

Plato's Metaphysical Development before Middle Period Dialogues

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Abstract

Regarding the relation of Plato's early and middle period dialogues, scholars have been divided to two opposing groups: unitarists and developmentalists. While developmentalists try to prove that there are some noticeable and even fundamental differences between Plato's early and middle period dialogues, the unitarists assert that there is no essential difference in there. The main goal of this article is to suggest that some of Plato's ontological as well as epistemological principles change, both radically and fundamentally, between the early and middle period dialogues. Though this is a kind of strengthening the developmentalistic approach corresponding the relation of the early and middle period dialogues, based on the fact that what is to be proved here is a essential development in Plato's ontology and his epistemology, by expanding the grounds of development to the ontological and epistemological principles, it hints to a more profound development. The fact that the bipolar and split knowledge and being of the early period dialogues give way to the tripartite and bound knowledge and being of the middle period dialogues indicates the development of the notions of being and knowledge in Plato's philosophy before the dialogues of the middle period.

Keywords

Plato; early dialogues; middle dialogues; being; knowledge; development

Introduction

The differences between two groups of the early and middle period dialogues have always been a matter of dispute. Whereas the developmentalists like Vlastos, Silverman (2002), Teloh (1981), Dancy (2004) and Rickless (2007)¹ think that from the early to the middle dialogues Plato's philosophy changes, at least in some essential points, the unitarists² like Kahn, Cherniss and Shorey believe that there happens no development and the differences must be taken as natural, ignorable and even pedagogic.³

In his well-known article, *Socrates contra Socrates in PLATO*, Vlastos lists ten theses of difference between two groups of dialogues. The first group which includes Plato's early dialogues he divides to 'elenctic' (*Apology*, *Charmides*, *Crito*, *Euthyphro*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Minor*, *Ion*, *Laches*, *Protagoras* and *Republic I*) and 'transitional' (*Euthydemus*, *Hippias Major*, *Lysis*, *Menexenus* and *Meno*) dialogues.

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These transitional come after all the elenctic dialogues and before all the dialogues of the second group which compose Plato's middle period dialogues, including (with Vlastos' chronological order) *Cratylus*, *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Republic II-X*, *Phaedrus*, *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus* (1991, 46-49). Vlastos asserts strictly that his list of differences are 'so diverse in content and method that they contrast as sharply with one another as with any third philosophy you care to mention, beginning with Aristotole's' (ibid, 46). Vlastos' list of differences between two Socrateses⁴ is considered a view breaking sharply between the early and the middle dialogues.⁵ Besides all ten differences between the two Socrateses in Vlastos' list that can be supportive for our doctrine here, we intend to focus on some ontological as well as epistemological distinctions that have not completely been discussed hitherto.

Contrary to the developmentalist theory of Vlastos, unitarian theory of Charles Kahn wishes to eliminate any substantial difference between the early and the middle dialogues. He distinguishes seven 'pre-middle' or 'threshold' dialogues including *Laches*, *Charmides*, *Euthyphro*, *Protagoras*, *Meno*, *Lysis* and *Euthydemus* from the other Socratic dialogues which he calls 'earliest group' (1996, 41). The threshold dialogues, Kahn thinks, 'embarke upon a sustained project' that is to reach to its climax in the middle period dialogues, namely *Phaedo*, *Symposium* and *Republic*. Believing in that there is no 'fundamental shift' between the early and middle dialogues (ibid, 40), Kahn thinks the Socratic dialogues are just the 'first stage' with a 'deliberate silence' towards the theories of later periods (ibid, 339). One of the reasons of the surprising fact that Plato gives no hint of the metaphysics and epistemology of the Forms in the early dialogues, he thinks, is the pedagogical advantages of *aporia*. He thinks that Plato 'obscurely', and mostly because of education, hinted to some doctrines and conceptions in his early dialogues and with the aim of clarifying them only in the later ones⁶ (ibid, 66). The seven threshold dialogues, Kahn asserts, 'had been designed from the first' to prepare the pupils and readers for the views expounded in the middle period dialogues⁷ (ibid, 59-60).

To show that the differences of the two Socrateses⁸ of the early and middle period dialogue are in their onto-epistemological grounds and thence cannot be explained by a unitaristic view, we try to draw the ontological and epistemological principles of the early dialogues in the first part below in order to show, in the second part, that those principles have been developed in the middle period dialogues.

A. The Onto-Epistemologic Principles of the Early Dialogues

Socratic dialogues are paradoxical about knowledge because while being knowledge-oriented always searching for knowledge,⁹ they deny it and even never discuss it directly.¹⁰ Three elements of Socrates' way of searching Knowledge throughout the early dialogues, i.e. Socratic 'what is X?' question, his disavowal of knowledge and his elenctic method combined together produce something like a circle which works, more or less, in the same way in these dialogues. Though this circle is an embaressing inquiry always resulting in ignorance instead of knowledge,

its motivation is surprisingly Socrates' passionate enthusiasm for knowledge, an intensive love of wisdom. The starting point of this circle is Socrates' confession of having no knowledge which might be explicitly asserted or presupposed, maybe because it was one of the famous characteristics of Socrates; a confession always paradoxically accompanied with his intense longing for knowledge (e.g., *Gorgias* 505e4-5). Every time Socrates encounters with someone who thinks he knows something (οἶταί τι εἰδέναι) (*Apology* 21d5) and tries to examine him. This examination seems to be the simplest one asking just what it is that he knows. Socrates' *elenchus*, therefore, is always connected with 'what is X?' (τίς ποτέ ἐστίν) question,¹¹ a question that most of the early dialogues of Plato are concerned with; 'what is courage?' in the *Laches*, 'what is piety?' in *Euthydemus*, 'what is temperance?' in *Charmides* and 'what is beauty?' in *Hippias Major*. This question we call here 'Socratic question' and probably is the very question the historical Socrates used to employ,¹² is tightly interrelated with both his disavowal and his *elenchus*. He disclaims knowledge because he cannot find the answer to the question himself and he rejects others' since they cannot offer the correct answer too. Every interlocutor can claim he knows X, if and only if he can answer the Socratic question. Otherwise, he is more of an ignorant than of a knower of τί ποτέ ἐστὶ X. Knowing the answer to this question is, thus, knowledge's criterion for Socrates. Having found out that he cannot answer what it is which he would claim to know, the interlocutor comes to the point Socrates was there at the beginning. The least advantage of this circle is that he becomes as wise as Socrates does about the subject, becoming aware that he does not know it. At the end of the circle they are both still at the beginning, not knowing what X is. So let us first take a glance at these three elements.

Socratic disavowal of knowledge is strictly asserted in some passages.¹³ At *Apology* 21b4-5, Socrates says:

I do not know of myself being wise at all (οὔτε μέγα οὔτε σμικρὸν σύννοια ἐμαυτῷ σοφὸς ὢν)¹⁴

Moreover, at 21d4-6:

None of us knows anything worthwhile (καλὸν καὶ γαθὸν εἰδέναι) I do not know (οἶδα) neither do I think I know.

In *Charmides* Socrates speaks about a fear about his probable mistake of thinking that he knows (εἰδέναι) something when he does not (166d1-2). The somehow generalization of this disavowal can be seen in *Gorgias*. After calling his disavowal 'an account that is always the same' (509a4-5), Socrates continues (a5-7):

I say that I do not know (οἶδα) how these things are, but no one I have ever met, like now, who can say anything else without being absurd.

At the end of *Hippias Major* (304d7-8), Socrates affirms his disavowal of knowledge of 'what is X?' this time about the fine:

I do not know (οἶδα) what that is itself (αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὅτι ποτέ ἐστιν).

Some other passages, however, made a number of scholars dubious about Socrates' disavowal. Vlastos mentions *Apology* 29b6-7 as an evidence¹⁵: 'that to do wrong and to disobey one's master, both god and men, I know (οἶδα) to be evil and shameful'. He thinks that if we give this single text 'its full weight' it can suffice to show that Socrates does claim knowledge of a moral truth (1985, 7). Vlastos' claim is not admissible since it would be too strange, I think, for a man like Socrates to violate his disavowal claim just after emphasizing it. We can see his claim just before the already mentioned passage:

And surely it is the most blameworthy ignorance to believe that one knows what one does not know. It is perhaps on this point and in this respect, gentlemen, that I differ from the majority of men and if I were to claim that I am wiser than anyone in anything it would be in this, that, as I have no adequate knowledge (οὐκ εἰδῶς ἱκανῶς) of things in the underworld, so I do not think I have (οὐκ εἰδέναι) (*Apology* 29b1-6)

Vlastos tries to solve what he calls the 'paradox' of Socrates' disavowal of knowledge distinguishing the 'certain' knowledge from 'elenctic' knowledge (1985, 11) and thinking that when Socrates avows knowledge, we must perceive it as an elenctic knowledge, a knowledge its content 'must be propositions he thinks elenctically justifiable' (ibid, 18).¹⁶ Irwin's solution is the distinction of knowledge and belief. He approves that Socrates does not 'explicitly' make such a distinction, but still thinks that Socrates' 'test for knowledge would make it reasonable for him to recognize true belief without knowledge, and his own claims are easily understood if they are claims to true belief alone' (1977, 40). While I agree with Vlastos up to a point, I strongly disagree with Irwin about the early dialogues. As I will try to show below, we are not permitted to consider any kind of distinction within knowledge in Socratic dialogues because only one category of knowledge is alluded to there and the distinction of knowledge and belief thoroughly belongs to the second Socrates. Although no kind of distinction can be admissible here, I think Vlastos' distinction can be accepted only if we regard it as a distinction between knowledge, which is unique and without any, even incomparable, rival, and a semi-idiomatic and ordinary one that is a necessary requirement for any argument, and thus, unavoidable even for someone who does not claim any kind of knowledge. An apparent evidence of this is *Gorgias* 505e6-506a4:

I go through the discussion as I think it is (ὡς ἄν μοι δοκῆ ἔχειν), if any of you do not agree with admissions I am making to myself, you must object and refute

me. For I do not say what I say as I know (οὐδὲ γὰρ τοι ἔγωγε εἰδῶς λέγω ἃ λέγω) but as searching jointly with you (ζητῶ κοινῇ μεθ' ὑμῶν).

The minimal degree of knowledge everyone must have to take part in an argument, conduct it and use the phrase "I know" when it is necessary is what Socrates cannot deny. We can call it *elenctic* knowledge only if we agree that it is not the kind of knowledge that Socrates has always been searching, the one that can be accepted as the answer of Socratic 'what is X?' question. His disavowal of knowledge is applied only to the knowledge which can truly be the answer of Socratic question and pass the elenctic exam; a knowledge that, I believe, is never claimed by first Socrates.

Socrates conducts his method of examining his interlocutors' knowledge, our second element here, by almost the same method repeated in Socratic dialogues. That whether we are allowed to regard all the examinations of Socrates in the early dialogues as based on the same or not has been a matter of dispute. Vlastos himself (1994, 31) distinguished *Euthydemas*, *Lysis*, *Menexenus* and *Hippias Major* from the other Socratic dialogues because he thinks Socrates has lost his faith to *elenchus* in there. Irwin (1977, 38) distinguishes *Apology* and *Crito* where Socrates' own convictions is present. Contrary to some scholars like Benson (2002, 107) who take *elenchus* in all the Socratic dialogues as a unique method, Michelle Carpenter and Ronald M. Polansky (2002, 89-100) argue pro the variety of methods of *elenchus*. Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith (2002, 145-160) even reject such a thing as Socratic *elenchus* which can gather all of the Socrates' various arguments under such a heading. There can be no solution for the problem of *elenchus*, they think, is due to 'the simple reason that there is no such thing as 'the Socratic *elenchos*'"(p.147). Though we consider *elenchus* a somehow determined process and a part of Socratic circle in the early dialogues, all we assume is that whatever differences it might have in different dialogues, it has the same onto-epistemological principles and, thus, we are not going to take it necessarily as a unique method. This method sets out to prove that the interlocutors are as ignorant as Socrates himself is. That whether *elenchus* is constructive, capable of establishing doctrines as Vlastos (1994) or Brickhouse and Smith (1994, 20-21) believe or not¹⁷ is another issue to which this paper is not to claim anything. What is crucial for our discussion here is that *elenchus* does not reach to the very knowledge Socrates is looking for. This is strictly against Irwin who thinks that not only *elenchus* leads to positive results, 'it should even yield knowledge to match Socrates' conditions'(1977, 68, cf. 48). He does not explain where and how they really yield to that kind of knowledge.

He explains his elenctic method in his apology in the court (*Apology* 21-22), that how he used to examine wise men, politicians, poets and all those who had the highest reputation for their knowledge and every time found that they have no knowledge. If we accept, as I strongly do, that Socrates' disavowal of his knowledge

is not irony, it might seem more reasonable to agree that the process that has that disavowal as its first step cannot be irony as well.

The key of the circle which can explain why Socrates disclaims knowledge and how he can reject others' claim of having any kind of knowledge lies in the third element, Socratic question. In *Hippias Major* (287c1-2), Socrates asks: 'Is it not by Justice that just people are Just? (ἄρ' οὐ δικαιοσύνη δίκαιοί εἰσιν οἱ δίκαιοι). He insists at 294b1 that they were searching for that by which (ᾧ) all beautiful things are beautiful (cf. b4-5, 8). At *Euthyphro* 6d10-11 it is said that the Socratic question is waiting for 'the form itself (αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος) by which (ᾧ) all the pious actions are pious; and at 6d11-e1:

Through one form (ποῦ μιᾷ ἰδέᾳ) impious actions are impious and pious actions pious.

Since the X itself is that by which X is X, knowing 'X itself' is the only way of knowing X. It is probably because of this that Socrates makes the distinction between the *ousia* as a right answer to the question and effect as a wrong one:

I am afraid, Euthyphro, that when you were asked what piety is (τὸ ὅσιον ὅτι ποτ' ἐστίν) you did not wish to make clear its nature itself (οὐσίαν ... αὐτοῦ) to me, but you said some effect (πάθος) about it. (*Euthp.* 11a6-9)

1. Knowledge of what X is

Now it is time to look for the onto-epistemological principles¹⁸ of Socratic circle and its three elements. It cannot reasonably be expected from the first Socrates to present us explicitly and clearly formulated principles of his onto-epistemology¹⁹ when such explications cannot be found even in the second Socrates who has some obviously positive theoris. Since there must be some principles underlying this first systematic inquiry of knowledge, we must seek to them and be satisfied with elicitation of the first Socrates' principle. What will be drawn out as his principles cannot and must not, thus, be taken as very fix and dogmatic principles. Some very slightest principles and grounds suffice for our purposes here. The first principle that is the *prima facie* significance of the Socratic question and his implementation of all those elenctic arguments I call the principle of 'Knowledge of What X is' (KWX):

KWX *To know X, it is required to know what X is.*

Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 1078b23-25, 27-29, 987b4-8) takes Plato's τί ἐστι question as seeking the definition of a thing that is the same as historical Socrates' search but applying to a different field. That Plato's 'what is X?' question was a search for definition became the prevailed understanding of this question up to now.²⁰ I am going neither to discuss the answer of Socratic question²¹ nor to challenge taking it as definition. What I am to insist is that knowledge is attached

firmly to the answer of the question: Knowledge of X is not anything but the knowledge of what X is. It entails, certainly, the priority of this knowledge to any other kind of knowledge about X but it also has something more fundamental about the relation of knowledge and Socratic question. Socrates' exclusive focus on the answer of his question can authorize the consideration of such an essential role for KWX in his epistemology. The total rejection of his interlocutors' knowledge when they are unable to answer the question can be regarded as a strong evidence for it. Socrates' elenctic method and his rejection of others' knowledge in the early dialogues, which all end aporetically with no one accepted as knower and nothing as knowledge, prevent us from finding any positive evidence for this. We have to be content, therefore, of negative evidences which, I think, can be found wherever Socrates rejects his interlocutors' knowledge when they are not able to give an acceptable answer to his 'what is X?' question.

2. Bipolar Epistemology

Socrates' rejection of his interlocutors' knowledge has another epistemological principle as its basis. Let me call this principle 'Bipolar Epistemology' (BE):

BE *There is no third way besides knowledge and Ignorance.*

BE says that about every object of knowledge there are only two subjective statuses: knowledge and Ignorance. Socrates' disavowal, however, says nothing but that he is ignorant of knowledge of X because he does not know what X is. This means that BE is presupposed here. Socrates' elenchus and his rejection of interlocutors' having any kind of knowledge are the necessary results of the fact that he does not let any third way besides knowledge and ignorance. The first Socrates never let anyone partly know X or have a true opinion about it, as he would not let anyone know anything about X when he did not know what X is.²²

3. Bipolar Ontology

The principle of BE in first Socrates' epistemology is parallel to another principle in his ontology. Plato's bipolar distinction between being and not being is as strict and perfect as his distinction between knowledge and ignorance. This principle I shall call the principle of 'Bipolar Ontology' (BO):

BO *Being is and not being is not.*

BO is apparently the same with the well-known Parmenidean Principle of being and not being (cf. Diels-Kranz (DK) Fr. 2.2-5). Euthydemus' statement against the possibility of false knowledge can be good evidence for this principle:

The things which are not surely do not exist (τὰ δὲ μὴ ὄντα ... ἄλλο τι ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν). (*Euthydemus* 284b3-4)

He continues (b4-5):

There is nowhere for not being to be there (οὐν οὐδαμοῦ τά γε μὴ ὄντα ὄντα ἔστιν).

That BE does not let true opinion as a third option besides knowledge and ignorance seems to be related to BO's rejecting a third option besides being and not being, which is itself the basis of the impossibility of false belief. Socrates' elaborate discussion of the problem of false belief in *Theatetus* that leads to a more decisive discussion and finally to some solutions in *Sophist* can make our consideration of BO for the first group of dialogues authentic.

4. &5. Split Knowledge and Split Being

The fourth principle I shall call the principle of 'Split Knowledge' (SK):

SK *Knowledge of X is separated from any other knowledge (of anything else) as if the whole knowledge is split to various parts.*

This Principle is hinted and criticized as Socrates' way of treating with knowledge in *Hippias Major*:²³

But Socrates, you do not contemplate the entireties of things, nor do people you have used to talk with (τὰ μὲν ὅλα τῶν πραγμάτων οὐ σκοπεῖς, οὐδ' ἐκεῖνοι οἷς σὺ εἶωθας διαλέγεσθαι). (301b2-4)

Contrary to Rankin who regards the passage as 'antilogical, almost eristic in tone rather than presenting a serious philosophy of being' (1983, 54), I think it can be taken as serious. Hippias criticizes Socrates that he does not contemplate (σκοπεῖς) the entireties of things (ὅλα τῶν πραγμάτων), a critique which Socrates is not its only subject but all those whom Socrates accustomed to talk with (ἐκεῖνοι οἷς σὺ εἶωθας διαλέγεσθαι). This last phrase, I think, extends this critic beyond this dialogue to other Socratic dialogues. Hippias' use of the perfect tense of the verb ἔθω (to be accustomed) is a good evidence of this extension. We can get, thus, these ἐκεῖνοι as Socrates' interlocutors in his other dialogues that hints that this criticism has the epistemological groundings of the previous dialogues as its subject. What ἐκεῖνοι οἷς σὺ εἶωθας διαλέγεσθαι points to is that Hippias does not have in mind Socrates' way of treating things only in this dialogue, but he is also criticizing Socrates' way throughout his dialogues.

At 301b4-5, Socrates and his interlocutors' way of beholding things is described as such:

You people knock (κρούετε) at the fine and each of the beings (ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων) by taking each being cut up in pieces (κατατέμνοντες) in words (ἐν τοῖς λόγοις).

This leads us to our next principle that is parallel to, and the ontological side of, SK, the principle of 'Split Being'(SB):

SB *Everything (being) is separated from any other thing as if the whole being is split to many beings.*

Socrates and his interlocutors and thus, as we saw, the Socratic dialogues are accused to regard everything as it is separated from all other things. This separation is *en tois logos* that, I think, can reasonably be taken as saying that Socratic dialogues (it refers of course to the dialogues before *Hippias Major*) cut up all things which have the same name/definition from all other things and try to understand them separately, without considering other things that are not in their *logos*. They, for example in *Hippias Major*, are cutting up *to kalon* and try to understand what it and all others inside this *logos* are by separating it from all other things. This is directed straightly against Socratic question and the way Socratic dialogues follow to find its answer, every time separating one *logos*. As Meyer (1995, 85) points out, every question 'presupposes that the X in question in a logos is something' and 'every answer to every question aims at unity' (84).

The critique of *Hippias Major* is, therefore, at the same time a critique of SK and SB. It is also a critique of KWX because it is only based on KWX that Socratic dialogues could search for the answer of 'what is X' question supposing that knowing what X is is enough for the knowledge of X. SK and KWX are absolutely interdependent.

What Socrates and all his previous interlocutors have neglected in Socratic dialogues, Hippias says, was 'continuous bodies of being' (διανεκῆ σώματα τῆς οὐσίας) (301b6). Either this theory actually belongs to the historical Hippias as it is being said²⁴ or not, it is strictly criticizing SB. We have the same phrase with changing *sūma* to *logos* some lines later at 301e3-4: διανεκεῖ λόγῳ τῆς οὐσίας. Although this theory that can be observed as both an ontological and an epistemological theory is rejected by Socrates (301cff.), it is still against first Socrates' onto-epistemological principles and might let us look at what is rejected as Socratic principle.

6. Knowledge is of Being

The sixth principle that I think is presupposed by the first Socrates, is the 'Knowledge of Being' Principle (KB):

KB *Knowledge is of Being.*

This principle is obviously the source of the problem of false knowledge, a very important problem throughout Plato's philosophy. We face this problem maybe for the first time in *Euthydemus*.²⁵ In less than 20 Stephanus' pages, 276-295, we are encountered with different interwoven problems about knowledge²⁶, all grounded in the problem of false opinion. Having challenged the obvious possibility of telling lies at 283e, at 284 Euthydemus discusses it saying that the man who speaks is speaking about 'one of those things that are (ἐν μὴν κακκείνó γ' ἔστιν τῶν ὄντων)' (284a3) and thus speaks what is (λέγων τὸ ὄν) (a5). He must necessarily be saying truth when he is speaking what is because he who speaks what is (τὸ ὄν) and the things that are (τὰ ὄντα) speaks truth (τὰληθῆ λέγει) (a5-6). This is based on Parmenidean principle of the impossibility of being of not being which Euthydemus restates (284b3-4) and we mentioned discussing BO principle above. The things that are not are nowhere (οὐδαμοῦ) and there is no possibility for anyone to do (πράξειεν) anything with them because they must be made as being before anything else can be done, which is impossible²⁷ (b5-7). The words, then, are of things that exist (εἰσὶν ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων λόγοι) (285e9) and as they are (ὡς ἔστιν) (e10). The result is that no one can speak of things as they are not. It is this impossibility of false speech that is extended to thinking (δοξάζειν) at 286d1 and leads to the impossibility of false opinion (ψευδής ... δόξα) (286d4). The general conclusion is asserted at 287a extending this impossibility to actions and making any kind of mistake. Not only knowledge is of being but speech, thought and action are of being simply because of the fact that nothing can be of not being.

B. First Socrates' Principles in the Middle Period Dialogues

Out of what were presupposed or criticized mostly in five dialogues, *Euthyphro*, *Euthydemus*, *Hippias Major*, *Laches* and *Charmides*, we tried to draw the first Socrates' principles. Our inquiry here is directed to find out the fate of these principles in the three dialogues of the middle period, *Meno*, *Phaedo* and *Republic*. To do this, first we ought to check the situation of Socratic circle in these dialogues. The Socratic circle that was predominant in the early dialogues, does not look like a circle here anymore though they certainly have some features in common. *Meno*, *Phaedo* and *Republic II-X* are not committed to the principles of the circle²⁸ and the whole circle is disrupted in them.

The difference of the two Socrateses towards acquiring knowledge is obvious.²⁹ The Socrates of *Meno*, *Phaedo* and *Republic* is evidently more self-confident that he can get to some truths during his arguments as he does. They are in their first appearance, as almost all other dialogues, committed to Socrates' disavowal. All of them try to keep the shape of the *Socratikoi Logoi* genre, which is committed to the historical Socrates' way of discussion; a dramatic personage who is to challenge his interlocutors, ask them and refuse the answers. Nevertheless, the fact is that what we

have in common between two groups of dialogues is mostly a dramatic structure. Whereas the first group's arguments are based on Socrates' disavowal and lead to no positive results, the second group is decisively going to achieve some positive results. The aim of the first Socrates was to show others that they are ignorant of what they thought they knew. The new Socrates of *Meno*, on the opposite, makes so much efforts to show that the slave boy has within himself true opinions (ἀληθεῖς δόξαι) about the things that he does not know (οἶδε) (85c6-7). Despite his lack of knowledge, he has true opinions nevertheless. The way from these true opinions to knowledge, as Socrates states, is not so long. These true opinions are now like a dream but 'can become knowledge of the same things not less accurate than anyone's' (οὐδενὸς ἤττον ἀκριβῶς ἐπιστήσεται περὶ τούτων) (c11-d1), if they be repeated by asking the same questions.

The most outstanding text regarding Socrates' disavowal³⁰ is *Meno* 98b where he explicitly claims knowledge:

And indeed I also speak as (ὥς) one who does not know (εἰδῶς) but is guessing (εἰκάζων). However, [about the fact] that true opinion and knowledge are different, I do not altogether expect (δοκῶ) myself to be guessing (εἰκάζειν), but if I say about anything that I know (εἰδέναι) -which about few things I say- this is one of the things that I know (οἶδα).³¹ (98b1-5)

This passage is very significant about Plato's disavowal of knowledge. There can hardly be found, I think, anywhere else in Plato's corpus where Socrates speaks about his knowledge of something as such. He says first that he speaks *as* someone who does not know. This ὥς οὐκ εἰδῶς λέγω comparing with what he used to say in the first group, οὐκ οἶδα, has this added ὥς. Socrates does not claim strongly anymore that he does not know anything but speaks only *as* someone who does not know. He needs this ὥς not only because he is going to accept that he does know some, though few, things immediately after this sentence, but also because he needs his previous disavowal to be loosened from *Meno* on. He does not merely say here that he knows something. It is then different from the examples mentioned before which could be taken as idiomatic or at least not emphatic. Socrates' remarkable emphasis on distinguishing εἰδέναι from εἰκάζειν departs it from all other passages where he says only he knows something. Moreover, he claims definitely that he has knowledge about few (ὀλίγα) things.³²

From the early to the middle dialogues, Socrates' attitude to knowledge has totally renewed its face. He brings forth a new concept, true opinion, and he does not speak of knowledge as he used to before; the rough, perfect and unachievable knowledge of the first group has turned to something more smooth, realistic and achievable. Comparing with the early dialogues that did not set out from the first to reach positive results, the middle ones are extraordinarily and surprisingly positive³³

and hence destroy the basis of the Socratic circle. The questions and answers are purposely directed to some specific new theories; most of them are not directly related to the topics or the main questions of the dialogues. They are suggested when Socrates draws the attention of the interlocutor away from the main question because of the necessity of another discussion. Even if the main question remains unanswered, we have still many positive theories, prominently of metaphysical type. These theories are so abundant and dominant in these dialogues, especially *Phaedo* and *Republic*, that one might think that they may appear to be arbitrarily sandwiched in there. This helps dialogues to keep their original Socratic structure while they are suggesting new theories. Hence, the Socratic question of 'what is X?', though is still used to launch the discussion, is loosened and is forgotten for most part of the dialogues. *Meno* that has first a differently formulated question, 'can virtue be taught?', leads finally to the Socratic question of 'What is virtue?'. *Phaedo* is dedicated to the demonstration of the immortality of soul and the life after death without having a central Socratic question. The case of *Republic* is more complicated. The first book, on the one hand, has all the criteria of a Socratic circle: its 'what is justice?' question, Socrates' strong disavowal (e.g. 337d-e), his rejection of all answers and coming back to the first point without finding out any answer. This Book, considered alone, is a perfect Socratic dialogue, as many scholars regard it as early and separated from other books. The books II-X are, on the other hand, far from implementing a Socratic circle. They have still the 'what is justice?' question as their incentive leading question, but they are, in most of the positive doctrines and methods that encompass the main parts, ignoring the question. Even these books that, I believe, are the farthest discussions from the Socratic circle are so cautious not to break the Socratic structure of the dialogue as long as it is possible. What is changed is not the structure of the dialogue but the ontological and epistemological grounds based on which new theories are suggested.

1. Knowledge of the Good

We can clearly see in the second group of dialogues that the KWX principle loses the place it had before in our first group. It is not, of course, rejected, but still we cannot say that it has the same situation. KWX that was based on Socratic question, as we discussed before, was the leading principle of the first Socrates' epistemology and of the highest position. Other epistemological principles, SK directly and BE indirectly, were relying on Socratic question and therefore on KWX. Such a position does not belong to KWX from *Meno* on. What makes it different in the second Socrates is another principle that is needed it not only as its complementary principle but also as what is more fundamental. Plato, then, does not reject KWX in this period, but, it seems, he transcends to another more basic principle; a principle we shall call the principle of 'Knowledge of the Good' (KG):

KG *Knowledge of X requires knowledge of the Good.*

Whereas all the dialogues of our first group are free from any discussion about KG, it bears a very important role in the second group so as to become the superior principle of knowledge in *Republic*. Trying to solve the problem of teachability of virtue, Socrates says that it can be teachable only if it is a kind of knowledge because nothing can be taught to human beings but knowledge (ἐπιστήμην) (*Meno* 87c2). The dilemma will be, then, whether virtue is knowledge or not (c11-12) and since virtue is good, we can change the question to: whether is there anything good separate from knowledge (εἰ μὲν τί ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἄλλο χωριζόμενον ἐπιστήμῃς) (d4-5). Therefore, the conclusion will be that if there is nothing good which knowledge does not encompass, virtue can be nothing but knowledge (d6-8).

What let us discuss KG as an epistemological principle for the second Socrates is the relation he tries to establish between knowledge and the Good which, though is alongside with the mentioned thesis and the idea of virtue as knowledge, goes much deeper inside epistemology asking to regard the Good as the basis of knowledge. The effort of *Phaedo* cannot succeed in establishing the Good as the criterion of explanation and knowledge since, I think, it needs a far more complicated ontology of *Republic* where Socrates can finally announce KG. What is said in *Republic* is totally compatible with *Phaedo* 99d–e and the metaphor of watching an eclipse of the sun. In spite of the fact that we do not have adequate knowledge of the Idea of the Good, it is necessary for every kind of knowledge: 'If we do not know it, even if we know all other things, it is of no benefit to us without it' (505a6-7). The problem of our not having sufficient knowledge of the Idea of Good is tried to be solved by the same method of *Phaedo* 99d-e, that is to say, by looking at what is like instead of looking at thing itself (506d8-e4). It is this solution that leads to the comparison of the Good with sun in the allegory of Sun (508b12-13). What the Good is in the intelligible realm corresponds to what the sun is in the visible realm; as sun is not sight, but is its cause and is seen by it (b9-10), the Good is so regarding knowledge. It has, then, the same role for knowledge that the sun has for sight. Socrates draws our attention to the function of sun in our seeing. The eyes can see everything only in the light of the day being unable to see the same things in the gloom of night (508c4-6). Without the sun, our eyes are dimmed and blind as if they do not have clear vision any longer (c6-7). That the Good must have the same role about knowledge based on the analogy means that it must be considered as a required condition of any kind of knowledge:

The soul, then, thinks (νόει) in the same way: whenever it focuses on what is shined upon by truth and being, understands (ἐνόησέν), knows (ἔγνω) and apparently possesses understanding (νοῦν ἔχειν). (508d4-6)

Socrates does not use *agathon* in this paragraph and substitutes it with both *aletheia* and *to on*.³⁴ He links them with the Idea of the Good when he is to assert the conclusion of the analogy:

That which gives truth to the objects of knowledge and the power of knowing to the knower, you must say, is the Idea of the Good: being the cause of knowledge and truth (αἰτίαν δ' ἐπιστήμης οὔσαν καὶ ἀληθείας)³⁵ so far as it is known (ὡς γιγνωσκομένης μὲν διανοοῦ). (508e1-4)

Knowledge and truth are called goodlike (ἀγαθοειδῆ) since they are not the same as the Good but more honoured (508e6-509a5). KG, which had been implicitly contemplated and searched in *Phaedo*, is now explicitly being asserted in *Republic*. As what was quoted clearly proves, this principle is the very one which we can observe as the most fundamental principle of the second Socrates in *Republic*, corresponding to the role KWX had in the first Socrates.

The Form of the Good in *Republic*, of which Santas speaks as 'the centerpiece of the canonical Platonism of the middle dialogues, the centerpiece of Plato's metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and ...' (1983, 256) much more can be said. Plato's Cave allegory in *Book VIII* dedicates a similar role to the Idea of the Good. The Idea of the Good is there as the last thing to be seen in the knowable realm, something so important that its seeing equals to understanding the fact that it is the cause of all that is correct and beautiful (517b). Producing both light and its source in visible realm, it controls and provides truth and understanding in the intelligible realm (517c).

2. Tripartite Epistemology

BE is thoroughly rejected in the second Socrates and substituted by its opposite, the principle of 'Tripartite Epistemology' (TE):

TE *Opinion is an epistemological status between knowledge and ignorance.*

BE of the first Socrates was denying any third way besides knowledge and ignorance which was the foundation of Socratic circle without which Socrates could not reject his interlocutors' possessing any kind of knowledge. We cannot say, however, that the first Socrates had a third epistemological status in mind but rejected it. Such a status was unacceptable for him so that one can say that he would reject any kind of such status if suggested. There were only two possibilities about knowledge: either one knows something or he does not know it. TE, thus, was not the first Socrates' discovery and, I think it is not the second Socrates' discovery. All we can see in our second group of dialogues is that he uses this principle as an already demonstrated one.

Having examined the slave boy in *Meno* for the purpose of showing the working of recollection, it turns out that he has some opinions in him while he still does not know. Without trying to prove it, Socrates takes this as the distinction between knowledge and opinion:

So, he who does not know (οὐκ εἰδότε) about what he does not know (περὶ ὧν ἂν μὴ εἰδῆ)³⁶ has within himself true opinions (ἀληθεῖς δόξαι) about the same things he did not know (περὶ τούτων ὧν οὐκ οἶδε) (85c6-7).

The same distinction is set between ὀρθὴν δόξαν and ἐπιστήμην at 97b5-6 ff. (also cf. 97b1-2: ὀρθῶς μὲν δοξάζων ... ἐπιστάμενος). He connects then their difference to the myth of Daedalus, the statue that would run away and escape. So are true opinions, not willing to remain long in mind and thus not worthy until one ties them down by αἰτίας λογισμῶ (98a3-4). Socrates says that this tying down is *anamnesis*. We face, in *Phaedo*, the same relation is settled between knowledge as the process of being tied down and getting the capability to give an account, on the one hand, and *anamnesis*, on the other hand. When a man knows, he must be able to give an account of what he knows (*Phaedo* 76b5-6) and since not all people are able to give such an account, those who recollect, recollect what once they learned (76c4). Although the distinction between knowledge and opinion is not explicitly used in *Phaedo*, referring to the parallel link between knowledge plus account and *anamnesis* in *Phaedo* and *Meno*, one can say that those who cannot recollect are not able to give account and, thus, are in a state of opinion. What is said at *Phaedo* 84a, though not yet a definite distinction between knowledge and opinion, makes a distinction between their objects so as we can agree that it is presupposed. The soul of the philosopher, Socrates says, follows reason, stays with it forever and contemplates the divine, which is not the object of opinion (ἀδόξαστον) (84a8, cf. *Meno* 98b2-5).

The distinction of knowledge and belief in *Republic* has a significant difference with what we discussed in *Meno* and *Phaedo* since the distinction of *Meno* was based on *anamnesis* and thus more an epistemological distinction. Even in *Phaedo* that we do not have any elaborate discussion about the distinction, the only hint to the matter at 76 is bound to the theory of *anamnesis*. In addition to the relation of the distinction with this theory, there is another evidence that does not permit us to consider the distinction as an ontological distinction. Let's see *Meno* 85c6-7:

So, he who does not know about what he does not know has within himself true opinions about the same things he did not know (τῷ οὐκ εἰδότε ἄρα περὶ ὧν ἂν μὴ εἰδῆ ἔνεισιν ἀληθεῖς δόξαι περὶ τούτων ὧν οὐκ οἶδε). (85c6-7)

This last sentence persists that the objects of knowledge and true opinion are the same. What Socrates is to say here is that whereas he does not know X he has true opinion about the same X. I think Socrates' sentence that the slave boy οὐκ εἰδότε ἄρα περὶ ὧν ἂν μὴ εἰδῆ and his restatement of it by saying περὶ τούτων ὧν οὐκ οἶδε is because he wants to emphasize that the slave boy who does not know, has true opinion *about the same thing*. Socrates could say this just with using τούτων

and there would be no necessity to bring *περὶ ὧν ἄν μὴ εἰδῆ* for *οὐκ εἰδότη* if he did not want to emphasize.

3. Tripartite Ontology

The distinction between knowledge and true opinion in *Republic*, on other side, has nothing to do with recollection, but is based on an ontological principle, 'Tripartite Ontology' (TO):

TO *There are things that both are and are not.*

This principle I confine, among our three dialogues of the second group, to *Republic* not extended to *Meno* and *Phaedo*, is obviously the opposite of BO. Speaking about the lovers of sights and sounds in the fifth book, Socrates distinguishes them from philosophers because their thought is unable to understand the nature of beautiful itself besides beautiful things (476a6-8) and hence they can only have opinions. The philosopher who, on the contrary, believes in beautiful itself and can distinguish it from beautiful things (476c9-d3), has knowledge because he knows, contrasting others who have opinion because they only opine (d5-6). Since those whose knowledge were degraded as opinion will complain about Socrates' such calling their thought, he provides them the following argument (476e7-477b1):

- Does the person who knows, knows (*γινώσκει*) something (*τι*) or nothing (*οὐδέν*)?
- He knows something (*τί*).
- Something that is (*ὄν*) or is not (*οὐκ ὄν*)?
- Something that is (*ὄν*) for how could something that is not be known (*πῶς γὰρ ἄν μὴ ὄν γέ τι γνωσθείη*)?
- Then we have an adequate grasp of this: No matter how many ways we examine it, what completely is (*παντελῶς ὄν*) is completely knowable (*παντελῶς γνωστόν*) and what is in no way (*μὴ ὄν δὲ μηδαμῆ*) is in every way unknowable (*πάντη ἄγνωστον*).
- A most adequate one.
- Good. Now, if anything is such as to be and also not to be (*ὡς εἶναί τε καὶ μὴ εἶναι*), won't it be intermediate (*μεταξὺ*) between what purely is (*εἰλικρινῶς ὄντος*) and what in no way is (*μηδαμῆ ὄντος*)?
- Yes, it's intermediate.
- Then as knowledge (*γνώσις*) is set over what is (*τῷ ὄντι*), while ignorance (*ἀγνοσία*) is of necessity set over what is not (*μὴ ὄντι*) mustn't we find an intermediate between ignorance (*ἀγνοίας*) and knowledge (*ἐπιστήμης*) to be set over the intermediate, if there is such a thing?

From the third status of being we must reach to the third status of knowledge. The simple reading of this text can be an existential reading, taking the "is" of the mentioned sentences as existence. The problem is that when it is said that there is something that both is and is not reading "is" existentially, it sounds too bizarre to be acceptable. It cannot easily be understandable to have something as both existent and non-existent at the same time. This problem arose so many debates and led many scholars to reject the existential reading of "is" and suggest some other readings like predicative or veridical readings. I think though Plato's complicated ontology of *Republic* cannot be correctly understood by a simple existential reading, this "is" cannot be free from existential sense of being and, thus, cannot be reduced to just a predicative or veridical sense of being.

4. Bound Knowledges

In addition to KG, the Good is also the basis of another principle in the second Socrates, namely the principle of 'Bound Knowledge' (BK):

BK *Knowledge of everything is bound to the knowledge of the Good.*

We distinguished BK from KG because we want to insist, in BK, on what had not been insisted upon in KG, that is, the binding role that the Good plays in the second Socrates, contrasting the absence of such a role in the first Socrates. Socrates remembers, in *Phaedo*, his wonderful keen on natural philosophers' wisdom when he was young. The origin of this enthusiasm was Socrates' hope to know the cause of everything as they used to claim. When he was searching the matters of his interest on their basis, Socrates says, he became convinced he can get no acceptable answer from them and found himself blind even to the things he thought he knew before. One day he hears Anaxagoras' theory that 'it is Mind that arranges and is the cause of everything (ὡς ἄρα νοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ διακοσμῶν τε καὶ πάντων αἴτιος)' (*Phd.* 97c1-2 cf. DK, Fr.15.8-9, 11-12, 12-14) and thinks that he can finally find what he has always expected, i.e. something which can explain all things. What I intend to show here is that what makes Socrates hopeful is that Anaxagoras' theory tries 1) to explain all things by one thing and 2) this explanation is understood by Socrates as if it is based on the concept of the Good.

That Socrates was searching for one explanation for all things can be proved even from what he has been expecting from natural philosophers. The case is, nonetheless, more clearly asserted when he speaks about Anaxagoras' theory. In addition to διακοσμῶν τε καὶ πάντων αἴτιος of 97c2 mentioned above, we have τὸ τὸν νοῦν εἶναι πάντων αἴτιον (c3-4) and τὸν γε νοῦν κοσμοῦντα πάντα κοσμεῖν (c4-5) all emphasizing on the cause of all things (πάντα) which can clearly prove that one of the reasons which caused Socrates to embrace it delightfully was its claim to provide the cause of all things by one thing. Another reason was that Anaxagoras' Mind, at least in Socrates' view, was attempting to explain everything

by the concept of the Good. This connection between Mind and Good belongs more to the essential relation they have in Socrates' thinking than Anaxagoras' theory because there are almost nothing about such a relation in Anaxagoras. The reason for Socrates' reading can be that Mind is substantially compatible with Socrates' idea of the relation between good and knowledge. Both the thesis 'no one does wrong willingly' and the theory of virtue as knowledge we pointed to above are evidences of this essential relation. Nobody who knows that something is bad can choose or do it as bad. The reason, when it is reason, that means when it is as it should be, when it is wise or when it knows, works only based on good-choosing. In this context, when Socrates hears that Mind is considered as the cause of everything, it sounds to him like this: good should be regarded as the basis of the explanation of all things. We see him, thus, passing from the former to the latter without any proof. This is done in the second sentence after introducing Mind:

I thought that if this were so, the arranging Mind would arrange all things and put each thing in *the way that was Best* (ὅτι ἄν βέλτιστα ἔχη). If one then wished to find the cause of each thing by which it either perishes or exists, one needs to find what *is the best way* (βέλτιστον αὐτῷ ἐστίν) for it to be, or to be acted upon, or to act. On these premises then it befitted a man to investigate only, about this and other things, *what is the most excellent* (ἄριστον) *and best* (βέλτιστον). The same man must inevitably also know *what is worse* (χειρόν), for that is part of the same knowledge. (97c4-d5)

This passage is a good evidence of Socrates' leap from Anaxagoras' Mind to his own concept of the Good that can explain why Socrates found Anaxagoras theory after his own heart (97d7). Mind is welcomed because of its capability for explanation on the basis of good to 'explain why it is so of necessity, saying which is better (ἄμεινον), and that it was better (ἄμεινον) to be so' (97e1-3).³⁷

What Socrates thought he had found in Anaxagoras can indicate what he had been expecting from natural scientists before. Socrates could not be satisfied with their explanations because they were unable to explain how it is the best for everything to be as it is. It can probably be said, then, that it was the lack of the unifying Good in their explanation that had disappointed him.³⁸ We must insist that we are discussing what Socrates *thought* that Anaxagoras' theory of Mind should have been, not about Anaxagoras' actual way of using Mind. *Phaedo* 97c-98b, is not about what Socrates *found* in Anaxagoras but what he thought he *could find* in it. On the contrary, it should also be noted that it was not this that was dashed at 98b, but Anaxagoras' actual way of using Mind. It was Anaxagoras' fault not to find out how to use such an excellent thesis (98b8-c2, cf. 98e-99b). Socrates gives an example to show how not believing in 'good' as the basis of explanation makes people be wanderers between different unreal explanations of a thing. His words δέον

συνδεῖν (binding that binds together) as a description for the Good we chose as the name of BK principle:

They do not believe that the truly good and *binding binds* and holds them together (ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ δέον συνδεῖν καὶ συνέχειν οὐδὲν οἶονται). (99c5-6)

Having in mind Plato's well-known analogy of the sun and the Good at *Republic* 508-509, we can dare to say that his warning of the danger of seeing the truth directly like one watching an eclipse of the sun in *Phaedo* (99d-e) is more about the difficulty of so-called good-based explanation than its insufficiency, a difficulty which is precisely confirmed in *Republic* (504e-505a, 506d-e). Moreover, BK is asserted in a more explicit way in the *Republic*, where the Good is considered not only as a condition for the knowledge of X, as was noted above discussing KG, but also as what binds all the objects of knowledge and also the soul in its knowing them. At *Republic VI*, 508e1-3, when Socrates says that the Form of the Good 'gives truth to the things known and the power to know to the knower (τοῦτο τοίνυν τὸ τὴν ἀλήθειαν παρέχον τοῖς γινωσκομένοις καὶ τῷ γινώσκοντι τὴν δύναμιν ἀποδιδόν)', he wants to set the Good at the highest point of his epistemological structure by which all the elements of this structure are bound. This binding aspect of the Good is by no means a simple binding of all knowledges or all the objects of knowledge, but the most complicated kind of binding as it is expected from the author of the *Republic*. The kind of unity the Good gives to the different knowledges of different things is comparable with the unity which each Form gives to its participants in *Republic*: as all the participants of a Form are united *by referring to the ideas*, all different kinds of knowledge are united *by referring to the Good*. If we observe Aristotle's assertion that for Plato and the believers of Forms, the causative relation of the One with the Forms is the same as that of the Forms with particulars (e.g. *Metaphysics* 988a10-11, 988b4), that is to say the One is the essence (e.g., *ibid*, 988a10-11: τοῦ τί ἐστίν, 988b4-6: τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι) of the Forms besides his statement that for them One is the Good (e.g., *ibid*, 988b11-13) the relation between the Good and unity may become more understandable.

Since the quiddity of the Good (τί ποτ' ἐστὶ τἀγαθόν) is more than discussion (506d8-e2), we cannot await Socrates to tell us how this binding role is played. All we can expect is to hear from him an analogy by which this unifying role is envisaged, the sun. The kind of unity that the Good gives to the knowledge and its objects in the intelligible realm is comparable to the unity that the sun gives to the sight and its objects in the visible realm (508b-c). The allegory of Line (*Republic VI*, 509d-511), like that of the Sun, tries to bind all various kinds of knowledges. The hierarchical model of the Line which encompasses all kinds of knowledge from imagination to understanding can clearly be considered as Plato's effort to bind all kinds of knowledges by a certain unhypothetical principle. The method of hypothesis

starts, in the first subsection of the intelligible realm, with a hypothesis that is not directed firstly to a principle but a conclusion (510b4-6). It proceeds, in the other subsection, to a 'principle which is not a hypothesis' (b7) and is called the 'unhypothetical principle of all things' (ἀνυποθέτου ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχὴν) (511b6-7). This παντὸς must refer not only to the objects of the intelligible realm but to the sensible objects as well. Plato does posit, therefore, an epistemological principle for all things, a principle that all things are, epistemologically, bound and, thus, unified by.

5. Bound Beings

The ontological aspect of BK we shall call the principle of 'Bound Beings' (BB):

BB *Being of all things are bound by the Good.*

We saw in our principle of Split Being (SB) how the first Socrates was criticized because of his approach to split being and separate each thing from other things. The principle of Bound Beings intends to make the things more related, a duty which is done again by the Good. In the allegory of Sun, there are two paragraphs that evidently and deliberately extend the binding role of the Good to the ontological scene:

You will say that the sun not only makes the visible things have the ability of being seen but also coming to be, growth and nourishment. (509b2-4)

This clearly intends to remind the ontological role the sun plays in bringing to being all the sensible things in order to display how its counterpart has the same role in the intelligible realm (b6-10):

Not only the objects of knowledge (γινωσκόμενοι) owe their being known (γινώσκεσθαι) to the Good, but also their existence (τὸ εἶναι) and their being (οὐσίαν) are due to it, though the Good is not being but superior to it in rank and power.

That the Good is here represented as responsible for being of things in addition to their being known means, in my opinion, that Plato wants to posit BB in addition to BK. The allegory of Cave at the very beginning of the seventh Book (514aff.) can be taken as another evidence. The role of the Good, one might say, is confined to the intelligible realm because it is asserted that the role the Good plays in this realm is corresponding to that of the sun in the visible realm. The fact that Plato wants to observe the Good also as the ontological cause of the sensible things is obvious from his saying, in the allegory of Cave, that the Form of the Good 'produces light and *its source* (τὸν τοῦτου κύριον) [i.e. the sun] in the visible realm' (517c3). We can conclude, then, that the ontological function of the Good is not confined to the

intelligible realm in which it is the lord and provides truth and understanding (c3-4) because it is also responsible to produce τὸν κύριον of light.³⁹

6. Proportionality of Being and Knowledge

Insofar as BE and BO principles of the first Socrates gave way to TE and TO principles of the second Socrates, we cannot expect him to preserve KB in the same way as it was in the first Socrates. The new tripartite ontology and epistemology necessitates some modifications in KB which results in the principle of 'Proportionality of Being and Knowledge' (PBK):

PBK *To every class⁴⁰ of being there is a proportionate category of knowledge.*

This principle, of course, does not entail the refutation of KB and thus is not kind of rejecting PBK but only a more complicated version of it. Based on PBK, we can still agree that knowledge is of being (KB) but the issue is that since none of the concepts of knowledge and being in the second Socrates are as simple as they were for the first Socrates, we need a more complicated principle for their relation here. Although from *Meno* 97a where the distinction of knowledge and true opinion is drawn out in the second group of the dialogues, we can expect a new relation, it is articulated in its most complete way in *Republic* and specifically in the allegory of Line. All the beings are divided there hierarchically to four classes, to each of them belongs a class of knowledge: imagination to images, belief to the sensible things (more correctly: the things of which they[in previous class] were images (ὧ τοῦτο ἔοικεν)), thought to mathematical objects (?) and understanding to the Forms and the first principle. The degree of clarity that each of the classes of knowledge shares in (σαφηνείας ἡγησάμενος μετέχειν) is proportionate to the degree that its object shares in truth (ἀληθείας μετέχει). (511e2-4)

Conclusion

From the six onto-epistemological principles of the first Socrates, four principles turn to their opposite in the middle period dialogues. While bipolar epistemology and ontology of the early dialogues give place to tripartite epistemology in the middle period dialogues and tripartite ontology in *Republic*, the split knowledge and being of the first Socrates are inclined to be substituted by bound knowledges and bound beings in the second Socrates and specifically in *Republic*. Not all our system of principles in this article is necessarily determinative. Either they are rightly formulated or not, our result would not be vulnerable if we accept that 1) making the distinction of knowledge and belief, 2) accepting the being of not being and 3) trying to bind both being and knowledge by the concept of the Good happens only in middle period dialogues, having been absent in the early ones. These are the favourite results all those somehow arbitrary and even oversimplified principles were

to illustrate; that there is kind of a development in the epistemological as well as the ontological grounds of Plato's philosophy.

Notes

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- ¹ See also: Prior (1985, 10-37)
- ² Gerson (2002, 85) distinguishes between three groups of antidevelopmentalists which include unitarists, those who take the dialogues protreptic and agnosticistic.
- ³ Being a unitarist, Cormack (2006, 15) thinks that the early dialogues are "protreptic". He (ibid, 9-10) points to the fact that the "historical interpretation" which tries to refer the distinction of the early and middle dialogues to the distinction between Socrates and Plato and the developmental interpretations are not mutually exclusive. By calling Plato's thought 'the unity of growth and development', Allen (1970, 157), it seems, tries to reconcile the developmentalist with unitarist approach.
- ⁴ The ten theses point orderly to these differences: 1) a moral philosopher vs. a metaphysician; 2) separated Forms and Soul in the latter; 3) elenctical vs. demonstrative philosophy; 4) complex and tripartite model of the soul in second Socrates; 5) second Socrates' mastership in mathematics; 6) being populist vs. elitist; 7) second Socrates' elaborate political theory; 8) second Socrates' metaphysical grounding in love for the transcendent Form of beauty; 9) practical and ethical vs. mystical and contemplated religion and 10) adversative vs. didactic philosophy (1991, 47-49). Robinson (1953, 61) points to their difference in respect of method and methodology.
- ⁵ Fine agrees with Vlastos that there are some 'genuine' differences, but she does not agree with such a wide difference: 'Plato is more of a Socratic than Vlastos allows' (1993, 83). She thinks that Vlastos 'overemphasizes' on differences (ibid, 68).
- ⁶ Allen, on the contrary, thinks that the difference between theories in the early and middle period dialogues is not between what is tentative and what is thought and came to a conclusion (1959, 174).
- ⁷ E.g., Kahn (1996, 339) thinks that the trio of *Laches*, *Euthyphro* and *Meno* 'is best read together as a well-planned essay on definition'. Therefore, the search of essence in dialogues is 'future-oriented' from the start. While there is some truth in Mackay's view that we should substitute the pedagogical or mental growth with a dramatic and dialectical development, 'an elaboration of many themes within a single theme; the clarification of an original insight through opposition and new perspective' (1928, 14), I do not think it is enough for being a unitarist in Plato (ibid, 11). Even a developmentalist might share this view.
- ⁸ None of these Socrateses I take as historical Socrates. The first Socrates of this paper means only the Socrates of the early period dialogues specially that of *Laches*, *Hippias Major*, *Euthyphro*, *Euthydemus* and *Charmides* while the second Socrates is that of *Meno*, *Phaedo* and *Republic*. Contrary to Vlastos who takes the Socrates of the early dialogues as the historical Socrates (1991, 77), an idea in which many scholars like Silverman (2002,28) share with him, I think while we can be sure that the first Socrates is closer to the historical Socrates, there might arise many problems if we ascribe either the dramatic character or the suggested theories in the early dialogues to the historical Socrates. Therefore, my position is

like that of Benson (2000, 7) that it is best not to assume the theories as merely belonging to the historical Socrates or the writer of dialogues himself.

⁹ Kirkland notes that Socrates wants to bring about some kind of 'non-epistemic but nonetheless true and properly human way' of his question, thus, does not aim 'moral knowledge' (2012, 8), goes far from the overall epistemic spirit of the early dialogues.

¹⁰ Vlastos (1957, 229) thinks that it is not accidental since heretofore the investigation of knowledge is 'a dependency of ontological or cosmological inquiry'. As Vlastos correctly points out, *Charmides* 165c is where Socrates comes so close to this investigation though still avoids it. About his reference to *Euthydemus* 282e, I cannot see any evidence. *Euthydemus* 288d-e is not as close as the mentioned passage of *Charmides*. The same can be said about 292d.

¹¹ Cf. *Euthyphro* 6e3-4, *Hippias Major* 286d1-2, *Laches* 190a4, 191d9

¹² It is generally assumed that this question was the very question historical Socrates used to employ which has also Aristotle (1078b27-30) as its evidence. Nonetheless, we are not to claim this by so calling the question. The doubt Weiss (2009) brings forth about the role of the Socratic question based on the absence of the question in *Apology* seems unnecessary either we take it about historical Socrates or Plato's Socrates. Though hinting to the process of *elenchus* (21-22), *Apology* is not to set a Socratic investigation and does not thus need to use the Socratic question. This can be the reason why it does not mention it. We may reasonably assume that the *elenchus* he speaks there about must have the question in use.

¹³ E.g., *Laches* 186 d8-e2, 200e3-4 (εἰδώς, ... μὴ εἰδότε) *Hippias Major* 286c-e, 304d7-8, *Apology* 21b 4-5, d4-6, 29b1-7, *Gorgias* 505e6-506a4, 509a4-7, *Charmides* 165b4-c2, 166d1-2, *Euthyphro* 5a1-2, *Meno* 71a6-7 (οὐδὲ αὐτὸ ὅτι ποτ' ἐστὶ τὸ παράπαν ἀρετῆ τυγχάνω εἰδώς), 71b3 (οὐκ εἰδώς περὶ ἀρετῆς τὸ παράπαν), *Symposium* 216d2-4

¹⁴ Though I used Cooper's (ed.) translation (1997) for Plato's texts, I was not totally committed to it and changed it based on the Greek text wherever a more strict translation was needed.

¹⁵ He also mentions (1985, 7-10) some other texts like *Republic* 351a5-6, *Protagoras* 357d7-e1, *Crito* 48a5-7 and *Gorgias* 479e8, 486e5-6, 512b1-2.

¹⁶ Criticizing Vlastos' distinction, Matthews (2006, 113) notes that Socrates neither does speak of two different senses of knowledge nor says 'I know and I don't know'. The distinctions of expert and nonexpert or latent and manifest knowledge (cf., e.g., Woodruff (1995), Taylor (2008) and Matthews (2008)) does not essentially differ from that of Vlastos. The trouble with all such suggestions is that, as Richard Bett points out, Plato 'gives no indication of wishing to multiply senses of the various words translated by "know"' (2011, 226). Pointing to *tekhne* as a kind of knowledge, he suggests the distinction of the subject matters instead of senses of knowledge.

¹⁷ Gonzalez, for instance, thinks that in most of the early dialogues, protreptic is the only positive function of *elenchus* (2002, 161-182).

¹⁸ Using the word "principle" for what I am going to discuss the ontology and epistemology of Socrates in both his early dialogues and his middle ones might be misleading. It is not to mean more than "ground" or "approach" and thus is not to be emphasized.

¹⁹ This does not give us, however, the permission to agree with Woodruff (1978, 101-102) that Plato's early dialogues are 'innocent of metaphysics' or 'ontologically neutral' or with Vlastos (1991, 15) that "no epistemological theory at all can be ascribed to Socrates". Trying to refute such views, Benson (2000, 3, n. 1) provides a list of those who think that the historical Socrates or Socrates of the earlier dialogues is no epistemologist. The reason for the fact that

Socrates must have had some kind of metaphysics is best suggested by Silverman (2002, 28-30). Despite the fact that Socrates is not interested in articulating a metaphysical theory, he thinks that Plato's middle period metaphysics cannot have been emerged *ex nihilo* and must be considered as his reaction to the difficulties of the metaphysics of Socrates.

²⁰ Fine, for example, asserts 'To know what F is is to know the answer to the question "what is F?", that is, to know the real definition of the nature of F-ness' (2003, 2) which she calls 'the principle of the priority of knowledge of a definition'²⁰(*ibid*). Indicating specifically to *Laches* 190b-c, calls it 'the epistemological priority of definitional knowledge' (*ibid*, 25). Kahn articulates this priority of definition as such: 'If you do not know at all what X is, you cannot know anything about X' (1996, 180-181).

²¹ Think that the answer of the Socratic question is definition, some scholars insist on its being a real definition, contrasting, for instance, with nominal definition (cf. Wolfsdorf, 2005, 24), while some others regard the meaning of the concept as the answer. Wolfsdorf (*ibid*, 21) thinks that when Socrates, for example in *Protagoras* and *Hippias Major*, asserts that X must be something (τί), it means that he seeks a real definition and its identity and not its meaning. Vlastos (1973) believes the question to be constitutive and not semantic and thus does not agree with meaning as the aim of search.

²² *Euthdemus* 293c-294a can be considered as a problem related to KWX and BE principles. Socrates states that if you are knowing, then you know (οὐκοῦν ἐπιστήμων εἶ, εἴπερ ἐπίστασαι) (293c2-3) and concludes that you must necessarily know all things if you are knowing (οὐκ ἀνάγκη σε ἔχει πάντα ἐπίστασθαι ἐπιστήμονά γε ὄντα) (c4). The impossibility of being and not being the same (d4) is Socrates' reason to conclude: 'If I know one thing, I know all (εἴπερ ἓν ἐπίσταμαι, ἅπαντα ἐπίσταμαι) since I could not be knowing and not knowing (ἐπιστήμων τε καὶ ἀνεπιστήμων) at the same time' (d5-6).

²³ Thinking that *Hippias Major* does not commit Plato to the ontology of the middle period, Woodruff believes that from *Hippias Major* to the middle period dialogues there is some kind of proceeding from 'ontological neutrality toward a transcendental ontology' (1988, 212). As it will be discussed below, while we agree with the first point, the ontological neutrality is not tenable.

²⁴ Kerferd (1981, 47) argues pro the idea. Rankin (1983, 55) does not agree with him. It is not, however, included in the fragments of Diels' collection. I think that if it is to be accepted, Plato's use of the theory as a critique of Socrates' onto-epistemology can be used more strongly in favor of our analysis.

²⁵ Most of the dialogues treating with this problem such as *Theatetus* and *Sophist* are observed as late dialogues in the 20th century chronologies. The case of *Gorgias* is different. It mentions the issue without discussing it. While it accepts that there can be false conviction besides true conviction (πίστις ψευδῆς καὶ ἀληθῆς) (454d5), false knowledge (ἐπιστήμη ... ψευδῆς) (d6-7) is strongly prohibited. Gorgias accepts the first simply by saying Ναί and rejects the second strongly by saying Οὐδαμῶς.

²⁶ The problems of: learning both what you know and what you do not know (276d), possibility of telling lies (283e), impossibility of speaking things that are not (285e-286a, 287a), impossibility of false speaking (286c), impossibility of false thinking and opinion (286d) and the problem of knowing nothing or all things. (293c-294a)

²⁷ Ctesippus' suggestion at 248c7-8 is surprisingly missed by Dionysodorus. He says that the problem could be solved if we accept that the one who tells lies speaks things that are in a way (τρόπον τινὰ) and not indeed as it is the case (ὡς γε ἔχει). This suggestion is close to what will be the final solution to the problem in *Sophist*.

²⁸ The only part in these dialogues that is constructed, like the early dialogues, based on Socratic circle is the first Book of the *Republic*. At 351a6, nonetheless, it is decisively said

that 'no one can now be ignorant of this (οὐδεὶς ἄν ἔτι τοῦτο ἀγνοήσειεν) that injustice is ignorance'.

²⁹ Vlastos explains this difference in his third pair of theses by distinguishing between elenctic versus demonstrative knowledge; while the first keeps disavowal claim, the second is confident that he can find knowledge. (1991, 76)

³⁰ We have some other less important passages where it seems that he avows knowledge of some truths. *Phaedo* 63c, though does not use the word 'knowing' is noteworthy. Socrates asserts that if he ever insists (δισχυρισσάμην) on anything about the matters related to the after-death life, he insists on his going to his good masters, Gods, after death (63c2-4).

³¹ καὶ μὴν καὶ ἐγὼ ὡς οὐκ εἰδῶς λέγω, ἀλλὰ εἰκάζων: ὅτι δὲ ἐστὶν τι ἄλλοιον ὀρθῆ δόξα καὶ ἐπιστήμη, οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκῶ τοῦτο εἰκάζειν, ἀλλ' εἶπερ τι ἄλλο φαίην ἄν εἰδέναι—ὀλίγα δ' ἄν φαίην—ἐν δ' οὖν καὶ τοῦτο ἐκείνων θείην ἄν ὧν οἶδα.

³² The subject of Socrates' avowal, i.e. the difference between knowledge and true opinion, can explain why Socrates' most considerable claim of knowledge is asserted here. This distinction will be not only the basis of all his later onto-epistemology but also his theory of Forms. *Timaeus* (51d-e), for instance, regards this distinction as what can be a sufficient proof for the existence of Forms.

³³ Vlastos speaks of the 'demise of the elenchus' before the middle period dialogues and in three dialogues of *Euthydemus*, *Lysis* and *Hippias Major* (1994, 29-33) because of the 'abandonment of adversary argument as Socrates' method of philosophical investigation' (p.30). He thinks that Socrates is both the author and the critic of the theories of these dialogues and they are, thus, uncontested by the interlocutors.

³⁴ The relation of the Good on the one hand and being and truth on the other hand remains, I think, ambiguous at least in *Republic*. All that we hear from Plato here is that the Good is beyond them. I cannot understand what kind of evidence Cynthia Hampton had to conclude that truth in *Republic* is 'likewise a Form and a part of the Good' and also an 'ontological notion' (1998, 239).

³⁵ One might agree with Politis that by the things that are capable of being known, Plato has in mind, 'at least primarily', the other ideas (2010, 102). Cooper's translation (ed.) of ὡς γινωσκομένης μὲν διανοοῦ ('it is an object of knowledge') cannot be satisfactory.

³⁶ While some of the translators do not translate περὶ ὧν ἄν μὴ εἰδῆ (e. g., Cooper (ed.)) maybe because they think it does not add anything new to the meaning, I think it must be translated.

³⁷ This is also clear from 98a1-b3:

If he showed me those things I should be prepared never to desire any other kind of cause. I was ready to find out *in the same way* (οὕτω ... ὡσαύτως) about the sun and the moon and, *how it is best* (πῆ ποτε ταῦτ' ἄμεινόν ἐστίν) that each should act or be acted upon. I never thought that Anaxagoras, who said that those things were directed by Mind, would bring *any other cause* for them than that *it was best for them as they are* (βέλτιστον αὐτὰ οὕτως ἔχειν ἐστὶν ὥσπερ ἔχει). Once he had given the *best for each* (ἐκάστῳ βέλτιστον) as the cause for each and the general cause of all, I thought he would go on to *explain the common good for all* (τὸ κοινὸν πᾶσιν ἐπεκδιηγῆσθαι ἀγαθόν).

³⁸ Politis, conversely, thinks it is not true to say Socrates introduced this new method of explanation because of the fact that they were not good-based. 'Socrates' complaint against traditional explanation', he says, 'is independent of and prior to his becoming hopeful about

good-based ones.' (2010, 99) If we have to accept that what he means by 'good-based' explanation is the same with what Socrates had in mind about Anaxagoras' theory, Politis is misleading here. Socrates' hope for Anaxagoras' theory was, I believe, owing to the fact that he had been disappointed with natural philosophers' explanations which justifies the suggestion to take that which is included in this new theory as the same with what was absent before. It is also misleading, I think, to call Socrates' theory teleological if we mean by this some kind of explanation that must be considered besides other kinds of explanation as, for example, Taylor thinks. (1998, 11) If we behold the essential relation between the Good and the knowledge and observe the fact that the good is here considered as the basis of explanation, we cannot be satisfied with putting it besides other kinds of explanations only as one kind.

³⁹ Socrates' statement at 517c1-2 that the form of the Good 'is the cause of all that is right and beautiful in everything (πάντα πάντα) is also noticeable.

⁴⁰ I do not insist on the word here. I used 'class' to avoid the possible interpretations which words like 'level' and 'degree' might arise.

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