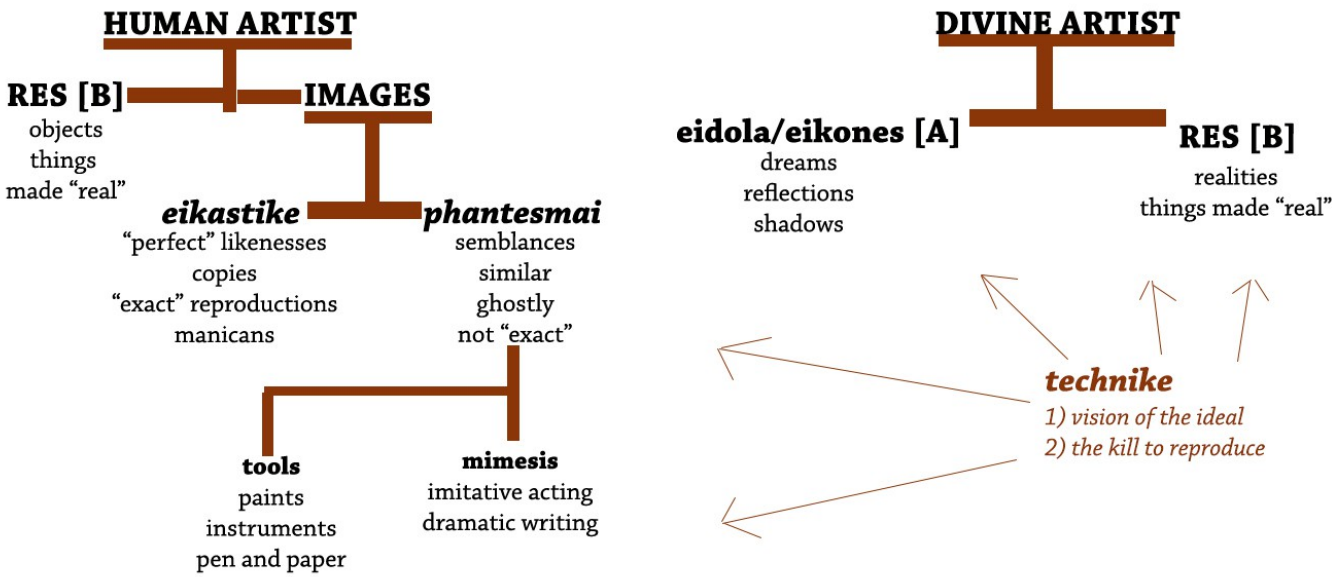
Plato (427-347 B.C.)

A	B	C	D
ART ***eikones* ("icons")** Represents things artistically	**REALITY** ***res* ("things")** **is represented by** art and/or math	**MATHEMATICAL** ***dionia* ("thoughts" or "archetypes")** Represents things mathematically	**TRUTH** ***eide* ("idea" or "ideal image")** Everything pre-exists here.
Changing World of the Senses		Mathematical Thought	*Outside Time; Beyond Change and History; Universal; The Ultimate Truth*
You know eikones by conjecture.	*Validation of "things" comes from belief.*	*Mathematical thought is a means to understanding.*	
A painting, sculpture or words describing a tree that is merely representational.	*This is all we can see, touch, smell, taste, hear. It is limited by our perception.*	*Measurements of the tree that are not quite perfect (because of our limited perception).*	*The real tree as we are never able to preceive.*
<u>POET/ARTIST</u> represents a mere "shadow" an imperfection of things (representing reality), is too much in love with himself.	<u>EROTIC PERSON</u> is too much in love with the senses (not just sex, but anything sensual).	<u>SCIENTIST/MATHEMATICIAN</u> is too cold-blooded, too detached from reality, as well as from himself.	PHILOSOPHER is in love with Truth, Knowledge, and Reason—and is therefore the "best" kind of person.
Painting or image of a bed.	*The bed as a thing that we can see, touch,... know it with our senses.*	*The calculations of a bed (the measurements,...).*	The TRUTH of the bed, the idea of the bed, the "real" bed (that we cannot sense with our limited senses).

PRODUCTIVE ART



MIMESIS *inspiration/madness* MIMETIC RELATIONSHIP
"OKAY" "NOT OKAY"

Three Possible Definitions of a Muse

1. The artist's own passions (suspect).
2. Another writer (e.g., Homer is the muse of other epic poets, a "poet's poet").
3. Comes from a god in some way ("ideas" Block D)—highly suspect, probably a lie:
    - arrival at, not by reasoning, but by mystical insight that is momentary (madness?) and tricky
    - by perceiving the idea through the material world (anticipating transcendentalism), these people who do this must be (logically) a very pure and small cluster of people, a cult of some kind.
        - But what good are these people if others (like Plato) cannot relate to these mystical inspirations?
        - Or the inspiration may be little more than pure emotion.

        All of this is so difficult to understand and is, therefore, unsafe (potentially immoral).

A little more (adding to the Aug. 28th lecture).

Art/Literature Is Useless

- Why bother with art? It has no real function. It is trivial.
- Art is not real; it doesn't involve all the dimentional properties of reality.
- With art, the concept of the the diety is becoming depersonalized, abstract.
- Interpretations are a waste of time. Each person has his/her own version of what a piece means; you can't ask the artist what it means (reliably). There is no valid, conclusive interpretation to be made.
- It is better to gain ideas of reality (Block D) and forget about poetry/art (Block A); the goal of obtaining a full idea (Block D) is superior to settling for a mere image (Block A).
- Art/poetry doesn't give much insight into how to put order into life.
- There is no logic to art/poetry.

What ARE the arts?

1. A part of the imagination (fictions, or imperfect perceptions of the Truth)
2. Acting by means of powerful emotions
3. Dealing with illusion

Art/Literature Is Immoral

- Three approaches:
    1. The poet speaks to the audience in his own voice –~~t~~hat is acceptable.
    2. The poet speaks in the voice of someone else (mimics): an image of an image of reality (a perception of a perception)—that is always evil.
    3. The poet does a mixture of #1 and #2 (such as an epic novel, rather than an epic poem), another kind of attempt at mimesis—that is sometimes evil, certainly suspect.
- The image of an image of fiction is lies-upon-lies is very evil.
- Identifying a muse and/or inspiration is so difficult, and is therefore questionable, potentially evil.
- Representing love as a passion or other emotion is evil, always.

The arts are NOT:

1. Knowledge
2. Reality
3. Useful

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

CAUSES	GENERAL AESTHETICS	TRAGEDY
1. Material	1. Medium	1. Language, Rhythm, Harmony (Diction/Song)
2. Formal	2. Object	2. Imitation of men in action (plot, character, thought by imitation)
3. Efficient	3. Manner	3. Spectacle
4. Final	4. Pleasure & Knowledge	4. Katharsis (Catharsis)

The Four Pleasures

1. Pleasure of recognition
2. Pleasure of execution
3. Pleasure of knowledge
4. Pleasure of the medium

The Six Elements of a Play

1. PLOT
2. CHARACTER
3. THEME
4. LANGUAGE
5. RHYTHM
6. SPECTACLE

A little more (adding to the Aug. 28th lecture).

Portrayals

1. better than they are (tragedy)
2. worse than they are (comedy)
3. as they are (?)

Mimesis is a positive thing (not evil).

Definition of a Good Tragedy

Tragedy is an action that creates pity and fear, which culminates into a katharsis.

- **Pity**
  - an emotion directed toward others
  - a feeling of pain caused by some sight of evil befalling someone who doesn't deserve it
- **Fear**
  - a painful emotion directed toward ourselves
  - a pain or disturbance caused by the image (or mental picture) of a destructive or evil force
  - pain and worry of future/potential powers
  - great pain must be implied
  - great pain and disturbance that does not necessarily end in death
  - we also fear things that threaten (destroy, frighten) those better than ourselves
  - fear exists when there is even the slightest hope of escape (no hope, no fear)
- **Katharsis**
  - nobody knows what this really means
  - was a medical term, before Aristotle, which had to do with family purification (purification of incest, of such evil, in the family), so in Aristotle's time the meaning must have had something to with the purging of evil (purging of pity and sorrow?)
  - it could be the point where things are hopeless, where pity and fear no longer function
- **Action**
  - controls pity and fear
  - positive pretext vs. negative pretext
  - Aristotle seems to have thought that there was a difference between a bad person and a villain.
  - *Hamartia*: an archery term—trying your hardest and yet you miss the mark; error in judgement
  - *Tragic flaw*: a virtuous trait (body, personality, intelligence,...) that is so powerful that it might bring a person down (too nice, too trusting, too honest, too strong, too much of a good thing); derived from *hamartia*
  - *Hubris*: pride, with an inclination toward evil (not associated with *hamartia*)

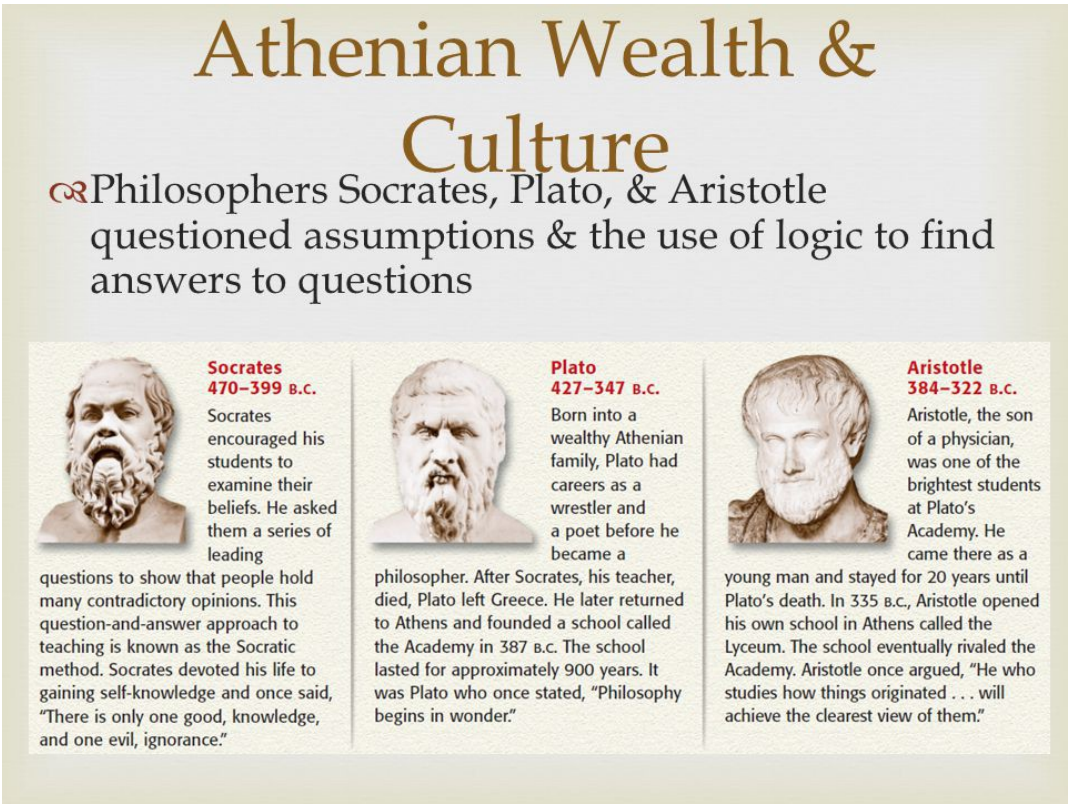
DEFECTIVE VIRTUE <----------> GOLDEN MEAN<----------> EXCESSIVE VIRTUE

UTTER VILLAIN — GOOD PERSON — HAMARTIA

- The choice of a mean is not possible in every action, not possible (for example) in: adultery, malice, corruption—there is no “golden” mean for these.
- Aristotle assumes that there are clean, obvious, choices between good and evil.
- In a tragedy, there is an involuntary action:
  - compulsion (action not controlled)
  - ignorance (committing an evil unknowingly)
  - Othello kills his wife out of ignorance/misinformation. One *might* argue that *The Tragedy of Macbeth* is not a tragedy because the actions are voluntary (not involuntary).

Four Classifications of Character

1. **ETHICS** of character: moral purpose, choices beteen bad and good and how these choices contribute to pity and fear
2. **PROPRIETY**: defining the audience (age, sex, class, . . .); once this definition (these classifications) have been made, certain patterns of audience interest appear; propriety acts according to the patterns of the classifications of audience; not only does the character have to behave appropriately, but also speak and have an appropriate role
3. **VERSIMILITUDE** (true to life): believability; the characgter has to be plausible, enough "like us" to be acceptable as human; this has nothing to do with character traits; villains are not human
4. **CONSISTANCY:** of thought and of action



500 B.C.E.
470 Socrates born
450
428 Plato born
399 Socrates dies
384 Aristotle born
350
348 Plato dies
322 Aristotle dies
300
250
200
150
100
50
0 ----------
50
100 C.E.

PLATO	ARISTOTLE
• Tended to think in terms of parts (pieces of the picture). • The poet/playwright writes as a result of divine inspiration. • The value of a work of art or literature is extrinsic (having value beyond itself); it must be useful. • Change is not good, potentially desstructive. • Poetry makes one weak. • Poetry should teach.	• Tended to think in terms of wholes (the big picture). • The poet/playwright writes out of a universal need to imitate (and that's okay). • Value of a work of art or literature is intrinsic (having value within itself); it has its own value. • Change is inevitable, needed. • Poetry is empowering. • Poetry should give pleasure, and often there is pleasure in teaching/learning.