

## EXISTENCE IN THE LIGHT OF POST SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY WITH RELATION TO THE CREATIVE WORKS

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### Abstract

*This research delves into the intersection of Post-Socratic philosophies—Stoicism, Epicureanism, Skepticism, and Cynicism—with the realm of art, exploring how these philosophical currents have influenced artistic thought and expression throughout history. The study examines how artists have engaged with the fundamental dimensions of human existence, authenticity, and the pursuit of truth articulated by these ancient schools of thought.*

*The investigation begins by elucidating the core tenets of each philosophical tradition, ranging from Socratic dialectics and the pursuit of virtue to the Sophists' emphasis on subjectivism and relativism. It explores the Stoic ideal of living in accordance with nature, the Epicurean pursuit of pleasure and tranquility, the Skeptical quest for logical answers, and the Cynical rejection of materialism and embrace of simplicity.*

*Drawing connections between philosophy and art, the study analyzes the ways in which artists across different periods and movements have manifested philosophical principles in their creative endeavors. From Renaissance masters like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo to modern movements like Fauvism, Cubism, and Psychedelia, artists have grappled with existential questions, social critique, and the pursuit of aesthetic pleasure.*

*Moreover, the research highlights how philosophical ideas have permeated diverse artistic forms, from painting and sculpture to literature and architecture. It examines the impact of Post-Socratic thought on artistic movements such as Rococo, Aestheticism, and Cynical Realism, illustrating how philosophical currents continue to shape cultural narratives and artistic expressions in contemporary society.*

*Through an interdisciplinary lens, this study elucidates the intricate relationship between philosophy and art, shedding light on the enduring influence of ancient wisdom on the creative imagination across cultures and epochs. Ultimately, it underscores the profound insights that emerge when philosophy and art converge, inviting deeper reflections on the nature of human existence and the quest for authenticity.*

### Introduction

The nexus between philosophy and art has been a perennial subject of exploration, providing a nuanced lens through which to decipher the complexities of human existence. Among the myriad philosophical currents that have shaped intellectual landscapes across epochs, the Post-Socratic philosophies stand as pillars, each offering distinctive insights into the nature of reality, authenticity, and the pursuit of truth. Stoicism, Epicureanism, Skepticism, and Cynicism, originating in the aftermath of Socratic inquiry, have left an indelible mark on the fabric of philosophical thought.

This research embarks on an exploration of the interplay between these Post-Socratic philosophies and the world of art, delving into the ways in which artists have grappled with and embraced the fundamental dimensions of human experience articulated by these ancient schools of thought. From the vibrant tapestries of the Renaissance to the avant-garde expressions of the 20th century and beyond, the artistic realm becomes a canvas upon which philosophical ideas find resonance and visual manifestation.

In this interdisciplinary inquiry, we traverse the intellectual landscapes of Socratic dialectics, the Sophists' rhetoric, Stoic rationality, Epicurean hedonism, Skeptical inquiry, and Cynical rejection of materialism. Through the lens of art, we aim to unravel the profound connections between these philosophical currents and the creative endeavors of artists who, in turn, become interpreters and articulators of timeless philosophical themes.

As we navigate the rich tapestry of human thought and artistic expression, this study seeks to illuminate the ways in which philosophy and art converge, offering a deeper understanding of the human condition. By examining the manifestations of Post-Socratic philosophies in visual, literary, and architectural forms, we endeavor to elucidate the enduring dialogue between ancient wisdom and contemporary creativity, inviting contemplation on the ever-evolving pursuit of truth and authenticity through the lens of artistic interpretation.

“Philosophy is rational, abstract, and methodical consideration of reality as a whole or of fundamental dimensions of human existence and experience”.<sup>1</sup> The specific focus of this research is to explore authenticity, the real truth of human existence, with different angles and thinking of four Post Socratic philosophies in which man became main object of philosophical thought including Stoicism<sup>2</sup>, Epicureanism<sup>3</sup>, Skepticism<sup>4</sup> and Cynicism<sup>5</sup>. It identifies that how relations and experiences of an artist with society relate to the visions of above said categories; this is also the hypothesis of this article. It also identifies that how the ideology and thinking of these ancient school of thought and philosophers perceived by the artists of different times.

### Post Socratic school of thought and human existence

469- 399 BCE was the time of Socrates<sup>6</sup>, father of philosophy. His basic philosophy was “Doubt”, which is the origin of truth.<sup>7</sup> By finding the answers of doubts one may explore various ways to find truth.<sup>8</sup> These questions were from our own self not from others. Self examination is important, unexamined life is not worth living. Wisdom, temperance, courage and justice were Socrates cross – examined moral concepts. “Dialectics”<sup>9</sup> was the method Socrates used.<sup>10</sup>

Socratic dialect based on the principle which is called “principle of non contradiction”.<sup>11</sup> He pretended that he knew nothing, instead of lecturing students he discussed in the marketplaces. “Virtue” is the basic principle of ethics and philosophy according to his point of view, and virtue is knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/philosophy>

<sup>2</sup> A school of philosophy popularized during the Roman Empire that emphasized reason as a means of understanding the natural state of things, or logos, and as a means of freeing oneself from emotional distress.

<sup>3</sup> Epicureanism, is a focus on the importance of pleasure.

<sup>4</sup> Skepticism is doubt about something you're just not convinced or can't totally believe it.

<sup>5</sup> Cynicism is the feeling of distrust or that something isn't going to work out well.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Socrates>

<sup>7</sup> <https://exploringyourmind.com/the-philosophy-of-doubt-a-brief-historical-review/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.thecollector.com/socrates-philosophy-ancient-greek-philosopher-legacy/>

<sup>9</sup> an explanation of the fundamental reasons

<sup>10</sup> Brick house, Thomas C., Smith, Nicholas. The Philosophy of Socrates. United Kingdom: Avalon Publishing, 2000.pg,78

<sup>11</sup> <https://unacademy.com/content/upsc/study-material/philosophy/dialectical-method> (accessed 17th May, 2022)

Socratic thought of “virtue” and “true knowledge” expressed by different artists like Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian in their own ways. They possessed the solid grasp of technical mastery.

Leonardo had a keen desire for knowledge and he described himself in a platonic allegory<sup>12</sup>. For the sake and search of true knowledge Leonardo worked on mechanics, anatomical drawings, perspectives exercises of diagrams and painted diagrams of useful inventions as well as searched under water and opened many secrets to the world through his art ability. Once Leonardo said “ those who are in love with practice without knowledge are like the sailor who gets into a ship without rudder or compass and who never can be certain whether he is going”<sup>13</sup>. He believed in true knowledge and once wrote in his note book that the painter who draws merely by practice and by eye without any reason is like a mirror which copies everything placed in front of it without being conscious of their existence.<sup>14</sup>



**Figure 1: Leonardo's anatomical and mechanical drawings**

source:[https://www.google.com.pk/books/edition/Leonardo\\_Da\\_Vinci](https://www.google.com.pk/books/edition/Leonardo_Da_Vinci)

Basic purpose of life is to get knowledge which is against the thought of upcoming sophists who aimed to achieve the excellence.

### Sophists

Sophists were the Greek lecturers, writers and teachers, they were against Socrates.<sup>15</sup> They were skilled in rhetoric. They claimed to make a weaker position appear stronger by using techniques of rhetoric and debate and started a thorough examination of human psyche.<sup>16</sup> They

<sup>12</sup> Symbolic representation of contrasting reality versus our interpretation of it.

<sup>13</sup> “The notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci” Jean Paul Richter, Dover Publications, Inc., New York.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> <https://iep.utm.edu/sophists/#H2>

<sup>16</sup> Bruce McComiskey . Gorgias and the New Sophistic Rhetoric.pg, 32.

sought the essence of man in relation to the individuality of an individual and collectively to the various types of society.

The Sophists focused on the rational examination of human affairs and the betterment and success of human life.<sup>17</sup> Their concerns were not with truth but with excellence and practical knowledge. The most important contribution of Sophists was their talks and debates on all previous philosophies and aware the common people. They consider reality to the subjectivism of experience. According to them man is the measure of what exists.<sup>18</sup>

Subjectivism was explained by Protagoras<sup>19</sup>, (490- 420 BCE) one of the most influential Sophists,<sup>20</sup> that what is true for you is true for you and what is true for me is true for me.<sup>21</sup> It is equally possible to affirm or deny anything of anything. Relativism was also described by Protagoras that man decides what is true or false.<sup>22</sup> There is not absolute truth, there is not absolute reason. They were the founding fathers of relativism<sup>23</sup> and subjectivism<sup>24</sup>, promoted and developed its culture.

In art relativism and subjectivism ideas energized in Post Modernism in the first half of 20th century. For instilled a heightened their vibrant colours into yellow to the artist, then be<sup>26</sup> said Paul Gauguin Fauvism

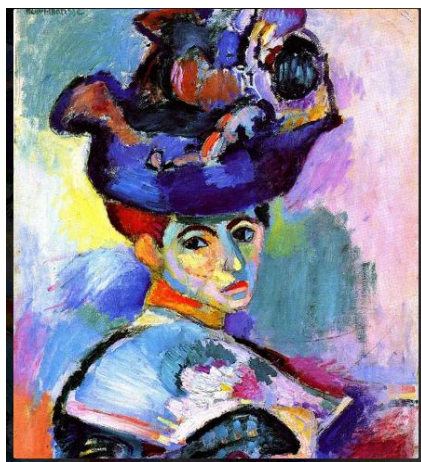


Figure 2: *Woman with a Hat* by Henri Matisse.1905.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fauvism>

Another 20<sup>th</sup> century art movement was Cubism<sup>27</sup> (figure 3) who aimed to discard the conventions of the past by using various conflicting vantage points in their paintings.

<sup>17</sup> <https://iep.utm.edu/sophists/#H2>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2103811?seq=5>

<sup>19</sup> JYL Gentzler. Method in Ancient Philosophy. pg, 156

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/1591/pg1591-images.html>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> The theory, especially in ethics or aesthetics that conceptions of truth and moral values are not absolute but are relative to the persons or groups holding them.

<sup>24</sup> In ethics the doctrine that values and moral principles comes from attitudes, convention, whim, or preference.

<sup>25</sup> Fauvism was the first of the avant-garde movements that flourished in France in the early years of the twentieth century.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/fauvism/>

<sup>27</sup> The art movement known as cubism arose out of the need to define and represent the then new modern reality.



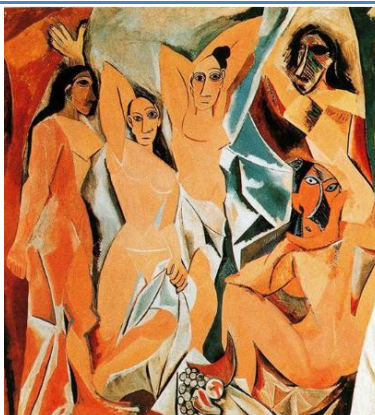


Figure 3: Cubism, Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907)

Futurists<sup>28</sup> (figure 4) were impressed by machines to embrace change, speed and innovation and rejected all previous artistic and cultural forms and traditions.



Figure 4: *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* Umberto Boccioni, 1931

Source: <https://www.britannica.com>

Constructivism<sup>29</sup> (figure 5), which embraced theory that art should be constructed from modern industrial materials.

<sup>28</sup> Futurists emphasized the dynamism, speed, energy, and power of the machine and the vitality, change, and restlessness of modern life.

<sup>29</sup> Constructivism is the theory that says learners construct knowledge rather than just passively take in information. As people experience the world and reflect upon those experiences, they build their own representations and incorporate new information into their pre-existing knowledge.



Figure 5: *Monument to the Third International* by Tatlin,  
Source: <https://www.britannica.com>

Subjectivity clearly expressed in a reaction of senseless slaughter of trenches of world war I & II in an art movement Dadaism<sup>30</sup>. Artists condemned capitalism and nationalism.<sup>31</sup> Marcel Duchamp rejected authoritarianism by presenting his remarkable art piece “*The Fountain*”, (figure 6) a result of complete freedom and rejection of traditional values. Mass death of 37.5 million people and destruction in these circumstances creating art was nonsensical.<sup>32</sup>



Figure 6: *The Fountain* by Marcel Duchamp  
Source: <https://scroll.in/article/833703/marcel-duchamps-fountain>

## Cynicism

Another school of philosophical thought was Cynics<sup>33</sup>. Antisthenes (400 BC) was the founder of this school of thought.<sup>34</sup> “What a lot of things I don’t need”<sup>35</sup> is the basic philosophy

<sup>30</sup> Dadaists philosophy completely challenged traditional views of war, class, religion, technology and morals.

<sup>31</sup> <https://medium.com/@kbreenconsulting/dadaism>

<sup>32</sup> <https://magazine.artland.com/what-is-dadaism/>

<sup>33</sup> A member of a sect of ancient Greek philosopher who believed virtue to be the only good and self control to be the only means of achieving virtue.

<sup>34</sup> <https://iep.utm.edu/antisthenes/>

of Cynics, "Philosophy is to care for nothing"<sup>36</sup>. They discouraged all material worldly pleasures and encouraged nature, as well as extremely criticized the aristocracy. According to them love of money is the mother city of evils. They adopted poverty and want to live difficult life. According to Diogenes "refraining from pleasures is pleasurable"<sup>37</sup>. For their living they beg to the people and the logic they explained behind this act that all things belong to the gods. The wise are friends of the gods. Friends share everything. Hence all things belong to the wise.



Figure 7 : Psychedelic art

Source: <https://www.mushroom-magazine.com/psychedelic-art/>

The hippie culture movement of the 1960s and 70s<sup>38</sup> is a prominent example for us. They promoted Cynicism as fashionable. They gave Cynicism a new angle by wearing psychedelic swirls (figure 7), they believed in absolute peace, love and harmony. Their art also representing their ideas varied in origin and form. The common features the hippie art shows is the peace signs, anti war campaigns, geometric patterns, curls and swirls often appear crazy and mysterious, they were also inspired by the Bohemian's unconventional lifestyles, they were wanderers, adventurers or vagabonds. The psychedelic art comes in various forms like Tribal art, Art Brute, Kinetic art with optic illusions, Art nouveau and Surrealism, which expresses the inner world or spirit is another contemporary art form which was inspired by Cynics. They created a mixture of various cultural and artistic forms.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche a prominent German philosopher was also inspired from Cynics, and said it the highest stage one can reach on earth. Cynics left strong influences on Christianity<sup>39</sup> and Muslim mystics' world.<sup>40</sup> Even if we see in 20<sup>th</sup> century an art movement

<sup>35</sup> <https://iep.utm.edu/cynics/>

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*

<sup>37</sup> <https://iep.utm.edu/diogenes-of-sinope/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hippie>

<sup>39</sup> Greek Philosophy. Netherlands: Brill, 1967. PG: 328.

<sup>40</sup> Key Figures in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia. United States: Taylor & Francis, 2013. PG: 342

emerged in China named Cynical Realism<sup>41</sup> used in 1992, by art critic Li Xian Ting who described the Beijing artist group who exposed social satirical paintings (figure 8,9).



Figure 8: Untitled (Smile-ism No. 14), lithograph, 2006, by Yue Minjun



Figure 9: Untitled (Smile-ism No. 9), lithograph, 2006 by Yue Minjun

Source : <https://www.composition.gallery>

Post Socratic philosophers established further four more ethical periods<sup>42</sup> emerged to investigate the problem of human conduct, including Stoicism,<sup>43</sup> Skepticism,<sup>44</sup> Epicureanism,<sup>45</sup> and Eclecticism<sup>46</sup>.

### Stoicism

Next important Greek school of thought is Stoicism. It flourished in ancient Greece and Rome during 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE.<sup>47</sup> Stoicism concept that a person who suffered pains, troubles and hardships, never bothered him. This philosophy of life maximizes positive emotions and reduces negative emotions. Stoic philosophy started with Zino of Citium 334 – 262 BCE.<sup>48</sup> They were also inspired from Cynics. Only difference between them they didn't adopt poverty like them. In fact the main philosophical view of Romans was Stoicism. According to them tranquility and peace of mind can only be achieved from being a virtuous person as created by the English landscape painter Constable (figure 10)

<sup>41</sup> Art has been used as a tool against the oppressing matter of politics and the only way of unobstructed creative expression.

<sup>42</sup> <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/greek-philosophers/> (accessed 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2022)

<sup>43</sup> A school of philosophy popularized during the Roman Empire that emphasized reason as a means of understanding the natural state of things, and as a means of freeing oneself from emotional distress.

<sup>44</sup> A studied attitude of questioning and doubt.

<sup>45</sup> A system of philosophy, chiefly ethics, based upon the teachings of Epicurus (340 – 270 BC), that advocated retreat from public life to preserve ones long term happiness and ataraxia

<sup>46</sup> An approach to thought that draws upon multiple theories to gain complementary insight into phenomena.

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.holstee.com/blogs/mindful-matter/stoicism> (accessed 8th June, 2022)

<sup>48</sup> ibid





Figure 10: English landscape painting  
 Source: <https://iep.utm.edu/stoicism/>

Stoics worked on logics, mind and soul. According to them when a human being born, his mind is like a blank paper, anyone can write anything on it. A human is like a wax mould and whatever impression anyone wants to create he can. These prints are developed by our five senses. Four virtues they presented were wisdom, courage, justice and temperance.<sup>49</sup> Stoics worked on physics and worshiped nature.<sup>50</sup> Their philosophy is that all human beings are part of nature and all matter and living organisms have souls. They divided nature into two parts mind and matter, and both are mandatory for each other. Whatever exists in human mind exists in nature. They completely challenged Plato's theory of imaginative existence, rejected dualism<sup>51</sup> and supported monism<sup>52</sup> theory. They believe that world is made up of matter but with soul, the whole life connected with nature.<sup>53</sup> Buddhist and Hindu philosophy also agreed with this concept. Buddhist believes that sufferings are the reason of our desires.<sup>54</sup>

Stoicism highly inspired from eastern philosophy. Stoics ignored the emotions, love, hatred, excitement, grief and promoted reason and logic. Reason is the only tool which takes us in right direction not emotions. We need to be self disciplined, keep away from materialist world and live simple life; they prefer to live ascetic life style. Logic, concentration, reflections, thinking can help us to control our emotions. Knowledge and rationality is main tool to make us happy and satisfied. In the history of visual art the rationality, innovation and logic were the focus of the artists from 15<sup>th</sup> century to onwards. They produced highly idealistic approach into their paintings and sculptures, concepts of humanism were widely promoted. Concept of a universal man and his status in the world was defined as Stoics did. Synthesis of artistic and

<sup>49</sup> <https://philosophybreak.com/articles> (accessed 8th June, 2022)

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org> (accessed 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2022)

<sup>51</sup> In the philosophy of mind, dualism is the theory that the mental and the physical – or mind and body or mind and brain – are, in some sense, radically different kinds of things.

<sup>52</sup> Monism is the philosophical idea that all things in existence are part of the same essential oneness or whole.

<sup>53</sup> *The Beast in Sheep's Clothing: Exposing the Lies of Godless Human Science*. United States: Pelican Publishing, 2005. Pg:45

<sup>54</sup> <https://thestoicsage.com/stoicism-and-Buddhism> (accessed 5 June 2022)

scientific ideals is clearly shown in *Vitruvian man* (figure 11) by Leonardo Da Vinci during late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

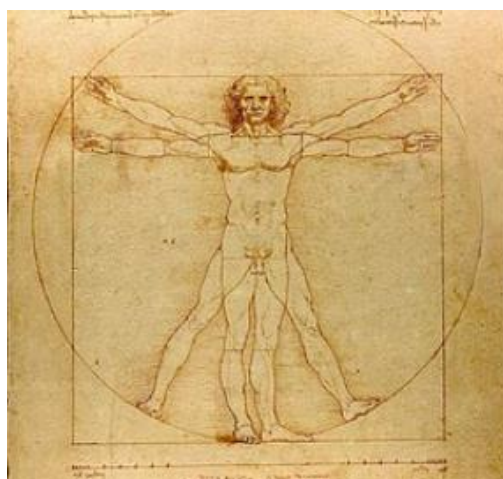


Figure 11: *Vitruvian Man* by Leonardo Da Vinci

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Vitruvian-man>

Stoics agreed with Socratic point of view that knowledge is virtue, virtue is knowledge, and stoics said that to live according to logic and nature is virtue. According to them philosophers never need any material thing. They agreed to adopt a healthy life style not poverty like cynics, but the highest achievement is virtue, wisdom, courage, justice and temperance. The most prominent aspect of stoic philosophy was that they were highly opposed to slavery, and supported equality. Wealth, status, fame, rank had least importance, deeds and acts are important. Stoic philosophy also inspired the Christian philosophy as well as Muslim philosophy as did Cynics. Because they gave the imperial importance to humanity, the human philosophy had a great inspiration from it.

For creative art stoics believed that art is a representation of reality and should be used as virtue and ignored to show the dark side of human nature. In relation to visual art Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, was Roman emperor from 161 to 180 AD and a Stoic philosopher<sup>55</sup> wrote a book named *Meditation* explained creativity as a fundamental human impulse<sup>56</sup>. Creativity is the simple human act of bringing something forth into the world that did not heretofore exist. Stoics fought against tyranny.

<sup>55</sup><https://www.google.com.pk/search?q=marcus+aurelius&h>

<sup>56</sup> Aurelius, Marcus Antonius. *Meditations*. N.p.: n.p., 1906.

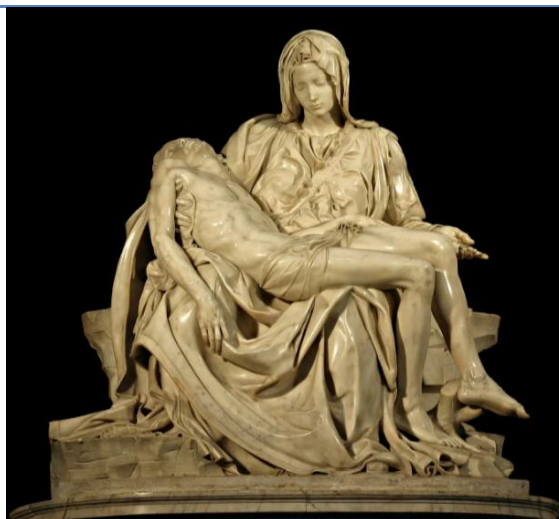


Figure 12: Stoicism and creative works, *Pieta* by Michael Angelo  
 Source: <https://smarthistory.org/michelangelo-pieta/>

In Michelangelo's pieta sculpted the stoic nature of the mother holding her dead son, very humble, serene, tranquil and calm pose (figure 12).

### Skepticism

3<sup>rd</sup> Ancient Hellenistic Greek philosophy is Skepticism emerged in 273 BCE to 1<sup>st</sup> BCE.<sup>57</sup> They did not have any specific philosophy but whatever point of view or philosophy discussed in front of them, they never accept it wholeheartedly but argued, criticized and questioned on them. They wanted logical answers and arguments. Skepticism is a mental state to inquire about the existence of objective moral laws; they debated on soul, metaphysics and subjective realities. They believe that doubt is an origin of everything. They started the dialectic process of arguing to search for truth. It reveals truth on basis of knowledge. They criticize stoics and called them dogmatic. It's a never ending debate or they want solid evidences and logics against all theories.

Skepticism is the base of Empiricism (1711- 1776)<sup>58</sup>, which is the philosophy that all concepts originate from experience. They talk on metaphysics, truth and ontology<sup>59</sup>. In visual art how the ordinary objects define their intrinsic properties with relation to their extrinsic properties. Robert Motherwell an American painter and printmaker painted a series of abstract expressionist paintings titled Plato's cave in 1970, Plato's allegory of the cave recounts the group of prisoners who spent their entire lives chained facing the wall of a cave and only saw the shadows projected onto the walls never experienced real life and believed that these shadows are the reality, created with thick layers of white, black and various shades of grey creating a deep space and seems that the denizens of the cave are chained, cut off the worldly colours outside.<sup>60</sup> He painted meditation with his skeptical doubts and acquired certain knowledge of his existence, God and the world around him (figure 13).

<sup>57</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skepticism>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/empiricism>

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> Orson Welles narrated a wonderful cartoon version from 1973: <https://www.youtube.com/> (accessed 10 June, 2022)



Figure 13: *Platos Cave No 7* by Robert Motherwell

Source: <https://www.sothebys.com>

## Epicureanism

The fourth Greek school of thought was Epicureanism 341 -270 BCE<sup>61</sup>, Epicurean was a philosopher who gave its idea. Epicurean pleasure in English literature is commonly used term for a great pleasure but in philosophy its meanings were slightly different. Epicurean was basically inspired from Socratic philosophy, “the highest good is pleasure, and the greatest evil is pain”<sup>62</sup>. The only purpose of life is to have pleasure not grief. Epicureans opposed stoicism, challenged Plato and shunned politics. According to them pleasure is virtue.<sup>63</sup> To get that pleasure one had to be highly educated who listens good music and poetry, study philosophy etc, and there must be quality and balance in it. According to Epicurus, pleasure is not just sensual. Friendship, art and culture are also pleasurable acts. They discouraged extremism like cynics and supported a balanced life in every field of life.<sup>64</sup> Get pleasure without negativity. His opinion about world is that this only world we have, our existence is not eternal, we were not here before, nor will be here again. We are not puppets in god’s hands, where we are rewarded if obedient or punished otherwise.<sup>65</sup> Physical characteristics of human mind are very important to express natural human desires by using senses, emotions and the anticipations.<sup>66</sup> Epicurus encouraged bachelor life and didn’t marry or having any relationship with women in his whole life living modesty and gaining knowledge provides pleasure, a state of tranquility and absence of bodily pain which is pure happiness.<sup>67</sup> Materialism led Epicurus to attack superstition, no fear of death. Epicurus emphasized minimizing harm and maximizing happiness for oneself and society. The whimsical hedonistic philosophy of Epicurean inspired the 16<sup>th</sup> century Rococo artists, they expressed it in innovative ways, paintings and decorative objects were woven into various environments, created fully immersive atmosphere (figure 14). To achieve a seamless integration

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Epicureanism> (accessed 10 June,2022)

<sup>62</sup> Oxford Handbook of Epicurus and Epicureanism. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pg :145

<sup>63</sup> The Virtuous Life in Greek Ethics. N.p.: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pg:4.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. pg: 24

<sup>65</sup> A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology: Earinus-Nyx. United Kingdom: J. Murray, 1880.pg:35

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>67</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epicurus> (accessed 12 June, 2022)



of art and architecture they used stucco reliefs, scrollwork, sculptural arabesque details and gilding.



Figure 14: *A Swing* by Jean-Honoré Fragonard, 1767

Source: <https://smarthistory.org/jean-honore-fragonard-the-swing/>

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of Post-Socratic philosophies, including Stoicism, Epicureanism, Skepticism, and Cynicism, reveals a profound and enduring impact on the realm of art throughout history. Artists, from the Renaissance to the contemporary era, have engaged with these philosophical concepts, exploring the complexities of human existence, the pursuit of authenticity, and the search for truth.

The Socratic emphasis on virtue and true knowledge finds resonance in the works of artists like Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael, who sought to express a solid grasp of technical mastery and a keen desire for true knowledge. The Sophists' focus on rhetoric and human affairs influenced art movements like Fauvism and Cubism in the 20th century, challenging conventional norms and promoting subjectivism in artistic expression.

Cynicism's rejection of material pleasures and embrace of a simple life has found echoes in movements like the 1960s hippie culture, where artists expressed ideals of peace, love, and harmony through psychedelic art. Cynicism's influence extends to Friedrich Nietzsche and the emergence of Cynical Realism in 20th-century China, reflecting social satirical paintings.

Stoicism's emphasis on logic, virtue, and equality resonates with artists who embraced rationality and innovation, particularly during the Renaissance. The Stoic philosophy inspired works like Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, promoting a synthesis of artistic and scientific ideals. The Stoic influence on Christianity and Muslim mystics underscores its enduring impact on various cultural and philosophical traditions.

Skepticism's quest for logical answers and questioning of established theories lays the foundation for Empiricism and reflects in artists like Robert Motherwell, who painted Plato's cave as a metaphor for skeptical doubts and the pursuit of certain knowledge.

Epicureanism's focus on pleasure, balance, and minimizing harm finds expression in Rococo art of the 16th century and resonates in modern movements like Aestheticism, where artists prioritize sensory experiences and aesthetic enjoyment.

Finally, Eclecticism, born out of the synthesis of diverse philosophical elements, has been a recurring theme in art history. From the Renaissance to the 19th century, artists have freely combined various styles and traditions, creating a rich tapestry of artistic expressions.

The dynamic interplay between philosophy and art continues to shape cultural narratives and the evolution of artistic expressions. The exploration of these Post-Socratic philosophies provides a lens through which we can understand the profound and intricate relationship between philosophical thought and the visual arts across different epochs and cultures.