

Plato's Poets: Are They Completely Removed from Acquiring Reality? A Close Reading of Truth Acquisition in the Divided Line of Plato's *Republic*

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According to Plato, “art corrupts the minds of all who hearken to them, save only those whose knowledge of reality provides an antidote” (595-b) and this shows how Plato saw art as an obstacle to the wellbeing of the mind. This paper is a close reading of *The Republic*, which shows that the art and the artists/poets of Plato are not corrupt, as he has suggested, and are not completely removed from reality. At the end of Book VI of *The Republic* (509D-513E), in the Divided Line, Plato says that reality could be acquired with the use of the human intellect but not with the primary senses. The reality or the transcendent truth “relies exclusively on form, a level of intellection that is free from all hypothetical thinking” (510-b). According to Plato, the reality is completely dependent upon rational facts. Moreover, it is clear that the poets who “contrive appearances and not reality” (599-a) rely on hypothetical thinking, fabrications and are unable to attain truth, which is driven by reason. But contradictorily, Plato states, “the acquisition of true knowledge begins with assumptions and hypotheses but rises to a level...that is free from all hypothetical thinking” (510-B). It can be assumed that hypothetical thinking can mark the beginning of rational thought, which acquires truth. Then, it could be concluded that poets who engage in hypothetical thinking are not completely removed from acquiring truth but stand basic in the journey of acquiring reality. Thus, Plato's poets are not completely removed from acquiring reality.

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