

# Goodness and Beauty as Craft

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## Abstract:

Technique (technê) is one of the most important and complex concepts in the whole of ancient Greek thought. Not only because of its richness of meaning (craft, art, skill, expertise, science, etc.), but also because of its close association with concepts such as knowledge (epistēmē, also translated as 'science'), luck (tuche) and experience (empeiria). In a general sense, in ancient Greek thought, technique generally implies a knowledge that is contingent, which comes from nothing, requires empirical training and is achieved through human activity. [1] The value-neutrality of the art was also increasingly recognised, and for Plato it had its value-neutrality, and for it to be “knowledge”, it had to be able to identify the good or evil of its intended object in its use.

## Keywords:

Technique, Art, Beauty, Goodness

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## 1. Aristotle’s Conception of “Technique” and “Art”

Ancient Greek philosophy entered its heyday on the basis of the pre-Socrati. Two great philosophers emerged, Plato and Aristotle, who were both teachers and ideologically opposed to each other. The study of the key philosophical term “technique” in ancient Greece cannot be separated from the philosophical studies of Plato and Aristotle, and conversely, the study of “technique” and its relationship to “nature” can also contribute to an in-depth and holistic study of “technique” and its relationship to “nature”. The study of “technique” and its relationship to “nature”, in turn, contributes to a deeper and more holistic approach to the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. In fact, [2] Plato's critique of the arts is based on the relationship between the “technique” and “nature”. The techniques he opposes are precisely those that are “unnatural”. However, from another perspective, for example, for Aristotle, all “technique” is not “natural”. In the vast majority of cases, they are opposed. It seems that for this reason, especially in modern art philosophy, Aristotle does not seem to be as opposed to art as Plato was. So, did Aristotle, who said “I love my teacher, but I love the truth more”, completely subvert Plato’s concept of art? And, if we place their ideological disagreement in the context of the development of ancient Greek thought, at which point does this disagreement occur? The source of technique: knowledge as a special art in the strict sense.

From Aristotle's ideological position of sensuality and reality, "beauty", "goodness" and "joy", which were principles and starting points in Plato, should accordingly become the aim and end of Aristotle's philosophy. However, it is also under the influence of this position, which is the opposite of Plato's and similar to that of the pre-Socratic philosophy of nature, that Aristotle's philosophy does not complete, or, one might say, does not realise the final unity of "beauty", "goodness" and "joy" in all his philosophy. Just as in pre-Socratic philosophy there is no "nature" as a whole, but only a "nature" as a collection of all things. So in Aristotle's natural philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, rhetoric, poetics, and so on, in all his works, he was not able to clearly and unambiguously link "beauty", "goodness" and "joy" with his "first promoter" and thus unify them into a whole system of thought. In contrast to the myths of antiquity, Plato's theism, and later theology, the complete accomplishment of the task of achieving unity and identity among the various elements within philosophy from the standpoint of sensibility must be accomplished in a negative philosophical manner; this was achieved historically and successively in Kant's critical philosophy and Marx's complete negation of philosophy. In Aristotle, "happiness" is the perfect unity of "goodness", "beauty" and "joy". In the same way that just actions give pleasure to those who love justice, virtuous actions give pleasure to those who love virtue. Many people have conflicting pleasures, because those pleasures are not pleasurable by nature. And the love of what is pleasant in the nature of the noble man is pleasure. The activities that are in accordance with virtue are such things. Therefore, there is no need for additional pleasures in their lives, but they contain pleasures in themselves.

## **2. The Goodness of the Work of Art: The Goodness of the Work of Art as a Form of Therapy**

Aristotle believed that the good for a piper, a carpenter or a smith, who has some kind of practical activity, is in the perfection of that activity. Then, for this kind of activity, there is a difference between a harpist and a relatively good harpist in terms of their roots. A good harpist is morally superior (the function of a good harpist is to play the harp excellently, while the activity of an ordinary harpist is to play the harp), so the activity of a good person is to perform this activity well and nobly (nobly). If an activity is completed well when it is done in a manner consistent with its characteristic virtue; then the goodness of man is the virtuous realization of the soul. The goodness of man is the realization of the virtuousness of the soul. [3] The work of an ordinary painter is different from that of a distinguished or exceptional painter, and the activity of realizing goodness is different. The "type" of technique: virtue as technique; the "head" of technique: philosophy as the art of healing the soul, for Aristotle, while "technique" is aimed at goodness, "technique" can also do what "nature" cannot achieve. On the other hand, the most important thing is that "technique" can be "good" in itself, which actually gives "technique" itself some basic ethical overtones. In recent years, there have been a large number of real-life cases of art interventions in psychology and other related cases, where paintings are used to help people with autism as a form of complementary therapy. The discipline of "art therapy" is a field that, from the perspective of the development of the discipline in the United States, dates back to the late nineteenth century in terms of the introduction of artistic creation into the medical system as an adjunct to treatment.

Beginning with the independent clinical practice of the early pioneers, the art therapy field in the United States slowly took shape and began to establish trade

associations for different modules of therapy, academic education programs, and related laws and regulations were slowly established. In this cultural environment, although scholars continue to explore the connotation and clinical application of “art therapy”, there is a degree of clarity in the definition of related concepts. For example, the clinical assessment of children’s drawings and paintings has been practised. As in ancient Greek philosophy for Aristotle, “technique” is given a clearer affirmation than in Plato. On the one hand, “technique” aims at goodness, and at the same time, “technique” can do what “nature” cannot achieve. The act of technique does not have to be morally good, but it should be accepted and beneficial to human life. On the one hand, philosophy, as a craft dedicated to the health of the soul, aims at the process of training in this craft and in itself, rather than outside of it. Therefore it’s not exactly the same as medicine, the art of navigation, or even performing arts such as dance. The philosophical technique takes the soul as its object and aims at caring for it or acquiring virtue, while its product is the transformed state of the soul, that is, virtue or wisdom.

### **3. Beauty in Artworks: Forms with Beauty in Artworks**

Ancient Greek artistic and aesthetic thought, centred on Plato and Aristotle, had a profound influence on the artistic and aesthetic thought that followed them. However, since there was no concept of “The Fine arts” or “Aesthetics” in ancient Greece, but only the concept of “technique”, which was later translated as “art” and “technique”, there was no such concept. Therefore, the study of ancient Greek aesthetics and artistic thought, including Plato and Aristotle, should be carried out in the larger context of the ancient Greek idea of “technique”. The ancient Greek concept of “technique” was a very broad term, covering not only the “technique” that we refer to today, including poetry, painting, drama, etc., but also almost all aspects of human existence, including technology, science, medicine, rhetoric, logic, ethics, etc. As a term or concept, “technique” appeared in the legendary ancient Greek prophet Museus and in Homer's epic poems, and it is also an important term in Hippocrates' medical writings and in the rhetorical studies of the School of Wisdom. The various “craftsmen” were honorary titles for certain professions in ancient Greece before Plato. However, the concept of “technique” as a relatively mature philosophical concept started from Plato’s philosophy because, on the one hand, any relatively mature term of thought has to be based on a corresponding philosophical foundation, and on the other hand, “technique” plays an important structural role in the whole system of Plato’s philosophy. Since there is an ephemeral conceptual evolution between “technique” and later “art”, on the basis of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and their relationship, we should examine their respective ideas on “technique” and, in this context, philosophically interpret their respective views on poetry and painting, etc. This is the core of the study of ancient Greek ideas on “technique” in the context of the philosophy of art and the main task. The aesthetic characteristics of the artworks of the ancient Greek period show: symmetry, neat and harmony. In the stained glass art in medieval churches, stained glass painters need artistic talent and craftsmen’s manual skills are equally important, moreover, they concentrate on the spiritual pursuit implied in the artisan’s diligence and hard work. [4] Similarly, the stained glass art in medieval churches also signifies the idea of goodness, in addition to the function of beautifying the buildings, and the visual effect of purity refracted through light by bright colors. This is also the right way to study the artistic and aesthetic ideas of Plato and Aristotle. The artistic and aesthetic ideas of Plato and Aristotle are not entirely consistent, which is related to the inconsistency of their ideas

of “technique”, which is ultimately due to the difference in their philosophical positions and starting points of their ideas. The inconsistency of their “technical” ideas is ultimately due to their different philosophical positions and starting points. In contrast, although Plato and Aristotle did not form a relatively mature and well-developed art and aesthetic thought, their treatises on poetry and painting laid the intellectual foundation for subsequent art and aesthetics in different aspects and to different degrees.

#### 4. Conclusions

What does goodness mean in each activity and technique? In medicine or architecture there is something specific, such as health, housing, etc. In the case of art, for example, painting, the embodiment of the good in the field of painting can be either beautiful or therapeutic. Aristotle not only affirms directly that “technique” aims at a certain “goodness”, but also affirms the essence of “technique” on this basis, that is, the perfection of form and technique itself. In the case of painting, this means that not only is the plot and content of the painting “noble, beautiful, good and joyful”, but also the graphics, colors, technique and so on are “noble, beautiful, good and joyful”. Aristotle's affirmation of "technique", of "imitation", of the formal essence of "technique" apart from content, and of poetry. It is undeniable that Plato's critical affirmation of the ethical aspects of art and Aristotle's comprehensive affirmation of individual forms of art, from content to form, were the pinnacle of artistic and aesthetic thought that the ancient Greeks, as represented by them, could achieve. Aristotle's delineation of the hierarchy of “technique” was slightly influenced by the line he drew between “technique” and “nature”.

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