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Plato

The development of a sophisticated scientific and philosophical culture by the ancient Greeks can be accredited to discoveries and a growing body of knowledge from the early civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. Apart from making major contributions in the fields of mathematics and science, the creation and maintenance of contemporary artistic and philosophical culture can also be accredited to the Greeks. Particularly, the philosophical culture is apparent in the writings and dialogues of Plato who recreated Socrates’ curious dialogues in an organized form (Porter). Many of the ideas that Plato explored in his writings were present in the art and culture of Classical Greece. Being similar in aspects of nature, literature and art, they held primary significance in the eyes of Greek society. Drama and theatre soon gained wide recognition and were spread around many neighboring societies and influenced many contemporary genres of drama and playwrights.

Additionally, architecture and sculpture, which chiefly constituted Greek art, also exhibited ascendancy when the same forms of art were practiced in other societies. The embodiment of excellence was seen in Greek art when the sculptors captured the dynamic conditions of the human form which were never quite witnessed before (Funke). Peculiar care was employed with the poise and correct proportions of their pieces and they believed in a utopian symbolism of the human body and its manifestations.

Having a love-hate relationship with arts, Plato delivered literary sensations but at the same time, he was terrified of arts because he thought that arts and literature are critical in forming an individual's character and if the primary message propagates, soon the whole society will be under its influence. In his writings, Plato asserts that art is an imitation. He further advocates that art is mimicking the everyday events of ordinary life and should be considered as an illusion.

For a better part of history, Ancient Greece was either involved in wars and battles or was recuperating from it, but in the time frame from 455 to 431 B.C, the city of Athens in Greece flourished splendidly. Even though the ancient Athenians were not very organized or even large enough in numbers to wage a war against neighboring societies, they showed the rest of the world a true recognition and appreciation for the human mind and its functionalities for human life in general.

Many aspects of the Athenian and Greek environment were conducive to the propagation and spread of creative thinking and related works. Being a fundamental conversationalist, Socrates is regarded as a great thinker and philosopher and although he did not write anything on his own, the world remembers him from Plato’s narratives and dialogues. Doryphoros or the spear-bearer was a famous sculpture in Classical Greece. This sculpture was accompanied by a treatise with the title 'Canon', in which Polyclitus stipulated his principles regarding the ideal proportions in a man. This is a piece of art that Plato must have known and come across and this work shares common ground with his theories of the possibilities of attaining perfection through the imitation of art. Doryphorus’s face lacks any individual, distinct features, clearly suggesting that he has been created to delineate the glamorized version of a common citizen, as in those times, women did not attain the status of a citizen. The body of Doryphorus was designed and sculpted with extreme proportional symmetry and exuded confidence and strength. Plato, like many Athenians, valued beauty very highly (Drees). Although his prepositions about beauty are abstract and subtle, his dialogue, ‘The Symposium’, crafts many of his most important ideas (Alexandrakis). According to Plato, there are three characteristics of beauty; it acts like a form, it is an objective quality, and that no one has ever seen perfect beauty in this world. To sum it all, it is clear that Plato is a product of the world into which he was born, yet it is also true that he significantly contributed to the world that was to come after him in the fields of virtue, justice, ethics, literature, arts and philosophy.

# **Works Cited:**

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