



The Sarawak Museum Journal

Vol. LV No. 76

December 2000



ISSN: 0375-3050

E-ISSN: 3036-0188

Citation: Rashidah A. Salam. (2000). The Greek's Influences on the Later Traditions in Art in Malaysia: Some Examples from Sarawak. The Sarawak Museum Journal, LV (76): 45-59

THE GREEK'S INELUENCES ON THE LATER TRADITIONS IN ART IN MALAYSIA: SOME EXAMPLES FROM SARAWAK

Rashidah A. Salam

PART A: Introduction of Philosophy

The earliest Greek Philosophers intuited that the universe was monistic or a form of one singular substance. Modern science has discovered this original substance to be energy. The early Greeks, feeling that there was one root element for everything in the universe, suggested many substances as the originalone. This paper will discuss the studies of the ideal form according to Plato. Later on, the paper will discuss the concept of imitation in art.

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Academic minds divide philosophy into five divisions:

Division	Description	Branch
<i>Logic</i>	Studies of ideal method in thought and research.	Psychology
<i>Aesthetics</i>	Studies of ideal form or beauty.	Sociology
<i>Ethics</i>	Studies of ideal conduct.	
<i>Politics</i>	Studies of ideal social organization.	
<i>Metaphysics</i>	Studies of ultimate realities.	Inorganic sciences

To ask the questions of how does man know about the universe and how does the human mind function; the conclusions came with the establishment of a school known as *Sophists*. These skeptical and doubting questions needed intellectual teachers who tried to reduce to theoretical form the traditional and customary beliefs and knowledge. The profession

of Sophists was that of traveling teachers, employing the art of persuasion.

PART B: The Greek Influences: The notion of 'truth' and the idea of 'form' and the concept of imitation according to Plato.

This paper examines the notion of 'truth' and the idea of 'form' in the arts and cites some examples from Greek history of art that will be discussed later as a form of comparison and similarities to some architectural buildings in Malaysia. The conference has opened up a new idea and insight to develop a new research into how Greek influences were here several hundreds years back.

In Book Ten of Plato's *Republic*, the physical world consists of mimesis, or imitation. It is imitative, and therefore unreal. To Plato, only ideas are real. He referred to these real, nonphysical ideas as the forms. Plato was seeking metaphysics, which means above appearances. Objects in the physical world are appearances of the forms.

Plato says we do not learn to differentiate forms through experiences. We have a certain innate knowledge of the forms, a recollection we are born with, related to a pre-existence of the soul. It is what existed in us before we were born; not necessarily immortal, but primordial. We remember this knowledge because we are participants in this world of forms. Our innate knowledge of the forms is not knowledge of particulars and it is not gained through experience. This knowledge is derivative of the external, nonphysical world of the forms. The capacity to relate to this knowledge of the forms is reason. Plato, however, did not believe that all social classes possessed this capacity. For example, the Guardians, Traders, Slaves and Women did not possess the capacity to know the forms. Only certain people can discern the imitation from the real. Only