THE QUESTION OF EVIL IN PLATO

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İmge Oranlı

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Thesis Abstract

İmge Oranlı, “The Question of Evil in Plato”

This thesis aims at understanding Plato’s conception of evil. For this we are trying to determine what evil *is* in various aspects of Platonic Philosophy. We are arguing that in all of these aspects, in ontology, cosmology, epistemology, politics and morality, evil is articulated negatively; in terms of contrariety or deprivation. In our investigation we are also using the term evil in an operative sense, which serves as a medium that enables us to trace the interrelations of these various aspects. Our investigation begins with an inquiry questioning the evil(s) in the city, for this we are considering the *Laws X* and the *Republic*. We then elaborate on Platonic ontology with regard to the *Republic* and the *Sophist*. The last part of our study considers the cosmology of Plato with an analysis of the *Timaeus*.

Tez Özeti

İmge Oranlı, "Platon'da Kötülük Problemi"

Bu tez Platon'un kötülük üzerine düşüncelerini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu amaçla kötülüğün Platon'un düşüncesindeki farklı tezahürleri belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Platon'un felsefi düşüncesini oluşturan ontoloji, epistemoloji, ahlak ve kozmoloji gibi alanların birbiriyle ilişkisi kötülük izleği üzerinden düşünülmüştür. Böylece kötülük terimi, bir taraftan da, Platon'un felsefesini anlamak için işlevsel bir terim olarak kullanılmıştır. Bu tez, sözü geçen tüm alanlarda kötülüğün negativite üzerinden düşünüldüğünü öne sürmektedir. Bu, kötülüğün karşıtlık ve eksiklik üzerinden anlaşıldığını göstermektedir. Tezde, öncelikle şehirdeki "kötülük" üzerine düşünülmüş, bunu için, Platon'un *Yasalar* diyaloğunun onuncu kitabı ve *Devlet* diyaloğu incelenmiştir. Takiben, Platon'un ontolojisi *Devlet* ve *Sofist* diyaloğu üzerinden ele alınmıştır. Son olarak da, Platon'un kozmoloji anlayışı için *Timaios* adlı diyalog analiz edilmiştir.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

> [I]t was only on account of evil
> that we felt regard and affection
> for good.
>
> *Jacques Derrida*[1]

"Evil comes from a failure to think".[2] This is how Amos Elon captures Arendt's position regarding Eichmann, in the *Introduction* to the new edition of Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*. This formulation of evil refers to a particular event of 20th century. It refers to an analysis made by Arendt, regarding Eichmann's position in relation to the Holocaust and his role within. The Holocaust, together with other genocides of the 20th century, is among the recent examples of the history of massacres. They can be considered as the radical manifestations of *evil* within the world. This is the kind of evil that we *were* interested in investigating, i.e. evil within the realm of human action, which eventually led us to this particular study. For, we have realized that there have always been attempts put forward an analysis of evil that is founded upon metaphysics.

"Why is there evil in the world?" This question has been answered by metaphysical accounts throughout history; as in the example of *devil* in Christian theology or some "evil" principle, a source that is beyond the limits of human action. Such is an understanding of evil that is not limited by the agency of human beings,

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[1]Derrida, J. 'Plato's Pharmacy' in *Disseminations*, Trans. Barbara Johnson, The University of Chicago Press, 1981, p. 117.
The writing of this thesis is indebted to Derrida's thinking in his article 'Plato's Pharmacy', for the most part, because of the method of reading it proposes, that is, a negative reading of Platonic texts. A negative reading can be understood as attentiveness towards the concealed (negative) elements in the textual material.

[2] Elon, Amos. 'Introduction' in Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Penguin, 2006, p. xiv.

which transcends the ethical and the political realm as the space of evil action, and thereby appoints a transcendent source for the evil(s) manifested in the world. Plato's philosophy seems to be at the origin of the possibility of such a metaphysical explanation.

Then how are we to apprehend Plato's understanding of evil; is it an ethical, a political or a metaphysical matter? The present study aims at investigating Plato's conception of evil. This investigation will be pursued in three chapters. The chapters are designed so as to present Plato's understanding of evil in view of the transcendent movement it bears. What do we mean by transcendent movement? Roughly, this refers to the constitution of Platonic ontology. This constitution can be traced as a movement or a shift that takes place in Plato's philosophy from the ethical-political towards the ontological-cosmological.

In our first chapter we will be investigating evil beginning from the realm of politics (and ethics). For this, we will be considering the *Republic* and the *Laws X*. We will try to investigate Plato's understanding of evil within the *polis*, i.e. within the realm of human action. However, we shall see that this investigation takes us to a different realm (or discourse) by transcending the realm of ethics and politics.

Our first chapter will try to arrive at an understanding of the ethico-political issues that pave the way for this transcendental movement. That is, we will try to indicate the ethico-political problems of Plato. Why does Plato want to constitute a just city in the *Republic*? We will argue that Plato's main *problem* is ethical and political. And, he tries to solve these *problems* by means of his philosophy. The construction of the ontology of the Good in the *Republic* or the creation of the universe in view of goodness in the *Timaeus* are the two main examples of the ontological and cosmological *solutions* he proposes for a *better world*. We consider

this quite important. Plato can remind those of us who have forgotten his aim of philosophical investigation: to seek a *better world*. And since it is Plato who is to speak; the initiator of systematic philosophy, we might be led to re-thinking the status of philosophy today. What is philosophy concerned with today? Can we any longer apprehend philosophy on the grounds of ethics and politics? It seems that the essential question of philosophy is the conflict between *theory* and *praxis.*

Plato was well aware of this initial conflict between theory and praxis, i.e. the applicability of theory. The difficulty of application lies in the relation between political power and philosophy. He stresses this point in his *Seventh Letter*:

> [T]he human race will have no respite from evils until those who are really and truly philosophers acquire political power or until, through some divine dispensation, those who rule and have political authority in cities become real philosophers (324b-326-b)[3].

Thus our first chapter is entitled: Question of Politics, in order to indicate that the framework will be set in view of the problems of the *polis*. Where are we to fit *evil* within this framework? We will treat the ethical and political problems of the city under the perspective of evil. That is, we will approach injustice, wrongdoing, ignorance and vice, as those *evils* which need to be refrained from or protected against.

The following chapter will continue with the *Republic*. Our second chapter will present the transition from the ethico-political discourse towards the ontological discourse within the *Republic*. Indeed this shifting of the discourse will affect our understanding of evil. Following Cherniss, we will argue that the phenomenal world is negatively evil, since it is a derogation of reality, the real beings (*ta ontos onta*) i.e. the Forms. We will try to expand this argument by focusing on the copy and original

[3] Cited from the Introduction part of the *Republic* by G.M.A Grube, Revised by C.D.C. Reeve, Hackett, 1992.

dichotomy. We will consider this dichotomy in relation to the distinction between opinion, knowledge, and ignorance. Furthermore, we will inquire into the nature of the philosopher and the sophist as the subjects that are associated with these ontological and epistemological classifications. Indeed, this approach results from our point of departure, which regards the epistemological, ontological and cosmological stance of Plato as initially political and ethical. Thus, we are to trace the routes that present us the shifting between these discourses and the way in which they are interrelated.

In order to deepen our analysis on the relation between truth, being and the philosopher on the one hand and falsity, seeming and the sophist on the other, we will elaborate on the arguments of the *Sophist*. We will consider the refutation of sophistry by focusing on the conceptual articulation of the notion of non-being (*me on*). In view of this we will try to demonstrate how the concept of non-being undergoes transformation from a logical determination to an ontological determination. Non-being is ontologically determined in terms of *otherness*. In addition, we will try to shed light on the way in which the characterization of the sophist is linked with the problem of non-being.

Thus, in our second chapter entitled “The Question of Ontology”, we will be analyzing the fundamental structures of Platonic ontology with respect to two dialogues, the *Republic* and the *Sophist*. This of course results from the fact that in this chapter our initial aim is to ponder upon the possibility of a negative ontology of evil in Plato. Nonetheless, we are aware that this entails first of all, a clarification on the construction of Platonic ontology.

The last chapter is devoted to the Platonic cosmology with respect to the question of evil. For this we will focus on the *Timaeus*. This last part of our study is

rather autonomous in relation to the former chapters. This is due to the fact that it is exclusively articulated within a cosmological setting with its own peculiar terms and notions. However, as far as its basic conceptual framework and the way in which this framework is set by means of binary structures, it shows affinity both with the *Republic* and the *Sophist*. This last chapter inquires on the possibility of positive evil operative in the structure of the cosmos, which could account for the *evil(s)* of the world. For this, we will examine the corporeal nature of the universe, i.e. the four elements, the Necessity and the Receptacle. These three factors of creation account for the *irrational* character within the cosmos and thus account for the evil that takes place within the world. Irrationality and disorder will be conceived in relation to each other as opposed to rationality and order. Thus, irrationality and disorder will be the terms by means of which we will be speaking of evil. We will conclude that the four elements, the Receptacle or the Necessity can be considered as sources of evil, in the sense that, they account for the evil that takes place in the universe. However, this does not eliminate the fact that they are operating negatively, i.e. their operation is not articulate and intentional. This means that regardless of the fact that these *evil factors* have cosmological necessity they cannot be regarded as positively evil.

CHAPTER II: THE QUESTION OF POLITICS

This chapter of the thesis will be devoted to the articulation of 'evil' within the city (*polis*), i.e. injustice, wrongdoing, ignorance, vice, wickedness, impiety etc. There are two main dialogues that consider the constitution of the city within the Platonic corpus; the *Republic* and the *Laws*. In both of these dialogues we find a similar path in terms of appealing to an ontological-cosmological element in order to ground the political constitution. We will try to trace a conception of evil that functions in accordance with this appeal.

The *Republic* is devoted to the argument that articulates the possibility of governance of justice and goodness within the polity. In this sense, the dialogue in its totality can be considered as a political project, presenting the ways in which justice can be established in a polity. Thus it describes what would be a good and healthy political constitution and how this would be achieved. Yet then, one immediately realizes that this project has already, always assumed an articulation of evil; it has already condemned particular discourses, actions, and regimes as evil. Therefore, in terms of the *Republic,* we will be seeking a negative understanding of evil. The domain of evil in the *polis* will be constituted by injustice, wrongdoing, falsehood and ignorance etc.

When we consider the *Laws* however, in particular the tenth book, we will be able to treat evil positively, since the dialogue is apt for such an attempt. Here we see that evil's existence has been more or less problematized (yet indeed always as to refrain from it, as is the case with the *Republic*), and in this sense it differs from other dialogues of Plato, which do not exclusively consider evil.

The *Republic* and the *Laws* are similar in terms of the way in which they picture the political constitution; they both consider a city wherein *evils* (injustices, wrongdoings, vices, sins etc.), which have contaminated all previous actual states, are ward off and refrained from by legal and ethico-political regulations. Moreover, they both register their account to an ontological-cosmological basis in order to justify their regulations. Their regulations aim at the *utopia* of pure prevention, that is, a political constitution that is cleaned off from evil(s) and stays that way.

As Nightingale[4] points out, quoting from the *Laws* (630-c), the legislator, while making the laws, aims at nothing but the 'highest good', which is also the case in the *Republic*. As she suggests, Aristotle indicates that these two dialogues (*Republic* and *Laws*) constitute a 'distinct genre' in the name of *utopia*. They are rather 'radical constructions', in view of "the best constitution".[5] Yet Aristotle's characterization of these dialogues as utopia, when taken literally, means no place, which bares controversy in relation to Plato in the *Republic*[6]:

> [A]t whatever time the muse of philosophy controls a city, the constitution we've described will also exist at that time, whether it is past, present, or future. Since it is not impossible for this to happen, we are not speaking of impossibilities (*Rep*. 499-d).

This passage as well as similar passages in the *Republic* clearly indicate Plato's conviction that such a constitution is possible to establish, that it is not an utopia in the sense that it has no place. However he is aware of the difficulty to establish such a city (*Rep*.502-c).

Mythical discourse is among the issues raised by both the *Republic* and the *Laws*. It will be crucial for us to ponder upon this problematic for it is related with

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[4] Andrea Nightingale, Writing/Reading a Sacred Text: A Literary Interpretation of Plato's Laws, *Classical Philology*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (Oct. 1993) p. 283.
[5] ibid. 281
[6] We have used Grube's English translation in our study, so all the quotations from here onwards will be from this work. Plato, *Republic*, Trans. by G.M.A Grube, Revised by C.D.C. Reeve, Hackett, 1992.

the question of evil vis-à-vis misunderstanding and falsehood. As we shall see in our analysis of these dialogues, the misunderstanding of the traditional-mythical discourse becomes the locus of the corruption of the youth and thus causes evil within society. The *Republic* considers the status of mythical discourse within the polity beginning with Book II. Mythical discourse is restrained due to its power among children (*Rep.*377-b,c). Does Plato regard mythical discourse as the source of falsehood? Not exactly, we shall dwell on this point as we go forward.

Laws X also provides us with a good example regarding this matter. This particular dialogue is quite important in its articulation of the problem of evil, and at the outset evil is conceived in terms of misunderstanding the traditional-mythical. Here, however, the issue has more to do with a misinterpretation of the mythical discourses by a particular party called *the man of science*. Now we shall move on and consider these two dialogues in relation to the question of evil.

Evil in the *Laws X*[7]

The tenth book of the *Laws* begins in connection with the book immediately before it. Book IX was mostly concerned with criminal law and penalties for various crimes. Now at the beginning of the tenth book a universal principle is posited against all kinds of violations in order to prevent the "evils" the book IX has addressed.[8]

The particular violations or "outrages" the Book X is concerned with are against the gods; whether verbal or tangible, acts of disrespect towards the gods are to be punished. The Athenian delivers admonition against such impiety:

[7] All the quotations from the *Laws* belong to the translation of R. G. Bury, Plato, *Laws Books 7-12*, Loeb Classical Library, 2004.

[8] "No one shall carry or drive off anything which belongs to others, nor shall he use any of his neighbor's goods unless he has gained the consent of the owner, for from such action proceed all the evils above mentioned -past, present and to come." (884-a).

> No one believes, as the laws prescribe, in the existence of the gods has ever yet done an impious deed voluntarily, or uttered a lawless word: he that acts so is in one or other of these three conditions of mind – either he does not believe in what I have said; or, secondly, he believes that the gods exist, but have no care for men; or, thirdly, he believes that they are easy to win over when bribed by offering and prayers (*Laws*, 885-b).

Here we see that law defines belief. Believing according to the prescription of the law prevents disrespect towards the gods. That is, in order to commit an act of sacrilege you either don't believe or believe wrong (not according to the law). This idea seems to be connected with the Socratic dictum "vice is involuntary", which was the argument of Book IX (beginning with 860-d). Vice is involuntary because it is due to ignorance, no one does wrong knowing that it is wrong. This argument now applies to belief. If you are a true believer you cannot disbelieve. However, since belief is ordered by the law, hence regulated by the State, belief becomes rather submission to law. The Athenian regards the question of religion in connection with the well-being of the State: "Next to the cases which concern religion come those which concern the dissolution of polity" (*Laws*, 856-b).

Nevertheless the Athenian is aware that the force of law is neither sufficient nor very successful in order to purify the polity from its non-believers. He needs to give a justification for the existence of the gods. Thus, the main problem of the dialogue is: How do we prove the existence of gods against the non-believers, or rather, how do we persuade them to believe and believe properly?

What is the cause for their disbelief, asks Clinias (in 886-b). Their disbelief is not due to incontinence (i.e. not driven by their passions). The Athenian refers to these men as "bad" (886-a). Here we see a distinction between evil/bad man and incontinent[9] man. This distinction takes us back to book IX where the Athenian

[9] Weakened by their passions and so driven to irreligion (*Laws*,886-b).

indicated three kinds of sins[10] (864-b). The first two kinds of sins are caused by passions and desires, hence incontinence is related with them. The third cause of sins is ignorance. There are two kinds of ignorance, simple form and double form. Double forms is "where the folly is due to the man being gripped not by ignorance, but also by a conceit of wisdom, as though he had full knowledge of things he knows nothing at all about" (863-c). This double form of ignorance is precisely what the Athenian attributes to the non-believers and hence what makes them evil: "a very grievous unwisdom, which is reputed to be the height of wisdom (886-b)".

What is this unwisdom, which *seems* to be a great wisdom? It is the interpretation of the ancient discourses through contemporary theories. The modern discourse of the materialists (men of science) is responsible for driving the young community members to disbelief: "It is rather the novel views of our modern scientists that we must hold responsible as the cause of mischief" (886-d). There is a misinterpretation due to the gap between the traditional and the contemporary discourse:

> We at Athens have accounts preserved in writing… telling about the gods: the oldest of these accounts relate how the first substance of Heaven and all else came into being, and shortly after the beginning they go on to give a detailed theogony, and to tell how, after they were born, the gods associated with one and other. These accounts, whether good or bad for the hearers in other respects, it is hard for us to censure because of their antiquity….Such ancient accounts, however we may pass over and dismiss: let them be told in the way most pleasing to the gods. It is rather the novel views of our modern scientists [materialists] that we must hold responsible as the cause of mischief. [W]hen you and I try to prove the existence of the gods by pointing to these very objects –sun, moon, stars, and earth- as instances of deity and divinity, people who have been converted by these scientists will assert that these things are simply earth and stone… (*Laws*, 886 c-e).

The Athenian is condemning the materialists, the 'modern scientists' for the way in which they misinterpret traditional discourse; they are incapable of making justice to

[10] 1) Passion and fear 2) Pleasure and desires 3) Ignorance

the traditional discourse. Precisely this is what is evil and causes disbelief. There seems to be a similar position with that of the *Republic.* In the *Republic* (books II and III) the fear of misinterpretation of the traditional discourses (mainly those of Homer and Hesiod) seems to be the main reason for their banishment from the polity. The content of the *mythos* can easily be misunderstood. Plato is very well aware of the power of *mythos*;

> [W]ho at his obviously most serious moments tells us his truths under the forms of fictions, and who announces point-blank that the whole subject does not admit of exposition.[11]
>
> [A]nd no one more than Plato was aware of the power for evil or for good that a myth might be.[12]

Both in the *Laws* and the *Republic* the existence of gods and the manner of their existence is a crucial matter; since these dialogues concern the well-being of the city. Can we assert that the source of evil in the polity has a close relation with the issue of religion and religious narrative? It seems to be so.

Now let us return to *Laws X* in order see how the Athenian shifts the discourse. The dialogue had began treating sacrilege as a legal crime, which is within the boundaries of human action. Now, in order to refute the non-believers who are committing the acts of sacrilege the dialogue shifts towards a different dimension (i.e. ontological-cosmological).

In order to refute them, the Athenian delivers the argument of the non-believers or as he calls them 'men of science' (888-e). Thus the dialogue assumes a cosmological/ existential perspective, considering the structure of existence.[13]

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[11] Irwin Edman, Poetry and Truth in Plato, *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 33, No.22, 1936 p. 607.
[12] ibid. p. 608.
[13] Clinias notes this (in 891-d,e) : " I perceive, that we shall be traversing alien ground, outside legislation, if we handle such arguments. But if there is no other way in which it is

Accordingly the status of evil changes, now evil will not be sought in acts of man but rather in the structure of the universe as a cosmological element –if ever there is such an evil.

The argument of the non-believers is as follows: Everything that comes to existence is either caused by nature, art or chance (*Laws*, 888-e). The non-believers consider art to have a lower kind of existence in comparison to nature and chance, for products of art imitate nature (*Laws*, 889-c). Nature and chance are said to be prior to art in origin, for they are considered to be the principles of existence. This is a materialistic approach that treats the concept of nature in terms of bodily elements, such as the first elements of the universe –earth, air, fire and water. And all existence is described by means of the combination of these bodily elements "without the agency of reason, any god or art" (889-c). "As a later product of nature and chance, art comes later." (889-c,d) Furthermore, religion and legislation are both considered to be mostly products of art (889d,e) and thus secondary and inferior.

This seems to trouble the Athenian most, since the authority of law is undermined when legislation as a kind of art is deemed inferior to nature and chance. This threatens law as well as religion, for they are both treated as conventional, deprived of their divine authority and bound to change.

> The first statement, my dear sir, which these people make about the gods is that they exist by art and not by nature, -by certain legal conventions which differ from place to place, according as each tribe agreed when forming their laws(*Laws*,889-e).

The Athenian considers laws as enactments towards corruption, to prevent evil from society, for that, it is crucial that they have to be recognized as unalterable. They cannot be regarded as changing according to legal conventions; they cannot be a matter of dispute. Writing will be the *cure* to keep the laws unaltered. Clinias

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possible for us to speak in concert with truth, as now legally declared, except this way, then in this way, my good sir, we must speak."

maintains that, “legal ordinances when put in writing remain wholly unchanged”(*Laws*,891-a).

In order to refute non-believers the Athenian problematizes the distinction between art and nature. Law and accordingly art should be claimed to be natural or conformable to nature (as stated by Clinias in 890-d). This is done by means of shifting the concept of nature from the materialistic understanding to the understanding that promotes soul as the cause of all existence.

The Athenian claims that it is an “irrational opinion” (891-c) on behalf of the non-believers to regard fire, water, earth and air to be the first of all things and name them as “nature” (*Laws,* 891-c).

> By ‘nature’ they intend to indicate production of things primary, but if soul shall be shown to have been produced first (not fire or air), but soul first and foremost, -it would most truly be described as a superlatively “natural” existence. (*Laws,* 892-c)

What the Athenian wants to assert is that if something should be called nature as the source of all existence, it is not the bodily form but the soul. (*Laws*, 892-c). “Then opinion and reflection and thought and art and law will be prior to things hard and soft and heavy and light” (*Laws*,892-b).

The priority of the soul becomes an important proof for the existence of gods. We should notice that the soul that is spoken of is not the soul of an individual but soul in general; this includes the soul of the universe, since the discussion is of existence in general. Regarding evil, soul is crucial:

> For soul is the cause of things good and bad, fair and foul, just and unjust, and all the opposites, if we are to assume it cause of all things (*Laws*,896-d).

As far as it is indicated above, soul as the cause of good and evil is in terms of soul’s being the cause of all things. We shall now see how this is articulated.

The claim of the Athenian that the soul is the primary cause of all coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be and, therefore, is prior to anything in the form of body is demonstrated in terms of motion. When we are to talk about coming-to-be, there needs to be a kind of motion which by itself causes its own motion and therefore causes other things to move. This is precisely how the Athenian defines soul. “The motion able to move itself.” (*Laws,* 896-a) And since self-moving motion is soul, “soul is identical with the prime origin and motion of what is, has been, and shall be.” (*Laws* ,896-a).

If then the soul is primary and the body secondary, it should follow that “the things of soul also will be older than body” (*Laws*, 896-c). Thus art, law and reason, which are akin to soul, gain a prior position to that of the bodily.

Inquiring into the nature of soul, the Athenian asks about quantity of soul: “One soul, is it, or several?” (*Laws* 896-e).

There are two kinds of souls or rather two aspects of a singular soul: “The beneficent soul and that which is capable of effecting results of the opposite kind” (*Laws,*896-e). This contrary effect of the beneficent is what we are to call evil.

According to Plato, contraries seem to be necessary for motion and change to be possible. And good and evil are described in terms of motions. Evil seems to be necessary for cosmological change, for it is the contrary of the good; in this sense good and evil necessitate each other.

Motion was described as belonging to the soul. There are various kinds of motions of the soul whether bodily or intellectual:

> Soul drives all things in Heaven and earth and sea by its own motions, of which the names are wish, reflection, forethought, counsel, opinion true and false, joy, grief, confidence, fear, hate, love, and all the motions that are akin to these or are prime-working motions (*Laws* 897-a)

We can see that some of the motions of the soul are described as what we call emotions. This can be taken as a reference to the passions, which Plato seems to use as a term to indicate emotions. As we shall see in the later chapters, the *Timaeus* gives an account of the relation of soul and motions as passions. In the *Timaeus* we shall see that passions or emotions are related with the four elements, and in this sense seem to belong to the material rather than the spiritual. However as we have seen above, this is not the case in the *Laws*; it is clearly indicated that motions belong to the soul: "These motions are either ruled by the right and good kind of soul, or the evil soul" (*Laws*, 897-c,d).

> [Evil soul occupies a] motion that is never uniform or regular or in the same place or around or in relation to the same things, not moving in one spot nor in any order or system or rule –will not this motion be akin to absolute unreason. (*Laws*, 898-c).

Here we see that the evil soul is related with irrationality; which is in conformity with the idea that evil is due to ignorance. Conceiving evil in terms of irrationality, i.e. as a lack of reason, is a position that we also encounter in the *Timaeus*. Equating evil with ignorance functions within the ethico-political realm, whereas speaking of evil by means of irrational elements is a discourse used within the cosmological setting. However, as we see in the understanding of evil, the ethico-political and the cosmological accounts support each other. Now let's turn to our main argument.

Are there really two distinct souls or two aspects, or two movements of one soul? This has been a point of controversy among Plato scholars for the text supplies us with both views.

> [I]n conjunction with reason, it[soul] runs aright and always governs all things rightly and happily, and when in converse with unreason, it produces results which are in all respects the opposite (*Laws*, 897-b).

There are two conclusions that can be driven from the above passage. First is that, there is one soul, yet it becomes good or evil due to its relation with reason or unreason. But here we shall not take the term reason as implying a substantial entity, i.e. there is no existing Reason that the soul relates to. It merely implies the soul's rationality or irrationality, that the soul is capable of being both rational and irrational. This view is in line with the *Timaeus*, where the soul is ruled either by its rational part or affected by the passions and driven to irrationality.

Thus the above passage seems to be contradicting our earlier statement that there are two kinds of soul, one good and other evil. This position is more in line with the thought that there is one soul with two aspects.

The other important issue is that the evil element is phrased as an opposition. This was also the case in the first quotation about the *duality* of the soul where the evil soul was defined as "that which is capable of the contrary effect". The description of evil in terms of contrariety seems to emphasize its existence as a contrary effect.

In such a framework, evil as the contrary of the good has a cosmological significance. The cosmological structure is understood in terms of the composition of contrary elements and motions, thus, evil as the contrary of good is required for cosmological change (*Laws*, 897-a) . "Heaven is either ruled by the good soul or its opposite" (*Laws*, 898-c).

The Form of the Good is posited as the ultimate reality (*Republic* 509-b) and goodness is related with order (*Laws* 898-a,b; good soul and orderly motion), as its contrary other, evil is articulated in terms of disorder and folly[14]. Thus in a negative way evil has its part in the ontological-cosmology of the *Laws X*. That is to say, that

[14] "but the bad soul, if it proceeds in a mad and disorderly way" (*Laws*, 897-d)

which is considered to be evil is articulated as the contrary of the good, but has no substantial existence of its own.

Evil in the *Republic*

Now is a good time to move on to the *Republic* wherein this positioning of the Good on top of Plato's ontology takes place. However, rather than jumping ahead onto the sixth Book we would like to proceed by giving a brief account of the problematic of the *Republic* and draw some connections with *Laws X* in terms of the mutual concerns these two dialogues express.

The *Republic* aims at the highest good for the constitution of its polity and thereby ensures justice for the whole; yet in order to do this, as we shall see, politics is based upon an ontological setting. The *Republic* can be read as an attempt of constituting ontology of the Good and positing it as the *paradigm* that will govern the polity. However it can also be read negatively as an attempt to prevent 'evils' from society, by constructing the system/regime that will purify the *polis* from what may become a threat. The *Republic* presents various notions that can be grouped under the title of evil, or rather, it allows us to consider injustice, falsehood, opinion, sophistry, ignorance, wrongdoing etc., as the causes of evil within the polity. In this sense, the philosophical project of the *Republic* can be considered as a theoretical means for the purification of the *polis* from its *diseases*[15].

The *Republic* opens-up as an inquiry into justice; Book I deals with the questions what justice is and if it is beneficial to be just. Yet, beginning with Book II it turns into a project of searching for justice within the polity. It is argued in 368-e that it would be easier to understand what justice is by looking for it in a city rather

[15] The relation between disease and the notion of evil will be considered in the Appendix.

than a single man. However, as we proceed with the dialogue, trying to determine how a just city could be founded, we are encountered with a shifting of the discourse from the ethico-political towards the ontological. This shift can be anticipated as we come along by the end of Book V, where Socrates mentions forms and how they are associated with "actions, bodies, and one another" (*Rep.*476-a). However, here these forms are not yet regarded ontologically (for this we need wait for the Book VI)[16]:

> And the same account is true of the just and unjust, the good and the bad, and all the forms. Each of them is itself one, but because they manifest themselves everywhere in association with actions, bodies, and one and other, each of them appears to be many. (*Rep.*476-a)

The argument regarding the forms (*Rep.* Book V, 476-a,c) is basically developed on the bases of the distinction between particulars and universals, e.g of instances of beautiful things and the beautiful itself. This indication of the distinction between "likeness" [particulars or instances] and "the thing itself" [universals or forms] leads to another fundamental separation between two kinds of power; opinion and knowledge (*Rep.*477-d). Knowledge is said to be an infallible power whereas opinion is a fallible one (*Rep.*477-e). What is more crucial in terms of our subject matter is the assertion that knowledge is concerned with "something that is", whereas ignorance "is of necessity set over what is not" (*Rep.*477-a). This point is important to underline in terms of comparing it with the argument in the *Sophist*. One of the main issues of the *Sophist* is the relation between being and truth and non-being and falsity. Plato, speaks of the forms as the *essences* of things ("the being of each"

[16] Grube and Reeve give a footnote to this passage which refers to Book X 596-a; revealing the use of the term "form": "we customarily hypothesize a single form in connection with each of the many things to which we apply the same name."
Guthrie also suggests that the translation of *eide* as forms here indicates "qualities or even concepts". Guthrie, W.K.C. *A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. V, The Later Plato and the Academy*, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p.98.

*Rep.*507-b), and this is the reason that being has a direct relation with truth, since truth is attained by knowing the forms of things (forms are the being of each thing). By contrast, Plato's understanding of evil as ignorance, wrongdoing or injustice is in tune with the connection he draws between non-being and falsity (in the *Sophist*). It is important for us to further elaborate upon this point. However, we shall postpone this inquiry to our second chapter.

The shifting of the discourse towards an ontological explanation, which begins by the end of Book V, flourishes as we proceed within the sixth book, where the Form of the Good is posited as the First Cause (arche) of everything. Thus goodness, vis-à-vis its ultimate representation in the Form of the Good, becomes the fundamental *determinant* of the order of things (the phenomenal world). "It is of course true that one cannot discuss evil, badness, harshness, madness, and tyranny without tacitly referring to their opposites as good things".[17]

We think that Rosen's indication applies both ways. We would like to examine *evil* within the city with respect to the transition from the ethical-political realm to the ontological. The ontological discourse will posit goodness and justice within the *polis*. Therefore, an articulation of evil becomes rather necessary in order to address its refutation and posit its opposite.

As we had formerly shown, the initial question that leads the argument of the *Republic* is: what justice[18] is (beginning with *Rep.*331-c), and if it is beneficial to be just (*Rep.*347-e). Ultimately, Socrates seems to be referring to happiness while considering the benefit of justice.[19]

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[17] Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Republic/ A Study*, Yale University Press, 2005, p.28

[18] "Unlike their usual equivalents "just" and "justice", the adjective *dikaios* and the noun *dikaiosyné* are often used in a wider sense, better captured by our words "right" or "correct". The opposite, *adikia*, then has the sense of general wrongdoing." Footnote p. 5, Grube & Reeve edition of *Republic*, 1992

[19] "whether a person who has it [justice] is happy or not" (354-c)

Justice is one of the four virtues[20]. As the footnote in Grube's translation indicates; virtue or *arête* is that state or property of the thing that makes it good.[21] Thus there is a connection between good and *arête*; *arête* or virtue makes a thing good. Then, justice as a kind of virtue also has a connection with good. Socrates says, "good people are just and able to do no wrong" (*Rep.*334-d). Here we see an opposition between wrongdoing and justice[22]. Thus injustice is aligned with wrongdoing. We shall see how such oppositions will allow us to regard this text in terms of a binary structure[23]. This is crucial in order to understand what Socrates within the dialogue tries to do.

The main philosophical conflict of the *Republic* lies in the definition of justice. Thrasymachus defines justice as "the advantage of the stronger" (*Rep.*338-c) whereas Socrates wants to refute this understanding. He tries to define justice regardless of who has the power. Thus the problem lies within the relation between justice and power. Socrates takes this relation very seriously. He either has to demonstrate that justice is not the advantage of the stronger or bring justice and power into collaboration. Ultimately, the latter seems to be the road that Socrates pursues. Nevertheless in order to do this he still needs to draw a distinction between justice and injustice, and show that Thrasymachus' position is false, that such an approach culminates in injustice. As Rosen points out, despite their initial controversy, Socrates and Thrasymachus have a mutual conception of justice. They

[20] justice, wisdom, courage and temperance.
[21] It is also indicated here that *arête* exceeds the scope of moral virtue, since it applies to all kinds of things and not merely moral agents, thus excellence sometimes fits better as a translation. Grube and Reeve, *Republic*, 1992, p. 10, 11
[22] This is in line with the footnote of Grube and Reeve; look at above to p. 15
[23] The oppositions that constitute a binary structure in various texts of Plato has been pointed out by Derrida in his work "Plato's Pharmacy".

both argue that justice is not independent of benefit. (Rosen, 2005: 39) Thus, the question of justice and its benefit seems to be inseparable.

In his definition of justice what Thrasymachus means by "the stronger" is the ruler, with his "established rule", including all the laws and regulations, which are to be made to the advantage of the ruler (*Rep.*338-d, 339-a).[24] "Since the established rule is surely stronger"(*Rep.*339-a). "And a law is correct if it prescribes what is to the rulers' own advantage and incorrect if it prescribes what is to their disadvantage" (*Rep.*339-c).

This position reminds us of the non-believers of the *Laws X*, who were claiming that laws were conventional, according to the agreement of each tribe. (*Laws X*, 889-e) The Athenian was trying to refute the unbelievers in the *Laws X*. Now in the *Republic*, Socrates is trying to refute Thrasymachus. Are the two dialogues similar in terms of their method of refutation? The Athenian had refuted the non-believers by changing the meaning of the concept of nature from a materialistic understanding to an understanding that promotes the priority of the soul and thus argued that all that is akin to the soul is natural, which includes laws and all that is considered to be rational. To change the definition or the meaning of a concept was a brilliant philosophical move on the part of the Athenian. What does Socrates do? Socrates tries to employ a similar strategy; he tries to show Thrasymachus that what he calls justice is not justice (this is his main intention). Justice is not the advantage of the stronger; even though this is a common understanding held by the majority of people.

Does he succeed? Socrates tries to convince his listeners and perhaps himself, that individual justice is better than injustice, meaning, that a just person is happier

[24] "In every city there is a ruling group that sets up the laws, and these define what is just." (Rosen, 2005, p.41) "Justice is expressed in laws, and laws are established by the ruling class to its own advantage" (Rosen, 2005, p.41)

than an unjust one. And he takes this matter seriously[25], for he has to show that justice has more benefits than injustice. "What Thrasymachus is now saying –that the life of an unjust person is better than that of a just one –seems to be of far greater importance" (*Rep.*347-e).

But can he, or does he refute Thrasymachus? The answer to this question is both affirmative and negative. Let's first take the negative answer. Socrates cannot give an argument to convince his listeners that the just person is happy. However, this seems to be due to the fact that a just person in an unjust polity cannot be happy. Rosen points out the importance of the relation between individual justice and political justice in the *Republic*: "One of the most difficult questions about justice is whether political justice is the basis for private justice or vice versa. It is the need of the person for justice that leads to the foundation of the city. Once the city comes to existence, it plays a decisive role in modifying the private conception of justice" (Rosen 2005:32).

Individual justice cannot hold without the justice of the whole. Although we shall see that this is the case, Socrates does not utter this beforehand; the reason he gives in constituting his just city is that it would be easier to understand what justice is on a larger scale, something like a city (*Rep.*368-e). Thus he moves on to constitute a polis of justice, where justice is the ruling element, that is, where the just are the stronger.

What about the positive answer to our initial question: Was Socrates able to refute Thrasymachus? Demonstration of this will be the main intention of the dialogue. It is important to notice that the question of justice and accordingly the initial conflict between justice and injustice underlies both the political and the

[25] "He is initially afraid that he cannot refute Thrasymachus…It is not Thrasymachus personally who frightens him but the thesis that might makes right." (Rosen, 2005, p.39-40)

ontological project of the *Republic*. The contrary positions held by Socrates and Thrasymachus build the framework within which the dialogue will be formed; this binary structure will lead us to separate justice from injustice, good from evil or wisdom from ignorance.

Socrates begins his refutation, trying to determine what justice and injustice is. He distinguishes justice and injustice on the basis of the term "outdoing" (*pleonektein*). The unjust person thinks that "he deserves to outdo everyone" whereas the just person "outdoes" people "unlike" himself (*Rep.*349-c). Then he continues by stating that the knowledgeable people would not *outdo* other knowledgeable people. In contrast, the ignorant person would try to *outdo* both the knowledgeable and the ignorant. Here we see that, the just person is associated with the knowledgeable and the unjust person with the ignorant. Socrates continues as follows:

> A knowledgeable person is clever?
> I agree.
> And a clever one is good?
> I agree. (*Rep.*350-b)

In line with the above passage, then, the just person becomes clever and good; on the other hand, the unjust becomes ignorant and bad. Then, a just person is like a clever and a good one, and an unjust is like an ignorant and bad one. (*Rep.*350-c)

The ultimate conclusion of the above argument leads to the formulation: "justice is virtue and wisdom and [that] injustice is vice and ignorance" (*Rep.*350-d). Thus we can see how the separation takes place. Justice, virtue and wisdom is on the one side, and as their opposite, injustice, vice and ignorance on the other side. The former domain will be the domain of goodness, the latter the domain of evil. The city now will be founded so as to praise the former and condemn the latter. Socrates argues that injustice causes civil war and hatred among the members of the city,

whereas justice causes “friendship and a sense of common purpose”. (*Rep.*351-d) Accordingly it is argued that injustice results in separation and disharmony. This is true for both individuals and political establishments. (*Rep.*351-d 352-a)

Virtue is related with function. We had noted before that virtue was a kind of excellence, that which makes the thing good. This seems to be possible when the thing functions properly. “[W]hether the function of each thing is what it can alone do or what it does better than anything else” (*Rep.*353-a). “Does each thing to which a particular function is assigned also have a virtue?” (*Rep.*353-b)

The justice of the city will be established on the basis of this formulation of virtue as an excellence in functioning. To function properly is related with virtue whereas functioning badly related with vice. (*Rep.*353-c) It seems that virtue and vice are not separate modes of the soul but two opposed moments of an ability to function. That is, virtue and vice can be understood as the opposite poles of a state of functioning. “[W]hether anything that has a function performs it well by means of its own peculiar virtue and badly by means of its vice?” (*Rep.*353-c)

In connection, a disease is understood as a kind of vice because it prevents the living organism from functioning properly.[26]

Until now we spoke of a thing’s virtue and in connection to this of a thing’s function. Socrates also speaks of a soul’s virtue (*Rep.*353-d). Justice is soul’s virtue, whereas injustice vice. The soul functions well when it has its “peculiar virtue”, and functions badly when it has vice. “Now, we agreed that justice is a soul’s virtue, and injustice its vice?” (*Rep.*353-e)

It seems this peculiar virtue is soul’s justice and soul’s injustice is its vice. Thus soul that functions well is a just soul, whereas soul that functions badly is an

[26] Further analysis is given on the relation between vice and disease in the Appendix.

unjust soul. “Doesn’t it follow, then, that a bad soul rules and takes care of things badly and that a good soul does all these things well?” (*Rep.*353-e)

With the above indication we realize that goodness and justice culminate in living well, on the other hand vice and injustice culminate in living badly. The ultimate conclusion of this of course is that “a just person is happy, and an unjust wretched.” (*Rep.*354-a). Thus Socrates makes his point about the benefit of justice vis-à-vis happiness. However, this, as Socrates realizes, does not provide the definition of justice. It merely shows if it is “a kind of vice and ignorance or a kind of wisdom or virtue” (*Rep.*354-b). Therefore the first book ends in *aporia* due to the fact that the initial question that set the arguments is not answered.

It was important to focus our attention on the first book in order to present the development of the initial problem that is to lead to the construction of the just city. Moreover, in line with this, we were also able to see how the fundamental concepts of the dialogue were separated in a dialectical manner, that is, in terms of similarity and dissimilarity between them. This separation is followed by assessment; one party is valued the other not. Justice, goodness, wisdom and virtue are regarded all alike, i.e. understood in relation to each other and valued. As their opposites, injustice, vice, ignorance and bad (or evil) are all treated as negative and devalued.

It is important to underline that Socrates’ struggle is against the understanding of the majority. Thrasymachus represents the majority; his argument is an example of common sense.[27] Furthermore, it is not merely he that Socrates needs

[27] Rosen stresses this point:
“The many argue that what counts is the appearance of justice, not the reality. So long as we are not caught and punished, it is better to be unjust than just.” (Rosen, p.62)
“The many regard injustice as good and justice as bad by nature.” (Rosen, p. 64)

to convince; Glaucon too takes the opinion of the majority seriously. "[G]laucon is himself tempted by the views of the many. In the actual city, these views are of great importance to someone who aspires to political prominence." (Rosen, 2005: 62)

At this level it is perhaps more appropriate to regard Socrates' method of refutation as persuasion. And assessment of the concepts plays an important role in Socrates' method. For example, despite its benefit, he posits justice to be valued for itself.

> Where do you put justice?
> I myself put it among the finest goods, as something to be valued by anyone who is going to be blessed with happiness, both because of itself and because of what comes from it. (*Rep.*357-e)

Thus he is trying to define the concepts in relation to their value. That is, to be able to regard something as good in itself means to attribute that thing a value independent of its benefit; the above passage shows us this distinction. Thus Socrates is offering an understanding whereby the thing itself and the benefit that can be derived from it can be discerned. We think of this as a crucial philosophical move to be underlined.

When we were considering the *Laws X* we had drawn a connection with the *Republic* on the question of myth and mythological discourse. Now we would like to say more things about this issue, since beginning with the second book of the *Republic* this matter becomes crucial. One of the main problems with *mythos* is that these stories picture gods as unjust in their judgments about humans. Moreover, they claim that the gods can be bribed with sacrifices. (*Rep.*363-c,365-a) And the problem is common with the *Laws X*; the misguiding effect of such discourses among the

young. As a result, disrespect towards public religion among the members of the community, that is to say, the articulation of false belief within the majority.

> When all such sayings about the attitudes of gods and humans to virtue and vice are so often repeated, Socrates, what effect do you suppose they have on souls of young people? (*Rep.*365-a)

As above indicated, *mythos* (in the form of theogonies) has a strong effect on the souls of the young. This is due to its power of persuasion. We had formerly mentioned the justice and injustice of the soul. When the souls are affected by such discourses that promote injustice, then they are inclined towards injustice. This is why Plato attributes great importance to the role of education with respect to the souls of the young. Education becomes a fundamental aspect of justice.

Adeimantus asks Socrates to demonstrate how justice is better than injustice, not theoretically but so as it can be seen in practice. This leads the way to the forming of the city.

The analogy between individual justice and justice of a city will be the departure point, a point which the dialogue will constantly refer to.

> Perhaps, then, there is more justice in the larger thing, and it will be easier to learn what it is. So, if you're willing, let's first found put what sort of thing is in a just city and afterwards look for it in the individual…(*Rep.*368-e)

After the construction of the city, the question of *muthos* is once again brought up. It is argued that famous stories (those of Homer and Hesiod) should be censured even if they were true, for the young would not be able to discern what is true from what is false in them (*Rep.*377 to 379).

The young can't distinguish what is allegorical from what isn't, and the opinions they absorb at that age are hard to erase and apt to become unalterable. For

these reasons, then, we should probably take the utmost care to insure that the first stories they hear about virtue are the best ones for them to hear. (*Rep.*378-d,e)

Socrates describes the kind of stories that should be told in the city. “The patterns on which poets must base their stories” (*Rep.*379-a), i.e. the patterns of the stories about theology and gods, are to be determined by the founders of the city. For example, gods must be described as good. (*Rep.*379-b) And since, “nothing bad be the cause of anything bad” (*Rep.*379-b), gods cannot be the cause of bad things. “The good isn’t the cause of all things, then, but only of good ones; it isn’t the “cause of bad ones” (*Rep.*379-b).

The conclusion is, then, that gods are only the causes of good things. The gods do not cause bad things that happen to humans. (*Rep.*379-c) Furthermore, all these indications are considered as laws to be obeyed in the just city. (*Rep.*380-c) Thus it is forbidden in the just city to attribute to the divine any part on the existence of evil.

“[B]ut we must find some other cause for the bad ones, not a god.” (*Rep.*379-c) This perhaps is one of the crucial remarks that permit us to consider Plato at the outset of the problem of evil. He is aware that evil occurs in the world, yet he wishes that the divine realm be exempt from any evil that takes place within the world.

We would like to reconsider what Plato puts forward in *Laws X*. Like the *Republic*, the *Laws X* regarded the question of evil in relation to theology. In both of these dialogues the traditional mythologies as the locus of theological discourse are discussed. In the *Laws X* it is argued that they are misinterpreted when read in the light of modern materialism. In the *Republic* they are to be censured and recreated in a form that would be adequate to the understanding that the divine is only the cause of good within the world. To refresh our memory let us remember that *Laws X*

overcame the problem of evil by describing two kinds of souls, or two aspects of one soul; one beneficent and the other capable of causing the opposite effect (*Laws X* 896-e). When the movement is disorderly and distraught it means that bad soul is leading the universe. Thus in this explanation the goodness and badness of the soul is according to the quality of the motion. The cosmological tendency to goodness or its opposite was a matter of the kind of motion the universe was led by. Such an understanding of evil on the cosmological level provides an explanation without making reference to the realm of the divine. How does the *Republic* solve this issue of evil? We will touch upon this issue in our next chapter, in relation to the *Sophist*.

CHAPTER III: QUESTION OF ONTOLOGY

The first chapter left us with a question: How does the *Republic* solve the problem of evil? The account of evil that we would like to consider in this chapter, extends beyond the *Republic* and can be gathered from all those dialogues involving Plato's ontology. Indeed, this suggests that the account of evil will be given from an ontological standpoint. Then, we could phrase the aim of this chapter as an inquiry into the ontology of evil. The reason we have chosen the *Republic* and the *Sophist* is that they offer the fundamental tenets of Platonic ontology. Thus they provide us with the textual material to trace the negative ontology of evil in Plato's philosophy.

The name of the previous chapter indicated that it concerned politics, i.e. politics as the means of constituting a *logos* of the polity; politics as the means of presenting a *logos* for the *polis*. Our present chapter, in accordance with its ontological inquiry will also contribute to the question of politics. In the following lines we will explain how.

We would like to follow a pattern that will relate the question of ontology with that of politics. The transcendental shift[28] that is to take place in book VI of the *Republic* will be treated as an attempt to construct the *polis* with regard to the ontology of the good. In other words, positing the ontology of the good will be treated as a philosophical attempt in view of politics. Accordingly, in this chapter we would also like to consider the link between the political and the ontological discourse.

[28] What we mean by the transcendental shift is the shifting of the discourse towards transcendental ontology. This begins in Book VI (505) where Socrates speaks of the Form of the Good. This is the first time in the *Republic* that the Forms are treated ontologically.

Where does the *Sophist* stand with regard to this task? We believe that the *Sophist* provides an onto-logical explanation that could contribute to the utmost aim in the *Republic*, which can be summarized as the establishment of goodness and truth within the city. Indeed, the *Sophist* does not relate itself to the *polis*. Nonetheless, it provides the theoretical ground that will distinguish being from not-being, truth from falsehood, and the sophist from the philosopher. Regardless of the significance of these distinctions concerning the separation of *good* from *evil* and thereby supporting the philosophical agenda of the *Republic*, these notions, and the way in which they are interrelated play a crucial role in Plato's ontology. Accordingly, if we are to investigate Plato's ontology of evil or rather the possibility of such an ontology of evil, we are obliged to take the *Sophist* into consideration as it provides a detailed analysis of the fundamental concepts of Platonic ontology.

Consequently, what we are aiming at is the conceptual analysis of the *Sophist* together with the books V and VI of the *Republic*. This will enable us to think through a negative conception of evil that is articulated in terms of lack or deprivation of being. This negative conception of evil will be derived from the metaphysical status of the phenomenal world. We are encouraged after Cherniss to consider the phenomenal world as negatively evil.[29] We would like to seek further into this position by a parallel reading of the *Republic* and the *Sophist*.

Cherniss uses the term 'negative evil' to indicate the phenomenal world, which is a derivative of the transcendental realm of Forms and in this sense lacking

[29] Harold Cherniss, "The Sources of Evil According to Plato, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 98, No.1, 1954.
Guthrie is in agreement with Cherniss in this, he refers to Cherniss on this matter in the section on the problem of evil in his book: *A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. V, The Later Plato and the Academy*, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

reality or being[30]. He argues that evil as negative evil 'is' already intrinsic in the phenomenal world, since the latter is populated by what Plato sees as 'copies' or 'semblances'. As Cherniss states, the very idea of copy or semblance implies some kind of a lack or deprivation; the copy is not as real as the 'realities' that it is the copy of. This is the sense in which the correlation between evil, lack and being is formed; phenomena are 'evil' in the sense that they lack being.[31]

> So all the phenomenal world is always involved in what may be called 'negative evil', since it is a derogation of reality, the degree of deviation from the original which at the very least is implied in the existence of a copy or reflection. (Cherniss 1954: 24)

The sensible-intelligible opposition is at work in the relation of originals (archetypes) and copies. Things in the phenomenal world (*phainomena*) as copies are sensible. In order to exist, copies entail body and thus become sensible. On the other hand, the originality of the eternal beings (Forms) goes through their intangible character, they are purely and exclusively intelligible. Therefore, the sensible-intelligible opposition is constituted in relation to the copy-original opposition.

In Cherniss' term 'negative evil', 'evil' refers to the derogation or lack of being/reality. And this lack seems to be connected with sensibility. Since that which distinguishes a copy from the original is the sensible-intelligible opposition, the copy is always sensible and thus bodily. Yet this lack due to body is necessary, since it stimulates within things a striving towards the Form of the Good. That is, this state of deprivation in the being of things supplies the condition in which things desire to be

[30] Plato often uses 'to be real' and 'to be' interchangeably. G.E.L. Owen notes this link between 'to be' and 'to be real' in his article "Plato on Not-Being" in *Plato*, ed. Gail Fine, Oxford University Press, 2000, p.418

[31] In the *Sophist* the issue of non-being (*me on*) is taken in relation to falsehood, however this would be a different kind of 'negative evil', not a metaphysical one. However there seems to be a significant relevance in the broader picture, which we will try to show in this chapter.

non-lacking, i.e. good or excellent.[32] This is the negative sense in which 'evil' is necessary.

Now that we have given a brief account of Cherniss' understanding of negative evil and the framework within which he speaks, we will begin by looking into the books V and VI of the *Republic* and draw a connection with the problematic of the *Sophist*. Founding ourselves upon these two dialogues we would like to dwell upon the notion of copy or likeness.

Towards the Ontology of the Good: *Republic V*

The last few pages of the book IV are devoted to the nature of the soul, the human soul, as the locus of justice and other virtues (as well as vices). In this sense, the agenda, which was set in the earlier part of the dialogue is still at hand: to inquire into the nature of justice. Yet because it was difficult to investigate what justice is by appealing to individuals (it was rather hard to see things in small size), Socrates attempted to hypothesize a just city in order to have a broader picture of what justice was. Now we find in book IV that Socrates turns back to investigate individual justice vis-à-vis the soul, thus he reverts the direction of the inquiry from the constitution of the just city towards the just soul. That is, the tripartite character of the just city[33] is linked to the tripartite character of the soul. The question is not that of precedence but rather why he constitutes this linkage between the individual soul and the city. Why is this important? One reasonable answer is that, by this linkage he

[32] This desire to be excellent or to gain *arête* applies to both inanimate things and humans. However in the case of humans the process is more complicated since we cannot conceive the human condition by merely appealing to ontological necessity, and Plato doesn't either; in that case there would be no need for education or morality, yet the endless struggle within the human soul shows us otherwise.

[33] The just city is established by "meddling and exchange between these three classes" (434-b). The three classes are the money-making, the auxiliary and the guardians. What makes the city just is that these classes each do their work. (434-c)

guarantees that justice is same for all men; that it does not differ in relation to individual inclination. For, the analogy between the city and the soul in terms of their tripartite character suggests that justice is bound to similar patterns and proceedings in both entities. Thus, the individual soul has a direct relation with society. The being of society is linked with the being of the soul. Socrates says:

> Well, then, is the justice in us at all indistinct? Does it seem to be something different from what we found in the city?
> It doesn't seem so to me. (*Rep.*442-d)

Socrates may be implying here that justice is familiar to our souls because we know it from the city, or better still, *we can know it from the city*. It is as if the city is to teach us what justice is; we will be able to understand what justice is by living within justice, i.e. in a just city. This we believe is a philosophical as well as a political suggestion of Plato and in this sense the *Republic* is both a philosophical and a political text. His *Seventh Letter* supports this view:

> But as far as action was concerned, I kept waiting for favorable moments and finally saw clearly that the constitutions of all actual cities are bad and that their laws are almost beyond redemption without extraordinary resources and luck as well. Hence I was compelled to say in praise of the true philosophy that it enables us to discern what is just for a city or an individual in every case and that the human race will have no respite from evils until those who are really and truly philosophers acquire political power or until, through some divine dispensation, those who rule and have political authority in cities become real philosophers (324-b, 326-b)[34]

Our main question is then: How does this politico-philosophical agenda go through the mediation of ontology? And how does the ontological account establish the "respite from evils"? Such a reading of Plato emphasizing the philosophical task as prevention of *evil* and regarding the ontology of the good from there on, is very much illuminated by Adi Ophir. Ophir's phenomenological investigation in his

[34] Cited from the Introduction part of the *Republic* by G.M.A Grube, Revised by C.D.C. Reeve, Hackett, 1992

Order of Evils[35] tries to constitute an ontology of morals that is attentive towards the evils of the world. He thus suggests an approach to morality through the ontology of evil. Our question then is: Can we think of Plato as a thinker of morality through the ontology of evil? In order to answer this question we will have to investigate how Plato's ontology of evil is negative and to be able to do this, we will need to inquire into how his ontology of the good is positive.

First we would like to give a broader picture of the Platonic ontology and locate the problem. We shall begin by the *Republic*.

> Isn't this dreaming: whether asleep or awake, to think that a likeness is not a likeness but rather the thing itself that it is like? (*Rep.*476-c).

This passage is one of the examples of how Plato issues the copy-original problem[36]. He posits a distinction between opinion and knowledge in order to define the former in relation to 'likeness' (copy) and the latter in relation to 'the thing itself that it is like' (original) and thereby aligns the original with truth and the copy with opinion. The terms like, copy and original refer to the distinction between the *phainomena* and *eide* (i.e. the Forms, the real beings; *ta ontos onta*). Copies are the instances of the originals, i.e. the Forms. Such terms as 'likeness' and 'that which is the likeness of' are the terms he uses in reference to this copy-original distinction.

From the epistemological point of view the distinction is between opinion and knowledge. This is indeed related to the distinction between the Forms and the *phainomena* since the objects of knowledge and the objects of opinion differ in terms of their ontological locations. The famous 'divided line', which articulates this

[35] Ophir, Adi. The Order of Evils, Towards an Ontology of Morals, Zone Books, 2004

[36] We are aware that it is too early to speak of a copy-original problem at the outset of our analysis, since the aim of the analysis will be to show how such a distinction is established. In this sense to speak with the assumption of such a binary structure can be regarded as a prejudgment, yet with our best effort we will show that this is not a *given* for us and indicate step by step how it is constructed.

ontological separation between the realm of the Forms and the phenomenal realm, will be issued in Book VI.

Likenesses or copies, namely, that which constitute the phenomenal world, are the objects of opinion, however their being, i.e. the Forms are objects of knowledge. This will be further analyzed.

Opinion (*doxa*) is defined as a power (*dynamis*) between truth and falsehood; opinion carries within itself a possibility towards both truth and falsity because it is an "intermediate" state of *knowledge*, whereas knowledge (*episteme*) is defined only in terms of truth. Yet the danger with opinion is that it can be manifested as truth. Plato will argue that this is what the sophists do: to present likeness as a way to truth.[37] This suggests that, opinion is the only form of truth. This position is founded upon the idea that there is no absolute truth. This is precisely why Plato wants to refute the sophists. The following passage shows Socrates' explanation of opinion as being placed between ignorance and knowledge:

> Then, as knowledge is set over what is, while ignorance is of necessity set over what is not, mustn't we find an intermediate between knowledge and ignorance to be set over what is intermediate between what is and what is not, is there is such a thing? (*Rep.*477-a)

Above passage reveals the link between epistemology and ontology. That which is between knowledge and ignorance is related with that which is between 'what is' and 'what is not'. Thus, the nature of the *thing* is linked with the nature of the *knowledge*. 'What is' refers to that which can be known; meaning the Forms. 'What is not' is that which cannot be known; meaning that which does not exist. The Forms, as the *being* of things, are the true/real *beings*. The likenesses, that is, the copies, the things of the

[37] Saligman notes Plato's disagreement with the sophistic position; known to be developed mostly by Gorgias and Protagoras. He introduces the latter's position as: "Seeming is not an aberration from being, but being is a function of seeming." Saligman, Paul. *Being and Not-Being /An Introduction to Plato's Sophist*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1974, p. 8

phenomenal world, are known by means of their *participation* in the Forms and what can be known about them is their *being* (their Forms). However, what is not essential to the thing, what is accustomed to change cannot be known absolutely but remain as an opinion. What is the object of opinion?

Socrates articulates the copy-original distinction vis-à-vis the example of 'beautiful things' and ' the beautiful itself'. (*Rep.*476-c) The beautiful things become beautiful by participating in the 'beautiful itself', i.e. Form of Beauty. In this sense, beautiful things are instances or the copies of the beautiful itself:

> But someone who, to take the opposite case, believes in the beautiful itself, can see both it and the things that participate in it and doesn't believe that the participants are it or that it itself is the participants… (*Rep.*476-c)

The philosopher is the one who can distinguish the beautiful itself from the beautiful things and this is why *he knows the truth*, whereas the others (the lovers of sights and sounds) who mistake the instances of beautiful things for the beautiful itself, do not know but they opine.

> So we'd be right to call his thought knowledge, since he knows, but we should call the other person's thought opinion, since he opines? (*Rep.*476-d)

These distinctions are important in terms of two occasions, which are related to each other. First, vis-à-vis these distinctions, truth or knowledge gains an absolute character. Moreover, philosophy is defined as the path to achieve this truth. The relation between truth and philosophy will be associated with the justice of the city and the soul. The task to establish this truth within the city -the truth of the city being justice and goodness- will be given to the philosopher, since he is the guide to truth and goodness he shall be given the right to rule. (*Rep.*484-b,c) This is how the political problem becomes a problem of ontology and solved therein.

Socrates argues that philosophers are distinct from those people called 'lovers of sights and sounds'. Yet the latter "are *like* philosophers"(*Rep.*475-e). In this sense, -i.e. to be like philosophers- they can be related with the sophists.[38] The sophists pretend to know the truth but fail to do so; they too, merely opine.

> Then it is a sort of knowledge based upon mere opinion that the sophist has been shown to possess about all things, not true knowledge. (*Sophist*, 233-c)

The above passage is an example of how the Athenian condemns the sophists in the *Sophist*. As we can see the sophists too are said to be having opinions and not knowledge. Access to knowledge is reserved for the philosopher. We would like to call attention to the dichotomy between the philosopher and the lovers of sights and sounds (or the sophists). In the *Republic* this dichotomy operates in order to justify the philosopher's claim to political power. It is important to notice that the justification for ruling the city is given in relation to the status of knowledge. The philosopher has a right to rule because he is wiser then all other man.[39]

> The lovers of sights and sounds like beautiful sounds, colors shapes, and everything fashioned out of them, but they are unable to see and embrace the nature of the beautiful itself. (*Rep.*476-b)

There are few people who would be able to reach the beautiful itself and see it by itself (*Rep.*476-b)

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[38] We are not sure of the affinity between the 'lovers of sights and sounds' and the sophists, and thus we shall be careful not to equate these two kinds of men. We can perhaps separate them by the way in which they are treated. Grube and Reeve indicate in the footnote on 476-e that Socrates tries to persuade the lovers of sights and sounds; that he needs to convince them by his arguments. By contrast, as we shall see, the Athenian in the *Sophist* uses argumentation to refute the position of the sophists; he is not using the method of persuasion. It is as if the *Republic* aims to educate these *ignorant* men, whereas the *Sophist* condemns them as being *evil*, i.e. ignorant in the double sense. (The distinction between simple and double form of ignorance is issued in the first chapter regarding *Laws X* and also in the Appendix regarding the *Sophist*)

[39] We will not here inquire into how philosophers become kings. What we are interested in however is how the philosopher unites the political, epistemological and ontological in his being. For this we will subsequently elaborate on his objects of knowledge, i.e. the Forms.

Thus, the dichotomy between the philosopher and the lovers of sights and sounds is interrelated with that of copy and original; this is due to the fact that the epistemological and the ontological realms are connected. Let's now move on to reveal the nature of the latter dichotomy: what is copy and what is original? Or what is 'likeness' and 'the thing itself that it is like'? Socrates gives a definition of copy (or likeness):

> [I]f something could be shown, as it were, to be and not to be at the same time, it would be intermediate between the purely is and what in every way is not. (*Rep.*478-d)
> [A]pparently, then, it only remains for us to find what participates in both being and not being.. (*Rep.*478-d,e)

As Socrates indicates, likeness or copy is both 'is' and 'is not', that is, it participates in being and non-being. In what way does likeness participate in being and in what way in non-being? The answer to this question will reveal the ontological status of phenomenal things. In what sense do they exist and in what sense do they lack being?

The definitions of opinion and copy are related. Opinion had been defined as in between knowledge and ignorance. We see above that copy -or 'the opinable' as Socrates calls it (*Rep.*479-d)- is defined as something in between being and non-being. This suggests that the epistemological status of *knowledge* and the objects of *knowledge* are related to each other by means of their definition. Both of the passages speak of an ontological status that 'is' and 'not is' at the same time, or in other words, that which 'participates in both being and not-being'. We have to explore how the phenomenal, the copy, the likeness, whatever it may be called, is defined in relation to both being and not-being. Indeed, in order to do this we need to clarify our understanding of being and not-being.

Here we conclude our account on the *Republic* and move on to the *Sophist* in order to get a better understanding of being and non-being and what their relation to likeness is. This investigation will enable us to have a deeper understanding of Plato's point of view with respect to the sophists and their position concerning the copy-original dichotomy; consequently reveal why Plato is so eager to refute them. The inquiry into the nature of copy or likeness will then lead us to the original; the thing itself, namely, the essences; the Forms; and ultimately to the Form of the Good. This will be the conclusive part of our present chapter, where the relation of goodness and being in contrast to copy and deprivation-of-being will be shown.

Being and Not-Being: The Onto-logical Analysis of the *Sophist*

The *Sophist* is a dialogue that questions the nature of the sophist. The Stranger leading the dialogue is from the Eleatic School, i.e. the Parmenidean tradition. He has found various definitions for sophist by means of the method of *diaresis*[40].

In relation to our former argument regarding likeness in the *Republic* we would now like to focus on the distinction the Stranger makes between likeness and appearance. This distinction is made in the course of defining the sophist as imitator of realities.(*Sop.* 235-a) Imitation is the activity of image-making art. (*Sop.* 235-b,c,d) Hence, this suggests that the image-making art is how the sophist imitates realities. There are two kinds of image-making art. And the distinction between appearance and likeness is drawn in terms of the art they are placed within. *Phainomenon* is the word used for appearance; produced appearance is *phantasma* and the art that produces appearances is characterized as *phantastiké.* (*Sop.* 236-b,c)

[40] Method for seeking definitions by means of dividing into classes.

Eikona is the word used for likeness and *eikastiké* is the art of likeness-making. *Phantastike* and *eikastike* are the "two forms of image-making art" (*Sop.* 236-c). The question that follows is: in which of the classes the sophist is to be placed? The answer is not obvious. The sophist is characterized as "very difficult to keep in sight" (*Sop.* 236-d) and hence "it is hard to track him" (*Sop.* 236-d). What happens next is that the dialogue shifts into an ontological discourse that investigates the nature of non-being. How does this happen? The Stranger says:

> We are really, my dear friend, engaged in a very difficult investigation; for the matter of appearing and seeming , but not being, and of saying things but not true ones- all this is now and always has been very perplexing. (*Sop.* 236-e)

This passage associates the question of the sophist with that of non-being and this is why the inquiry into the nature of the sophist shifts towards an inquiry into the nature of non-being. Appearing and seeming are distinguished from being and are linked with saying false things and accordingly with non-being. Thus the sophist is thought in relation to the matter of appearing and seeming and this is linked with the inquiry of non-being.[41] This suggests that appearing and seeming is conceived in terms of not-being vis-à-vis falsehood.[42]

We had formerly indicated that the sophistic position is a negative radicalization of the Parmenidian position. We shall now see how this is achieved and hence explain how the association between the sophist and non-being is constituted.

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[41] Saligman notes this: "Similarly the Sophist creates semblances [phantasmata] in discourse, spoken images that seem to be true but cannot stand up to the facts encountered in actual life (234 d-e). What the Sophist produces in his discourse appears to be (*phainestai*), seems to be (*dokein*) but is really not (*me einai*)." Saligman op.cit. p. 13

[42] It is crucial to notice that this relation is very much linked with where we left off in the *Republic*; the relation between opinion, likeness (copy) and lovers of sights and sounds.

The question that initiates the shift towards an ontological inquiry involves a conflict with the Parmenidian position, i.e. the inability of falsehood or inconceivability of non-being:

> [H]ow a man is to say or think that falsehood really exists and in saying this not be involved in contradiction.
> Why?
> This statement [falsehood really exists] involves the bold assumption that non-being exists, for otherwise falsehood could not come into existence. But the great Parmenides.. always protested against this and constantly repeated both in prose and in verse: "Never let this thought prevail, saith he, that non-being is" (*Sop.* 237-a).

In the passage above the term falsehood refers to non-being. Falsehood taken as non-being, due to its very definition, cannot exist. The contradiction emerges from the definition of falsehood as non-being. Falsehood is a logical determination. However, being can be understood both as a logical and as an ontological determination. With respect to the above definition the term non-being is used as a logical category, that is, to indicate non-existence of something. The difficulty of apprehending the meaning of this passage is due to its equation of non-being and falsehood. With reference to the above passage Parmenides' position can be summarized as: it is a logical contradiction to indicate that falsehood is.

As we move on through the dialogue the reference to being and non-being will change from a logical determination to an ontological determination. This will be done by means of the refutation of the Parmenidian dictum. The Stranger will show the possibility of falsehood. This will be an important achievement since this will enable the condemnation of the sophists as speakers of falsehood.

Both the Parmenidian and the sophistic position are based on the understanding that there is no such a thing as falsehood, and in this sense non-being does not exist. The former argues that there is no falsehood because there is only

truth; on the contrary the latter argue that there is no such a thing as absolute truth, but every appearance and seeming is true, that is, relatively true. With regard to Parmenides and his followers there is only being, and being is in unity and being is equated with truth. Within this framework there is no room for falsehood, difference, or even movement for that matter. In this sense Parmenides falls short of explaining generation. Plato is aware of this. Thus the *Sophist* tries to find a way out by refuting the Parmenidian position on two occasions; first by accounting for the possibility of falsehood and accordingly refuting the relativist position of the sophists. Secondly, the dialogue explains generation by means of otherness. The conception of non-being is re-thought in terms of otherness.

The difficulty in indicating the nature of non-being is similar to the difficulty in indicating the nature of the sophist. The Stranger implies that the sophist has hidden himself *under* non-being. "[T]he sophist has in most rascally fashion hidden himself in a place we cannot explore" (*Sop.* 239-c).

This passage turns the argument once again towards the sophist. His art is "of making appearances" (*Sop.* 239-d) or in other words "we call him an image-maker" (*Sop.* 239-d). The question then is: What is an image? Image is "another such thing fashioned in the likeness of the true one"(*Sop.* 240-b) Thus image itself is not true, but one like the true. And what he means by true is "that which really is" (*Sop.* 240-b) But then, "that which is like" does not really exist. (*Sop.* 240-b) No, "that which is like" exists, but not truly:

> Then what we call a likeness, though not really existing, really does exist?
> Not-being does seem to have got into some such entanglement with being, and it is very absurd. (*Sop.* 240-c)

Hence, it becomes evident that the conception of likeness is associated with non-being. Furthermore, non-being has left its logical domain and gained an ontological dimension. Non-being is thought in terms of likeness. Another perplexing issue is the distinction between appearance and likeness or *phantasma* and *eikon*. And how they differ in their relation to non-being. The difference between *phantasma* and *eikon* seems to be of their imitation of realities (the original). Likenesses are "exact copies", whereas appearances are not truly in view of the original but are "images that seem to be beautiful but are not like the original".[43] In this sense the sophist is more of a creator of appearances than likenesses.

> When, talking about appearance, we say that he deceives and that his art is an art of deception, shall we that his art is an art of deception, shall we say that our mind is misled by his art to hold a false opinion, or what shall we say? (*Sop.* 240-d)

As indicated, false opinion is defined as the deception of the sophist, who by making appearances[44], which seem to be true but are actually not, deceives people. The falsity of his thinking lies in the assumption that "things which are not at all, in some sense are" (*Sop.*240-e). The "things which are not" the Athenian refers to here are the appearances. This means that "they are not" in the sense that they are not realities (original). Thus the sophist is asserting that there is no falsity by treating appearances not as false. Moreover, since he does not distinguish appearance from realities, he is also asserting that there are no such things as realities. "And does it not also think that things which certainly are, not at all?" (*Sop.*240-e).

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[43] Saligman, op. cit. p. 12,13

[44] Saligman notes that the images that the Athenian mentions, whether appearances or likeness, are limited to discourse: "Readers may be reminded that the images with which we are here concerned are spoken images (Sop.240 a). Saligman op. cit. p.18
This indication of course problematizes the link between copies as sensible and copies as spoken words, suggesting that, with regard to the *Sophist*, we must be attentive not to apply the description of the copies/images to the phenomenal world.

Thus, in order to refute the sophists the Athenian has to claim that "falsehood exists in opinions and words" (*Sop.*241-a,b) However, to assert this is not "attributing being to not-being" (*Sop.* 241-b). In order to prove this, namely, that the assertion of the existence of falsity is not attributing being to non-being, he will change the definition of non-being. He will not define non-being in terms of falsity but define it in terms of otherness. The association of non-being with otherness will culminate in the "entanglement" of non-being with being. (Saligman, 1974: 18) We shall not go further into the detailed analysis of how this is achieved, which would exceed the limits of this section. We would like to end this section by Saligman's remark on the relation between the *Sophist* and the *Republic* in terms of the question of copies or images and their association with being and non-being. He draws attention to how these two dialogues can be related and how they need to separated:

> A word needs to be added to differentiate the union of being and not-being which is here in question from the one which Plato invoked for sensibles in the *Republic*. Images as spoken of in the *Sophist* are not like sensible things, constituted by an unknowable flux (assimilated to not-being) and forms (being) in which they participate. They posses being *qua* what they are (viz. images) and not-being *qua* what they are not (viz. the originals of which they are copies). But there is also a significant similarity. Both the objects of opinion in the *Republic* and the spoken images in the *Sophist* represent a *tertium quid* between the two horns of the Parmenidian dilemma.
> There are no degrees of reality in the *Sophist.* There are forms, things, states of affairs, and there are also images, each of them having real being as what they are. (Saligman, 1974: 19)

The Relation of Goodness and Being: *Republic VI*

Cherniss' claim of treating the phenomenal world as negatively evil is derived from the idea that true beings (the Forms) are related to goodness. Main references to this idea are issued in the sixth book of the *Republic,* where Socrates speaks of the Form

of the Good "as the cause of knowledge and truth" (*Rep.* 508-e) and also where the Good is said do be other than being (*Rep.* 509-b).

The argument that initiates the articulation of the Form of the Good begins in *Rep.* 504-d, 505-a, where Socrates declares that the "most important subject" to learn is the Form of the Good. It is more important than the virtues (i.e. "just things and the others") since they become "useful and beneficial" by their relation to the Form of the Good. Its greatness and importance lies in the fact that it is the Form of the Good, which gives meaning and justice to every act; in the pursuit of the good everything becomes "useful and beneficial". Even if we have acquired "the fullest possible knowledge" of other things it would be no use for us without the knowledge of the good of it. However, majority define good in terms of pleasure and the more sophisticated define it in terms of knowledge. (*Rep.*505-b) But at the end no one really knows "what they are speaking about when they utter the word 'good'". (*Rep.*505-c). The good itself is in the intelligible realm and it has priority "in relation to understanding and intelligible things" (*Rep.*508-b). These intelligible things Socrates refers to, are the Forms, the realities.

> So what gives truth to the things known and the power to know to the knower is the form of the good. And though it is the cause of knowledge and truth, it is also an object of knowledge. Both knowledge and truth are beautiful things, but the good is other and more beautiful than they. (*Rep.*508-d)

As Socrates stresses, the priority of the Form of the Good is both epistemological and ontological. The claim that the truth of the things comes from the Form of the Good implies that the Form of the Good has a priority in relation to the other Forms, which are the truths of each thing by the things participation in the Forms. Here the word truth can be understood as *being* or *reality*. That which is the truth of each thing is that which is *real*. Or, the *being* of each thing is what makes it real or true.

The second assumption is that, the power to know is derived from the Form of the Good. This seems to be related with the assumption that the Form of the Good is "also an object of knowledge". It is an object of knowledge, which differs from the other objects of knowledge (i.e. the Forms) by its power to affect the knower into knowing. That is, it seems to be the condition of the possibility of knowledge.

> [N]ot only do the objects of knowledge owe their being known to the good, but their being is also due to it, although the good is not being, but superior to it in rank and power. (*Rep.*509-b)

The passage above has caused controversy among the Plato scholars in terms of its implications. The first indication, namely that, the good enables knowledge is in line with our former analysis, whereas the second point implies that the objects of knowledge (the Forms) are initially bound to the good, so that their being, that is, their very existence is in some sense caused by it. Yet the last assertion is all the more surprising, its claim has triggered various interpretations throughout the history of philosophy. What does it mean to assert, "the good is not being, but superior to it in rank and power"? We would like to quote Demos with respect to this passage, as well as, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the ontological status of the Form of the Good and its relation to the other Forms. Demos stresses:

> Thus the whole area, not only of temporal but also of eternal beings, may be evaluated by the norm of the Good. This is the sense in which the Good is *other* than Being. The Good is a norm for Being.[45]

In this chapter we tried to present the link between Plato's political and ontological framework. For this, we pondered upon the relation between soul and justice and its impact on the constitution of the just city. The justice of the city is associated with the justice of the soul, and in both entities justice is related with the rational part. The

[45] Raphael Demos, 'Plato's Idea of the Good', *The Philosophical Review*, Vol.46, No.3 (May, 1937) p.249

nurturing of the soul's virtues is connected with the soul's rational part. Soul sustains its rationality by means of good education, which is ultimately related with philosophy and the knowledge of the good. Accordingly, justice of the city is guaranteed by the right conduct of the philosopher, who aims at truth vis-à-vis the knowledge of the good.

In order to deepen our analysis we elaborated on the distinction between knowledge and opinion in relation to the distinction between the sophist and the philosopher. We argued that the philosopher is capable of seeking the truth by means of the knowledge of the Forms, whereas the sophist operates on the realm of opinion and appearances.

We then argued that the distinction between appearances (copies) and *real beings* (originals or the Forms) could be connected with the understanding that relates goodness and being. According to this, we tried to show that the copies, that which populates the phenomenal world, are deprived of *true being* and in this sense negatively evil.

CHAPTER IV: QUESTION OF COSMOLOGY

In this part of the paper we will try to investigate 'evil' in the context of the *Timaeus*. However, before moving on to this task, we shall present the general structure of the dialogue. The dialogue can be considered as consisting of two parts. The first part is an account of the demiurge's making of the world. The emphasis here is on the making of the universe in the best possible way, in the likeness of the Eternal Creature (i.e. the Forms). For the demiurge desired that 'all things should be good and nothing evil' (30-a). He is conceived as a dynamic principle in the sense that he is 'making' the universe. However, he is making it by means of his Reason. That is, the demiurge is a dynamic principle with Reason. For it is due to his Reason that he is capable of relating to the Forms in order to create the cosmos in their likeness. Therefore the demiurge represents also the rational principle; a rational force, in a sense, a dynamic Reason.

There is also an irrational principle in the creation story; the Necessity. This is mostly considered in the second part of the dialogue. The discourse on Necessity - and that which is related to it- gives the framework in which we will speak of 'evil'. That is, irrationality as the source of evil within the world. How does Necessity connect to irrationality? Basically, Necessity is the name ascribed to the movements of bodily nature.

This bodily nature is its *domain*[46] of application, meaning the four elements and the Receptacle (the Place in which Necessity operates).

[46]Steven Strange introduces thinking in terms of *domains* by distinguishing the *domains* of Reason and Necessity in order to analyze the relation between them. "A first step would be to distinguish what we could call the domains of each principle, what features of the world each is supposed to explain or help explain." Steven Strange 'The Double Explanation in the *Timaeus*', in *Plato*, p.404

Thus, according to this general schema of the dialogue, on the one side there is the eternal and the rational and on the other side there is the irrational and the changing. Hence, each of the forces (Reason and Necessity) of Becoming operates in relation to their own *domain* (Eternal Creature or Receptacle). The Eternal Creature is pure intelligence whereas the Receptacle is deprived of intelligence (or of any other characteristic). The Receptacle, together with Necessity and the four elements, constitutes the domain, which can account for the disorder and irrationality within the phenomenal world. An investigation into the source(s) of evil within the cosmos constitutes of an analysis of these factors.

Evil in the *Timaeus:* Four Elements, Necessity, and Receptacle

Our first encounter with Necessity is in 42-a, where Necessity is said to be responsible for the embodiment of individual souls: "And when, by virtue of Necessity, they [souls] should be implanted in bodies (42-a)[47]

This is where the demiurge is addressing the inferior gods, entrusting them with the creation of individuals. What Plato here means by implantation of the souls into bodies, is the process of embodiment. Embodiment is necessary for the existence of creatures, for 'that which is created is of necessity corporeal, and also visible and tangible.'(31-b). Like the generation of the creatures, the generation of the universe entails embodiment as well, for the universe is also designated as a 'Living Creature' (30-d). Therefore, to be alive entails the union of the soul with the body; generation begins with the coalescing of these two elements.

[47] All quotations from the *Timaeus* are from *Plato: With an English Translation,* Vol. *VII, Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles.* Trans. Rev. R. G. Bury. London, 1917. The Loeb Classical Library.

When we talk about the existence of creatures, what is always meant is existence determined by generation. However, the mode of existence is different in soul and body *per se*. Existence of the soul[48] is endless i.e. atemporal, devoid of time. For time is created with the universe, whereas the World-Soul is a constituent of creation.

The bodily nature is also prior to time. What we mean by bodily nature is that which is 'visible and tangible', and these happen to be the four elements (water, fire, earth and air), which are uncreated and were inherent in the chaotic flux before the creation of the cosmos. (31-b, c) The demiurge, by proportioning these elements (32-c), makes the body of the universe (World-Body). Before the demiurge's acting upon them, these elements were 'in a state of discordant and disorderly motion' (30-a).

Despite the fact that the World-Soul and the World-Body are both constructed 'before' time, one is declared to be 'older' than the other. The priority introduced, however, is not a temporal but an ontological priority. So we are cautioned not to take it in the strict temporal sense (34-c).

> God, however, constructed the Soul to be older than Body and prior in birth and excellence, since she was to be the mistress and ruler and it be ruled (35-a)

The ontological priority of the World-Soul over the World-Body, is its position as a 'ruler and mistress' (34-c). This recurring theme of the body-soul distinction – which we are familiar with from the *Phaedo*- we are inclined to read it as the governance of the intellectual part over the irrational. This pattern will also manifest itself in the relation between Reason and Necessity.

[48] Within this paper when we speak of soul in general, without any further indication of where it belongs to (individuals or universe), it means that we are referring both to the world-soul and individual souls, for they are made by the same ingredients, yet the former is much better in 'degree of purity' (41-e).

> For, in truth, this Cosmos in its origin was generated as a compound, from the combination of Necessity and Reason. And inasmuch as Reason was controlling Necessity by persuading her to conduct the best end the most part of the things coming into existence, thus it came about, through Necessity yielding to intelligent persuasion, that this Universe of ours was being in this wise constructed at the beginning. (48-a)

Reason, i.e. the rational principle personified by the demiurge, guides the act of creation, in the sense that it is the sole artificer of the cosmos. However, the ingredients Reason uses in making the world are not only rational. The soul is the intellectual ingredient, whereas the bodily is deprived of intelligence. Hence, Necessity is the force that is responsible for the irrationality of the bodily; it is a designation of the necessary motions of four elements,[49] which constitute the bodily nature. The irrationality of Necessity is manifested as irrational *movement*. This irrationality within the cosmos is conceived as necessary, yet as a factor, which needs to be dominated by the rational element. Why does Plato have to give an account of irrationality? His conception of the phenomenal world calls for this. The only realm that is purely intelligible is the realm of the Forms (Eternal Creature; The Model 48-e). They are the source of rationality within the world. As it is agreed, the intelligibility of the Forms is accounted by their sameness or unity; by them not being accustomed to change. On the contrary, the phenomenal world is in continuous motion and thus changing. So it is admissible that rationality and irrationality is manifested in terms of motion, since the *Timaeus* is a discourse on generation, and generation is conceived in terms of motions /forces. It is as if the cosmological necessity of a contrary force can be derived from the fact that the cosmological explanation is given in terms of 'movements'. And the contrariety of motions is in terms of rationality and irrationality (Reason and Necessity). When we consider

[49] "For Plato also this world of earth, air, fire, and water in perpetual motion and interchange was a realm of genuine necessity.." Glenn R. Morrow, Necessity and Persuasion in Plato's Timaeus, *The Philosophical* Review, vol. 59, No. 2, 1950 p.153

irrationality as a manifestation of evil, Necessity becomes a source for 'evil'[50]. Here 'evil' once again is a negative articulation being described as a contrary. Contrary effects always need to be controlled in Plato[51]; and they are commonly described by means of irrationality[52], thus Irrationality needs to be controlled. This takes the form of 'persuasion' in the *Timaeus*. Necessity is a force contrary to Reason, yet it is to be 'persuaded'. Why does the irrational movement need to be dominated? What does irrational movement correspond to within the soul? Or is soul entirely rational?

> And when, by virtue of Necessity, they [souls] should be implanted in bodies, and their bodies are subject to influx and efflux, these results would necessarily follow, -firstly, sensation that is innate and common to all proceeding from violent affections; secondly, desire mingled with pleasure and pain; and besides these, fear and anger and all such emotions as are naturally allied thereto, and all such as are of a different and opposite character. (42-a,b)

Above we see that Necessity is at work in the coming together of soul and body; however, it governs the bodily part of this union, but this doesn't mean that it has no relation to soul. For the bodily nature and soul are not two unrelated constituents, on the contrary, they affect each other. According to the above passage, the relation between body and soul seems to be mediated by sensations and feelings. Sensations and feelings are the 'influx and efflux' that body receives. That is, they appear in the form of motions. They are described as 'violent affections' and as emotions 'of a different and opposite character'. They are disorderly, due to the fact that they are

[50] Steven Strange warns us against considering Necessity as a source for evil, yet he agrees that it will account for it. "Necessity will thus account for all evil and imperfection in the universe, though it will not be by nature evil nor the cause of evil, since it will also be the cause of all things that are neither good nor evil." Steven Strange, op. cit. p. 414.

[51] This is true in the *Phaedo* where soul is said to be the master of the body. Also in *Laws X* (896-d,e) where there are two kinds of motions of the world-soul, one is beneficent the other its contrary and the former needs to dominate the latter. And in the *Sophist* (227-d) 'disease' and 'deformity' are described as two kinds of evil of the soul, and they will be overcome by 'measure', i.e. right conduct.

[52] "All these movements I take to be the symbols, not of deliberate evil, but of irrationality, the element both in man and in the cosmos which is incompletely mastered by a rational will". E.R. Dodds, 'Plato and the Irrational', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol.65, 1945 p.21

related with the four elements.[53] And since the body is made out of the four elements, it seems plausible to suppose that sensations and emotions belong to the bodily part.[54]

Yet, they *need* to be *mastered* by the rational part, which belongs to the soul[55]. Soul as the locus of intellection[56] needs to master the irrational-disorderly motions (of sensations and emotions), for if it fails to do so, it shall pursue an unjust life:

> And if they [souls] shall master these [sensations and emotions] they will live justly, but if they [souls] are mastered, unjustly. (42-b)

This passage indicates that the soul *can be* mastered by sensations and emotions. Then, despite the fact that the soul is 'mainly' intellectual, there is the possibility of it being affected by the disorderly and irrational. Where does this capacity come from? To seek an answer we shall investigate the construction of the World-Soul. The World-Soul is a compound of opposed ingredients and movements in a uniform spiritual entity.

> Midway between the Being which is indivisible and remains always the same and the Being which is transient and divisible in bodies, He blended a third form of Being compounded out of the Same and the Other...(35-a)

After making this compound 'into one form' he 'compasses' it with two motions, i.e. motion of the Same and motion of the Other. (35-a,b). Thus, it is a compound of contrary 'Beings' (indivisible-divisible) and 'Motions' (Same and Other). Its uniform

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[53] Disorderly motions are ascribed to the four elements: "that burdensome mass which afterwards adhered to him of fire and water and earth and air, a mass tumultuous and irrational.." (42-d)

[54] We had indicated before that the World-Body was made of the four elements, and since in the construction of the cosmos the demiurge used 'the whole of every one' (32-c), the individual bodies must be generated out of the World-Body. This we shall see in our analysis of the Receptacle.

[55] "He constructed reason within soul and soul within body as He fashioned the All." (30-b) Although here the quotation refers to the World-Soul we had indicated before that World-Soul and individual souls are made in the same manner. (41-e)

[56] "...intelligence could not be present in anything devoid of soul." 30-b.

character, in spite of the contrariety within it, is established by means of the governance of the Same over the Other (36-d). Therefore the World-Soul has a *capacity* to embrace contrary 'elements' for it is constituted as a compound of them. Furthermore, it is precisely this contrariety within the World-Soul that enables intellection. That is, without the otherness inherent within itself, the Soul would not be in a position to distinguish the same from the other. Hence otherness comes out as a necessity for the possibility of knowledge. Knowledge of both Becoming and the Eternal realities:

> Inasmuch, then, she is a compound, blended of the natures of the Same and the Other and Being, these three portions, and is proportionately divided and bound together, and revolves back upon herself, whenever she touches anything which has its substance dispersed or anything which has its substance undivided she is moved throughout her whole being and announces what the object is identical with and from what it is different.. (37-a,b)

The passage above indicates that the presence of the Other as a contrary is necessary for knowledge. We have formerly mentioned other examples of contrary 'elements' and 'forces' or 'movements'. Hence, through the *Timaeus*' logic the binary oppositions[57] are in play and the main opposition is between rationality and irrationality, where the former must govern the latter. Why is there irrationality? Why is there evil in the world? It seems for the perfection of the whole, 'evil' element is required. This fact is not apparent in the *Timaeus*; the text doesn't give an account for it. Yet in the In *Laws X* 902-903 we can see this position more clearly:

> [He] who provides for the world has disposed all things with a view to the preservation and perfection of the whole. ..all its striving is ever directed toward the whole, but thou hast forgotten in the business that the

[57] Derrida in "Plato's Pharmacy" investigates the logic of binary oppositions and the medium within which they are constructed: "In order for these contrary values (good/evil, true/false, essence/appearance, inside/outside etc.) to be in opposition, each of the terms must be simply external to the other, which means that one of these oppositions (the opposition between inside and outside) must already be accredited as the matrix of all possible opposition." Derrida, op. cit. p. 103

> purpose of all that happens is what we have said to, to win bliss for the life of the whole…the part he fashions for the sake of the whole to contribute to the general good (*Laws* 903-b,c).

As we have indicated the necessity of contrariety, we shall now analyze further the relation within this binary structure. The general binary within the *Timaeus*, i.e. of rationality and irrationality is represented by means of the distinction of body/soul as well as Reason/Necessity. Regarding the body-soul distinction, Plato's position is most akin to the *Phaedo* where the soul is constantly favored over against the body.[58] The soul is promoted as the ruler of the body, its governance is required for the well being of the individual:

> And if they [souls] shall master these [sensations and emotions] they will live justly, but if they [souls] are mastered, unjustly. And he that has lived his appointed time well shall return again to his abode in his native star, and shall gain a life that is blessed and congenial; but whoso has failed therein shall be changed into woman's nature at the second birth; and if, in that shape, he still refraineth not from wickedness he shall be changed every time, according to the nature of his wickedness, into some bestial form after the similitude of his own nature..(42-b,c)

Goodness or well being described as 'living justly' depends on the soul's governance of feelings and sensations. This means that the rational inclination within the soul should suppress irrational movements due to bodily nature. Furthermore, the status of intellection determines the status of the body. If the soul establishes itself over the body the bodily condition flourishes, whereas if the soul fails to attain order the bodily condition deteriorates.

We had indicated before that the body is not in a static condition. For it is 'subject to influx and efflux' (42-a). What it is losing or gaining is sensations and

[58]The status of these binary terms is not the same; they are not equally valued. That is, there is a relationship of contrariety as well as hierarchy between soul and body. This applies to other binary distinctions as well; goodness, rationality, wisdom, philosophy, soul etc. constitute the prior terms of the binaries; this prior *domain* 'needs to' govern the inferior –in which evil, irrationality, ignorance, sophistry, body etc. is located.

emotions, by which, as movements, they affect the condition of the soul. For that matter soul is also not in a static condition. Sensations and feelings as movements have the capacity to affect the condition of the soul through the body.

> [U]ntil he yields himself to the revolution of the Same and Similar that is within him, and domination by force of reason that burdensome mass which afterwards adhered to him of fire and water and earth and air, a mass tumultuous and irrational, returns again to the semblance of his first and best state.(42-c,d)

The rational part of the soul, despite its capacity to be affected by sensations and emotions, should overcome them. For this 'burdensome mass' of bodily nature and the inflow and outflow of sensations and emotions is all caused by the four elements, which are 'tumultuous and irrational'.

> [A]nd within bodies subject to inflow and outflow they [inferior gods] bound the revolutions of the immortal Soul. The souls, then, being thus bound within a mighty river neither mastered it nor were mastered, but with violence they rolled along and were rolled along themselves, so that the whole of the living creature was moved, but in such a random way that its progress was disorderly and irrational (43-a,b)

It is as if the condition of the body is conceived as a formless entity, which is subject to giving and receiving the four elements and thereby gains a particular form. The four elements are represented by the expression 'mighty river'. It is said that the souls were bound within a mighty river; it is as though the body is conceived as that which carries this river, a kind of *substratum*.

> When the body of a creature happened to meet and collide with alien fire from without, or with a solid lump of earth or liquid glidings of waters, or when it was overtaken by a tempest of winds driven by air, and when the motions due to all these causes rushing through the body impinged the upon the soul. And for these reasons all such motions were termed "Sensations", and are still termed today. (43-c,d)

Body is a passive medium that receives the sensations, whereas the soul by the force of its inner revolution (of the Same) resists the disorderly motion of the four

elements. Here we should underline the distinction between body and bodily nature. Body, as in the case of bodies of individuals or the body of the universe, is a passive medium, which partakes of the four elements as we have seen, whereas what we mean by bodily nature is always the four elements which constitute the body. Therefore body is conceived as a medium in which sensation takes place. This as we shall see is much like the conception of the receptacle.

> Now all these [four elements] are among the auxiliary causes which God employs as his ministers (46-c) Yet they are incapable of possessing reason and thought for any purpose. (46-d)
> We must declare both kinds of Causes, but keep distinct those which, with the aid of thought, are artificers fair and good, and all those which are devoid of intelligence and produce always chance effects. (46-e)

The four elements are irrational and their motion is governed by chance[59]. The force that drives these elements is Necessity. As though to imply that they act by *necessity*, that an account of their action cannot be given.[60] Despite the fact that the four elements are conceived as unintelligent, they have the capability of being ordered by a rational principle. Thus the demiurge –cited above as God— employs them 'as his ministers' in the creation. This is the sense in which they are referred to as auxiliary rather than primary causes. For the primary causes are Reason (in the form of demiurge) and the eternal Forms.

We indicated before that *Timaeus* consisted of two parts; the first part was mainly committed to the Rational construction of the cosmos. That is, the emphasis was made on the rational principle rather than the 'errant'. In the beginning of the second part Timaeus says:

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[59] There seems to be a close connection between the conceptions of chance and necessity in ancient thought.

[60] Necessity is a principle that we cannot give an account of. Steven Strange underlines this: "These two principles of explanation [Reason and Necessity] are ultimate in that they are themselves left entirely unexplained." Steven Strange, op. cit. p. 403

> We must return, and taking once again a fresh starting-point suitable to the matter we must make a fresh start in dealing therewith, just as we did with our previous subjects. (48-b)

This new beginning will be devoted to the explanation of the 'Errant Cause, in the way that it really acts' (48-a). The Errant Cause is the Receptacle. It is the locus of irrational movements; hence it is the locus of Necessity and the four elements.

> For our former exposition those two [Forms] were sufficient, one of them being assumed as a Model Form, intelligible and ever uniformly existent, and the second as the model's Copy, subject to becoming and visible. (48-e - 49-a)

The Receptacle is described as a third kind of *Form* (48-e). The other two kinds are the Eternal (Model's Form) and the Becoming (Model's Copy). As we see, this distinction is made in terms of their existential status. The differentiation is determined according to their manner of existence; the former as 'intelligible and uniform', the latter as 'becoming and visible'.

What does this tell us about the Receptacle? It indicates that the Receptacle has a different manner or mode of existence than the other two; that it is neither eternal nor in becoming. Now the question that pops into one's mind may be: If the Receptacle has a different manner/mode of existence, how can it be the locus of the four elements, which are the ingredients used in Becoming? The explanation is that the Receptacle is the 'real nature of fire and water, air and earth, as it was *before* the birth of Heaven' (48-b). This designation implies the ontological priority of the Receptacle over Becoming. [61] For the four elements belong to Becoming (i.e.

[61] Then the distinction made between the three Forms would not be merely horizontal but also vertical, i.e. hierarchal. We had formerly given other examples of the vertical dimension of the contraries; between body/soul, Reason/Necessity. This hierarchal structuring of the binaries represents Plato's philosophical intentions. He stabilizes the status of oppositions by determining one term as 'good' and the other as 'evil' (situates them hierarchically), thus it is not merely a relation of contrariety anymore, where the opposite terms have 'equal' statuses. And by this philosophical 'act' he contributes once again to his philosophical defeat of relativism, announced by him as sophistry, where each notion is regarded in comparison to

Becoming as an existential mode), and if Receptacle is the 'real nature' of these elements, it must be *prior* to Becoming. We are not saying chronological priority in spite of the word 'before' since Time also belongs to Becoming, i.e. there cannot be a priority in time since it is not 'yet' created. Therefore the Receptacle is the 'source' of the elements, 'as it were the nurse, of all Becoming' (49-b). This is designated as 'her' 'essential property'; as a 'receptacle' it nurses Becoming, i.e. it 'receives' and 'nurses'. We shall disclose how.

> First of all, we see that which we now call "water" becoming by condensation, as we believe, stones and earth; and again this same substance, by dissolving and dilating, becoming breath and air; and air through combustion becoming fire; and conversely… thus we see the elements passing on to one another, as it would seem, in an unbroken circle the gift of birth. Accordingly, since no one of these ever remains identical in appearance, which of them shall a man definitely affirm to be any one particular element…(49-c,d)

This passage indicates how the Receptacle is the 'real nature' of the four elements. It also shows how Necessity is involved in the formation of these elements. We see again that there are not 'really' four elements but transformations of one 'substance'; in this sense none of them is 'one particular element'. This 'substance' 'wherein' they emerge is the Receptacle.

The transformations between the so-called elements is by means of 'condensation', dissolving', 'dilating', 'combustion' and 'contraction'. And it is precisely these 'motions' or 'forces' which are of Necessity. Necessity is the name

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others and gains its value thereby. Thinking on the hierarchal structures of concepts has been an attempt of Derrida's.
John Sallis notes Derrida's attempt: "Metaphysical thinking arranges these pairs of concepts in a hierarchically structured conceptual system and, within each of the individual pairs, subordinates one concept to the other...Derrida continually emphasizes the ethical, valuational component of this hierarchical proceeding and, on the model of Heidegger's talk about the "ontho-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics" designates such thinking as "ethical-ontological". John Sallis, *Husserl and Contemporary Thought*, Humanities Press, 1983, p.88

Plato ascribes to all such 'mechanical/material movements'.[62] It is a force 'deprived of intelligence' in the sense that it has no intention in itself of determining a thing as it is, i.e. it has no aim. It merely produces 'accidental and irregular' effects, i.e. it cannot account for any determination 'elements' receive. However it has the capability of being persuaded by Reason 'to conduct to the best end the most part of the things coming into existence' (48-a). Therefore, its irregularity is delimited by Reason.

Thus there is also a relation between the Receptacle and Necessity. Necessity is one of the principles that operate within the Receptacle. Another principle is the Eternal Forms.[63] These together determine the 'suchlike' character of the elements. In 49-e it is indicated that the elements, since they are 'constantly changing from one state to another' should be regarded as 'suchlike' but never as 'being'. There are only two existential modes/determinations that deserve to be entitled as 'this' and 'that'; the Receptacle and Eternal Forms. Here we see that Plato uses the terms 'this' and 'that' as an implication of immutability and as referring to 'being'. In this sense elements are not beings. "One should never describe them as 'being', seeing that they change even while one is mentioning them.."(50-b).

The 'being' of the elements is the Receptacle, and the elements are the figures that this being receives. The source of the form of these figures is the Eternal

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[62] "Under this heading are comprised purely material properties: elemental transformations, the random motion, structure and movement of the physical elements, the nature of compound bodies that are aggregates of the elements, and finally the affections, that soul undergoes in relation to the material.." Steven Strange, op. cit. p.405

[63] In this part of the dialogue Plato does not mention the role of the demiurge or Reason; he merely addresses the Eternal Forms. But as we know within the context of the *Timaeus* the Forms are not considered to be efficient causes and cannot affect the Receptacle; the application of the Forms requires a dynamic principle, which, till now, throughout the dialogue was Reason. A suggestion for this could be the interpretation of Receptacle and Forms as a representation of Necessity and Reason in a different manner. This is not such a farfetched point due to the fact that in 48-a Timaeus says: "but we must also furnish an account of what comes into existence through Necessity, but then he begins to give the account of the Receptacle. Thus, on the one hand Necessity and Receptacle, on the other, Reason and Forms can be regarded as different aspects or modes of the same principles.

Forms. Receptacle and Eternal Forms are both 'beings' in the sense that they are immutable, but as we said before, their manner of existence differs. The Receptacle is the 'substance, which receives all bodies' (50-b). It receives the bodies by means of the Eternal Forms (the model). We can consider the former as pure body[64] and the latter pure intellection. This pure body has no property of its own and receives properties from without; she takes within all from the Forms and thus gives birth to Becoming.

For from its own proper quality it never departs at all; for while it is always receiving all things, nowhere and in no wise does it assume any shape similar to any of the things that enter to it. For it is laid down by nature as a moulding-stuff for everything, being moved and marked by the entering figures, and because of them it appears different at different times. And the figures that enter and depart are copies of those that are always existent, being stamped from them in a fashion marvelous and hard to describe..(50-c**)**

Thus the appearance of the Receptacle is according to the figures that it receives and since it is always receiving, it is continuously changing appearance[65]. This is possible for it is 'void of all forms'. (50-e) Receptacle makes things possible by presenting them herself as an 'ever-existing Place' (52-b) in which they become what they are. Eternal Forms 'stamp' (50-d) this Place and thus the 'stamped copy'(50-d) becomes.[66] The Receptacle is a kind of medium wherein the Forms

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[64] "It must be rather construed as the potency of matter, and of space and of physical motion; as that which, when impressed by the patterns, becomes matter, space, motion." Raphael Demos, 'The Receptacle, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 45, No.6, 1936, p.540

[65] Despite the fact that it changes appearance, the Receptacle is still immutable since it looses nothing of its being while changing appearance, for the appearances don't belong to its nature.

[66] This is the sense in which things are copies. The copy-hood of the phenomenal things is asserted on the basis that nothing belongs to them; their essence is derived from the transcendental Forms and the Receptacle provides their body. Yet, it is as if they don't own their own body but 'borrow' it from the Receptacle, for they are constantly accustomed to change and thereby gain and loose their 'body': "it has not for its own even that substance for

become 'actualized'[67] by gaining a 'body'. It is a pure body in the sense that everything becomes 'inside' of her. Thus everything takes place in the Receptacle, it is in this sense nursing Becoming. It is the mother of generation or Becoming:

> It is proper to liken the Recipient to the Mother, the Source to the Father, and what is engendered in between these two to the Offspring.. (50-d)

But can we consider the Receptacle to be a source of 'evil' in any way? The answer to this question is negative to the extent that Receptacle is not a immediate source, yet it is mediating 'evil' in the sense that it is that in which irrational movement as a source of 'evil' manifests itself.

Irrational movement takes place in Becoming. Becoming is generated by the involvement of the Receptacle and the Eternal Forms. Eternal Forms are pure intellection and have no irrational character. Thus since generation takes place within the Receptacle, and since irrational movement is not projected from the Eternal Forms, it must be due to a 'factor' within Receptacle. It cannot be the Receptacle *per se* for it has no property of its own, but is exposed to *others*. This 'factor' that causes irrational movements within the Receptacle[68] is Necessity. This is plausible, for we have tried to show that the irrational and disorderly motions are caused by the four elements. Despite the fact that four elements are generated within the Receptacle,[69] the movements of Necessity regulate them,[70] i.e. their disorderliness is due to Necessity.

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which it came to being, but fleets ever as a phantom of something else –to come into existence in some other thing, clinging to existence as best it may, on pain of being nothing at all.." (52-c)

[67] "Now the factor which accounts for the transition from ideality to actuality is the receptacle; it is the principle of existence" Raphael Demos, op. cit. 545

[68] "Motion in the receptacle is random, non-purposive, irregular, unpredictable" Raphael Demos, op. cit. p.545

[69] "and that the Nurse of Becoming, being liquefied and ignified and receiving also the forms of earth and of air, and submitting to all the other affections which accompany these" (52-e)

[70] "but owing to being filled with *potencies* that are neither similar nor balanced" (52-e)

Necessity is the force that causes unpredictable motions, and it is inexplicable[71] in the sense that it cannot account for its movements; it causes chance effects. It is disorderly and undeterminable. All these characters can be regarded under the heading of irrationality. In the *Timaeus* irrationality seems to be the source of 'evil' within the phenomenal world.

[71] The Receptacle is also conceived as inexplicable: "being apprehensible by a kind of bastard reasoning by the aid of non-sensation, barely an object of belief" (52-b). We cannot give a proper account of the Receptacle; it is not an object of knowledge.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

In the present study we tried to ponder upon Plato's understanding of evil. The three chapters were designed so as to reveal the transition of the articulation of evil in different realms. As we claimed to show, in all these realms, with regard to ontology, epistemology, cosmology, politics and morality, this articulation is an articulation of a lack, derogation or privation, that, it has negative existence. For when the ultimate reality is posited as the good, which is apprehended with respect to intelligibility and true *being*, evil cannot be regarded as other than ultimate non-reality; it is presented as being the contrary of the good and consequently it cannot 'be', it can only not-be or be a non-being. However, the articulation of evil is necessary in order to account for all the instances of *evil* that take place in human action, in the phenomenal world or in the universe. The various examples, which may be considered as the articulation of evil as lack, deprivation or derogation, are: injustice, wrongdoing, ignorance, opinion, vice, falsity, sophistry, seeming-copy, corporeality, disorder or irrationality. The articulation of these evil(s) is always understood in negative terms as *lacking* contraries. For the sake of the good there needs to be an articulation of evil, yet this evil is always bound to be determined by the rules/principles that the good assigns to human action, the city or the cosmos, for it is the good that is posited on top of Plato's ontological system and which effects all the other realms of *discourse*.

This study has shown us; with respect to morality, that ignorance is evil, accordingly, on the cosmological level we have seen that evil is understood in terms of irrationality. In both of these realms, which are ultimately tied to each other, we realize that evil is apprehended as a lack of reason.

What does this position reflect in Plato's philosophical stance? What does it mean to conceive lack of reason as a source of evil? Fundamentally, that 'evil' cannot be rational or rationalized. In this sense even irrationality is not really evil, if we take the term evil as something implied by 'evil act' due to 'evil motivation'. For irrationality is a lack of intelligence, that, it has no 'position' of its own but is a mere deprivation or negation. So here we cannot talk about a positive evil 'will' or 'motivation'. No, 'evil' is *ignorance*, deprivation of intelligence; it is unthought and unsought. Evil is not intended; it is inexplicable. Thus evil does not *exist*, it has no *logos* and no *ousia*.

This is perhaps an inconceivable articulation of evil for our modern minds, which have seen overt evil in most systematically rationalized forms, as though the magnitude of evil action has been nourished by the Reason devoted to it. And perhaps precisely for this reason it is important for us to try to understand a systematic conception, on which evil is not yet anything positive.

APPENDIX [72] : EVIL(S) OF THE SOUL

A. Regarding *Republic X* (609-a to 611-e)

There are few pages at the end of the *Republic,* which are suprizingly devoted to the question of evil. Contrary to a somewhat anemic presence of a notion of evil throughout the *Republic*, these few pages provide a set of arguments that present a brief account of Plato's approach to the question of evil.

The argument that leads to the consideration of evil is the immortality of the soul. (608-d) Thus, the first question that opens up the argument on evil also provides an entrance to the explanation of the immortality of the soul:

> Do you talk about good and bad?
> And do you think about them the same way I do?
> The bad is entirely coterminous with what destroys and corrupts, and the good is what preserves and benefits. (608-d,e)

This small passage summarizes what we may here and there infer from the *Republic* on the topic of good and evil. That is to say, the *Republic* claims that bad or evil is destructive and corruptive whereas good preserving and beneficial. In this sense these descriptions reveal what we are to understand when Socrates speaks of something as good or bad.

[72] The need to insert an appendix results from the very nature of this study. The main difficulty with working on the topic of evil is that it is not a specifically articulated issue within the Platonic corpus. Often we come across with the articulation of the notion of evil in an attempt to strengthen the current argument. In our study we are to come across two instances of such surprising encounter; in *Republic X 609-a to 611-e* and in *Sophist 227-c to 229-c*, which both consider evil within the soul. We prefered to consider these passages seperately on two occasions, mainly because we believe that they call for specific consideration in terms of their explicit arguments. On the other hand, despite their articulate character on the question of evil, they are rather eccentric with regard to what we are trying to do in this study; i.e. to focus on a certain philosophical move that Plato makes from the political towards the ontological. Thus we preferred to include this special section under an appendix in order to keep our main argument within its own course.

After this initial claim, the argument continues on the notion of evil. The main assertion seems to be, that evil is natural to everything. That is, there is a "natural badness and sickness" (609-a) for everything.

> Therefore, the evil that is natural to each thing and the bad that is peculiar to it destroy it. However, if they don't destroy it, nothing else will, for the good would never destroy anything, nor would anything neither good or bad. (609-a)

This *natural* evil of the thing operates like a virus (disease) with a view to destroying the thing itself. This will be seen more clearly as Socrates appeals to an analogy between the soul and the body.

"Disintegration" and "destruction" are the words used in order to explain this process. (609-a,b) Disintegration seems to imply that this event takes place within an organism, since *something* disintegrates its initial constitution out of various elements assembled together. However, Socrates introduces an exceptional case in which " something that has an evil that makes it bad but isn't able to disintegrate and destroy it" (609-b). This is to be the soul. The soul is "incapable of being destroyed" (609-b). But what is it that makes the soul bad? Socrates answers: "All the things we were mentioning: Injustice, licentiousness, cowardice, and lack of learning." (609-b,c).

This answer supports our suggestion to consider particular negative terms under the heading of evil. They are all considered to be evil because their effect on the soul is bad. And if we look more closely we can realize that these four negative terms correspond to the four virtues; injustice is the negative of justice, licentiousness of temperance, cowardice of courage and lack of learning of wisdom. The virtues are conceived as those that make the soul good, whereas the vices make

the soul bad[73]. The binary structure is again at work here. The vice-virtue dichotomy had been considered in book IV by appealing to the analogy of health and disease.

> Because just and unjust actions are no different for the soul than healthy and unhealthy things are for the body.
> Healthy things produce health, unhealthy ones disease. (444-c)

With regard to this analogy then, vices of the soul produce disease within the soul, or rather, vices are forms of disease of the soul. Accordingly, virtues of the soul make the soul healthy.

> Virtue seems, then, to be a kind of health, fine condition, and well-being of the soul, while vice is disease, shameful condition and weakness. (444-d)

Let's now turn back to consider the point Socrates tries to make in defense of the immortality of the soul. Even when injustice, "which is evil in a soul" (609-c) and other vices remain in the soul they are not capable of destroying the soul. Here Socrates appeals to an analogy between soul and body:

> Just as the body is worn out, destroyed, and brought to the point where it is a body no longer by disease, which is evil in a body, so all the things we mentioned just now reach the point at which they cease to be what they are through their own peculiar evil, which attaches itself to them and is present in them (609-c,d)

There are two points we would like to focus in this passage. First, that, the word evil is used in order to refer to disease of the body. An example, which shows that evil, is not limited to the soul, i.e. 'evil' can be attributed to the body or to the city as well[74].

[73] Book IV too considers these negative states of the soul as vice. They are considered as "the turmoil and straying of these [soul's] parts" (444-b)

[74]This is a crucial remark revealing why our attempt to regard evil needs to consider all kinds of Platonic discourse; the political, ontological and the cosmological, and showing that it cannot limit itself with a particular *topos* (place). This particular place, namely, the soul, throughout the aforementioned discourses, will show itself to be in relation with the question of evil.

Another crucial assumption of the passage above is that things cease to be through the evil(s) peculiar to them. Yet, we see that the soul has an exceptional status here; it cannot be destroyed by its own evils, or the evils of the body.

> Now, if the soul isn't destroyed by a single evil, whether its own or something else's, then clearly it must always be. And if it always is, it is immortal. (610-e)

This then leads to the justification of the immortality of the soul: the decease of the body, which is an evil of the body, will not affect the soul.

Disease implies a malfunction of the organism. Disease makes the organism go bad or *outdoes* (*pleonektein*) the healthy state of the organism. This view is in line with the indications that evil "causes disintegration" or evil is "a natural badness or sickness". Such an understanding of evil as what is "natural to each thing"; wherein "the bad that is peculiar to [the thing] destroy[s] it" (609-a) considers evil as a natural aspect of the thing. This position seems to suggest once more that we regard evil as a kind of disease.

We had stressed in our footnote (on appendix) that these passages, focusing on the question of evil, were mostly used in defense of the current argument, which, in this case is the immortality of the soul. Nonetheless, regardless of the thematic support these passages provide, we think that it is quite important that Plato here chooses to defend the immortality of the soul by means of the distinction between body's evil and soul's evil.[75] The demarcation of the soul and the body in terms of their own evils is actually surprising, when we think that Plato almost always tries to protect the soul from body's evils[76], as if the source of evil was always the body. The

[75] Indeed, compared to the argument of the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo* this particular defense seems relatively limited. Perhaps for this reason too, we should give credit to these passages in view of their efficacy on the question of evil rather then on the defense of the immortality of the soul.

[76] This can be seen in *Phaedo, Republic and Timaeus*.

distinction he makes between the soul and the body in terms of their own evils seems to suggest that soul is responsible for its own evils, since soul's evils are different than body's. And that is why body's evils will never be able to destroy the soul.

> If the body's evil doesn't cause an evil in the soul that is proper to the soul, we'll never judge that the soul, in the absence of its own peculiar evil, is destroyed by the evil of something else. We'd never accept that *anything* is destroyed by an evil proper to something else. (610-a)

Body's evils will not be able to destroy the soul, that is true, but they can definitely harm the soul. This then avoids what we may judge as a contradiction. Plato tries to protect the soul from the evils of the body not because he thinks that the evils of the body can destroy the soul but because they can still affect the soul negatively.

Soul's evils are the vices. In this sense vices belong to the soul and it is the soul's responsibility to cure its vices. Yet we would like to note that this still does not eliminate the idea that the body is related with the vices. Socrates says:

> We mustn't say that the soul is even close to being destroyed by these things until someone shows us that these conditions of the body make the soul more unjust and more impious. (610-b)

This above statement seems to be in contradiction with Socrates' earlier indication in the *Republic*, because he had showed himself that the "conditions of the body make the soul more unjust", for he had treated the desires and pleasures, as belonging to the "beastly and savage part" of the soul (571-c) and associated this part with the bodily needs.[77] In this sense he had already shown us that body's needs and tendencies are capable of harming the soul's harmony, i.e. harmony within its three

[77] Socrates indicates that there are "unnecessary pleasures and desires" which are "lawless" in almost everyone. (572-b) "Our dreams make it clear that there is a dangerous, wild, and lawless form of desire in everyone, even in those of us who seem to be entirely moderate or measured." (572-b) It will be seen clear in the *Timaeus* that these desires are caused by our bodily nature. In the *Republic* these desires constitute the appetitive part of the soul: "because of the intensity of its appetites for food, drink, sex, and all the things associated with them" (580-d). Here we can also see that desires are articulated in terms of the bodily needs.

parts[78]. Moreover, let us note that the destruction of the harmony between the soul's parts constitutes injustice. Ignorance is related to the 'overseeing' of this injustice.[79] Accordingly, in contrast to the passage above, body is capable of making the soul unjust.

Thus it is important to note that, by distinguishing the body's evils and the soul's evils Plato tries to demonstrate that the body's evils cannot destroy the soul, but this is not to suggest that the body's evils have no effect on the soul, to assert this would be to contradict his well-known body-soul doctrine which is based on the idea that the soul needs to gain power over the body in order to refrain from the body's destructive tendencies. The depths of the relation between the body and the soul will be analyzed as we take up the *Timaeus* in our third chapter, but for now we should keep in mind that even though the bodily cannot destroy the soul it can very well harm it.

Regarding the *Sophist* (227-c to 229-c)

Next we shall take a closer look at the *Sophist 227-c, 229-c*. The argument considering evil within the soul is to be found in the fairly early part of the dialogue. We can trace back the argument that initiates the inquiry on evil as early as the beginning of 226; where *another* definition of the sophist has been indicated. The second chapter of our study gives a brief account of the problematic of the dialogue, yet for the sake of our current presentation let us note here that the dialogue opens with an investigation into the nature of the sophist. Numerous definitions of the sophist are given by means of the method of *diairesis*[80]. In 226-a the sophist is

[78] There are three parts of the soul; rational, appetitive and spirited. For further consideration look at the passages between 436- 441 and also in 580-d,e.

[79] "the action that destroys this harmony is unjust" and the belief that "oversees" this injustice is called ignorance. (443-e, 444-a)

[80] i.e. a method for seeking definitions by means of dividing into classes.

defined as a member of "the money-making class of the disputatious, argumentative, controversial, pugnacious, combative, acquisitive art". This definition once again confirms the "many-sidedness" of the sophist, which is repeatedly indicated throughout the dialogue. Hence, the Stranger follows *another* path to catch him. He deliberates upon "the art of discrimination" (226-c). He asserts that there are two kinds of "discrimination"; "the separation of worse from better, and, secondly, of like from like." (226-d) The procedure that separates the better from the worse is called purification. (226-d)

There are two kinds of purification; of the body[81] and of the soul. (227-d) The argument concerning the evil of the soul is initially related with the purification of the soul. "Hence whenever we find any removal of evil from the soul, we shall be speaking properly if we call that a purification." (227-d). That is, in order to speak of the purification of the soul the Stranger first needs to explain the kinds of evil within the soul. Therefore, the account of the soul's evil(s), at the outset, is an exploration of how one can refrain from such evil. There are two kinds of evil in the soul: "The one is comparable to a disease in the body, the other to a deformity." (228-a).

As it was the case with our analysis of the *Republic X*, we are once again encountered with an understanding of evil that is described in terms of a disease of the body. A crucial point to notice here, though, is that disease and deformity are distinguished as two distinct kinds of evil of the soul. This distinction suggests that in terms of the *Sophist* we should think the notion of disease apart from deformity. Nevertheless, this seems difficult, since a common reading of the notion of disease implies evil due to its effect, which is mostly a kind of deformity.

[81] "The purification of living creatures, having to do with impurities within the body, such as are successfully discriminated by gymnastics and medicine.." (226-e) This passage seems to suggest disease as an impurity of the body. Diseases can be purified by medicine and the body's un-diseased condition can be preserved by means of gymnastics.

Furthermore the Stranger suggests, "disease and discord are the same thing" (228-a). Hence, we see that discord and deformity are also taken to be separate notions. Hackforth argues that this distinction alludes to an understanding of two different kinds of evil in Plato's moral philosophy.[82] The former, implies the "disharmony between reason and the irrational elements of the soul"[83] and the latter, conceives evil as a form of ignorance. We shall inquire whether these two conceptions of evil can reconcile. Hackforth seems to argue they should be considered separately. The Stranger pursues a definition of discord:"[T]he disagreement of the naturally related, brought by some corruption." (228-a).

This definition calls to mind the characterization of evil as "disintegration", which was in *Rep. X* (609-b). In our analysis of *Rep. X* we had indicated that this emphasis on the word disintegration implied a malfunction of a living organism. Accordingly, we see here that discord is conceived as a "disagreement of the naturally related", which also implies a dismantling of the organism. These descriptions of disintegration and discord can very well be used to describe disease. However, it is not clear how such a conception of evil through discord and disintegration, suggests that it is a "disharmony between reason and irrational elements of the soul" as Hackforth argues[84]. Moreover, there needs to be no disease or malfunctioning for the soul to have disharmony between its rational and irrational parts; these parts seem to be in conflict with each other due to their very nature. That is, the rational and irrational parts of the soul are by their very nature opposed to each other and in struggle. The tripartite characterization of the soul in the *Republic*

[82] Hackforth argues that there are two passages, one in the *Sophist* the other in the *Laws IX* that present moral evil that involves no ignorance. He refers to the distinction in the *Sophist* to support his view. Hackforth, R. 'Moral Evil and Ignorance in Plato's Ethics, *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 40, 1946

[83] *ibid*. p. 118

[84] However as we shall see soon, this is due to an interpretive choice of Hackforth's.

(beginning from 435-c) reveals this struggle within the soul and explains why the rational needs to master the irrational in order to attain justice. Let us now move on to the definition of deformity:

> But is deformity anything else than the presence of the quality of disproportion, which is always ugly?
> Do we not see in the souls of worthless men opinions are opposed to desires, anger to pleasures, reason to pain and all such things to one another? (228-b)[85]

The above passage indicates that deformity is caused by the disproportion of the oppositions that take place within the soul. This definition suits better to explain the disharmony between the parts of the soul. Yet hence we realize that it is only with "worthless men" that this is the case; by contrast, the wise man has no disharmony within his soul. But this is not due to the fact that his rational and irrational parts are in harmony with each other, rather because he has been trained so as to master the irrational part by the rational.

Subsequently, after speaking of deformity as a disproportion of the soul, the Stranger gives the example of the ignorant man; who aims at the truth yet misses it due to disproportion. Hence he restates the Socratic dictum of morality that ignorance is not voluntary.[86] "But yet we know that every soul, if ignorant of anything, is ignorant against its will." (228-c). Thus ignorance is related with deformation and "ill-proportion" of a "foolish soul". In relation to the former distinction between discord and deformity, ignorance, then, is thought in terms of deformity. That is, the soul is deformed due to the disproportion between its

[85] This particular passage is ambiguous in terms of interpretation; it can either be thought in relation to deformity, as we took it as the previous question suggests, or it can be regarded as in relation with discord and disease as its following passage suggests (228-c, not cited above). Hackforth prefers to regard it as the indication of the latter and hence argues as we have previously shown. Despite this perplexity we chose to consider this passage in relation to deformity.

[86] We had given another example of this understanding in reference to *Laws IX* in our first chapter p.10

constitutive parts and its subsequent failure in attaining the truth. In what follows the Stranger rephrases the initial distinction between discord/disease and deformity/disproportion, this time appealing to the terms "wickedness" and "ignorance."

> Then there are, it appears, these two kinds of evils in the soul, one, which people call wickedness, which is very clearly a disease. (228-d)
> And the other they call ignorance, but they are not willing to acknowledge that it is vice, when it arises only in the soul. (228-d)

In the passage above wickedness and ignorance are classified in two distinct categories and ignorance is regarded as a vice. We had shown that in *Republic* 444-d that vice was considered to be a disease of the soul. Yet here we see that wickedness too is considered to be a disease. Does the *Republic* and the *Sophist* differ in terms of their characterization of disease?

In view of the *Republic* wickedness and vice are connected, on the contrast, this is not the case in the *Sophist*. For, we see here that vice and wickedness is in distinct categories. In the *Sophist* wickedness is said to be "disease and discord of the soul" (228b), and *poneria* is the word used for wickedness.

Regarding the passage above the word that is used for vice is *kakian*, which is derived from the word *kakos*, which is the Greek for what is generally translated as evil. This suggests that evil and vice is used interchangeably, whereas a different word is used in reference to wickedness (*poneria)*.

What are we to understand from the classification of discord, disease and wickedness within one group, and vice, ignorance and deformity on the other? The latter group seems to be more familiar to us in relation to what has been put forward in the *Republic*. Perhaps a better question would be; to what conclusion does this

separation of the kinds of evil bring us? Let's consider another passage for an answer.

> It must certainly be admitted, that there are two kinds of vice in the soul, and that cowardice, intemperance, and injustice must all alike be considered a disease in us, and the widespread and various condition of ignorance must be regarded as a deformity.(228-e)

This is an important passage in terms of its connection with the *Republic*. This is our third encounter with cowardice, intemperance, and injustice as forms of evil or vice within the soul. The other two passages we came across with the forms of vice were in *Rep.* 444-b[87] and *Rep. 609-c*[88]. However**,** Hackforth notes that the fourth form of vice is not mentioned in this passage, which would be ignorance. (Hackforth, op.cit. p.118) On the contrary we see that ignorance is separated and constitutes its own kind/class of evil.

The above passage gives a clarification in terms of our question. We see that the *Sophist* parts with the *Republic* in terms of positing ignorance as a distinct kind in relation to other vices of the soul. Why does Plato do this? We think that Plato here wants to underline ignorance, and associate this kind of evil with the sophist in particular. In this sense, this is another way to attack the sophists, but a crucial one, as it is shown in the second chapter, the association of the sophists with ignorance is made vis-à-vis the argument on not-being and falsity. The argument in the *Sophist* will try to present the possibility of falsity. Falsity in the *Sophist* is conceived in terms of not-being. Thus, the Stranger by showing that not-being *in a way* exists will then relate the sophists as the associates of not-being and falsity. It is important to keep in mind that the initial aim of the *Sophist* is to define the nature of the sophist,

[87] "[T]he turmoil and straying of these parts [soul's parts] are injustice, licentiousness, cowardice, ignorance, and in a word, the whole of vice."
[88] Well, what about the soul? Isn't there something that makes it bad? Certainly, all the things we were mentioning: Injustice, licentiousness, cowardice, and lack of learning.

thus it should be recognized that the argument that evolves around not-being and falsity is a means to define the sophist and refute his understanding.

The Stranger indicates different arts for the prevention or correction of these two kinds of evil. This then leads to a further discussion of the kinds of ignorance.The corrective art for the three vices is "most closely related to Justice" (229-a). On the other hand, "all sorts of ignorance" (229-a) is overcome by the art of instruction. The question that follows next, is, whether there is one kind of instruction to treat ignorance.

> For if ignorance turns out to be twofold, it is clear that instruction must also consist of two parts, one for each part of ignorance. (229-b)

Then the Stranger indicates that there is a form of ignorance that is separated from the rest, which is a "grievous kind of ignorance" (229-c).

> Thinking that one knows a thing when one does not know it. Through this, I believe, all the mistakes of the mind are caused in all of us. (*Sophist*, 229-c)

This immediately calls to mind the Athenian's definition of the double form of ignorance, in *Laws* IX 863-c[89].

a very grievous unwisdom, which is reputed to be the height of wisdom (*Laws* X, 886-b).

In considering Book X with reference to Book IX we had indicated that there was a connection with double form of ignorance and "the men of science" the Athenian referred to as "bad". In the *Laws X* these "bad" men were the misinterpreters of the traditional myths. In the *Sophist* we see that this great kind of ignorance is the main source of mistakes or falsity (229-c) and is related to the

[89] Double form of ignorance is "where the folly is due to the man being gripped not by ignorance, but also by a conceit of wisdom, as though he had full knowledge of things he knows nothing at all about" (*Laws IX* 863-c).

sophist. We once again see that the current argument on evil supports the main argument of the dialogue, i.e. the association of sophistry with falsehood. The articulation of falsehood with sophistry will thereby lead to the condemnation of the sophists.

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