

Ethics and Morality in Plato's Vision

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ABSTRACT: Plato's ethics lie at the centre of his philosophy. So to grasp his moral theory we need to understand how it is integrated with the enterprise as a whole. If we look closely at Plato's metaphysics, we can easily ascertain that the Greek philosopher proclaims the impossibility of being in this world the foundation of the ultimate cause, which is situated in a superior of the ideal world. From this vision came the theory of two worlds or realities. A productive world, that of Ideas, the true reality, known through the eye of thought, the world of eternal prototypes; and the world is produced by the sensible world, the world of appearances. Ideas form a logical system subordinated to a Supreme Idea that is the Idea of Good.

KEY WORDS: Platon, ethics, morality, values, Idea of Good, divinity

1. Introduction

Speaking of ethics and morality, we feel the need to define these terms. Defining the term ethics can be difficult because we should explain a lot of other interdependent terms. According to Pritchard and Goldfarb (2007), „Ethics is about what is right or wrong, right or wrong, right or wrong, responsible or irresponsible, obligatory or permissible, praiseworthy or reprehensible. It is associated with guilt, shame, indignation, resentment, empathy, compassion and care. She is interested in both character and conduct. It addresses both public policy and personal issues.”

The work of the great ancient philosopher Plato (Aristocles - birth name), the most prolific disciple of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle, contains 34 writings in the form of dialogue and 13 letters, each dialogue emphasizing a certain idea or problem (Bușe 2001, 38).

Ancient philosophers believed that virtues were not achieved through study. They were cultivated by parents in families, by teachers in schools and by politicians in society. By interacting with others, individuals became right or wrong and their actions in dangerous conditions gave rise to feelings of fear, confidence, courage or cowardice (Cioară 2013).

Being situated in the direction of a certain philosophical tradition (Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides), Plato starts from an opposing parallelism between reality and knowledge, between common opinion and science, between appearance and essence, between senses and reason (Vlăduțescu 1998, 10). If the senses represent the binder that binds man to the sensible, inferior reality, - while reason leads him to the knowledge of true reality, then the experience of the senses, being subjective and changeable, cannot lead to a certain and definitive truth. (Neacșu 2009, 90)

On the other hand, it is reason that helps us to enter into the true reality of things, into a world outside of time and space, into the world of ideas - which is the foundation of truth. *Platonism*, a term used by scholars to refer to the intellectual consequences of denying the reality of the material world, reverses people's intuition about what can be known and what is reality (Clement, Demonque, Hansen, Kahn 2000, 84).

So, while all men accept the reality of objects, which are perceptible to their senses, Plato following the logic of Socrates, has an attitude of superiority over people who believe that in order to become real things must be palpable. Socrates also stated that he who sees only with his eyes is blind or he who sees sunlight can be blind (freedom being too strong for the cave from which he came out) and this idea is most often mentioned in connection with the allegory of the cave (Republic 7. 514a), which is a paradoxical resemblance in which Socrates argues that the invisible world is the most intelligible („noeton”) and that the visible world („(h) oraton”) is the least possible for knowledge, and that more obscure (Muscă, Baumgarten 2006, 100).

In Plato's view, the individual good is subordinated to the collective good, the good of the city and derives from science, and his ethics are theoretically subordinated to politics. In order to sustain an eternal stability of values in the pattern of the world of Ideas that must be realized as faithfully as possible in this world of becoming, Plato imagines an ideal city in the way of what will later be the utopias of the modern world.

Perhaps he excessively insists on the totalitarian aspect of the Platonic state, forgetting its so open ideas - such as those concerning equality between women and men - and its political experience as an adviser to a tyrant, which led to the end of his career another turn of his political conception. What is worth remembering from this political part of Platonic doctrine is exactly what the political world forgets today: that the true state and political administration can function only in the service of values, in an attempt to shape this world of appearances and becoming, as much as possible according to the higher rational order of the world of Ideas (www.scritub.com).

For the sphere of ideas, Plato uses metaphorical expressions, resorts to myth, and all this to reveal that ideas had their place, that they would be a special world, unique, in itself, motionless. It would be, therefore, the world of ideas or the realm of ideas. It is the place of „Being itself, which has neither form, nor color, nor can be touched, which can only be contemplated by the helm of the soul, namely the intellect ...” (Annas 1999, 52).

This theory is, for Plato, the culmination of his work. It contains Platonic epistemology and metaphysics (Rotaru 2005, 144-162). For us, the concept of idea is something we have in mind, but for Plato ideas are something outside of space and time. The physical world is only an imitation of the true Idea, of the Real.

The theory of ideas represents the essence and the culmination of Platonic philosophy, although we do not find this concept explicitly or in a systematic way, in any of its dialogues. Pure thinking is what detaches you from the sensory world, thus finding what is real, eternal, undeveloped and unchanged, and all ideas are embodied in an ultimate ideal, in a principle of perfection which he calls, the *Idea of Good* (Muscă, Baumgarten 2006, 111).

2. Defining the value of Good in Plato's conception

The *idea of Good*, in Plato's vision, is best found in his famous masterpiece, *The Republic*. He himself reproduces this idea in the third part of the work: „Because you have often heard from me that the idea of the Good is sufficient. And if we do not know her, even if we know everything else as well as possible, again you understand that in her absence, we do not know all the others of any use, as we could not truly possess anything in the absence of the Good” (Platon 1986, 303, 505a.)

The supreme goal of knowledge, which consists in an effort of upliftment-remembrance towards the contemplation of absolute realities, is the Idea of Good, the supreme goal towards which all that is tends. It is easy to see that in the Platonic view the knowledge of all other things is useless without the knowledge of the Idea of Good, and no one will appreciate the just and beautiful things if he does not know that they are good things:

„Or do you think it is worthwhile to possess everything, when you are not in possession of the Good? Or to have ideas about everything, lacking the Good, so not to think of anything beautiful and good?” „Zeus”, he answered, „I do not believe!” ...„I believe,” I said, „that the just and beautiful, but of which it is not known how good they are, could not be too well guarded to the one who ignores this aspect. I suppose none of these will be sufficiently known before the knowledge of the Good” (Platon 1986, 303-304).

When we analyze the ideas from Plato's perspective, we will notice that they represent the prototypes, models, primordial, immutable and even eternal forms of all beings, as well as things existing in the world, but also of abstract concepts, such as virtue or good. They also become objective realities, ultimate realities, substances, essences and even perfections.

In the hierarchy of the world of ideas the first place is occupied by the Idea of Good, because Good is the one that elevates the soul, while evil and injustice degrade it. This means that it is better to endure an injustice in life than to do evil. However, the man who knows good will not do evil, because evil means ignorance, just as virtue means knowing good, and happiness consists only in knowing virtue. On the other hand, the aspects of injustice or evil are presented as a disease of the soul, and the one who practices them becomes dissatisfied and unhappy.

From another point of view, to be righteous means to dominate your impulses and impose a measure on your desires; and the science—because it is a true science—of practicing these behaviors is virtue. In this way, the supreme idea of the Good, regulates and explains the course of the Universe, in which everything exists and acts for a purpose - universal harmony.

Knowing the idea of Beauty, Goodness or Justice, meant for Plato as for Socrates, to become good, beautiful and just, and in this way to get as close as possible to the divine. From his point of view, he states that only two ideals are possible for human life: one according to which the ultimate goal of human existence is pleasure and another according to which the Good is the supreme purpose of life.

Virtues such as Good, Beauty, Righteousness, or Harmony are values that belong to man and as such, would be subordinated in turn to a supreme goal, namely the happiness of people, which would make the fear of post-mortem punishment, misery of reincarnation, would push man to avoid evil and to practice Good. However, the motivation and object of love is beauty, and the Idea of Beauty is closely related to the Idea of Good, which is the *supreme ideal* (Banu 1975, XVIII-LXXVIII).

One of the most important ideas taken by Plato from his master, Socrates, is the idea that morality is the most important science. In this sense, the path of Good and Virtue is thus opened by detachment from this world, from all that is impure and degrading, and on this path can pass only the soul, whose essence is thought, through which it can reunite with reality. pure, one can enjoy what is perfect and eternal: a world of Absolute Ideas.

In turn, the supreme happiness presupposes a full identification, a direct contact with the unalterable, which obviously can be achieved only after the detachment of the soul from the body, through death. Until the moment of death, the perfection of ethical life presupposes the determination of the Highest Good, the universal Good, whose knowledge is sufficient for the purification of the soul, based on the foundation that no one is deliberately evil (Cioară Ionel 2011).

In the assent of many researchers of Plato's work, we consider that one of his deepest myths, which illustrates the sensitive-intelligible binomial, but also the transcendence of the idea of Good is the Myth of the Cave, presented by him in Book VII of the Republic dialogue. We can say that

the cave represents the sensitive world, ignorance; prisoners are people in their entirety; chains symbolize prejudices and the limits of the senses; fire represents reason; the shadows on the cave wall signify appearances; human bodies and objects are concepts; the exit from the cave is equivalent to the cognitive approach in metaphysical plan; the sun is nothing but the Supreme Idea of Good. This grandiose comparison is given by Plato himself: „Then be careful - I said - that I call the sun the offspring of the Good, the offspring that the Good has conceived similar to himself. For what the Good is in the intelligible place, in relation to both intelligence and intelligibles, the same is the sun to sight and to visible things” (Platon 1986, 307, 508a).

It is very clear that the world as a whole is a huge cave, a cosmic prison in which human beings are handcuffed, where the only one who manages to get out of the cave, to episodically contemplate this intelligible sun, the idea of the Supreme Good, is the *man of genius*. His problem lies in the fact that by the nature of his nature, he cannot hide this experience and returns to the cave to share with his comrades what he saw. All this return to notify them, this audacity to reveal the ultimate essence of things, will not go unpunished by those who are content with the semi-dark space of shadows. This explains the fact that the exceptional man is always envied, marginalized, persecuted, and not infrequently licked by those around him.

In a way, Plato emphasizes that the Idea of Good can produce effects in the sentient world, representing the cause of all that is right and good in this world. On the other hand, the Idea of Good is characterized as an entity belonging to the intelligible world. This is how the question can be asked: *How can something that belongs to the intelligible have effects on the sensitive world, given the strict separation between the two worlds?*

The most convenient answer may be that the Idea of Good is the formal cause of the good things in the sensible world, it being the formal cause of the good of other ideas, which in turn function as formal causes of good things. At the same time, in order to have this function, the Idea of Good depends on cooperating with an effective cause, in this case a divine or human mind, which, on the one hand, belongs to the sentient world, and on the other hand has access to the world. intelligible through his faculty of thought. In this way, we can explain why Plato emphasizes and is so incisive

about the importance of knowing the Idea of Good, because it establishes a link between our ability to know and the things known through this faculty. (Seel 2010).

This point of congruence is called „truth” and „reality”, the Idea of Good being the cause of our faculty of knowledge, true science, which on the scale of values occupies the highest position, higher than knowledge and truth and above Being, as we find written in the Republic: „He admits that this entity, which offers the truth for the objects to be known and the possibility to know for the knower, is the idea of the Good. Think of it as the cause of knowledge and truth, understood as the object of knowledge. Thus both knowledge and truth are beautiful; but if you had in mind something even more beautiful than they, you would judge properly. For just as, beyond, light and sight, though it is right to be regarded as the sun, are not to be regarded as the sun, so here it is right that these two—truth and knowledge—should not be regarded as good, none” (Platon 1986, 308, 509a).

For the prolific philosopher, the Idea of Good is the cause of the existence and essence of all beings in the intelligible world. Some specialists have taken the analogy of the Sun too far, so much so that they have gone so far as to say that the Idea of Good is the very effective cause that generated the essences. This theory would be in contradiction with the thesis that essences are eternal, therefore they cannot be created or destroyed. Proponents that the Idea of Good is in fact the highest point reached by an upward movement, explain Plato’s statement that the Idea of Good is the highest class in the hierarchy of essences, it is being in its purest and simplest form.

Thus it shares its being with all the other essences that participate in it. However, while all other essences depend on it in their being, the idea of Good does not depend on anything else, it transcends all other essences in dignity and power. If the Idea of Good contains or represents the form of the logical principles according to which the system of essences is interpreted and if following the dialectical method we can reach the truth, it means that the reality of the intelligible world is based on the same principles. In this sense, we can say that when the Greek philosopher states that the Idea of Good is „the most splendid of beings, „we should understand that the beings to whom it refers are in fact „the things which participate in the Idea of Being” (Seel 2010).

There is nothing contradictory in stating that, on the one hand, the Idea of Good is beyond the essences and at the same time is *the most splendid of beings*. Not all entities that populate the intelligible world are essences. Moreover, if the Idea of Good is not the highest of the classes, then there would be no reason to claim that all essences are of the same nature as the Good.

In support of these ideas comes even Plato's statement in the Republic: „But my opinions are that in the realm of the intelligible, above all is the idea of the Good, that it is difficult to see, but that, once seen, it must be conceived as being the cause of all that is just and beautiful; it begets in the visible realm and in its realm, and in the intelligible realm, it itself reigns, producing truth and intellect; and again, I think that anyone who wants to do something thoughtful in private or public life must contemplate it” (Platon 1986, 316, 518a).

3. The morality of the Good and the concept of divinity from the Platonic perspective

Then there is an interpretation in the Christian spirit of the *Myth of the Cave*, the situation could complicate the argument to take care until it can be preserved and overturned in an ontological manner, then in the Platonic myth, one of the prisoners manages to get rid of the chains and go out, human genius, in Christianity *the sun enters the cave*, let itself be killed by some of the chained, but offering through His sacrifice can be the other beings blocked to go out, let us rejoice not only of the eternal Sunlight, but clear to become themselves can be a sun.

The sensitive universe is seen by Plato as a living being, built according to mathematical and musical proportions, or a living faith created by a *Demiurge*, care concerns the world of ideas or pure essences. Thus, the *Demiurge* facing this world is nothing, when the world of care ideas are under the species of the uncreated, the ideas are above the *Demiurge*, so transcendent, still superior.

Theologian Gregory Palamas comes to Plato's support, supporting every resource that does not require the expression or paradigm of divinity and solving the problem participates in the distinction and continuity of care if he must give him confidence and his energies. Thus, man deifies himself in front, by participation, by grace (OrthodoxWiki n.d.).

The analogical depth, the distinction between the intelligible and visible world of the world, the transcendence of the ideas of Good towards the paradigm and the sensible world, *The idea of one*, the mechanism of participation, the immortality of the soul or the praise of virtues, to Plato a Christian *avant la lettre*, patristic author, or in any case, a special speculative genius of foresight to prepare the logical, rational and psychological humanity for the Christic counterpoint, a moment that is both musical, historical and metaphysical (Chira Vasile 2012).

In this sense, the Good Idea is anointed in the creation of the empirical world and also plays a particularly important role in creating an aspect that can be considered better in this world. Thus, no doubt, nothing is more important in his soul, and the creation of the soul of the world and other souls are also the work of the ideas of Good.

The premise from the start, we can easily conclude how in care Plato conceives the mediation between the divine and the human mind, being available while their nature, human beings must achieve good things, as it should be stated: „I said I, that, as the eye is not able to return spread within the darkness, together with the whole body, this way can present in the soul of each one, as well as the organ through which every one knows, we must be able to answer with the whole soul within the realm of becoming, until the moment when one can reach confidentiality about what is and its great radiance. That’s good, isn’t it?” (Platon 1986, 317, 518a).

Then we talk about Plato’s vision, this is a metaphysics, in the care of the world is ordered by purposes to make universal references and for the care of good and evil are considered as absolute entities. Plato’s main commentaries and philosophies are in agreement because, for this, the Divinity is identical with the Idea of Good, many of the things of care can no longer exist or can deify and be especially or deify personally, although it can keep that Plato thinks of the Divinity as a personal being.

According to the freedom of will, it is over time its care, even when it can be destined in the world, by the fact that it can allow it good or evil; their virtue and vice bear a reward in themselves: the virtuous man who is indulged in nostalgia for accomplishment, may be possible, lie with the Divinity, is happy, while the same care commits injustice, may receive punishment before him is unfortunate. This is how Plato’s idea was born, which raises the

question of man's inner values. Philosophy is also mastered by unwavering conviction that God does not leave the virtuous and that it is not possible to receive punishment by being unhappy inside; he can increase the punishment if he is here, then in the world beyond. So punishment is a pedagogical role in Plato's thinking. (<http://www.crestinortodox.ro/filozofia-platonica-religiei>)

Good becomes motor care gives strength and can use cognitive intellect. The faculty through which the spirit takes note of transcendence, in care contemplates the idea of the supreme Good, is the contemplative intellect. In fact, it is the faculty of knowing spontaneity will be responsible in Christian mystical ecstatic experience, union with divine light, with uncreated energetic care emanating like rays from the divine Being. The theologian Dionysius the Areopagite will later identify the Platonic idea of the Good with the Surface of God (Chira Vasile 2012).

We can conclude this foray into divinity, emphasizing that Plato holds the view that Divinity is the totality of perfection, is unchanging and good: it is the origin of good in the world and the world is the manifestation of the idea of good. Through this idea Plato rises to a very high conception of the Divinity, which in him is confused with the Idea of the absolute Good, as the origin of all ideas and as the only creative power, which masters both the macrocosm and the microcosm. Not everyone has access to this knowledge, for the knowledge of this power is bestowed only on those who are capable of inner enlightenment and resemblance to it.

4. Ethical analysis of the Idea of Good from the perspective of Gerhard Seel

Researcher Gerhard Seel, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Bern, Switzerland, summarizes the most important features of the Idea of Good in Plato's conception, making robot portraits of the characteristics of knowledge or the axiological role of the Idea of Good, as well as a triple comparison of the Sun, the Line and the Cave in Plato's work. He states that when we begin a study of Plato's Idea of Good, it would seem that the data we have available in his work are contradictory, or so some scholars believe, but the situation is ambiguous, studies on the work of the philosopher remain open (Seel 2010).

In itself, the presentation of the Idea of Good may seem unclear, either because it is segmented into three arguments, most likely complementary, or because, within each, the central point is an analogical image of Good, Socrates refusing to try to define it together with its interlocutors (cf. 506e1). The three analogies are the following: the analogy with the sun (507a-9c), the split line (509d-11e) and the resemblance to the cave (514a-7c). Each of them is accompanied by explanations given in the form of dialectical conversation, but this does not hide the fact that we are witnessing Plato's most convincing attempt to fix a principle of his philosophy.

The tables below make robotic portraits of the Idea of Good and normally contain a number of characteristic features of the individual concerned. In order to see if there is such a contradiction in the characterization of Plato's Idea of Good, Gerhard Seel (2005) proposes the analysis of the phenomenon in question, by researching and comparing the tables below:

Characteristics regarding the knowledge of the Idea of Good
1. The idea of good is the most important object of study (megiston mathema) (505A).
1.1 Without knowing by virtue of which just and beautiful things are good, things themselves are impossible to know (506A).
1.2 Knowing all other things is useless without knowing the Idea of Good (505A-B).
1.2.1 No one will appreciate fair and beautiful things unless he knows that they are good things (506A).
1.2.2 Whoever wishes to handle personal or public affairs in an intelligent / prudent manner (emprhronôs) must first have the knowledge of the Good (517c).
1.2.3 The city-state will be perfectly organized if the people in charge know that fair and beautiful things are good (506B).
1.3 No one knows enough the Idea of Good (505E), not even Socrates (505A, 506C).
1.3.1 Socrates has an opinion on the Idea of Good (506E).
1.4 The correspondent of the Idea of Good, according to the three comparisons (of the Sun, of the Line, of the Cave) is characterized as a „descendant” of the „Good itself” and „very similar” to it (506E, 507A). Compare also 517C.

The characteristics regarding the axiological role of the Idea of Good
2. The Idea of Good, or the Good itself, is only an Idea, in comparison with the „multitude” of good things (its achievements in the sensible world, n.t.), being the principle underlying every (good) thing (507B).
2.1 Good is the principle that makes just things or things used in establishing their justice useful and beneficial (chresma kai ôphelima) (505A).
2.2 No gain is useful or beneficial without the Idea of Good (505B).
2.3 Without possession of good things no possession is beneficial (505B).
3. Everything we do, we do for the sake of good things (505E).
3.1 No one is satisfied with a possession that is only good in appearance, because we are all looking for the really good things (505D).
The characteristics of the Idea of Good established on the basis of the 3 comparisons
A. The Sun
4. The Idea of Good establishes a connection between our ability to know and the things known through this faculty
4.1 This point of connection is called „truth” and „reality” (on) (508D).
5. The idea of Good is the cause of our faculty of knowledge (508E, 509A).
5.1 Knowledge and truth resemble goodness, but are not identical with it.
6. The objects of knowledge that belong to the realm of the conceivable owe their existence (einai) and essence (ousia) to the Idea of Good (509B).
7. The idea of the Good is not an essence, but is situated beyond the realm of essences (ousia), due to its majesty and power (509B).
7.1 The Idea of Good is the brightest of beings (tou ontos) (518C).
8. On the scale of values, the Idea of Good occupies the highest position, higher than knowledge and truth (508E-509A) and higher than Being (ousia) (509B).
B. Line (divided, n.t.)
We cannot be sure that this analogy adds a new element to the already established characteristics of the Idea of Good, although it is meant to complete the parallel between the Sun and Good (509C). In fact, neither the Sun nor the Idea of Good are mentioned in that analogy. Because (a) The line clarifies the relationship between the realm of sensible objects and that of the objects of thought and the specific ways in which we come to know them, and (b) The sun belongs to the first realm, while the Idea of Good is part of the second, Good must be located somewhere in the second domain. However, it is impossible to decide, based solely on the analogy of the Line, where exactly it is located. Some scholars have identified the Idea of Good with the non-hypothetical principle of all things, which is reached by the dialectical method, which can be understood only by reason itself (auto ho logos) (510B, 511B). The fact is doubtful; however, if we consider this hypothesis, we could add another feature of the Idea of Good

9. The Idea of Good is the highest principle which is presupposed by all other things, and has no other entity as its principle (511B).
9.1 The idea of Good can be known by following the dialectical method, for example, by asking in each case what is required to accept a hypothesis proposed by science (511B).
9.2 Starting from the Idea of Good, reason can reconstruct and „deduce“, so to speak, all the previous hypotheses (511B).
C. The Cave
The Comparison of the Cave does not give us much new information on the Idea of Good, because in the fragment devoted to this subject only the development of what has already been said in the comparison of the Sun takes place. Most of the new elements brought to the allegory of the Cave concern the way we come to know the Idea of Good.
10. Knowing the intelligible world is not our “normal” way of knowing.
10.1 In order to know the intelligible world we must deviate our minds from things in the world of the senses (515B).
10.2 The first attempt to know things in the intelligible world is painful and will not succeed.
10.3 These things happen because the environment necessary to know these things, truth and reality, is so powerful that it “overwhelms” our ability to know (515B-516A).
10.4 Thus, we need a gradual adaptation to the new situation, starting with the objects placed at the beginning of section three of the Line, continuing with those placed in the fourth section of the Line and ending with the knowledge of the Idea of Good (516A-B, 517B).
11. We are able to know the Idea of Good by itself (516B).
11.1 We are able to know the place that the Idea of Good occupies in the intelligible world (<i>en tei hautou chôrai</i>) (516B).
11.2 We are finally able to draw some conclusions about the Idea of Good (516B)
12. The Good Idea is the principle of order and organization of all things in the intelligible world.
13. The idea of Good is, in a way, the cause (<i>aition</i>) of all things in the intelligible world (516B).
14. The idea of Good is the cause (<i>aition</i>) of all that is just and beautiful (517C).
15. The idea of Good produces the sun and light in the visible world (517C).
16. The idea of Good is the mistress (<i>curia</i>) of the intelligible world; thus, it provides truth and knowledge (517C) [...]

The scientist's conclusion

„One thing is certain: we do not know exactly what Plato's conception of the Idea of Good was. If we had known, probably the fourth conference „A. G. Leventis” would not have taken place and, if it had taken place, the works would have looked quite different.

However, as is well known, Plato left us clues as to how he conceived the Idea of Good. What we find in the Republic, the three famous figures or comparisons, of the Sun, the Line and the Cave, are in fact robot portraits that we can use to identify the Idea of Good.

If these characteristics, taken together, are sufficiently clear, there should be - in an ideal situation - only one individual corresponding to the given description. However, let us imagine that the data available to the police are contradictory. In this case, they have no chance of a successful investigation.

This is exactly the situation we are in when we start the investigation into Plato's Idea of Good, or so some scholars believe.” (Seel 2005)

Conclusions

In the end we can say that the ultimate goal of all Platonic thought is to promote values: Good, Beauty, Righteousness, Harmony of the non-contradictory, and the attainment of Good - the highest aspiration of any philosopher - is obtained by himself if, following the path of true knowledge, appeals to its rational faculties and at the same time to Beauty or Law, harmonized by the breath of the mathematical order (Banu 1975, cap. XVIII--LXXVIII)

If we carefully analyze Plato's metaphysics, we can easily see that the Greek philosopher proclaims the impossibility of the existence in this world of the ultimate foundation or cause, which is situated in a higher, ideal world. From this vision arose the theory of the two worlds or realities. A producing world, that of Ideas, the true reality, known through the eye of thought, the world of eternal prototypes; and the produced world is the sensible world, the world of appearances. Ideas form a logical system subordinated to a supreme Idea which is the Idea of Good.

What forms the real world is the pure thinking or thinking through which you detach yourself from the sensory world, thus finding what is real, eternal, undeveloped and unchanged, and all ideas are summed up in an ultimate ideal which he calls Good - the principle of perfection (Vlad 2011, 135). There are many who have developed their academic personality around the world of Plato's ideas. As an example, René Descartes argued that an idea is „that which is immediately conceived by the human spirit”, while John Locke presented the idea as „a direct object of the mind, that is, perceived and existing nearby.”

The difficulties of understanding the term idea appear with the question of the nature (objective or subjective) and at the same time of the origin (empirical or transcendental) of the so-called entity. For Kant's rationalism, understanding must be conceived rather in terms of organizational rules and principles, so that the idea of moral duty or justice is not only general, but becomes universal.

As for Tatarkiewicz, he concludes: „The concept of beauty did not differ much from a concept of the widely understood good. Plato could - and did - use the terms interchangeably. His banquet is subtitled about good, but about beauty. What he says there about the idea of beauty coincides with what his other dialogues say about the idea of good. This was not Plato's personal opinion, but the generally accepted opinion of the ancients” (Tatarkiewicz 1978, 171-195).

I have provided a small example of understanding the notion of Idea from the perspective of some thinkers representative of human society, of the complexity that the depth of the term bears. Moreover, it is very important to understand that when we speak of the Idea of Good in Plato's vision, we are not talking about a moral virtue, although the Good in general is a moral value, but this Platonic Good is „greater than justice and than any other virtue” (Republic 504d) (Demos 1937, 245-275).

All the commentators of Platonic philosophy agree that, for Plato, the Divinity is identical with the Idea of Good, with which there can be no other divinity and especially a personal divinity, although sometimes it would seem that Plato thinks the Divinity as being a personal being. What gives us this impression is the fact that, being a poet and a prophet, he can only think of

the Divinity as a person. But still, if we consider Platonic philosophy as a whole, then we must say that for Plato, the Divinity remains a simple Idea. It is *the universal Nous* (Crestinortodox 2012).

To know 'how best to live' we must know what is 'best'. In contrast to the subjectivist or the relativist, Plato supposed that evaluative qualities really belong to the object that is valued. Thus we call something 'beautiful' not because we are pleased by it, but because it genuinely has, independent of being appreciated, the quality of beauty (Platon 1986, 243).

Values are natural and objective. From his early days, Plato supposes therefore that what is valuable can be calculated and assessed in a decisive way. Plato concludes, therefore, that over and above sensible objects there exist entities that give absolute understanding of values. These are the Forms, cognitively reliable, pure instantiations, or absolutes, of value. They provide us with the knowledge of what is best.

In Plato's view of virtue, too, there is a superficial uniformity. In the early dialogues he claims that the virtues - wisdom, temperance, justice, piety and courage - are a unity, held together by the central function of wisdom. The wise man knows what is right and what is wrong; and does what is right and eschews what is wrong - this is the skill of virtue. In the Republic, the rule of reason is likewise the cohesive factor - true virtue only and always occurs in the person whose reason is in charge. Thus, throughout his life Plato is, in one way or another, committed to the Socratic dictum *virtue is knowledge* (Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*: Book VII).

The alternative is to explore our intuitions for a new conception of happiness free from the dangers of contingency. That is exactly what Plato offers us - the freedom of 'peace of mind'. Taking it as self-evident that we all pursue happiness he sees himself as justified in doing moral philosophy, and his philosopher-kings as justified in paternalistic activity, provided they maximise the happiness of the individual. (Mackenzie Mary Margaret, 88)

At the height of his philosophical thinking, in the second book of the *State* and in „Phaidros”, Plato represents the view that the Divinity is the totality of perfection, it is unchanging and good: it is the origin of good in the world and the world is the manifestation of the idea of good. Through this idea Plato rises to a high moral moral conception of the Divinity, which

in him is confused with the Idea of the absolute Good, as the origin of all ideas and as the only creative power, which dominates both the macrocosm and the microcosm. The knowledge of this power is destined only to those who are capable of inner enlightenment and its resemblance (Valeriu 2016).

At the end of this paper, although we cannot say with a „millimetric” accuracy that represents the Idea of Good in Plato’s conception, the interrogative hypothesis proposed at the very beginning of the study, not being 100% solved, still proposed a tiny demonstration by the references of the authors cited in this paper and by the logic approached.

Personally, I believe that the Idea of Good represents for Plato, the apogee of his thinking. If for us, the concept of idea is something we have in mind, for Plato ideas are something outside of space and time. The physical world is only an imitation of the true Idea, of the Real, and the theory of ideas represents the essence and culmination of Platonic philosophy, although it is not an explicit concept in his work.

It acts in such a way as to treat humanity in one’s own person or in another’s, always as a goal and never only as a means. The principle of altruism, or the principle of „the greatest happiness of the other” is meant to restore equality between people.

Plato will try to make an ideal icon of a society in terms of its own philosophy through its socio-political utopia that is recommended both as a refuge and as compensation in relation to the given reality.

Pure thinking is what detaches you from the sensory world, thus finding what is real, eternal, undeveloped and unchanged, and all ideas are embedded in an ultimate ideal, in a principle of perfection that the Athenian philosopher calls simple: The Idea of Good ... and yet it’s so complex.

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