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FINE ART AS THERAPY ACCORDING TO PLATO*

In this paper I shall discuss what the great Athenian philosopher Plato says about the role the fine arts can play in the therapy of diseases, and more broadly in the improvement of the state of both the soul and the body. His teaching on this subject is rich and very valuable. However, it is not presented systematically in some one of his works, but is scattered in many of them. In almost every one of his dialogues there is something pertinent to this subject. Those which are richest in such teaching are the Republic and the Laws, and hence I shall draw a great deal more from these dialogues than from his other works. I shall not draw from secondary sources, from what others have said about Plato's teaching on this subject, because no one, to my knowledge, has dealt with this part of Plato's philosophy to any significant extent. I know of no book or even article on the subject.

Since our concern is with the therapy of man, especially of the psyche, by mental means, and of the body through the psyche, it is necessary at the outset to have an adequate idea of man as Plato conceives him, particularly of the psyche. According to Plato, man is a psyche or soul using a body as an instrument\(^1\). Like many philosophers since his time, such as Plotinos, Descartes, Locke and Bergson, he believes that the soul and the body interact: the soul acts on the body, and the body acts on the soul\(^2\). Hence, if one of these is in a good state, its influence on the other will be good, while if it is in a bad state, its influence will be bad. Negative states of the psyche are reflected in the body, result in bodily disorders; and conversely, bad states of the body result in disorderly mental states.

Of the two terms of the relationship, primacy belongs to the psyche. By nature, it is proper for the soul to rule and for the body to be ruled\(^3\). The soul is dynamic, creative: it is originative of motion, of change, whereas the body does not originate motion or change, but only communicates

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1. Thus, the soul uses the bodily senses, especially sight and hearing, in enquiry about the physical world (Phaedo 79c). See my book Plato's View of Man, 1975, pp. 56-64.
2. See e.g. Phaedo 81a-d, 83d, and Plato's View of Man, pp. 69-71.
3. Phaedo 79e-80a, 94b-95a; Laws X. 896b-c.
it. Hence, in the last analysis, the condition of the body is a result of the condition of the psyche.

The body is rendered alive by the psyche. More than this, the body is formed by the psyche. The psyche makes the body as a weaver makes a cloak; with this difference, that the activity of the psyche as a weaver continues throughout life. The body, says Plato in the Phaedo, ‘is constantly changing and being destroyed, while man still lives, and the soul is always weaving anew that which wears out’ (87d-e; cf. 91d). In the language of modern physiology, a process of catabolism is constantly taking place in the body, and this is counteracted by the reverse process of anabolism. According to Plato, the process of anabolism is directed by the psyche. The figure of the weaver and the cloak brings to mind Shakespeare’s remark that ‘sleep knits up the raveled sleeve of care’ (Macbeth II, ii). Plato would have commented on this passage of Shakespeare that sleep is not an entity which exercises causal efficacy, but is only a relatively inactive state of the body, during which the psyche intensifies its efforts to reknit the parts of the ‘garment’ that have been raveled by the cares of so-called wakeful life.

Implicit in the view that the psyche forms and repairs the body is the idea that there is an unconscious level of the psyche, which directs the ana-bolic processes, for we are not conscious of doing so. The belief that the unconscious is a recent discovery of psychology, particularly of psychoanalysis, is wrong; the idea of the unconscious is at least as old as Plato’s philosophy, being a fundamental part of his theory of man and of his theory of knowledge.

In some of his works, Plato makes certain statements that have been taken by some to imply that he regarded the body as inherently evil. He has been viewed, in other words, as a forerunner of Manichaeism. Now Plato speaks in a few places of the body as a ‘tomb’ (σῆμα) of the soul, or as a ‘prison’ (εἰργιαζός) of the soul. But these statements do not justify us in taking Plato to mean that the body is intrinsically evil. We have his own explicit assertion that the ‘body is neither good nor evil’, as well as his explicit assertion that ‘good and evil alike originate in the soul’. As to the body being a ‘tomb’ or a ‘prison’ of the soul, Plato explains that in the final analysis it is the soul which renders the body such through lack of vigilance.

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5. Cratylus 400c; Phaedrus 250c; Gorgias 493a.
6. Phaedo 81d-e, 82e, 83d; cf. Cratylus 400, Phaedrus 250c.
7. Lysis 217a.
8. Chrmides 156a; cf. Republic III. 409c.
through ignorance, through intemperance of one form or another. This is a topic that requires considerable discussion, and we shall return to it. The whole subject of physical disease, its causes, prevention and treatment is linked with it.

Since man is a psyche and the body is only an instrument of the psyche, it is necessary to discuss the structure of the psyche, when it is such as it ought to be, or 'according to nature', and then to view the psyche when this order is disrupted, when the condition of the psyche is 'contrary to nature'. Plato teaches that the human psyche has three distinguishable parts or powers. These are the rational, the spirited, and the appetitive. The rational part is the highest, the appetitive the lowest, and the spirited intermediate. This is the natural hierarchical order. Each of these is in turn distinguishable into a cognitive and an emotional element. The rational power consists of intellect (νοησις) and love (ἔρως); the spirited, of opinion or conviction (πίστις) and spirit (θυμός); and the appetitive, of conjecture (σκέψις) and desire (ἐπιθυμία). The rational power is directed to the true, the good, and the beautiful; the spirited, to ruling, conquering and getting fame; the appetitive, to eating, drinking, other sensual pleasures and to material gain, because such desires are generally satisfied by the help of money. The rational and the appetitive faculties are opposed principles. In the man who is striving for self-perfection, the rational power fights against and restrains the appetitive power. In the struggle between reason and desire, the spirited power, which is characterized by the feelings of anger, indignation and confidence, usually sides with reason, and never takes part with desire against reason. Thus, when a man's desires violently prevail over his reason, the spirited principle is on the side of reason: the man is angry, reviles himself. Also, the spirited element stirs us to indignation when we see the just trampled under foot by the unjust. But if it is not controlled by the rational element, the spirited power leads us to reckless boldness and self-assertion.

When the proper hierarchy is preserved within the soul, when the rational power is developed and rules the non-rational powers—the spirited and the appetitive—and these obey the commands of reason, so that each part of the psyche carries on rightly its own distinctive functions, the state of the psyche is one of harmony, health.

This state is regulated and maintained by the four main virtues: wisdom,

9. See e.g. *Phaedo* 82e-83a.

10. For a fuller discussion of the three powers of the soul see *Plato's View of Man*, pp. 31-39.
courage, temperance, and justice. Wisdom (sophia, phronesis) is the virtue, that pertains to the rational power. It is knowledge of man’s true nature and destiny, and of the necessary means for fulfilling it. This means that wisdom is the profound realization that each of us is essentially not a body, but a soul, which is far superior to the body in worth and immortal, and hence deserving the greatest attention and care. It means also that wisdom is a keen awareness that the body is an instrument of the soul, which the latter should make proper use of and keep in good condition, in order that it may be an efficient instrument of the soul and not a hindrance. Thus, wisdom is not only self-knowledge, but also knowledge of values, directing us to the right use of our psyche and body, and of everything pertaining to them. With regard to values, it should be explained that Plato distinguishes two categories, which he calls ‘divine goods’ (ἀγαθά θεία) and ‘human goods’ (ἀγαθά ἀνθρώπινα). The first are superior to the second. Divine goods are absolute; human goods, conditional. Among the divine goods are the four main virtues that have already been mentioned; wisdom, temperance, justice, and courage. Among the human goods are health of body, beauty of body, strength (which includes endurance), and a sufficiency of material resources. The goods of each of these categories form a scale, some being higher than others. The order in which they have been mentioned is the order of their value. Thus, wisdom is the highest of the divine goods, and physical health is the highest of human goods. Plato assigns supreme value to wisdom, because it is the excellence or virtue of the highest faculty of man, which rules the other powers; and because it is the guiding principle in the formation of the other virtues and the acquisition of the human goods. The latter are called conditional, in that they are good if they are rightly used, and their right use depends on the possession of the divine goods, i.e. the excellences of the soul: wisdom, temperance, justice, and courage.

To the spirited power, which comes next after the rational in the hierarchical structure of the soul, belongs the virtue of courage (ἀνδρεία). This virtue consists in obedience of the spirited power in pleasure and pain to the commands of reason. Courage involves right opinion or conviction as to what is to be feared and what is not to be feared.

Temperance (σωφροσύνη) belongs to all three parts of the soul. It exists when the spirited and the appetite powers agree that the highest faculty, reason, ought to rule and they should obey. In other words, temperance is proper subordination, is the submission of the lower parts of the

11. Laws I. 631b-c, II. 661a, III. 688b; cf. Euthydemus 281a-282, 288e-289a, Phaedo 69b, Republic IX. 591c-d.
soul to the highest without coercion. Further, it is the observance of measure or moderation in the exercise of each part.

The fourth main virtue, justice (δικαιοσύνη), similarly belongs to all three parts of the psyche. Justice is the harmonious working together of all three parts, where each does its own peculiar work and does not take over functions proper to the other parts. It is the quality that results when wisdom, courage and temperance are present; it is also the quality that preserves these. That is, justice can be looked at both as an effect and as a cause.

After defining the four virtues in the Republic, Plato remarks that it is obvious that virtue is the health, beauty, and vigor of the soul (IV. 444d-e). When the natural hierarchical structure of the soul is disrupted, when the order is inverted, there result disease, ugliness, and weakness of the soul. This inversion (ἀνταρτοπία)\(^{12}\) can be of greater or lesser seriousness. One form of inversion is when the rule of the rational faculty is replaced by the rule of the spirited element. The striving for honors and power replaces the love of wisdom and understanding. Life is now guided by custom and the letter of the law, unillumined by rational insight and wisdom. A more serious inversion of the hierarchical structure of the psyche takes place when not only reason, but also the spirited element are pushed aside, and the appetitive element takes over the leadership of the soul. In this case, the rational and the spirited parts of the soul are forced to act as slaves of the appetitive. Reason now has to calculate and consider nothing but ways of gratifying the sensuous desires and of making more money from little, while the spirited power has to admire and honor nothing but riches and rich men\(^{13}\). This, however, is not the worst form of inversion or disorder that can take place in the soul. The complete turning upside down of the true order of the soul occurs when some lawless (παράνομος) desire becomes enthroned as the ruler within the soul, as happens in the case of tyrants. For within the appetitive power there are three levels of desires, and the condition of the soul is worst when the lowest desires tyrannize over the whole soul. There are, according to Plato, (a) necessary desires, and (b) unnecessary or spendthrift desires, some of which are lawless\(^{14}\). The necessary desires, such as that for food, have to be satisfied, for the proper maintenance of the health and strength of the body. Their satisfaction is bad only when it is immoderate or when one seeks, for example, dainties instead of simple,

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12. On the notion of inversion, see esp. Republic IV. 442b and Gorgias 481c.
13. Republic VIII. 553c-d.
14. Ibid. 558d-661a, IX. 571a-572b.
wholesome food. The desire for dainties and that for luxuries are examples of unnecessary desires. Lawless desires are those unnecessary desires which are forbidden by the laws of well-governed states and by the highest principle of man, reason. The desire for murder, for incest, and for homosexual relations are examples of such desires. Plato notes that there appear to be unlawful desires in everyone, which manifest themselves in sleep. In some persons, he observes, they are controlled, and are either banished or become few and weak, whereas in the tyrannical man no effort is made to control and eradicate them, and hence he has many unlawful desires and these very strong. One such desire becomes the ruling force in him. It is nourished into greatness by his idle, spendthrift desires, until it breaks out in frenzy. Such a man becomes, says Plato, «for all his waking life the man he used to be is gone; time in his dreams, ready to shed blood or do any dreadful deed».

In a soul in which there is an inversion of the hierarchical structure, instead of the excellence of wisdom there is the vice of ignorance; instead of courage, cowardice; instead of temperance, intemperance; instead of justice injustice. Seen from the ethical standpoint, such a soul is bad; seen from the aesthetic standpoint, deformed, ugly; seen from the medical point of view, sick. And as soul and body act upon one another, the body is adversely affected.

In connection with the medical point of view, it should be noted that Plato characterizes each of the vices (κακία) or negative qualities just mentioned as a disease (νόσος) of the soul. He calls ignorance a disease of the soul, and applies the same term to intemperance or incontinence, injustice and cowardice. It must also be noted that the examples which Plato presents of men suffering from these maladies do not conform, except in certain respects, to the definitions or descriptions of either schizophrenia or paranoia given in modern medical books. The term schizophrenia, which is Greek, does not appear in his writings, while the word paranoia appears only three times. The latter means etymologically being beside (παρά) or out of one’s mind (νοσος). Plato uses the term paranoia to denote madness or insanity in general, but prefers to denote insanity by the cognate term anoma (ανομα), which means absence of mind, of reason, and is usually trans-

15. Republic V. 461, IX. 571c-d, 574d-e.
16. Ibid. IX. 571b, 572b.
17. Ibid. 572e; Laws VIII. 836c-839a, 841b.
18. Republic X. 609a-e; Timaeus 86b, 88b; Sophist 228d.
19. Phaedrus 266a; Laws XI. 928e, 929d.
lated as 'folly'; and by the term mania (μανία), 'madness'. Anoia for him is a broader term than mania: it embraces unconscious ignorance or stupidity (ἀμάθεια) and 'madness' (μανία). Probably, such extreme cases of psychic disorder as are denoted by our terms schizophrenia and paranoia were quite rare if not altogether unknown in ancient Greece. The closest Plato comes to describing a case of schizophrenia is in his discussions of the tyrannical man and of the incontinent man. The tyrannical man also presents features of paranoia: he is described as being beset with fear, full of convulsions and pains, and compelled to pass his life fighting and combating with other men. Incontinence is described in the Timaeus as a form of madness (μανία) that consists in an inability to control the reproductive function, and results in excessive pleasures and pains, which render the rational faculty inoperative as a power of guidance and control. For the most part of one's life, Plato remarks that when a man is overjoyed, or contrariwise suffers excessively from pain, «he is unable either to see or to hear anything correctly, and he is at such a time distraught and wholly incapable of exercising reason». Such madness, according to Plato, has as its proximate cause a bad bodily state. There is an overproduction of seed, which causes intense lust. This bodily state is in turn a result of wrong education and mode of life.

It is necessary to explain that Plato does not regard all forms of 'madness' as pathological. There are for him types of 'madness' which are not bad, pathological, but are good, non-pathological, having a divine origin and being releases from customary habits. He discusses four kinds of non-pathological madness. One of them is the madness of prophecy (μαντική); another is the mystic (τελεστική); a third is the poetic (ποιητική), or what we call poetic 'inspiration'; and the fourth is the madness of love (ἔρως). These four kinds of madness are not viewed by Plato as abnormal, but as what some call today, speaking of certain phenomena, paranormal or supernormal. They are healthy states, positive goods. This is especially true of the last mentioned form of madness, that of love, which Plato regards as the highest, best kind of madness. Love, as understood here by Plato, is love of the beautiful viewed as good. It has various manifestations, some

20. Timaeus 86b-d.
21. Republic IX. 579d-e.
23. Timaeus 86e; cf. Phaedrus 265a, Laws VIII. 839b-841c.
25. Ibid. 244-250a, 265b.
26. Ibid. 246d-250c; Symposium 204b-205d; Republic III. 403a.
higher than others. Its highest, purest form, is love of ideals, such as wisdom, temperance, justice, holiness, and of absolute, transcendent Beauty. This love is best manifested in the true philosopher, Plato believes, for the true philosopher, despising earthly riches and honors and the customary enjoyments, is absorbed with the quest of higher values, of higher truth, of the supreme Good.\footnote{27. \textit{Phaedrus} 248e; \textit{Republic} VI. 500b-c.}

Plato’s concern is clearly not with the therapy of these good forms of 'madness', but with the treatment of states that he regards as really pathological. One such state, as we have already seen, is ignorance. He calls ignorance the greatest of diseases of the soul.\footnote{28. \textit{Timaeus} 86b.} It is the greatest disease, because it is the root cause of other diseases of the soul. Of ignorance there are two kinds: conscious ignorance (\emph{ἀγνωσία}) and unconscious ignorance (\emph{ἀμηνοσία}). Conscious ignorance is ignorance that knows that it does not know. Unconscious ignorance is ignorance that believes itself to be knowledge; it is what is sometimes termed stupidity. Such ignorance is far worse than conscious ignorance, because it blocks the way to progress in knowledge and understanding. One who is in a state of unconscious ignorance with respect to a particular subject has the delusion that he possesses the knowledge which he lacks, and hence makes no effort to acquire it. Other states of the soul which Plato regards as pathological and hence in need of therapy are, as we have already seen, intemperance, injustice, and cowardice.

I have spoken of various pathological states or diseases. But what is disease? To understand what disease is, one must understand what health is, health being something positive and disease something negative, a privation of health. Plato analyzes health in \emph{aesthetic} terms. Health is harmony, order, proportion, rhythm. Disease is the absence or negation of these, as we have seen in the discussion of the inversion of the hierarchical structure of the psyche: it is disharmony, disorder, disproportion, lack of rhythm. This holds for diseases of the body as well as those of the soul. The body is healthy when it contains various substances in the right proportion, neither to excess nor deficiently; when its functions or 'movements', as Plato calls them, are harmoniously interrelated; and when it is harmoniously related to the psyche.\footnote{29. \textit{Phaedo} 93a; \textit{Symposium} 188a ff.; \textit{Rep. X}. 609; \textit{Laws X}. 906c.} In the case of the psyche, the virtues which constitute her health are forms of harmony.\footnote{30. \textit{Timaeus} 87d-e.} Thus, wisdom is in part an apprehension and reflection within the intellect of the objective cosmic order, and of the

\footnote{31. \textit{Phaedo} 93e; \textit{Republic} III. 410e-411a, IV. 430c.}
perfection and beauty of the realm of eternal archetypes, forms or ideas. Courage is the harmony between the spirited and the rational parts of the psyche, the latter counseling what is to be feared, and the former obeying. Temperance involves the harmonious relationship between all three parts of the psyche, the rational part ruling and the spirited and appetitive parts obeying without the need of coercion. And justice is their harmonious functioning, each part doing its own work and not interfering with the work of the other parts.

We come now to the problem of the therapy (θεραπεία) of the soul and the body. Plato expresses the conviction that we should give attention to both mental and physical means, but should give primacy to mental means. This is entailed by his view that the soul and the body interact, that the soul affects the body, and the body affects the soul; but that since the soul is the ultimate origative principle of good and evil, far greater emphasis should be given to mental means.

There is a very interesting discussion on this matter in one of the earlier dialogues, the Charmides, which brings out this point very vividly. It is asserted here that «as you ought not to attempt to cure the eyes without the head, so you ought not to attempt to cure the body without the soul... For all good and evil in the body and in man originates in the soul and overflows from thence, as from the head into the eyes. And therefore, if the head and the body are to be well, you must begin by curing the soul; that is the first thing.»

The fine arts are, according to Plato, a very powerful and effective means of therapy. In order to explain how they can be used to this end, it is necessary to add to what I have said thus far, a brief account of his theory of true education (δροθή παιδεία), because the fine arts are viewed by him as parts of education. Education for Plato is an enterprise that is unsurpassed by any other in importance. It has two major divisions. One of these is 'music' (μουσική), the other is 'gymnastic' (γυμναστική). The term 'musics' is derived from the Muses, whom the Greeks imagined as the 'goddesses' of the arts and sciences. The division of education which Plato calls 'music' embraces not only what is ordinarily called music, but also the rest of the fine arts and in addition mathematics (arithmetic, plane geometry and solid geometry), astronomy, harmonics, the correlation of the sciences, and phi-
losophy, which according to him is the supreme branch of knowledge. The term 'fine art' does not appear in Plato's or other ancient Greek writings. He uses simply the term 'art' (τέχνη) to denote what we call the 'fine arts'—e.g. music, painting, sculpture, literature—and in addition the various 'useful arts' and branches of knowledge. The sciences are arts in the sense that they are not only specific systems of knowledge, but are also certain skills, involving a method of investigation and of expression or communication. Philosophy itself is in this sense and art. For our purposes, we may distinguish the fine arts from the arts in general by saying that the fine arts are concerned with making, and more narrowly with making works that are expressive of beauty.

The division of education called 'music' in the wide sense of the term is concerned with the soul, with her care, harmonious development and purification from every defect or evil. It seeks not only to develop properly the potentialities of the soul, but also to prevent defects or maladies from arising in her, and to cure any that may be present.

The other major division of education, 'gymnastic', has to do with the body. Gymnastic is divided by Plato into two parts: regimen and physical exercises. The Greek word for regimen is διατήρησις, from which is derived the English word 'diet'. Regimen is a prescribed manner of life based on knowledge of the principles of hygiene, of the whole science of preventive medicine. It pertains to the quality and quantity of food and drink, and the time when one should partake of them, to the nature and duration of rest, habituation to hardships, and so on. Physical exercises (γυμνασία) are movements which are particularly valuable for building a healthy, strong, agile, and beautiful body. In the Laws (VII. 795e) where Plato discusses at some length physical exercises, he singles out two kinds: the dance and wrestling. Thus the dance is set apart from all the other fine arts by being placed under the heading of gymnastic, of education that pertains to the body. But he points out that true gymnastic aims at improving not only the body, but also, and chiefly, the soul. It strengthens the spirited element up to a point, there by helping develop courage, weakens lust and fosters the development of temperance. Exercises that have the opposite effects are ruled out. Thus, those that tend to overdevelop the muscles, and to strengthen the spirited

37. *Phaedo* 61; *Republic* VIII. 533c-534e.
38. *Republic* VII. 532c-533e.
40. *Gorgias* 452b, 465b; *Republic* III. 410b ff.
41. *Republic* III. 410c; *Laws* VII. 791c.
element to the point of ferocity, are asserted to be vulgar and unworthy of being called πατὸς ταύτα.  

Plato does not include in the first division of education, in music in the wide sense, studies which are of a purely utilitarian nature, concerned with man’s material needs and in general with his biological survival; that is, with the various trades, agriculture, mining, and other ways of earning money. The arts and sciences which he includes in his curriculum are all what we call ‘liberal’. They are such as tend to improve the soul, although some of them—for instance, mathematics and astronomy—also have utilitarian value. Thus, arithmetic is useful for everyday dealings, but its main value as a part of education lies in the fact that it is good intellectual discipline, in that it helps develop the faculty of reason, trains us to think, draws the soul towards the abstract, the true, the eternal, and thus prepares us for philosophy. The same is true of geometry. Astronomy and harmonics serve the same purpose, and further initiate us into higher truth and being, bringing to our attention what is beautiful: the one the harmony of the motions of the heavenly bodies, and the other the harmony of sounds. The study of the correlation of all these sciences, or what we would call the ‘philosophy of science’, further brings to our attention the beautiful and the good, by showing the harmony of one branch of knowledge with another. All these sciences: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, harmonics, and the correlation of them, prepare the mind for the study of the highest art and science: ‘dialectic’ or philosophy. The supreme object of philosophy as conceived by Plato is the discovery and contemplation of the highest Good, the ‘Idea of Good’, which is absolute, suprasensible, eternal. This Good, viewed from the detached, aesthetic standpoint, is an object of inexpressible Beauty. The contemplation of it constitutes the highest fulfilment of spiritual eros.

To understand properly Plato’s teaching on fine art as a means of psychotherapy, one must be aware of one further element in his philosophy: his sharp distinction between true art and pseudo art. True art is governed by the principles of idealism, rationality, simplicity, clarity, organic unity, appropriateness, measure, proportion, harmony, rhythm. It is guided by wisdom: by knowledge of man’s real nature and of his ultimate aim in life;

42. Republic III. 410b ff.
43. Euthydemus 288e-289a.
44. Republic VII. 525c-527e; Laws V. 747b.
45. Republic VII. 530-531.
46. Ibid. 532a-533e.
by knowledge of the divine and of man’s proper relation to it; and by a clear apprehension of the true hierarchy of values that should be the object of man’s aspiration. Such art seeks to convey this wisdom, this knowledge and these values, and to help mold character consonant with them. True art springs from the highest faculty in man, the rational, and addresses itself to this. It seeks to nourish and develop this power by means of such knowledge and the expression of higher values. Pseudo art, on the other hand, is not guided by such knowledge, but is directed by personal or public opinion, conjecture, or imagination, and gives expression to wrong forms of character and action. Pseudo art presents what is ugly as though it were beautiful, disease as if it were health; and it praises evil under the guise of good. Thus it has the effect of suggesting, and hence inclining people to do, what is ugly instead of what is beautiful; and it results in their developing various forms of ugliness or disease of soul and thereby of the body. Pseudo art addresses itself not to the highest part of the psyche, but to the lower parts. It strengthens these, weakens the intellectual power, and thus leads to the disruption of the hierarchical structure of the soul.\[48\]

It is clear that for Plato not all the creations of what are called ‘fine arts’ have therapeutic value, but only works of true art. Works of pseudo art do not have such value, but are either indifferent or positively harmful, implanting disharmony and disorder in the soul, and augmenting the disharmony and discord already present in her.

In their true form, the fine arts constitute an important kind of education. Their aim, like that of the rest of education, is the harmonious development of man, the promotion of health of body and soul. They are intended both as ways of preventing diseases or deformities of soul and body, of remedying those that have arisen, and also of actualizing man’s higher potentialities.

The fact that the fine arts are viewed as parts of paideia, education, does not necessarily mean that one must be exposed to them in a formal manner, as in classroom. For Plato and the ancient Greeks in general, the term education has both a narrower meaning, denoting formal education, and a broader meaning, denoting both formal education and all other cultural influences. All such influences, at every stage of life, were viewed by them as constituting education. Taken in this sense, education commences in early childhood and continues throughout life. As envisaged by Plato, fine arts such as architecture, painting and sculpture exert and educational

48. For a fuller discussion of the distinction between true art and pseudo art see my book *Plato’s Theory of Fine Art*, pp. 13-22, 26, 64-80.
influences from their own proper setting in the community, as parts of the surroundings in which one is brought up. Other arts, such as literature and music, act both by being presented formally, by a teacher, and by being presented informally on various occasions of life.

Fine art acts upon the psyche in a beneficent manner by conveying ideals, such as the virtues that we noted earlier. Plato speaks of the fine arts as 'imitating' ideals. 'Imitating' is to be taken to mean express or convey. The fine arts convey such ideals vividly and hence effectively. The rational faculty by nature apprehends these ideals; and the repeated apprehension of them, especially during what are called the formative years, definitely effects the formation of human character (ἡθος) in the likeness of these ideals.

In this connection, Plato enunciates the very important psychological and pedagogical principle that one becomes like that which he habitually contemplates. He states this principle in the Republic as follows: A man cannot help imitating (μιμετώναι) that with which he holds converse (διαλέει) with admiration. To this statement he adds: «The philosopher, holding converse with the divine and orderly, becomes divine and orderly, as far as this is possible for man».

Now the divine, the ideal, the orderly is precisely what true fine art expresses, as we have already noted. An epitome of Plato’s teaching on this matter is contained in the following passage of the same dialogue: «Let our artists be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful (καλόν) and graceful (εὐσχήμον); then our youth will dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything. And beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into a likeness (διεμοιότης) and concord (συμφωνία) with the beauty of reason».

This Platonic principle, which we may call the Principle of Assimilation, is recognized by contemporary Psychoanalysis. The latter calls it Identification. Psychoanalysis dwells on instances where this principle operates in a negative manner, that is, on instances where the assimilation or identification is with what is negative, unhealthy. Thus Anthony Storr, a British psychoanalyst, remarks by way of example, that analysts themselves are exposed to identifying with, or becoming infected by, their patients. He notes that Jung «referred to analysts ‘going queer’, and said that he thought Freud had been adversely affected by his patients». Plato himself was keenly

49. VI. 500c; cf. III. 395c-d.
50. VI. 500c-d.
51. III. 401c-d; cf. Laws II. 656b, Timaeus 90d.
aware of the fact that the Principle of Assimilation operates in a negative as well as in a positive way, and it was for this reason that he condemned pseudo art. Thus, he rejected the well known tragic poetry of his time because the heroes in this poetry provide wrong models for the people, being depicted as overcome by sorrow, beating themselves hopelessly and wailing.

Works of true art are viewed by Plato as working on the soul and improving her, not only by effecting an assimilation of the psyche to the ideals expressed by them, but also by way of purification. The Greek word for purification is catharsis. The connotation of the term catharsis should not be confused with that of a contemporary school of psychology, which employs it as a synonym of self-expression in general. For Plato catharsis and the cognate term catharmos mean strictly purification, either of the body or of the soul. He defines purification as the removing of whatever is bad and retaining of what is good. In the case of the body, badness, which consists of ugliness (αἰσχρος) or disease (υόσος), is removed by two means: by gymnastic, which removes the first, and by the art and science of medicine, which removes the second. In the case of the soul, badness is removed by the fine arts, the sciences which were discussed earlier, and philosophy; in other words, by all those disciplines which Plato includes in the first division of paideia.

Now there are various forms of badness or disease of the soul, as we have already seen. The chief of these, according to Plato, are ignorance, intemperance, injustice, and cowardice. There are two kinds of ignorance: unconscious and conscious. Unconscious ignorance or intellectual conceit, the «large and grievous kind» of ignorance, as Plato calls it, is purged most effectively by means of philosophy, particularly by means of dialectic in the form of the elenchos (ἔλεγχος), of cross-examination, of question-and-answer. This method removes the conceit (ὁντισίς) of knowledge, humbles one intellectually, making him realize what he knows and what he does not know. The elenchos «is the greatest and most efficacious of all purifications». To say that philosophy, or more precisely a particular part or

53. See Plato’s Theory of Fine Art, pp. 56-58.
54. Sophist 226d.
55. Ibid. 226d ff.; Laws I. 628d.
56. Republic VIII. 567c; Sophist 227d.
57. Sophist 228a ff.
58. Phaedo 82d.
59. Sophist 229b ff.
60. Ibid. 230d.
method of philosophy, effects the catharsis of unconscious ignorance or stupidity is not to assert that the fine arts can be of no use here. Plato’s dialogues, in which the use of cross-examination is displayed in action, are outstanding works of art, are philosophical dramas, literary masterpieces. This is especially true of those dialogues in which Socrates is the dominant figure. Socrates was the greatest master of the elenchos, of cross-examination, known in history. And Plato, who was Socrates’ greatest disciple and the greatest master of philosophical dramas, gave surpassing literary expression to the cross-examining that Socrates carried on. In reading these philosophical dramas or dialogues, we find that we ourselves are undergoing self-examination, that we ourselves become conscious of our ignorance and are purged of intellectual pride. Here, then, is a most striking example of great art that has the effect of purifying from the disease of unconscious ignorance. In recent times, a comparable example are the ‘aesthetic’ works of the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, father of modern Existentialism. Kierkegaard, incidentally, recognized Socrates as his great master.

The other kind of ignorance, conscious ignorance, is purged away by instruction (διδασκαλία) in those subjects in which one is ignorant. Of course, one cannot study and master every art and craft, and every branch of knowledge. Plato shows the ridiculous situation of the itinerant teachers of his time known as Sophists, who claimed to be able to teach a great variety of subjects, some of them, such as Gorgias, going so far as to claim to be able to discuss any subject and to answer any question, by any one, at any time. Plato does not regard all conscious ignorance as an evil, but only that which pertains to certain subjects, above all the existence and nature of Deity, the nature and destiny of man, the nature of good and evil, the true scale of values. With regard to the subject of God, it is to be noted that Plato characterizes unbelief in Deity or a wrong conception of Deity as a disease (νόσος). Unbelief, the outright denial of the existence of God, is viewed by him as a disease that as a rule appears in the young and tends to disappear with the passage of time. Some scientists in our time, such as Freud, regard religion, the belief in God, as an «obsessional neurosis», which one tends to outgrow. Plato’s view is evidently the exact opposite of this: it is atheism which is a neurosis, a disease, which one tends to outgrow. Plato’s view on this matter, it may be remarked, is by no means an antiquated one. It has been upheld in modern times by the famous English philosopher

61. Ibid. 229.
62. Ibid. 233a.
63. Laws X. 888b.
Francis Bacon (1561-1626), who says this in one of his essays (*Atheism*): *A little philosophy inclineth a man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion.* And in our time, the renowned Swiss psychologist to whom I have already made reference, Jung (d. 1961), who was nineteen years younger than Freud, held that a lively religious faith protects the individual from neurosis. Plato offers arguments to disprove both forms of atheism: that which says there is no God, and that which misconceives God, which asserts e.g. that Deity exercises no providence. And as one very conscious of the power which the fine arts, particularly literature, have in this regard, he emphasizes the need of writers of narratives and poetry speaking truthfully about the divine. Thus, God’s existence should be affirmed, and he should be depicted as perfect, all-good and all-wise, exercising providence for men, always causing good, never evil. When literature does this, Plato believes, it helps prevent the appearance of the disease of atheism or, if it has appeared, it helps cure it.

With regard to the subject of the destiny of man, Plato again believes that literature can play a significant role in mental health. It is vitally important, he holds, that one have *true* ideas on this subject. He himself sought in his philosophical dramas to convey such ideas. Thus, a large part of the *Phaedo* is devoted to the topic of the immortality of the human soul. And several other dialogues of Plato end with a lively treatment of the hereafter: the *Apology*, the *Gorgias*, and the *Republic*. Death is not the end of a man’s life, he asserts, but only the separation of the real man, the soul, from the body. And the life of the soul after death is not less real than life on earth, with the body, but probably more real. That life is blissful for those who have attained goodness in this life, but painful for those who led a life of wickedness. Plato emphasizes the need that narrative writers and poets express such ideas. False ideas on these matters, he remarks, «infect the soul with evil»; cowardice is one such consequence; for how can a man be courageous if he has fear of death, owing to false belief about it? By conveying true ideas about God and man, good literature serves not only to remove ignorance, but also to prevent or cure the malady of cowardice, of unwarranted and weakening fear.

Plato makes some noteworthy observations about the value of comedy in preventing and correcting another type of ignorance: self-ignorance.

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68. *Phaedo* 68d-e; *Republic* III. 386a-387c.
In the *Philebus* (48c-49b) discussing the ludicrous, the comic (τὸ γελοῖον), he asserts that in its main form it is that part of vice or badness in general which consists in ignorance of oneself as an individual. Self-ignorance involves a striking incongruity between what a man *is* and what he *thinks* he is. When noticed by others, it provokes in them laughter. One may be poor and fancy that he is rich, homely and fancy that he is handsome. More often, one may think that he excels in certain virtues, especially in wisdom. Such persons are in a state of delusion about themselves, and this is surely an evil condition, remarks Plato. We laugh at such delusions in people if they are individuals who will not or cannot react to us violently; but if they are powerful and can retaliate, we dare not laugh. When the comic is exhibited on the stage, the spectators can laugh unafraid, to their heart’s content, as we say. The *elenchos*, which is asserted to be the most effective means of purifying one of unconscious ignorance in general, is viewed by Plato as a potent means of purifying one of this particular form of it. Comedy is another effective means of removing self-ignorance. Provided it is not of the vulgar sort that resorts to obscenity, comedy helps us see ourselves as we really are, by exhibiting to us the ludicrous in others. By condemning the ludicrous through the laughter which it evokes in the audience, higher forms of comedy teach us indirectly to avoid doing or saying what is laughable, to avoid becoming ludicrous. Since there are many kinds of faults about which men are self-ignorant, it is necessary, Plato emphasizes, that comic performances always present some novel feature, exhibit a different form of the ludicrous, and thus drive home a new point.

For the therapy of another form of disease of the soul that has been mentioned, injustice, Plato stresses the value of the true art of *rhetoric*. In the *Gorgias* (504d-e) where Plato’s main topic is the art of rhetoric, he discusses the relevance of this art to the therapy of injustice. Viewing injustice not only as a state of the soul, but also in its social manifestations, he points out how rhetoric may be used for removing this vice and promoting the development of the excellence of justice in man. Thus, he remarks that the true rhetorician will always have before his mind «how injustice may be removed; how temperance may be bred in men and incontinence cut off; and how virtue as a whole may be produced and vice expelled». True rhetoric is the art of persuasion based on truth, on true knowledge of the subject which it treats and of ethical principles, and of the soul to which it addresses itself. Plato presents Socrates as the greatest master of this art. And Plato’s dialogues are examples of true rhetoric, as he conceived it.

69. *Laws* VII. 816d-e.
In connection with the therapeutic nature of true rhetoric, it is worth noting that in another dialogue, the *Phaedrus*, where Plato also discusses the art of rhetoric at length, rhetoric is compared with the art of medicine (λατρεία τέχνη). Rhetoric is said to be to the soul what the art of medicine is to the body. The one is concerned with the therapy of the soul; the other, with the therapy of the body. Thus, the true rhetorician is viewed as a *physician of the soul*. Having a profound knowledge of the soul, the art of rhetoric knows what sort of man is influenced by what sort of speech and why, and uses the various approaches accordingly. In the *Gorgias*, Plato particularly recommends the use of rhetoric to induce persons guilty of wrong-doing to confess their unjust acts. He recognizes that there is a tendency in men to conceal their guilt, to try to deceive themselves about their inner state of injustice. But inner injustice is a disease (νόον σαλιέων) which if not treated in time becomes incurable. A person who acts in this manner is like one who is suffering from a serious bodily illness and hides it from everyone, instead of hastening to a physician, to be examined and treated by every means necessary. It is to the vital interest of the wrong-doer to hasten to the judge, confess his unjust act, and ask to pay the penalty. For by exposing his injustice and accepting the penalty, the soul is cured of her disease. In cases where persons do not do this, the possessor of the art of true rhetoric, says Plato, ought to use his art. He should approach such a person, whether it be one of his relatives or some friend, and persuade him to bring his iniquity to light, in order that he may pay the penalty and be made healthy. He should instill courage in such a person, persuading him not to be afraid of doing this and of accepting without resentment whatever punishment is deemed proper. The punishment may be a fine, it may be a flogging, it may be imprisonment, it may be exile, it may even be death. It will vary, according to the nature of the crime, just as medical treatment for the body varies, sometimes calling for a purgative, sometimes for cauterization, and sometimes for cutting.

Plato’s viewpoint in this matter was shared by the great Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoievsky. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dmitri Karazmazov expresses the conviction that only through punishment will he be

70. *Phaedrus* 270b; cf. *Protagoras* 313e.
71. *Phaedrus* 271e.
72. *Gorgias* 480a; cf. *Sophist* 228d.
73. *Gorgias* 479a-b.
75. *Ibid.* 480d.
76. *Ibid.* 480e.
purified, and hence ungrudgingly accepts the punishment inflicted upon him for a murder he did not actually commit. Although Dmitri Karamazov did not kill his father, as he was accused of having done, still he confesses: «I meant to kill him, and perhaps I really might have killed him». The punishment, he believes, will serve to ease his conscience for having harbored such evil thoughts, and will cleanse the inner man. He says: «I accept the torture of accusation, and my public shame, and want to suffer because by suffering I shall be purified»\(^77\). Dostoievsky underlines the inner dimension of punishment, and thus helps us understand how punishment effects the cure of such a disease of the soul.

True rhetoric, the art of eloquent speech, spoken or written, based on a profound understanding of the human psyche and guided by sound ethical principles, succeeds in initiating the process of therapy of the psyche by leading the guilty person to confession, to self-blame and to the ungrudging acceptance of punishment. True rhetoric avoids the use of invective, of angry denunciation or accusation as an ineffective approach to the soul. It seeks, instead, to persuade by means of reasoning and the use of gentle and beautiful speech\(^78\).

In connection with the therapy of cowardice and intemperance or incontinence, Plato especially calls attention to the value of music, in the narrower sense of this term, and of the dance. The ancient Greeks did not use what we call 'pure music', i.e. music without words, but used it in conjunction with words, poetry. So when Plato speaks of 'music' in the narrower sense of the term, he means song, with or without instrumental accompaniment. True poetry not only conveys sound ideas on vital matters, but also possesses elements of rhythm and harmony kindred to music\(^79\). The power which music in this sense has upon the soul, Plato believes, is unsurpassed by any other agency so far as the formation of moral character is concerned. «For rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful»\(^80\). This means that through rhythm and harmony music affects the psyche not only at the level of consciousness, but also at the level of subconsciousness, and does so in a very powerful manner and with lasting effects.

\(^78\). Cf. Laws X. 887c-888a; Phaedrus 271c ff.
\(^79\). Republic VII. 522a.
\(^80\). Ibid. III. 401d-e. Cf. Laws VII. 812b-c.
For preventing cowardice, curing it, and developing courage, Plato recommends the use of the Dorian Mode of music. This mode «fittingly imitates the utterances and the accents of a brave man who is engaged in warfare or in any other hard and dangerous task, and who acts with firm step and a determination to endure»³¹. Certain other modes, notably the Ionian and the Lydian, the Mixolydian and the Hypolydian, are viewed as quite unsuitable for this purpose, as tending to weaken moral fiber instead of strengthening it. They are 'slack', and hence tend to instill softness, weakness. For fostering the development of temperance, for preventing and curing intemperance, Plato recommends the use of the Phrygian Mode. This mode expresses «peaceful action under no stress of hard necessity, as when man is using persuasion or entreaty, praying to gods, or instructing and admonishing his neighbor, exhibiting wise restraint and contentment»³².

These views are presented in the Republic. They reappear in the Laws in substantially the same form. In the Republic Plato stresses not only the need of employing certain musical modes and avoiding others, but also the need of employing simple rhythms and avoiding the use of many instruments; «for complexity in music engenders intemperance», just as in regimen it engenders bodily disease; whereas simplicity in music engenders temperance in the soul, and in regimen health of body³³.

The value of music in treating intemperance and cultivating temperance is noted also in the Charmides. Recommended for this purpose are certain songs, denoted by the word ἐνθοδαί. This is a term Plato often uses in his dialogues, and is rendered by English translators as 'incantations', 'charms', and 'chants'. In the Charmides (157a) these songs are said to consist of beautiful words, but nothing is said about their content. From other writings of Plato, especially the Laws, we learn that they are poetic compositions set to music, and designed to attract the young to virtue, and to this end should be repeated as often as possible³⁴.

Plato sums up the therapeutic function of music when he says: «Music was granted to us for the sake of harmony; the harmony of music is meant to correct any discord which may have arisen in the courses of the soul, and to be our ally in bringing her into harmony and agreement with herself; and the rhythm of music was meant to be a helper for the same ends»³⁵.

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81. Republic III. 399a.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid. III. 404e.
84. Laws II. 665c, 670e, 671a.
85. Timaeus 47c-d; cf. Laws II. 659c.
and again when he says: «Music by harmony makes men harmonious, and by rhythm rhythmical»\textsuperscript{86}.

The relevance of the dance to courage and temperance, and to the opposites of these, is discussed in the \textit{Laws}. As we have seen, Plato set the dance apart from the other fine arts, placing it in the second major division of \textit{paideia}: gymnastic. The dance is a form of physical exercise, and its direct aim is to make the \textit{body} (σῶμα) healthy and strong, beautiful and agile, whereas the other fine arts, which belong to the first division of education, have as their object the improvement of the soul. The dance is \textit{somato}therapeutic, concerned with the improvement of the \textit{soma}, the body, whereas the other arts are \textit{psych}otherapeutic, concerned with the improvement of the psyche, and of the body through the psyche. However, as we have already seen, although the direct aim of gymnastic is the care and improvement of the body, its ultimate aim is the improvement of the soul, which is the real man. The true or noble forms of the dance not only improve the condition of the body, but are also conducive to the therapy of the soul through harmonious postures and rhythmic bodily movements\textsuperscript{87}. War dances, which imitate the postures and movements of those engaged courageously in war and vehement action tend, on Platonic principles, to remove cowardice and foster the development of courage, whereas dances of peace, which exhibit a temperate soul in the enjoyment of prosperity and modest pleasures, tend to purify one of intemperance and promote the development of temperance.

There is implicit in Plato’s teaching here a principle of wider import than the James-Lange theory of emotion. According to the James-Lange theory, emotion follows the attendant physiological changes. Plato would have remarked that this is half the truth: the whole truth is that emotion sometimes follows physiological changes, being occasioned by them, and at other times precedes them, causing such changes. And he would have added that the James-Lange theory says nothing about the important relationship between bodily postures and gestures on the one hand, and settled dispositions (ἐξειδίκευσις) of the soul—traditionally known as virtues and vices—on the other. It is Plato’s view that states of the soul such as courage and temperance, find expression in certain bodily attitudes and gestures, and conversely, that such bodily attitudes and gestures tend to dispose one to courage and temperance\textsuperscript{88}. Because of his deep realization of this, Plato, emphasized the

\textsuperscript{86} \textit{ Republic} VII. 522a.
\textsuperscript{87} \textit{ Laws} II. 672c.
\textsuperscript{88} See \textit{ Laws} II. 655 ff.
need of selecting certain postures and movements for the dances and excluding others. And further, he suggested that painters could play a very valuable role on depicting the right postures and movements, those expressive of beauty, particularly of the beauty of temperance and courage.$^89$

With regard to temperance and intemperance, I must add to what I have said thus far, that Plato assigns great importance to the first as a factor in physical health, and to the second as a factor in physical disease. In the Charmides, where Plato sets forth briefly his general theory of psychotherapy, young Charmides is said to have been suffering lately from headaches. After sketching the theory of psychosomatic medicine, Socrates advises Charmides to strive to acquire the virtue of temperance, and remarks: «When temperance is engendered in our souls, and present, we may easily secure health to the head and the rest of the body also»$^{90}$. When, on the other hand, intemperance is present in the soul, multiform maladies arise in the body. Plato points this out in the Timaeus. He remarks that if the rational faculty does not observe measure in its activity, if it does not allow enough time for the exercise and rest of the body, it will end up by shattering the health of the body. «Whenever», he says, «the soul overeagerly pursues some study or investigation, it wastes the body»$^{91}$. When the spirited element does not check its tendency to controversy and contention, which arises from its striving for glory and power, the health of the body is similarly ruined. Plato says in this connection: «When the soul engages in teachings and battles of words carried on with controversy and contention, she makes the body inflamed and shakes it to pieces»$^{92}$. Finally, when moderation is not exercised with respect to the appetites, and there is for instance excessive eating, there result many bodily illnesses.$^{93}$

I have discussed the therapeutic role which can be played by fine art in the form of philosophical dramas, such as the dialogues of Plato, by poetry, comedy, rhetoric, music and the dance. Here I will add a few words about three other arts that Plato occasionally mentions in his works: architecture, painting, and sculpture. Plato does not go into special discussions as regards the effects of these arts on the psyche. Evidently he does not think that their influence is as strong as that of music, poetry and other forms of literature. On the other hand, it is clear that he does not consider their influence as negligible. In the Republic, he makes the general observation

$^{89}$ Laws II. 656d-e.
$^{90}$ Charmides 157a.
$^{91}$ Timaeus 88a.
$^{92}$ Ibid.
$^{93}$ Ibid. 72e; cf. Republic III. 408a-b.
that when they are expressive of the ideal, of beauty, of harmony these arts exercise a healthful influence upon the psyche, in accordance with the principle that we become like that which we habitually contemplate.

In view of the many things that Plato says about the prevention and therapy of diseases of the psyche and of the body by means of philosophy, the fine arts and regimen, one may wonder whether he assigned any value to other means, particularly surgery and drugs. The answer is that he does recognize the need of surgery in certain cases, the need of «cutting and burning», as he calls it. As far as drugs are concerned, he recommends the avoidance of them as far as possible. Characteristic in this connection is his remark that whenever anyone does violence to a malady by drugging, «diseases many and grave, in place of few and slight, are wont to occur» 94. There is only one 'medicine' (φάρμακον) that Plato regards as truly excellent and recommends to all: knowledge, wisdom 95.

I will end this paper by making two more brief remarks. Firstly, it is evident from this presentation of Plato's teaching on the relevance of the fine arts to psychotherapy that this teaching is many-sided and profound, and certainly applicable in our time. Secondly, it should be realized that the methods which Plato advocates for the therapy of body and soul, in particular the function which he assigns to the fine arts, are not mere speculations, untested personal theories. They are methods that had been conceived and applied in Greece long before his time. The guild of Greek physicians known as the descendants of Asklepios (or Aesculapius) used poetry and music for the treatment of physical and mental disorders 96; and the famous philosopher Pythagoras and his followers used these arts and also certain kinds of dances for the treatment of disorders of the soul and the body 97. There are in Plato's dialogues references to Asklepios and the Asklepiads as well as to Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans, and expressions of admiration for them. The originality of Plato lies in the fact that he pointed out the relevance of all the fine arts to psychotherapy, and also in the fact that he grounded this relevance in his total philosophy: in his theory of man, in his psychology, in his theory of education, in his aesthetics and ethics, and in his general theory of reality.

94. Timaeus 89c-d.
95. Critias 89e-d; cf. Republic X. 595b.
97. Lamblichus, Life of Pythagoras, or Pythagoric Life, translated by Thomas Taylor, 1818, pp. 43, 50, 80-82, 120.
ΟΙ ΚΑΛΕΣ ΤΕΧΝΕΣ ΩΣ ΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟΝ ΠΛΑΤΩΝΑ

Περιλαμβάνει γενικός τις τέχνες και ειδικότερα τις καλές τέχνες (μουσική, ξυγματική, γλυπτική, λογοτεχνία), τα μαθηματικά (άριθμημα, επιπεδομετρία, στερεομετρία), την αστρονομία, την αρμονική, τη φιλοσοφία της επιστήμης και τη φιλοσοφία, τον άνωτατο κλάδο των επιστημών. Η «μουσική» φροντίζει για την αρμονική ανάπτυξη της ψυχής και την κάθαρσή της, από έλλειψες και κακίες. Ζητά όχι μόνο
νά ἀναπτύξῃ σωστά τις δυνατότητες τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ νά θεραπεύῃ καταστάσεις ἄρρωσταις, ὅταν ἔχουν ἥδη ἄναπτυχθή. Ἀπὸ τῇ γυμναστικῇ, παράλληλα μὲ τή δίαιτα καὶ τήν ἀσκήση, μεγάλη εἶναι ἡ σημασία τοῦ χοροῦ γιά τό παθητικό μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς.

Μόνο βέβαια οἱ ἄλληνες τέχνες καὶ δχί οἱ γενικοτέχνες εἶναι ἀποτελεσματικὰ μέσα ψυχοθεραπείας καὶ ἔχουν άξια ως μέσα παιδευτικὰ. "Ἡ παιδευτική τους ἀποτελεσματικότητα δὲν περιορίζεται στή θέση που πρέπει νά ἔχουν στήν ἐκπαίδευση, ἀλλὰ ἐπεκτείνεται σὲ ὅλα τά στάδια τῆς ἀνθρώπινης παιδείας μὲ τήν πολιτιστική ἐπίδραση ποὺ ἀσκοῦν." Ἃτις ὁ ἄρχιτοκτονική, ὁ ἐγκαρκική καὶ ἡ γλυπτική, ἐμπνευσμένες ἀπό ἰδεώδη καὶ ἐμπνευσμένες ἰδεώδη, ἐπιδρόντων ἐνεργειακά ἀπό τή θέση τούς στά πλαίσια τῆς κοινότητας καὶ στό περιβάλλον. Οἱ λοιπὲς τέχνες ἐπενεργοῦν καὶ ἀκαδημαϊκά, ἀλλὰ καὶ μὲ τήν παρουσία τους σ᾿ ὅλες τὶς ἐκδηλώσεις τῆς ζωῆς.

Ἔπιτομη τῆς πλατωνικῆς διδασκαλίας γιὰ τήν ἐπίδραση τῶν ἄλλην ἁλλάν καὶ στὸν ἄνθρωπο θεωρεῖ οἱ συγγραφεῖς τὸ χωρίο 401c-d τῆς Πολυτείας, στὸ ὅποιο ἔπιστημαίνεται ή ἀνάγκη τῆς ἀποδοχῆς τῶν «δημιουργῶν» ἐκείνων ποῦ ή τέχνη τούς μιμεῖται τὰ θεῖα, τὰ ἰδεώδη καὶ τὰ εὐτακτά.

"Ἡ πλατωνική ἁρχή, ποῦ μπορεῖ νά ὅνομαζει κάρχη τῆς ἀφομοιωτῆς, ἀναγνωρίζεται — ἄρνητικα — ἀπὸ τή σύγχρονη ψυχολογία ως ἁρχή τῆς «ταύτισης». Ἀλλὰ οἱ καλὲς τέχνες δὲν ἐπενεργοῦν μόνο ἀφομοιωτικά στήν ψυχή, ἀλλὰ καὶ καθαρτικά, ἀπομακρύνοντας δηλ., τή δυσαρεσιμία, τήν κακία καὶ τήν ἀκρασία καὶ κρατώντας μόνο δ,τι εἶναι ἄγαθό. Εἰδικώτερα ή ἀμάθεια καθαίρεται ἀπὸ τήν ψυχολογία, κυρίως τή διαλεκτική καὶ τόν ἔλεγχο, καὶ ἡ ἄγνοια στά ὄραμα προβλήματα ἀπό τή σωστή διδασκαλία. Πρόσφορα μέσα παρέχει ἀκόμη ή λογοτεχνία καὶ μάλιστα ή κοιμία καὶ ή ἀγαθή ρητορική για τή θεραπεία ἰδιαίτερα τῆς ἐλευθερίας αὐτογνωσίας καὶ τῆς ἀδυναμίας. Ἡ ποιητική ἀποτελεῖ τήν ἀποτελεσματικότερη κάθαρση. Καί ὁ ἀνθρώπινος κρίσιμος καὶ τό τραγούδι εἶναι ἀπαράμιλλα για τήν θεραπεία τῆς δειλίας καὶ τῆς ἀκρασίας καὶ τήν διαμόρφωσή του ἡθικοῦ χαρακτηρά. Γιατὶ ἐπιρροήνται καὶ στό υποσυνείδητο. 'Ὑπονέεται καὶ στόν Πλάτωνα μὲ εὐρύτερη ἐννοια ἡ ἁρχή τῆς θεωρίας τῆς συγκίνησης τῶν James-Lange.

'Ὁ συγγραφεὺς πιστεῖ πιστευόμενοι συμπερασματικοί ότι ἡ πολυπλοκότητα καὶ βαθεια διδασκαλία τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἐχεῖ τή θέση τῆς στήν ἐποχή μας. Καὶ δὲν πρόκειται γιὰ μιὰ ἀπλή θεωρία, ἀλλὰ γιὰ μιὰ γνώση που συνειδητοποιήθηκε καὶ ἐφαρμόσθηκε στήν Ἐλλάδα, πολὺ πρίν ἀπὸ τόν καιρό του ἀπὸ τοὺς Ἀσκληπιάδες καὶ τοὺς Πυθαγορείους. Ὁ Πλάτων ὁμως τόνισε τή σχέση δλον τῶν καλῶν τεχνῶν μὲ τήν ψυχοθεραπεία καὶ θεμελίωσε τή σχέση αὐτή σ᾿ ὅλη τήν ψυχολογία: στή θεωρία τοῦ γιὰ τόν ἄνθρωπο, στήν ψυχολογία του, στή θεωρία τοῦ τοῦ παιδείας, στήν αισθητική, τήν ἡθική καὶ τή γενική τοῦ θεωρία τῆς πραγματικότητας.