

Implications of Plato's and Aristotle's Philosophy in Art Education: Focusing on the Discussion of Art

Minjung Lee*

Kongju National University, Gongju 314-701, Republic of Korea

*Corresponding author: Minjung Lee, lmingjung@126.com

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Abstract:

This study aims to draw implications for art education from the artistic thought and aesthetic concerns of the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. To this end, this paper first examines the artistic discussions and aesthetic issues pursued by Plato and Aristotle, respectively, and then focuses on the discussions that revolved around their opposing views on the concepts of the *techne*, *mimesis*, and *catharsis*, and the main implications for art education that can be drawn from them. Firstly, the concept of *techne* was discussed in relation to *mimesis*, and while Plato had a negative attitude towards *mimesis*, Aristotle understood *mimesis* in a positive light. Furthermore, the two philosophers took completely different positions on the intense emotions in tragedy: whereas Plato warned against them, Aristotle offered an interpretation of the positive effects and role of catharsis. Based on these discussions, this book can draw implications for art education from both of them: from Plato, the aesthetic issues and methods necessary for visual and cultural art education, and from Aristotle, the value and meaning of representation, the enjoyment of artistic creation, and the criticisms related to art therapy. This article also emphasizes the importance of aesthetic and philosophical methods and reflection on the direction of art education as a public education from the thoughts of the two philosophers.

Keywords:

Techne
Mimesis
Catharsis
Aesthetic issues
Art education

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1. Introduction

The term “art” used today did not exist in ancient Greece. The separate field and term fine art was “invented” in the eighteenth century ^[1], but it is not as if there was no artistic activity before then, the distinction of fine art as a separate field was already emerging during the

Renaissance in Europe, and even further back, in ancient Greece, where almost every culture had art in a broad sense ^[1]. Therefore, even though the term art has been coined in the modern era, it is important to examine the ancient Greek aesthetic and artistic thought that is at the root of the term, as art is an important concept in art

education.

Although ancient aesthetics revolved around the question of beauty and art, they are very different domains, and beauty is not limited to art, nor is art a lesser pursuit ^[2]. Although the two domains are often closely related, the concepts and developments in each are so varied and vast that it is difficult to cover them both in this book. In addition, each of them has different implications for art education and aesthetic issues, and each has its value, so this article will focus on artistic discussions and examine issues in art education, leaving issues related to aesthetics for future research.

In terms of artistic discussions, the two ancient Greek philosophers who are fundamental to Western aesthetics are Plato (approx. 428/427 BC – 348/347 BC) and Aristotle (approx. 384 BC – 322 BC). It is well known that both Plato and Aristotle, as priests, developed philosophical ideas that, while different in approach, together constitute two significant pillars of Western philosophy and aesthetics. Certainly, before Plato, issues of beauty and art were explored in mythology and religious rituals, or by natural philosophers such as Socrates (approx. 470 BC – 399 BC) and the Sophists. However, it was in Plato's writings that these issues became central to artistic discussions, forming the basis for key concepts in Western aesthetics ^[3]. Therefore, it is essential to examine the artistic ideologies of ancient Greece with a focus on these two philosophers.

While absorbing traditional philosophy, Plato and Aristotle established distinct characteristics in their artistic ideologies, displaying both similarities and differences in their philosophical thoughts. One of the most prominent points is Plato's evaluation of *techne* in plastic arts and poetry, which differs from Aristotle's. This becomes a significant aesthetic issue when considered in relation to visual imagery in art education. Furthermore, Plato and Aristotle's philosophical ideas surrounding "*mimesis*" raise aesthetic questions about imitation and expression in art education, particularly Aristotle's explanation of the relationship between "*katharsis*" and "*mimesis*" and the criticisms of these explanations, which provide worthwhile topics for study in art education. Additionally, the philosophical inquiry methods employed by Plato and Aristotle offer insightful implications for art education.

This article will explore some important aesthetic debates and issues that can be addressed in art education through the philosophical thoughts of Plato and Aristotle on art. Specifically, the study will investigate their artistic ideologies and aesthetic questions, focusing on the key themes of art and the contrasting viewpoints of the two philosophers: *techne*, *mimesis*, and *catharsis*. To this end, the study will first examine the artistic discussions in Plato's dialogues, followed by an exploration of artistic issues in Aristotle's writings. Based on these discussions, the study will highlight the common and differing views of the two philosophers on art, as well as their critical perspectives, and finally explore the implications of these discussions for art education and aesthetic issues.

2. Artistic discussions in Plato's philosophy

Plato's attitude towards art is ambivalent. This stance relates to both *techne* and poetry, where poetry, in today's context, encompasses the concept of art: Although poetry was considered as part of art today, Plato did not classify poetry under art but rather under the category of *techne*. For Plato, the contrasting viewpoints of these two elements form the basis of his criticism of *mimesis*, which further leads to the well-known issues of poet exile and art education.

Firstly, for Plato, *techne* appears to embody a concept inherited from antiquity. In ancient times, *techne* referred to "all skilled production, all crafts created by humans (as opposed to nature), insofar as they are productive (not cognitive), dependent on skill (not inspiration), and consciously following general rules" ^[3]. They emphasized the knowledge accompanying skill in technology and evaluated it from the perspective of knowledge ^[2]. Ancient technology itself was also subject to different evaluations: it was valued for the knowledge it required but also despised for the hard labor it entailed and the livelihood it provided ^[2]. In the *Ion*, Plato considers plastic arts such as painting, architecture, and sculpture to belong to *techne*, while poetry relies on inspiration. He praises poetic inspiration, believing that the madness suffered by poets is the best among the gods ^[4]. In the traditional sense of "*techne*", painting, architecture, and sculpture are included, but inspired poetry is not. Plato

seems to have absorbed this tradition.

Although Plato accepted the ancient concept of technology, he made several classifications. The most significant distinction is between productive and imitative arts ^[2]. The relationship between art and imitation was not first proposed by Plato. This distinction was not even fixed by Plato himself, but it had a significant impact on the development of imitation theory in later Western philosophy and aesthetics ^[2]. Furthermore, many important debates in art education, which will be explored later, also originate from the theory of *mimesis*.

Initially, in Plato's philosophy, imitation appears to have two distinct applications. One is applied to music, poetry, or dance to represent character or emotion ^[2]. Plato states in *The Laws*, "The performance of dance is an imitation of character, which is achieved through various actions and events, where each performer plays their role through their character and imitative abilities" ^[5], and "Poetry, including rhythm, is an imitation of character" ^[6], referring to the representation of character or emotion as an imitation. The other is the imitation of appearance, as in the case of plastic arts, which is more about the imitation of illusions or image-making ^[2]. Plato discusses the imitation of plastic art in Book 10 of *The Republic*. In Book 10 of *The Republic*, Plato describes three types of beds: the first is the bed as a creation of the gods - the "Idea"; the second is the bed imitated by the carpenter from the "Idea"; the third is the bed painted by the artist who imitates the carpenter's bed. Plato believes that only the first bed is essential and true, while the third bed painted by the artist is "an imitation of an 'illusion' and an image (*eidōlon*)" ^[7], which is far from the truth. Furthermore, Plato refers to the artist who paints the carpenter's bed as a "mimic" and calls this craft "the art of imitation (*hē mimētikē*)" ^[7]. In *The Sophist*, Plato further divides the art of imitation into "the art of likeness and the art of unlikeness" ^[8]. The art of likeness refers to "the art that produces likeness" ^[8], which maintains the proportions of the original during imitation; while the art of unlikeness refers to "the art that produces unlikeness" ^[8], which creates beautiful proportions during imitation without maintaining the proportions of the original. The "likeness" here refers to "phantasma" ^[8], or "that which appears to be" ^[8], meaning that this likeness is not even a likeness of the original, but an illusion that transcends

imitation and creates a phantasm. This is even further from the truth than the art of imitation. Therefore, both imitation and portraiture in sculptural art are far from the truth, leading Plato to make negative evaluations of them.

On the other hand, despite his positive attitude towards poetic inspiration, Plato holds a negative view of imitation in epic and tragedy. This criticism includes criticism of art education, and Plato continues to criticize epic and tragedy in Books 2, 3, and 10 of *The Republic*, as well as the teaching of poetry at that time. In Plato's view, a just state and individual justice are intertwined, and poetic education is crucial for him to examine poetic education from the perspective of the correct order of the soul and its relationship to individual justice. Plato's criticism of poetic education revolves around the art of imitation: what to teach, who to teach, and how to teach. Plato believes that the content or object to be imitated in poetic education should be good and worthy of imitation. However, the content or objects dealt with by Homer and tragic poets do not present true images of gods or heroes but distorted or false images, which disrupt the soul order of young people who imitate them through poetic education ^[7]. Furthermore, watching epics or tragedies strengthens the sensuous and irrational parts of the soul, allowing them to dominate the rational part, which is also a dangerous interference with the soul's order ^[7]. This criticism leads Plato to draw an extreme conclusion: "In poetry, only praise for the gods and praise for good men are acceptable to the state" ^[7], and "the exile of poetry" ^[7] means "the exile of poetry" ^[7].

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that Plato holds a critical and negative attitude towards art, including plastic arts, epics, and tragedies, as well as arts related to imitative arts. Overall, Plato is concerned about the negative impact of imitation on the human soul and the power of art (whether *techne* or inspired poetry) to obscure the soul from seeing its true nature related to the proper order. It is for this reason that Plato draws extreme criticisms and conclusions regarding the exile of poets and the censorship of artistic works.

3. Discussion on art in Aristotle's philosophy

Aristotle, a student of Plato, was influenced by Platonic

philosophy, yet he did not inherit Plato's philosophical ideas but rather constructed his original territory. Aristotle's philosophical thoughts on art mainly revolve around his work "On the Art of Poetry" (also known as "Poetics"). Aristotle's "Poetics" was originally divided into two volumes, but only the volume containing the theory of tragedy has survived ^[2]. In this section, I will explore some of Aristotle's main discussions on art in "On the Art of Poetry," which center around aesthetic and artistic issues such as *techne*, *mimesis*, and *catharsis*. However, these concepts are difficult to understand because Aristotle did not provide clear definitions, which is why there are many interpretations ^[2,9-12]. Therefore, in this section, I will combine the study of these terms with "On the Art of Poetry," while also paying attention to Aristotle's explanations and illustrations of these terms in his "Politics," "Rhetoric," "Metaphysics," "Nicomachean Ethics," and other related chapters.

Firstly, regarding *techne* (craftsmanship or art), Aristotle accepted the traditional concept of craftsmanship but attributed the primary characteristic of human activity to it in his definition ^[2]. According to Aristotle, human "thoughts are either related to practice, production, or theory" ^[13]. The art of production belongs to human activities, and poetry, which was not previously considered within the scope of technical theory, is included as an art of production. For Aristotle, poetry became something technical, teachable, and rule-based, rather than a mysterious divine revelation ^[11]. This contrasts sharply with Plato's view of poetry as a divine inspiration.

Aristotle understood the essential characteristics of art from the perspective of mimicry. For him, mimicry is the essence of tragedy ^[2]. In "On the Art of Poetry," Aristotle discusses mimicry as follows: Epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, and dithyrambic poetry, as well as most flute playing and cithara playing, are all, in their entirety, forms of mimicry. Just as some people imitate many things through color and form, and some through sound, the aforementioned arts imitate through rhythm, language, and speech.

The concept of mimicry in art here includes not only plastic arts such as painting and sculpture but also poetry and music. Additionally, Aristotle stated, "The imitator imitates men in action, and men are by nature of

a certain character; hence, as in the case of the painter, so here the forms of character are types" ^[14]. Therefore, human behavior involves a certain character, and both poetry and plastic arts take this human behavior as the object of imitation. In other words, art takes human behavior involving a certain character as the object of imitation.

In Chapter 6 of "On the Art of Poetry," the discussion on tragedy is fully developed, where we can better understand the meaning of "behavior involving a certain human character" and "character" as objects of imitation. Aristotle believes that tragedy imitates action, and actors perform action. Actors necessarily possess certain qualities in terms of character and thought. The reasons for their actions are thought and these two reasons cause character, and the successes and failures of their lives. Character refers to what enables us to say that actors possess certain qualities, while thought refers to what is expressed in their speech when they prove something or state universal truths ^[14].

It's worth noting here Aristotle's discussion on action and character, namely that action is caused by the actor's character and thought, and it can be understood that their character and thought by observing their actions. Furthermore, imitation is the essence of art, and the object of this imitation is human behavior involving a certain character.

However, Chapter 4 of "On Creativity" ^[9] discusses the inherent importance of mimicry. In this chapter, Aristotle points out that mimicry is an inherent nature of humans, which distinguishes them from other animals. Humans learn through mimicry, and everyone finds pleasure in what they imitate from the first day. This is not only the highest pleasure for philosophers but also everyone else, as learning what is imitated is a supreme delight. Finding pleasure in viewing a painting is learning through observation ^[14].

Aristotle believes that humans learn and find joy through the inherent nature of mimicry. Specifically, Aristotle says the pleasure felt from viewing a painting comes from learning through observation, indicating that this mimetic instinct applies to the plastic arts. Kwon (2013) suggests that Aristotle formalizes the epistemological value of attributing mimicry to the desirable nature of human cognition and aligning

cognitive expression with the perceiver's sensation.

Aristotle further explains the pleasure derived from learning, stating that joy can be found in viewing images because people learn through observation. "This is an image of a person." If one had never seen the object before, one would not find pleasure in the mimicry but rather in its artistry, color, or other similar reasons^[14].

The pleasure derived from learning through mimicry is because it is inferential. In the first volume of "Metaphysics," Aristotle ascribes epistemological significance to mimicry, fostering a desire for knowledge in humans, noting that "everyone naturally desires to know"^[13]. In Aristotle's view, mimicry is a source of actively generating perceptions of truth^[15]. Aristotle's discourse on mimicry in art differs from Plato's, who saw mimicry as a distortion of truth.

Next, let's discuss catharsis, which is often understood as the purpose of tragedy in Aristotle's framework. As mentioned earlier, *catharsis* is only mentioned once in Chapter 6 of Aristotle's "On the Art of Poetry," and the concept is not defined in the book, making it difficult to understand. Additionally, *catharsis* is also mentioned in Aristotle's "Politics" and must be understood in conjunction with other works such as "Rhetoric" and "Nicomachean Ethics." This has led to a variety of interpretations and debates about the meaning of catharsis. Therefore, instead of attempting to reinterpret or define a single concept of catharsis, this section will explore its meanings based on different interpretations by various researchers.

Here is where *catharsis* appears in Chapter 6 of "On Creative Writing": "Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions"^[14].

There are many different and complex interpretations surrounding this statement. Kwon (2014) studied three main positions: the moralistic interpretation that dominated from the Renaissance to the 18th century, the medical interpretation that emerged in the mid-19th century and persists today, and the cognitive interpretation that arose in the late 20th century.

First, regarding the moralistic interpretation, researchers in this position often understand catharsis as a "purification" of the soul of the tragedy audience^[10]. Lessing (1985) is frequently cited as a representative of this interpretation. Lessing (1985) believed that the pity and fear evoked by tragedy in the audience served as a purification, transforming these emotions into the virtue of "moderation" in Aristotle's ethics^[16], which Lessing (1985) saw as a form of catharsis^[17]. However, Kwon (2014) argues that Lessing's interpretation is difficult to reconcile with Aristotle's passages on catharsis in "Politics." *Catharsis* can be interpreted as an action that brings emotions to their optimal state according to their nature, but this optimal state can only be temporary. Aristotle describes *catharsis* in Book VIII, Chapter 7 of "Politics" as serving a different function from education^[18]. Samuel (1907/2014) also criticized Lessing for viewing fear as a component of sympathy.

The second interpretation, the medical explanation, was proposed by Jakob Bernays in the mid-19th century, interpreting *catharsis* as the processing of emotions^[10]. This interpretation was further influenced by the fact that Aristotle's father was a physician and understood through the term "purgation," meaning "outlet" or "removal"^[19]. It refers strictly to the removal of pain or disturbing elements from the organism in Hippocratic medical terminology^[20]. Bernays' explanation views catharsis as a therapeutic method that stimulates and expels diseases of the soul through the same means as treating physical illnesses, bringing pleasure and temporary relief, and thus being unrelated to morality^[10]. From a medical perspective, Buddha stated that "the healing and soothing effect wrought by tragedy is directly attended by an alteration in the emotions"^[20]. Kim (2019) also agrees with this position, stating that the emotions of pity and fear in tragedy heal one's pity and fear^[21]. Although these medical interpretations have significant aesthetic implications for focusing on emotions, they have also been criticized for denying moral significance, assuming excessive emotional release among all audience members, and adopting an overly pathological stance that places all viewers in a state of illness^[10]. Reviewing these criticisms and limitations, Kim (2007) suggests that catharsis occurs within the work itself before it occurs within the audience, and imitation itself

is cathartic because the poet purifies and reproduces events. Furthermore, Kwon (2014) criticizes the medical interpretation of denying moral connections and points out that even temporary restoration cannot deny moral connections, as seen in virtue cultivation education through music education.

The cognitive interpretation of *catharsis*, which emerged in the mid-20th century, attempts to understand catharsis in organic connection with the central arguments of “On the Art of Poetry,” locating its essence in the “cognitive” element of the tragedy audience’s experience of the work ^[10]. Among the proponents of this interpretation, Gerald Frank Else sees “On the Art of Poetry” as an important starting point for his interpretation of *catharsis*; Leon Golden explains *catharsis* as the learning and accompanying pleasure that arise when contemplating the resolution of imitation, viewing the audience’s cognitive experience as the essence of catharsis; and Martha Nussbaum, Stephen Halliwell, and Richard Janko interpret *catharsis* as the audience’s cognitive experience. Arborast Schmitt views *catharsis* in “On the Art of Poetry” as the experience of watching a tragedy that reproduces pitiable and terrible events or actions in idealized plots. The viewer faithfully understands and perceives these events or actions, and feels pity and fear appropriately evoked, thus forming an emotional sensitivity that is coordinated with a rational understanding of life and contributes to the formation of virtue ^[10]. They particularly focus on the interpretation of sympathy and fear in “Rhetoric,” which relies on the recognition and belief of these two emotions ^[22]. However, Kwon (2014) does not fully agree with this interpretation, arguing that the cognitive stance views catharsis as an intellectual process, thus contradicting Aristotle’s philosophy, which essentially distinguishes rational capabilities from emotional activities. Therefore, the pleasure involved in catharsis is not rational but rather the pleasure inherent in the emotion itself, based on the possession of such activities.

4. Artistic issues raised by Plato and Aristotle

Plato and Aristotle’s discussions on art share similarities but exhibit distinct characteristics. Specifically, the two

philosophers’ discussions on art, particularly regarding skill and imitation, emotional intensity or catharsis in tragedy, and their attitudes towards art, form a unique contrast. In the following, I will explore the artistic issues arising from these contrasts.

Firstly, let’s consider Plato and Aristotle’s positions on *techne*. Both philosophers seem to accept the traditional meaning of *techne*. However, their attitudes towards poetry sharply contrast. Plato does not consider poetry as a skill but rather attributes it to the domain of the divine, praising it on one hand while being cautious about its educational impact on the other. Conversely, Aristotle views poetry as a skill that can be taught and follows certain rules, showing no hostility like Plato.

Underlying these differences is their fundamental attitude towards imitation. Plato sees imitation in art as a negative aspect that alienates people from truth, whereas Aristotle positively evaluates imitation in art, believing it to be the essence of tragedy. Plato critiques art negatively from metaphysical, epistemological, and moral perspectives. He argues that imitation in plastic arts creates illusions and distortions, leading one away from fundamental knowledge. Poetry inspiration is seen as a divine and mysterious force, but it is irrational and inaccessible to reason. From a moral standpoint, the content and subject matter of poetry education should be excellent and worthy of imitation. However, poetry education at that time not only failed to achieve this but also had adverse effects on the impressionable souls of youths. Viewers of epic or tragic poetry are overcome by intense emotions, leading to weaknesses like sorrow or pity. This results in a state of weakness in daily life, ultimately enhancing the dominance of the irrational part of the soul over the rational part and disrupting the soul’s normal order. In Plato’s view, imitation is dangerous as it creates illusions, distorts images, obscures fundamental knowledge, causes intoxication and hallucinations, and disrupts the soul’s order.

Aristotle’s evaluation of imitation differs vastly from Plato’s. Epistemologically, he sees imitation as the beginning of human learning and human nature. Where Plato sees imitation as concealing and distorting truth, Aristotle views it as a means of human learning and creation. Kim (2007) suggests that Aristotle recognizes the possibility of beautiful appearance through imitation,

stemming from the gap between appearance and the object created by imitation. Besides its epistemological and aesthetic value in art, Aristotle also notes its positive aspects, such as its contribution to human souls and the stability and happiness of nations. In his view, imitative art helps soothe public emotions and ultimately achieves a stable polity.

In this discussion, Aristotle's concept of *catharsis* becomes a significant theme in art. For Plato, the intense emotions indulged in by tragedy viewers are morally and socially concerning: they are irrational, harmful to the soul, and ultimately hinder the formation of appropriate national identity. However, Aristotle believes that the pity and fear felt by tragedy viewers serve to purify negative emotions in daily life, providing epistemological and emotional pleasure. Additionally, the joy and enjoyment brought by tragedy contribute to the stability and restoration of the polity.

5. Implications of Plato and Aristotle's artistic discussions for art education

In this section, the implications for art education derived from the philosophical perspectives of Plato and Aristotle were explored, particularly focusing on their attitudes towards art in relation to emotions and *catharsis*, as well as themes such as *techne*, imitation, and tragedy. The unique discussions on art by these two philosophers allow us to reflect on both the challenges and common insights within art education. Moreover, this examination extends beyond content-based considerations to include methodological implications.

Firstly, let us consider the distinct arguments presented by Plato and Aristotle to identify potential topics of discussion within art education. To understand the evolution of Plato's artistic thought, several of his dialogues will be taken into account. Since Plato's artistic ideologies are predominantly reflected in the core content of art education in his work "The Republic," the discussion will primarily focus on the issues of art and art education within this text.

As we have observed, in "The Republic," Plato criticizes art as a form of imitative art and discusses the censorship of artistic works, pushing these ideas further until he ultimately advocates for the exile of

poets as artists. From a modern perspective, Plato's arguments may appear extreme and reckless. However, when considering the background of Plato's writing and the situation in Athens during that time, can draw parallels to today's art education. Athens, during the period following the Peloponnesian War, was in a state of turmoil characterized by mistrust, competition, and power struggles. Plato's "The Republic" represents his vision for an ideal state capable of reforming Athens^[23]. Traditional Greek education centered around Homer's epics, and given the importance of education in establishing his ideal state, Plato studied and criticized poetry^[12]. In Plato's view, Homer's epics, which played a pivotal role in education at that time, were unsuitable for the construction of an ideal state in terms of both content and methodology. Now, from the perspective of contemporary art education, are Plato's examinations and criticisms irrelevant? Even in today's context, where artistic autonomy is respected and valued, Plato's stance is not dissimilar to educational positions. Especially within the realm of public education, Plato's arguments are not unfamiliar. Considering that even nowadays, primary school art textbooks undergo stamp approval systems, and there exist textbook review committees and performance ethics committees, the issue of censorship raised by Plato is still relevant^[3]. Furthermore, censorship systems in art education have persisted throughout its history^[23]. The enduring presence of the censorship system advocated by Plato indicates that artistic works and visual imagery cannot be used freely in education and that political, economic, and cultural factors are involved, reaching beyond the context of Plato and his era.

So, does Plato's artistic thought only influence art education in terms of accepting censorship? Plato goes further. In Book 10 of "The Republic," he discusses the dangers of intoxication that viewers of tragedy need to be wary of^[7]. He believes that the use of beautiful language and metaphors by poets can enchant people, leading them astray^[24]. Plato suggests that one should be vigilant about this, which is where one can consider the importance of critical thinking and reflection in art education^[25]. Plato's arguments can be addressed in art education activities related to aesthetic education, such as identifying and discussing

artistic controversies surrounding artistic works, forming and exploring questions about faith, power, justice issues, environmental issues, etc., mediated through visual imagery ^[25-28]. Plato was the first to establish a distinction between art and the philosophy of art. Through the disharmony between poetry and philosophy, he initiated philosophical reflection and critique within art, linking it to considerations in art education ^[2,3,15]. However, current art curricula only stipulate the degree of discovery and understanding of visual culture used in daily life, rather than critiquing and reflecting on it through visual culture art education. Therefore, methodological research that can be applied to textbooks and classrooms is necessary ^[25,29]. Starting from Plato's arguments on censorship or the exile of poets, art education needs to contemplate the critical philosophical thinking paths implicit in these arguments.

On the other hand, Plato's focus in "The Republic" is on his insight into the power of art to influence through the senses. Recognizing art's ability to affect the soul through the senses, Plato acknowledges the significance of art education during childhood ^[7]. This serves as a reminder to prioritize the value of sensory elements in art education, marking the beginning of its uniqueness and independence. However, current art curricula are limited to perceiving the external world through sensory organs, distinguishing between artifacts and natural objects, and expressing feelings. Thus, methodological research and diverse aesthetic approaches are needed ^[25,29].

Next, the study will explore the implications of Aristotle's artistic thought for art education. Unlike Plato, who held a negative view of tragedy, Aristotle viewed it from a different perspective. He considered imitation to be the essence of tragedy and saw catharsis as its purpose. These viewpoints, along with interpretations from various researchers, have influenced art education.

As we have seen, Aristotle viewed mimicry as the essence of tragedy, differing from Plato who regarded mimicry as something that reveals human nature and initiates learning, attaching a positive meaning to it due to its association with pleasure. The divergence between these two philosophers stems from their fundamental philosophies: Plato imagined the idea of truth in "The Republic" as transcendental, whereas Aristotle saw

universality as identifiable through individuals. This difference leads to the fact that for Plato, mimicry obscures and distorts truth, but for Aristotle, it holds creative and generative significance. In Aristotle's view, mimicry is not an imitation of the object itself but rather a grasp of the individual's essence, which in art, signifies representation and its emergence ^[11]. Moreover, for Plato, mimicry is a negation that distorts reality, while for Aristotle, it's not a distortion but a representation of contingent, individual events and behaviors in art as contingent and inevitable processes ^[11]. Audiences can gain intellectual enlightenment and pleasure from appreciating artistic works. In Aristotle's framework, mimicry in art is endowed with meanings of representation, expression, and creation, distinct from merely seeing and imitating objects. This aspect of mimicry gives art a sense of representation, differing from observation in science.

In art education, mimicry allows students to capture their insights and individuality through the representation of objects, enabling viewers to gain intellectual insight and experience the joy of appreciating others' work, even if they don't fully express themselves according to the object. This corresponds to the cognitive, affective, and definitional domains of art education, where mimicry gains new meanings in each of these domains.

On the other hand, Aristotle's "mimicry" is related to "catharsis." As we have seen, there are multiple interpretations of "catharsis," enriching its meaning and broadening the considerations for art education. Firstly, in the moral interpretation discussed earlier, *catharsis* is understood as purification. This viewpoint suggests that catharsis brings the emotions in the viewer's heart to an optimal state, neither excessive nor deficient, thus forming virtues through habituation. Kwon (2014) disagrees with this, arguing that it's unreasonable to expect the formation of virtues through the habituation of emotions, but this optimal emotional state may be temporary. In terms of moral education in art, purifying and stabilizing emotions through art is a meaningful educational implication, even if the optimal emotional state is temporary.

Secondly, medical interpretations of catharsis as emotional therapy and their criticisms have implications for issues such as emotional anxiety, bullying, and

art therapy in art education. Specifically, Kim (2007) encouragingly interprets catharsis as occurring during the artistic creation process itself, suggesting that artistic activities can become a channel for students to release negative and violent emotions. Although Kim's interpretation doesn't mention catharsis occurring in the creator's mind, it can be argued that the creator's work purifies events during the artistic creation process, providing students with the possibility of releasing negative and violent emotions through artistic activities. In this sense, Aristotle's catharsis offers the possibility that artistic activities can help address issues like bullying and emotional anxiety to some extent.

On the other hand, criticisms of the medical interpretation of catharsis also impact art therapy in art education research. Criticisms include the assumption that all viewers are in a pathological state and can excessively *cathart* their emotions, raising questions about whether everyone needs to feel compassion and fear through artistic works and be healed, and what non-pathological individuals can gain from viewing artistic works^[11]. Keeping these criticisms in mind when introducing art therapy into school education can ponder whether students are seen as objects of treatment. If students are viewed as treatment objects, they become sick individuals needing treatment. This might lead to seeing non-problematic pathological issues in students' artistic expressions and creating problems where there are none. Baek (2018) illustrates the danger of diagnosing a child as having attention issues based solely on their artistic work, indicating the risk of mislabeling and stifling the child's potential^[30]. The question of whether students' ability to *cathart* and release negative emotions through artistic activities should be viewed as pathological resonates with criticisms of the medical interpretation of Aristotle's "*katharsis*." These criticisms argue that the appropriate audience for Aristotle's tragedy is ordinary people in a normal state. Thus, the cathartic effect of artistic activities is not limited to the pathological but accessible to all.

This section outlines the influence of Plato's and Aristotle's artistic thoughts on art education. Although they differed in their views on "mimicry" and evaluations of tragedy, both have significant implications for art education. Regarding the evaluation of "mimicry,"

Plato's arguments serve as a warning for today's visual images that distance us from reality, obscuring truth. Aristotle's perspectives on the creative source of art and the joy of re-creation in the gap between reality and art are of great significance to art education. On the other hand, the value of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophical thoughts lies in both the questions they raise and the answers they provide. Both philosophers questioned and reflected on artistic activities, phenomena, and education taken for granted in their era, demonstrating aesthetic attitudes and methods. The path and methodology of their philosophical thoughts are no less important to art education than the content of their philosophies.

6. Conclusion

This article explores the implications of the artistic thoughts of ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle for art education. These two philosophers formed a significant trend in Western philosophy, influencing not only philosophy but also education, art, and culture. The artistic ideas of Plato and Aristotle revolve around themes that remain important today, such as technology, *mimesis*, and *catharsis*, as well as their opposing positions on aesthetic issues and artistic debates. These discussions provide problematic and meaningful insights for art education, reflected not only in the artistic arguments and content of the two philosophers but also in their methodological approach to problem-solving.

A major point of contention in the philosophical reflections of Plato and Aristotle on *techne* is whether poetry is included within it. In art education, the interest lies not in the outcome of whether poetry is included in *techne*, but rather in the *mimesis* issues raised during their thought processes. The difference in Plato's and Aristotle's positions on the issue of *mimesis* is even more pronounced: Plato views *mimesis* as a negative aspect that leads people away from truth while Aristotle sees it as the starting point and essence of human perceptual desire, understanding it as a source of creation and authorship. Instead of choosing one of these two distinct positions, this article derives meaningful insights for art education from both. From Plato's critique of *mimesis*, the study extrapolates the necessity of education and

the importance of posing aesthetic questions to visual imagery, as visual images can sensory and unconsciously influence us. On the other hand, Aristotle's positively inspired view of *mimesis* renews the meaning of representation in the cognitive, psychological, and definitional domains of art education, seeing it as a principle of creation rather than imitation, and a source of intellectual insight and enjoyment. Additionally, the interpretation and critique of *catharsis*, which is the essence of *mimesis*, not only has implications for art education but also for art therapy and issues of campus violence and emotional anxiety studied in art education. The moral interpretation of *catharsis*, even as a temporary relief and stabilization of emotions, has a significant impact on character education in art; while the medical interpretation of *catharsis*, which involves the discharge and treatment of excessive emotions, influences the field of art therapy being studied in art education. Furthermore, criticisms of the medical interpretation of *catharsis* also have significant implications for art education, particularly its presupposition that all tragedy audiences are pathological and have excessive emotions. This raises a warning for the use of the term "therapy" in art education, as it positions the subject as something that needs to be "healed." Art therapy in art education needs to be cautious of this aspect of medical interpretation, as it has the potential to interpret students without issues as needing treatment or to turn non-issues into problems. If Aristotle considered the appropriate audience for

tragedy to be ordinary people in a normal state, rather than those in a pathological state, it is possible for people who are not necessarily in a pathological state to seek catharsis and emotional stabilization through art. Whether students' negative emotions or violence should be viewed as pathological or treatable is a question that requires serious discussion among those interested in art therapy, including art education. On the other hand, interpreting and criticizing *catharsis* from a cognitive perspective provides aesthetic significance for art education by reflecting on the intellectual pleasure accompanying catharsis and the pleasure inherent in emotions themselves.

Although Plato and Aristotle disagree in major artistic discussions, both philosophers envision an order and stability for the polity. Plato's focus on art education related to poetry and tragedy in "The Republic" aims to plan an appropriate national identity, while Aristotle's positive view of tragic catharsis lies in restoring the order and stability of the polity. While their ideological developments differ in this regard, they share a goal of prosperity and happiness for the polity, question and reflect on what was considered artistic and artistic education at the time, and maintain vigilance. Their common orientation also reminds us that when promoting art education in today's public education, its methods and content should be directed to educational researchers and educators.

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