essentially the form of art is an imitation of reality; it holds the mirror up to nature. Imitating in this sense is impossible for various reasons. Aristotle points out that the difficulty in producing the artifacts which bear resemblance with nature is due to the difference of material used by the artist as his medium. The concept of Catharsis in Western aesthetics arose out of speculation on Aristotle's remark in his Poetics that in a tragedy there should be, among other things, incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewithal to accomplish its Catharsis of such emotions. His theory of Catharsis pinpoints the capacity of tragedy to move the spectators thoroughly and by arousing fear and sympathy for the suffering characters; it brings about a purging of his narrowness of mind and makes him learn to

identify himself with the human misery in general. The Aristotelian theory had a far reaching influence in the years to come in the European thinking.

### IMMANUEL KANT - INTELLECTUAL THEORY OF ART

Kant occupies an important place in the development of German thought as a real speculative genius. According to Kant, art is not the pure beauty. Artistic beauty is not a beautiful thing but the beautiful representation of a thing. Art may be there to represent natural ugliness. Kant also admits that there may be artistic production without any concept. Similarly the aesthetics theory of Kant is little influenced by moral consideration. Kant made art autonomous and non-moral, nevertheless he spoke of art being a symbol of morality and founding this moral feeling on the basis of the universality and necessity of aesthetic judgment. Beauty involves a spectator's attitude as morality demands participation and stimulation within us. Kant believes that the key of the situation is our judgment of a pleasure universally communicable, yet independent of concept. The pleasure accompanying a perception is a subjective element which tells us nothing about the nature of the object. Kant substantiates the statement that the aesthetic judgment gives no information about the nature of the object. The recognition of beauty gives us no knowledge of the nature of things. Beauty is not to be identified with the desirable or with the moral nor can it be confounded with sensation. Kant beauty implied liberation from selfishness and wants. The genius creates spontaneously and is dominated by original inspiration. It is impossible to achieve academic greatness in arts again according to Kant the artistic genius has to constituting elements namely imagination and intellect.

### ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER - CONTEMPLATIVE THEORY OF ART

Schopenhauer profoundly presented the theory of art as the withdrawal of the will. The elevation of the mind to the will-less contemplation of truth, is the function of art. The object of science is the universe that contains many particulars; the object of art is the particular that contains a universal. Art is greater than science because the latter proceeds by laborious accumulation and cautious reasoning, while the former reaches its goal at once by intuition and presentation; science can get along with talent, but art requires genius. Genius is the highest form of will-less knowledge, The lowest forms of life are entirely made up of will, without knowledge; man in general is mostly with and little knowledge; genius is mostly knowledge and little will. This involves some passage of force out of reproductive into intellectual activity. Similarly tragedy may take aesthetic value, by delivering as from the strife of the individual will, and enabling us to see of our suffering in a larger view. Art alleviates the ills of life by showing as the eternal and universal behind the transitory and the individual.

### CONCLUSION

This article tried to explore the historical progression of philosophical theories of art a survey from Plato to Schopenhauer its evolutionary landmarks, concepts, theories and problems as well. Art is one of the cultural activities of man through which he reaches his ideas, values, feelings, aspirations and reactions to life. Philosophy of art deals with most general principles of aesthetic experience and the basic questions regarding art in general. The study of art and beauty had an ancient origin both in the East and West. Philosophy of art is the theoretical attempt to define and understand art and the beauty, to discover the norms which transform some physical objects to acquire the status of art and beauty. It also includes three stages of aesthetic experience, aesthetic expression, and aesthetic appreciation. Philosophy of art becomes necessary to define the methods and grounds for appreciation of art. When we came to the Western philosophy of art has also a long history. The theories of Imitation, Representation and Expression are the most well-known theories about art, based on the historical developments in the philosophical thinking. The relationship between art and reality can be presented in the form of philosophical theories of art. When we came to the Western

philosophy of art has also a long history. We have so far taken a stock of these theories of aesthetics propounded from time to time by various schools of thought right from the ancient times. The theories of Imitation, Representation and Expression are the most well-known theories about art, based on the historical developments in the philosophical thinking.

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