

# Revisiting the "Serious Criticism" in Volume 10 of Plato's Republic

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## Abstract

**This article is mainly divided into three parts, the first part is an overview of the Tenth book of the Republic, the second part is an analysis of the "serious criticism", the third part through the above analysis to explore the contradiction of Plato's poetics. Through the discussion of "serious criticism", we can understand Plato's idea of the Republic -- "Republic" is not only an ideal city-state, but also represents Plato's highest ideal for the soul.**

## Keywords

**Plato; The Republic; Serious Criticism.**

## 1. Introduction

The famous scholar Plato in his masterpiece The Republic, Volume 10, Part II of Poetry and the Poet's "Serious Criticism" points out that the poet's poetry, however, his attitude in attempting to use poetry exposes his poetic contradictions. The author thinks that this internal contradiction is the embodiment of Plato's political ideal. "Serious criticism" not only accords with the core idea of the Republic, but also is a kind of Plato's whole philosophical thought. This part's serious criticism of poetry is also the core of this volume.

## 2. Organization of the Text

The tenth volume of the Republic can be roughly divided into three parts, namely, the three technologies, the serious criticism of poetry and the immortality of the soul.

### 2.1. The First Part

Among them, the first part of the three technologies mainly include the technology of the user, the technology of the manufacturer and the technology of the imitator. In book X, the metaphor of "making a bed" is mentioned, namely, a natural bed, a formal bed and a bed imitated by a painter. The natural bed is believed to be a bed created by god, and this is the real bed, the bed in its essence. A formal bed is a bed made by a carpenter. It refers to a bed made by a carpenter according to individual ideas in his mind. A bed modeled by a painter is a bed made by a painter imitating both of the above. Through this part, it leads to the discussion of three kinds of technology. Plato thinks that there are three kinds of technology for everything, which are the technology of the user, the technology of the manufacturer and the technology of the imitator. In this part, Plato strongly criticizes the imitator: Imitators are lowly children of lowly parents, and imitators have no knowledge of what they imitate.

The above part echoes the "serious criticism" of the central part of this paper, which constitutes one of the original SINS of poetry -- poetry is not "true". The charm of poetry is attributed to its "musical elements", which also leads to the criticism of poetry in the second part below.

## 2.2. The Second Part

Leader of the poet Homer in the second part is based on the tragedy and the discussion of Homer, mainly use for reference to the case, compared with that of Homer and command from the war, city governance problems and three aspects of the education problem of the people to explain all the poet Homer and make the image of the other things just virtue or himself imitators, This extends to the criticism of all other poets and poems.

In this part, Plato points out the original sin of poetry, and poetry makes people feel "beautiful" through external decoration, poetry moves the lower part of the heart; It is not in the nature of the poet to imitate the best part of the mind, nor to impress that part, but to imitate the lowest part of the mind; and therefore we cannot let the poet enter the well-governed city-state, lest they should establish an evil political system in the mind of man; Poetry corrupts the best characters and so on.

Plato objected to poets entering the Republic precisely because he believed that poets pandered to the inferior parts of the human mind and encouraged the irrational growth of the mind. For example, when a person encounters a sad event, he will let his rationality play a greater role in front of people, showing more restraint and calm. But the human queen may let irrational flood, he will forget himself, let himself immersed in pain difficult to extricate themselves.

## 2.3. The Third Part

In the third part, Plato first proposed the discussion of justice, and discussed what a just person can get through the story of the warrior Eros. Justice is the eternal theme of the Republic. Finally Plato came to the conclusion that a person's soul was immortal and could endure all good and evil. We should always keep to the right path and continue to pursue justice and wisdom, so that we can have our own and God's love, and be safe and happy in this life and after death.

## 3. Plato's "Serious Criticism"

In the third part, Plato first proposed the discussion of justice, and discussed what a just person can get through the story of the warrior Eros. Justice is the eternal theme of the Republic. Finally Plato came to the conclusion that a person's soul was immortal and could endure all good and evil. We should always keep to the right path and continue to pursue justice and wisdom, so that we can Plato when try to build a "utopia", which explicitly advocated by the king of the "philosophy" to cure the polis, "unless the philosopher became king of our countries, or those who we are now called Kings and rulers can with serious attitude to study philosophy, to combine political power and philosophy of reason, And those who are now engaged in politics but not in philosophy or philosophy but not in politics.

Our nation will never be at peace and mankind will never be safe from disaster unless those who do nothing are excluded. Until that happens, our theory of the state will never be in the realm of possibility.

Of course, it is not difficult to find that The fundamental purpose of Plato's allegory of painters is to criticize poets. For Plato, there are many similarities between poets and painters. In the first place, poets' works are often as far removed from truth as painters, who, though they have no real knowledge of their own, can give the illusion of omnipotence, the illusion that comes out of their hands.

The elephant can deceive the ignorant and the naive child. Not only that, they will also have to get general ignorance of vw's heart to settling to cater to that part of the inferior of the soul, "and the rational, moderate spirit almost always remain the same, is not easy to imitate, imitate the is not easy to understand, especially not by those who rushed to the theatre to those filthy racket read".

Therefore, Plato argues that "the poet who engages in imitation has nothing to do with this good part of the soul, and even if he wants to win the audience's praise, his technique is not to please this part of the soul, but to be connected with the temperament of the volatile." And, in a sense, the two aspects complement each other:

"The truth of the poet's creation is low, for in fact he speaks to the inferior parts of the soul rather than to the best parts."

Even Homer, the great educator of all Greece, did not escape Plato's criticism: "Poets from Homer were imitators of images of virtue, or of other things they 'made'. They have no grasp of the truth at all, but are painters of the kind we have just spoken of. Such an artist, who knows nothing of the work of a shoemaker himself, can paint a man who looks like a shoemaker, if only to himself and to those who judge things only by form and colour."

Plato argues that if Homer had a true understanding of the knowledge he imitates in his poetry, it must have been projected on these real things, and that "he would rather be the hero of poets than the poet of heroes."

#### 4. The Contradiction of Plato's Poetics

Plato when try to build a "utopia", which explicitly advocated by the philosophy of "king" to cure the polis, "unless the philosopher became king of our countries, or those who we are now called Kings and rulers can with serious attitude to study philosophy, to combine political power and philosophy of reason, And those who are now engaged in politics but not in philosophy or philosophy but not in politics are excluded, otherwise... Our country will never be at peace and mankind will never be safe from disaster. Unless that happens.

Therefore, it is not surprising that Plato's poetics revealed the purpose of serving the construction of an ideal city-state. Plato believed that in the course of the development of a state or city-state, it is bound to be influenced by the people in the city-state. Therefore, whether the soul of the residents of the city-state is noble to a large extent also determines the ideal of the city-state. And there is no doubt that education is the key to shaping men's noble minds.

Is one of the most effective means. Just because of this, Plato spent a lot of space in his Treatise on the issue of education, which includes the cultivation of people's body and mind from music to sports, that is, from mind to body. According to Plato, only when the young people in the city-state are educated in a mixture of music and sports can reason and passion be harmonized and rationality play a better role in the human soul. "These two things (reason and passion), having been thus nurtured and bred to perform their respective duties in the true sense of the word, will regulate desire, which, as we know, occupies a large part of every man's soul, and whose nature is avarice. Reason and passion keep an eye on desire, lest it become too strong, by being saturated or polluted with what are called corporeal pleasures, and refuse to keep its place, and try to control that which it ought not to, and thus subvert the whole of man's life."

In other words, Plato believed that this was the only way in which the young people of the Greek city could be best educated, and thus become the guardians of the city to strengthen and defend the Republic. Thus, Plato further demands that the rulers of the Republic "must supervise the poets and compel them to cultivate the image of good character in their poetry, otherwise we would rather not have poetry. If do not comply, then we will punish them, don't let them exert their skills among us, we must find that some people, with excellent talent, they will be able to follow the real beauty and kindness, can make our young people will follow this path, and into the health of the township, there's good works can bring them benefits, What their eyes see and what their ears hear is good, and thus, like a spring of rain, they are imperceptibly influenced, and from childhood they are fused with good reason." From us, however, it is not hard to find, this is actually from another Angle shows that Plato on poets and poetry remains a lenient, namely the poet and poetry can come back to "utopia" in the -- of course, if they are able to find

sufficient evidence and defense, to prove that they are beneficial to the development of the "utopia". It can be seen that Plato's attitude towards poets and poems is not simply "expulsion", but hope to make reasonable use of them under the norms of his political ideal, so as to make them serve the "republic". In Plato's view, "a ruler may lie to his enemies or to his citizens for the good of the state." According to this, the deception of the people contained in the "imitation" poem is equally forgivable and acceptable if it is for the good of the state.

## 5. Conclusion

In a word, the author thinks that Plato's series of criticism of poetry and poets and the "contradiction" revealed in this theory all serve his political ideal and accord with his original intention of constructing the "Republic", and are in line with the overall core thought of the Republic.

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