The Rationality of Plato’s Theory of Good and Evil

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Plato has been called the "father of rational theology." This thesis is an attempt to examine in the light of contemporary Platonic scholarship five of Plato's essentially religious doctrines insofar as they support the idea that Plato's theory of good and evil is rational. Chapters 1 and 2 examine the plausibility of Plato's theory of knowledge. Chapter 3 states briefly his theory of Forms, while Chapter 4 attempts to give this doctrine credence by analysing those aspects of it which seem least convincing. Chapters 5 and 6 consider Plato's theory of soul and conclude that, although some of his beliefs in this area lack credibility, his interpretation of the nature and function of soul is basically plausible. Chapters 7 and 8 examine the rationality of Plato's Idea of the Good. Chapter 9 sketches his notion of balance and proportion and, in conclusion, Chapter 10 attempts to show how this theory provides an underlying credibility not only to all the theories discussed but also to Plato's theory of good and evil in its entirety.
This study would not have been possible without the generous help of Professor Jose Huertas-Jourda. His insistence on genuine scholarship was coupled with an unending patience for the numerous difficulties I experienced in my research. My thanks to Professor Ron Grimes for his extensive comments on each of the drafts as the manuscript matured, and for his advice on the format and style of the completed work. My thanks also to Professor Aarne Siirala for his reading and comments, and to Professor Hart Bezner for his technical assistance in producing the finished thesis.
THE RATIONALITY OF PLATO'S THEORY
OF GOOD AND EVIL

By

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B.A. University of Toronto, 1973

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree
Wilfrid Laurier University
1979
Plato was one of the greatest philosophers, and that largely because he combined, simultaneously and uniquely, dialectical skill with a metaphysical, indeed religious belief in a supra-sensible realm of divine essences, and came nearer than anyone else to relating it rationally to the world of human experience. (W.K.C. Guthrie).
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ......................................................... i  

1. Plato's Theory of Knowledge ................................. 1  

2. The Rationality of Plato's Theory of Knowledge .................. 7  

3. Plato's Theory of Form ....................................... 14  

4. The Rationality of Plato's Theory of Form ...................... 19  

5. Plato's Theory of Soul ...................................... 49  

6. The Rationality of Plato's Theory of Soul .................... 55  

7. Plato's Idea of the Good ................................... 64  

8. The Rationality of Plato's Idea of the Good ................. 71  


10. The Rationality of Plato's Theory of Balance and Proportion .... 90  

Conclusions .......................................................
INTRODUCTION

This study is an examination of Plato's theory of good and evil. Because this theory is "all of Plato" it is rather broad to be handled adequately within the scope of a study of this length. I have, therefore, put several arbitrary limitations on its content. First, although I explain the Platonic theories as I present them, my treatment of each is very brief. Secondly, because I am viewing the dialogues as a whole, my exegesis of particular dialogues is very selective. For this reason, also, I do not differentiate between the point of view of Socrates and that of Plato, nor do I make a distinction between Plato's early and late periods, unless, of course, this is necessary for the understanding of the topic. Thirdly, although my use of secondary sources is somewhat limited, I do try to include wherever relevant the comments of Aristotle, Plato's greatest pupil.

As this paper progresses, some questions emerge. The first is, What do I mean by "rational"? Rational according to what criteria? Rational according to scientific fact? Rational according to logic and reason? Rational because it appears to be so or seems to make sense? These problems result from the fact that Plato's theory is ontological as well as logical, metaphysical as well as scientific and, as such, must often be talked about in terms of religious
metaphor and analogy. Sometimes terms with theistic implications must be used, because they seem the best, if not the only, ones available. In general, however, my definition of the word "rational" is that of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Vol VIII, 169): "sensible," "sane," "reasonable," "not foolish," or "absurd." For example, when I say a particular point is rational, I mean according to one's experience it seems to "make sense." The idea that killing a spider will cause it to rain is "foolish" and "absurd." It does not correspond to any experience we have in life and is, therefore, not "reasonable." However, the idea that good actions and fair play, honesty and consideration generally are conducive to harmony both within one's self and one's society, while their opposites are not, does seem to correspond with life's experience and is, therefore, "sensible" and "sane."

This brings up other questions. What exactly do I mean by "good" and "evil"? Am I assuming an absolute standard of good or a relative standard of goodness? Although Plato employs the terms "good" and "evil" in a variety of ways in the dialogues, in general he means by the term "good" that which one objectively considers beneficial, and "evil" that which one considers not beneficial. The ideas of "good" and "evil" which he deems to be most important and which, consequently, we must most frequently consider, are the negative and positive exemplifications of moral absolutes.
Within these limitations, this thesis attempts to examine in the light of contemporary Platonic scholarship five of Plato's essentially religious doctrines insofar as they support the idea that Plato's theory of good and evil is rational. Chapters 1 and 2 examine the plausibility of Plato's theory of knowledge. Chapter 3 states briefly his theory of Forms, while Chapter 4 attempts to give this doctrine credence by analysing those aspects of it which seem least convincing. Chapters 5 and 6 consider Plato's theory of soul and conclude that, although some of his beliefs in this area lack credibility, his interpretation of the nature and function of soul is basically plausible. Chapters 7 and 8 examine the rationality of Plato's Idea of the Good. Chapter 9 sketches his notion of balance and proportion and, in conclusion, Chapter 10 attempts to show how this theory gives an underlying credibility not only to all the theories discussed but also to Plato's theory of good and evil in its entirety.
1. PLATO'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Before we can determine the degree to which Plato was able to provide a rational analysis of the meaning of good and evil, we must understand his theory of knowledge, part of which he borrowed from Socrates. Socrates believed that all virtues exist as fixed standards, or paradigms, independently of any transitory examples of virtuous conduct (1). According to Socrates, to have knowledge of virtue one must have knowledge of these paradigms. Any particular example of virtue, whether it be piety, courage, temperance or friendship, is simply an imperfect example, or copy of, the paradigm. If one does not have knowledge of the paradigm, one will not know the virtue. Granted, one might think that this act of courage or that act of piety is virtuous. But without reference to fixed paradigms, one's opinions are "...in a state of transition and there is nothing abiding (Cratylus 440 a)."

Building upon Socratic teaching, and upon elements of Heraclitean (2) and Pythagorean (3) philosophy, and upon the teachings of Parmenides (4), Plato developed the theory that knowledge, not only of virtues but of all reality, could be found only in reference to transcendent absolutes existing apart from the material world as a realm of fixed principles (5). Germane to this theory was Plato's belief that the
senses failed to give one true knowledge of reality. Sight, hearing and touch, he stated, gives to the mind nothing more than inaccurate and unreliable impressions of the material world (6). In the Theaetetus (185e-186e), Plato maintains that one must understand the objects of the material world, not through the sensual impressions, but through reflection upon sensual impressions (7).

Perhaps we can understand Plato's idea of reflection upon the impressions if we compare the mind to a computer assimilating information. The sense organs, we might say, work as individual perceptors receiving data--an individual eye sees, and individual ear hears, and so on. Each organ conveys its own impression of the object--the eye colour, the ear sound. Yet we don't think of the object as several at once, for the mind sorts the impressions into concepts. The resulting concepts are created, not through the organs by themselves, but through the mind. In other words, it is not by receiving passively what the senses convey, but by reasoning about them (reflecting upon them) that the mind grasps reality. A good example of this notion is found in the Theaetetus (186b):

SOCRATES: Wait a moment. The hardness of something hard and the softness of something soft will be perceived by the mind through touch, will they not?
THEAETETUS: Yes.
SOCRATES: But their existence and the fact that they both exist, and their contrariety to one another and again the existence of this contrariety are things which the mind itself undertakes to judge for us, when it reflects upon them and compares one with another.

THEAETETUS: Certainly.

Here Plato states that a hard and a soft apple exhibit a contrariety which the mind perceives by comparing them. Yet the hard one may become soft and that instance of contrariety vanish. But through reflection, or reason, the mind will realize that contrariety remains as an unchanging reality, a reality reached only by the mind after some reflection on the impressions of the hard and the soft apples. Therefore, claims Plato, not only does knowledge of such objects as apples come from this sort of reflection upon the impressions, but also knowledge of concepts like contrariety. In fact, states Plato in the Phaedo (78e), all of knowledge, whether of quantities, measurements, shapes, colours, moral or aesthetic concepts, comes to us through reflection:

Well, what about the concrete instances of beauty--such as men, horses, clothes, and so on--or of equality, or any other members of a class corresponding to an absolute entity? Are they constant, or are they, on the contrary, scarcely ever in the same relation in any sense either to themselves or to one another?

With them, Socrates, it is just the opposite; they are never free from variation.
And these concrete objects you can touch and see and perceive by your other senses, but those constant entities you cannot possibly apprehend except by thinking; they are invisible to our sight.

Plato's meaning can be made clearer if we refer to a common geometric example. When one's eye sees a circle, one's mind receives an impression of the circle. But this impression by itself does not give one knowledge of circularity. Only through the mind's reflection on the impressions of the circle does one come to know the true nature of circularity. Knowledge of the true nature of circularity includes knowledge of all circles, and not simply knowledge of the particular circle which the eye sees. This act of reflection is a process of determining the true nature or essence of the circle in itself. For example, this circle $\bigcirc$ is perhaps more perfect than some circles and less perfect than others. But knowledge of the perfection or imperfection of the particular circle is not important. What is important is that this circle, which is very imperfect and untrue, suggests another circle, a perfect circle. One recognizes this particular circle not as the perfect circle or the only circle in existence but as a copy of the true or perfect circle which it represents. In other words, the diagram of the circle elicits a particular concept or idea or principle— that of perfect
circularity. But no particular circle is the one true circle. All particular circles are simply copies of a constant standard of absolute circularity.

This analogy to the circle serves as a stepping stone to Plato's more abstract analogy of equality given in the Phaedo (74b):

Well, now, have you ever thought that things which were absolutely equal were unequal, or that equality was inequality?
No, never, Socrates.
Then these equal things are not the same as absolute equality.
Not in the least, as I see it, Socrates.
And yet it is these equal things that have suggested and conveyed to you your knowledge of absolute equality, although they are distinct from it?

With this analogy Plato introduces at Phaedo (74d) the idea that we have a priori knowledge of these absolutes:

Suppose that when you see something you say to yourself, This thing which I can see has a tendency to be like something else, but it falls short and cannot be really like it, only a poor imitation. Don't you agree with me that anyone who receives that impression must in fact have previous knowledge of that thing which he says that the other resembles but inadequately?

This passage presents us with Plato's belief that a priori knowledge of transcendent absolutes is contained within our immortal souls (8). In the Phaedo (75c) Plato states:
Then if we obtained it before our birth, and possessed it when we were born, we had knowledge, both before and at the moment of birth, not only of equality and relative magnitudes, but of all absolute standards. Our present argument applies no more to equality than it does to absolute beauty, goodness, uprightness, holiness, and, as I maintain, all those characteristics which we designate in our discussions by the term 'absolute.' So we must have obtained knowledge of all these characteristics before our birth.

That is so.

And unless we invariably forget it after obtaining it we must always be born knowing and continue to know all through our lives, because 'to know' means simply to retain the knowledge which one has acquired and not to lose it. Is not what we call 'forgetting' simply the loss of knowledge, Simmias?

In summary, Plato's theory of knowledge maintains that, just as a priori knowledge of equality or of circularity can be found only after reflective reference to an independent and absolute principle of equality or of circularity and not by a purely sensory interpretation of the particular circle or the particular instance of equal things, and just as a priori knowledge of the qualities like beauty, goodness, uprightness, holiness can be found only after reflective reference to a transcendent and absolute principle, so a priori knowledge of all reality can be found only by referring to a realm of transcendent absolutes (9).
2.

THE RATIONALITY OF PLATO'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Plato's theory of knowledge is based on three complementary hypotheses. The first is that the senses do not give us a true representation of reality. The second is that the immortal soul contains a priori knowledge and the third that this a priori knowledge is knowledge of a system of absolutes. That Plato's first hypothesis is credible can be suggested if we refer to an everyday example. The clear blue sky which we see does not exist apart from the eye which visualizes it. If we fly straight up for the rest of our life, we won't reach that flat blue ceiling called sky, for the blueness, the flatness, is, in fact, only light (especially the short blue wave lengths) refracted and dispersed as it passes through the earth's atmosphere. This particular image results from the fact that the eye is sensitive only to a narrow band of radiation that falls between the red and the violet. Thus, a band of a few hundred thousandths of a centimeter in wavelength makes the difference between what is visible and what is invisible. The sky would appear entirely different if we could see light rays beyond these two parameters (10).
Plato's belief that the senses are not able to give us a correct representation of reality becomes more profound if we consider for a moment the teaching of Einstein who stated that, since every object is "...simply the sum of its qualities...", and since qualities are perceived only via the senses, "...the whole objective universe of matter and energy, atoms and stars...." does not exist except as a construction of the senses (11). Because of this, says Einstein, knowledge of the universe "...is simply a residue of impressions clouded by our imperfect senses (12)." Einstein claims that "...the barrier between man, peering dimly through the clouded window of his senses, and whatever objective reality may exist...." is nearly impossible to penetrate (13). Echoing the words of Einstein, Carl Jung states that the world exists as such only as it is experienced in consciousness (14). Matter itself is an hypothesis, claims Jung (15). When you say "matter" you are really "...creating a symbol for something unknown (16)." Jung declares that "...everything thought, felt or perceived is a psychic image, and the world itself exists only so far as we are able to produce an image of it (17)."

The fact that Einstein and Jung agree with Plato's first hypothesis suggests to us that it ought to be considered a credible notion (18). However, Plato's
second hypothesis—that a priori knowledge is contained in the immortal soul—does not seem, at first glance, to be credible at all. We might argue that when Socrates in the *Meno* shows that the slave boy knows, without having been taught, that the square on the diagonal of the square is double the original square's area, he does so by using very leading questions. The boy looks at the diagram scratched in the sand and says "yes" or "no" to questions which suggest the answer. His evidence is based on eyesight and not on a priori knowledge. The slave boy gives the correct answers, not because he realizes that they must be so, but because they look as if they ought to be so. This demonstrates the process of reasoning from particular fact to general conclusions, but it does not demonstrate a theory of a priori knowledge existing in an immortal soul. Julius Moravaski in his article "Learning and Recollection" correctly states:

All that Plato can conclude from his experiment is that something in addition to a deductive reasoning capacity must be given to the mind innately in order to bridge the gap between input and understanding (19). Plato has no right, says Moravaski, "...to assume that he has proven that knowledge is given innately (20)."

But Plato's theory of recollection cannot be so easily dismissed. Flew states that "...what has to be
recognized is that whoever taught Meno's slave, no one ever taught Pythagoras (21)." As Moravaski himself admits, it seems probable "...that something in addition to a deductive reasoning capacity must be given to the mind innately... ." Findlay rightly points out that the process of learning often goes far beyond the methods used in communicating knowledge. (22) We can agree that this statement is especially relevant when we consider that language, the vehicle of learning, does not necessarily give us knowledge (23).

Plato's belief in innate knowledge of the absolutes becomes more understandable if we compare his theory with Carl Jung's theory that Plato's "forms" are inherited psychic archetypes:

Among these inherited psychic factors there is a special class which is not confined either to family or to race. These are the universal dispositions of the mind, and they are to be understood as analogous to Plato's forms (eidola), in accordance with which the mind organizes its contents. One could also describe these forms as categories analogous to the logical categories which are always and everywhere present as the basic postulates of reason (24).

In view of this statement, we might be able to say that perhaps Plato's theory of recollection as outlined in the
Meno would be more understandable if he had stated that knowledge was recollected in the way that innate conceptual abilities are inherited. For example, we could argue that knowledge of equality comes to us as part of our genetic information just as does knowledge of the colour pyramid. Any child, providing he is not colour-blind, can distinguish without being taught the difference between red and green. If the child knows this difference innately, perhaps in the same manner he might have innate knowledge of such concepts as near and far, high and low, big and small, one and many. Cornford, in support of this idea, suggests that we make judgements like equality and inequality as soon as we begin to use our senses, in infancy (25). Aristotle declares that the soul at conception or at birth has within it a set of ideals which it strives to achieve. Just as the acorn contains within itself the characteristics of an oak tree, an individual soul already contains within itself the moral and aesthetic absolutes. A man's soul, therefore, is a source of knowledge in the sense that it contains pre-natal knowledge of specific human ideals (26).

For Plato, as for Socrates, knowledge meant knowing a moral ideal or knowing the essence or true nature of something. Plato's theory of knowledge was not concerned with knowing a fact or knowing how to do something (27).
Therefore, we can realize that Plato's theory does not state that knowledge of particulars must be recalled. He does not mean that one can recall a particular recipe for baking a certain type of cake, or recall the chemical formula for a particular drug. For example, particular examples of what constitutes equality, the child must learn from his culture. In a primitive culture like that of the Australian aborigine, two pinches of salt would be equal. For the Canadian chemist, however, measuring grams of Demorol into a tiny capsule, two pinches would not be equal. For both the Australian and the Canadian, absolute equality would be the same. What constitutes a particular example of equality is learned but, in Plato's terms, the absolute is not. Similarly, we could argue that anthropologists say that all cultures have the idea of beauty, although what constitutes particular examples of beauty differs from culture to culture (28). In some cultures women with bones through their noses are considered beautiful. In our culture they would be considered not beautiful. This suggests that what constitutes particular examples of beauty is learned. It does not mean, however, that the absolute is learned. The particulars are variable but the absolute is not.

If we could say that knowledge of absolutes for
colour need not be learned, and if we could say that knowledge of absolutes of near and far, high and low, big and small, one and many, need not be learned; if we could say that knowledge of absolutes of equality and beauty need not be learned, we might also say that knowledge of all absolutes need not be learned and that perhaps they are inherited. Unfortunately all that these arguments in favour of existence of a priori knowledge prove is that given normal intelligence and proper stimulation a person can conceptualize without being taught certain abstract ideas. Guthrie rightly points out that to acquire these abstract ideas is to exercise a "universal human faculty." Without it men could not use "...terms like horse and triangle and piety." The ability to form concepts is what distinguishes man from animals. But this ability is not more than the "power of generalization," and the ability to generalize about a number of instances, states Guthrie, is not the same as Plato's doctrine of a priori knowledge (29). Furthermore, even if we could prove that knowledge of absolutes is inherited, this would not mean that Plato's doctrine is plausible since it is based, not upon a theory of genetic inheritance, but upon a belief in the immortality of the soul. Therefore, we must conclude that Plato's theory of a priori knowledge presents us with a serious
problem.

For the time being, however, we must set this problem aside. We cannot consider it further until we have considered Plato's theory of soul, and this theory cannot be examined until we have discussed Plato's third hypothesis, his theory of absolutes, the topic to be discussed in the next chapter.
PLATO'S THEORY OF FORMS

To give a precise definition of Plato's absolutes is difficult. In Socrates' conversation with Parmenides in the Parmenides (132b), he suggests that they might be like "thoughts." Later in the same conversation, Socrates maintains that they are like "patterns" (132d). Further on (135b), Parmenides states that they must be like "essences." In book VI of the Republic (507), Plato claims that the absolute is like "being" or "essence," like an "aspect," "unity," "idea," or "that which really is." In the Phaedrus (247c), he likens absolutes to "true being." In the Euthyphro (6d-7), he describes them as "essential forms," "standards" or "ideals." In the Greater Hippias (300b), he suggests that the absolute is like a "common quality." In the Gorgias (497e), he claims they are "present in" particulars. In the Cratylus (440c), he states they are "the eternal nature of things."

Plato's commentators employ a variety of names when referring to his "absolutes." Lodge uses the term "idea." Lodge maintains that "Idea" could mean for Plato a "group of sensuous experiences" or "an ideal concept"; "an intelligible unit" or a "conceptual essence of meaning
Like Lodge, Hoernle uses the term "Idea." Hoernle claims that for Plato the "Ideas" are "principles" or "standards of perfection (31)." Woltersorff uses the term "Universal." He says that for Plato the "Universals" are "perfect examples of themselves (32)" R.G. Cross and A.D. Woozley in their article, "Knowledge, Belief and the Forms," state that Plato uses the Greek word "eidos and idea" interchangeably. The English word "idea," say Cross and Woozley, is an exact translation of the Greek "idea." It tends to carry with it the notion that ideas exist only in the mind, that they are only thoughts and are only subjective. But, state Cross and Woozley, Plato did not mean this. Therefore, the English word "form" is preferable (33). We cannot say, however, that any one term is the right one, for no exact and precise definition can be given for a concept which Plato himself called by various names. But since most commentators use the term "Form," it is the one which will be used in this study.

As I have pointed out in Chapter One, these Forms variously described as "patterns," "essences," "aspects," "unities," "paradigms," "ideals" are apprehended not by the senses but by thought (reflection on the impressions). Because one apprehends the Forms through thought, knowledge is found not only in the relationship of the actual
particular to the Form, but also in the relationship of thought to the Form. The relationship of the particular circle to the Form circle is of secondary importance. Of primary importance is the mind's ability to apprehend the Form of Circle through thought. As a result of this relationship between the particulars, the Forms and thought, Plato divides reality into two classes, the "visible" or "variable" class (the particulars), and the "intelligible" class (the Forms). In the Republic (509d-511a) Plato represents these two regions by a line divided into four equal sections. The Forms occupy the first section of the "intelligible" class, numbers the next (34). In the "visible" class, the third section consists of plants, animals and objects, and the fourth contains their images, shadows and reflections. Corresponding to these four sections are four methods of cognition (511a-e). Thought (reason) is the highest, understanding is the second, belief is the third and picture thinking or conjecture is the fourth. The first two he calls intellection, the last two he calls opinion. Opinion cognizes the material world, intellection cognizes the Forms. All this is nicely summed up in the Republic (533e-534b):

Are you satisfied then, said I, as before, to call the first division science, and the second understanding, the third belief, and the fourth conjecture or
picture thought—and the last two collectively opinion, and the first two intellection, opinion dealing with generation and intellection with essence, and this relation expressed in the proportion: as essence is to generation, so is intellection to opinion, and as intellection is to opinion, so is science to belief, and understanding to image thinking or surmise?

To state the same idea more simply, we can say that if thought occupies itself with the "visible" world, it will achieve opinion only. But if it directs its attention to the Forms, it will achieve knowledge. For example, to think that one girl is more beautiful than another is to have an opinion (35) of beauty, or to think that one act is more courageous than another is to have an opinion of courage, but it is not at all the same thing as having knowledge of the Form of Beauty or the Form of Courage.

Plato claims that opinion is not necessarily undesirable even though it is not knowledge. In the Symposium (202a), Diotima declares that a "correct opinion" is better than ignorance. In the Meno (98b-c), Socrates remarks that "right opinion" can lead one in the proper direction, namely, in the direction of the Forms. Right opinion is not, however, as good as knowledge. In the "way to Larissa" analogy in the Meno (7a-b), for example, Plato points out that when one has knowledge, one knows not only
that something is true but why it is true. The man who has been told the right way to Larissa might meet someone who tells him differently and go astray. The man who knows the road, because he has been there (has a priori knowledge), will not be led astray. The essential difference between knowledge and true opinion, says Plato, is that, while knowledge always represents "stable and unchanging reality," true opinion does not, for opinions, founded on the material world, the Heraclitean world of flux, are not permanent (36).

We can now consider the importance of the above information for this study. According to Plato, we can only know what goodness is insofar as we have knowledge of the Forms. For example, through reference to the Form of Courage we will know whether or not a particular act is courageous. If we do not have direct knowledge of the Form of Courage, we might nevertheless have a correct opinion of what courage is like and, therefore, will initiate a courageous act (37). Conversely, if we have neither knowledge nor true opinion of the Form we will not know what courage is and will not initiate a courageous act.

Before we can determine if this idea is credible, we must determine whether or not this notion of a system of Forms is plausible. Commentators from Aristotle to the
present have been examining this problem. It is not nearer to resolution now than it was in Aristotle's time. In the following chapters some of the aspects of this dilemma will be examined insofar as they relate to the rationality of Plato's theory of good and evil.
4.

THE RATIONALITY OF PLATO'S THEORY OF FORMS

One of the first arguments we might present against the rationality of the theory of Forms is that, despite the metaphysical claims made in Chapter One and Two, Forms might be nothing more than thoughts in one's mind. Granted we can only know this circle is a circle because we have seen other circles, and by using reason, can compare it with them and find it is like an absolute principle called circularity. Similarly, we can conclude that the word "equal" stands for a principle called equality just as the word "red" stands for a principle called redness. But, as we suggested above (page 13), all we have been talking about so far are ideas of classes, that is to say, concepts. None of these concepts need exist as transcendent Forms apart from the thinking mind, and if they do not, the Forms will not be absolute principles of goodness, in which case Plato's theory of good and evil will immediately lose any credence we have thus far given it. Plato himself points out in the Parmenides (132b) the possibility that the Forms are only thoughts:

But, Parmenides, said Socrates, may it not be that each of these forms is a thought, which cannot properly exist anywhere but in a mind.
In answer to Socrates' question, Parmenides states (132b-c) that a thought must be of something that is, namely a form:

Then, is each form one of these thoughts and yet a thought of nothing? No, that is impossible. So it is a thought of something? Yes. Of something that is, or of something that is not? Of something that is. In fact, of some one thing which that thought observes to cover all the cases, as being a certain single character? Yes. Then will not this thing that is thought of as being one and always the same in all cases be a form? That again seems to follow. Parmenides' answer reminds us of a comment made earlier (page 10), namely, that Plato proves in the Sophist that language cannot by itself give us knowledge. In this dialogue (262c), Plato states that for language to exist, verb must be mingled with noun (262c). It is in this "weaving together" of verb with noun that the saying or thinking what is not happens. When one thinks what is not, one joins Forms which should not be joined. To say "'Theaetetus, whom I am talking to at this moment, flies'" (263a) is to combine verbs and nouns which ought not to be combined (263d). Even when words or thoughts are combined incorrectly, argues Plato, the separate thought corresponds to the separate form and this corresponds to what is. One can say what is not, therefore, just as easily as one can
think what is not. Based on Plato's argument, we can conclude, therefore, that it is incorrect for Parmenides to state that Forms must exist since a thought must be of something that exists (38).

The possibility that Forms might simply be thoughts appears to do serious damage to the credibility of Plato's theory of Forms. Some commentators, on the basis of problems brought up in the Parmenides, have suggested that Plato himself doubted the existence of transcendent Forms. Rist, for example, says that all that Parmenides' argument proves is the existence of class concepts. Philosophy, he states, operates with general propositions, and if particulars cannot be classed, whether or not the classes are Forms, then thought is at an end. But class concepts, claims Rist, do not prove the existence of transcendent Platonic Forms (39).

Cornford, on the other hand, claims that the Parmenides does maintain the full Platonic view of transcendent Forms. He reiterates Parmenides argument that, because Forms are necessary "... as objects on which to fix our thoughts...", and because they are "... constant meanings of the words used in all discourse...", they must not be "... wholly immersed in the flow of sensible things..." and must, therefore, have "... an unchanging and
independent existence, however hard it may be to conceive their relation to changing individuals (40)."

Guthrie concurs with Cornford. He states that the idea that a Form should be nothing more than a "common factor" of the particular is "at variance with" Plato's Theory of Forms as set down in the dialogues other than the *Parmenides* (41). "I cannot think," states Guthrie, "that Plato would in the Parmenides give up "...the sense given to Form in all his previous arguments, which depend for their force on the separate and independent existence of Form (42)." Like Cornford and Guthrie, Hackforth states that Plato believed the Forms to exist apart from and "...indeed before the particulars (43)." Similarly, Ross states that Plato considered the Forms to be "perfectly objective (44)."

The consensus among Plato's commentators, then, is that Plato does believe in transcendent forms. Personally, I agree with Rist's statement that the *Parmenides* proves that Plato believed in the existence of class concepts only, and not of transcendent Forms, but I also agree with Cornford, Guthrie, Hackforth and Ross who conclude from the dialogues as a whole that Plato did believe in transcendent Forms. For example, in the *Phaedo* (74a) Plato states that equality is something "beyond" and "distinct" from two equal sticks. Also in the *Phaedo* (79a-80a), when he divides
existence into two categories, the "visible" contrasted with the "invisible," he is claiming that the Forms exist independently of their instantiations:

Or does each one of these uniform and independent entities remain always constant and invariable, never admitting any alteration in any respect or in any sense? They must be constant and invariable, Socrates, said Cebes.

Well, what about the concrete instances of beauty--such as men, horses, clothes, and so on--or of equality, or any other members of a class corresponding to an absolute entity? Are they constant, or are they, on the contrary, scarcely ever in the same relation in any sense either to themselves or to one another?

With them, Socrates, it is just the opposite; they are never free from variation.

In addition, Plato asserts in the Republic with his analogy of the Good (507b-509c), of the divided line (509b-511c) and of the cave (514a-519b) that the Forms are transcendent. Similarly, in the Cratylus 454b, Plato argues in favour of transcendent Forms when he states that if there were no permanent entities, "no eternal nature of things," knowledge would be impossible.

In view of the above textual evidence from the dialogues, we must conclude that Plato did believe in transcendent Forms. But, we must now ask, Is such a belief rational? It was one of Aristotle's objections to Plato's
theory of Forms that he (Plato) made them exist apart from the particulars (44). Yet, Aristotle admits, the idea of Forms is necessary if we are to come to an understanding of the particulars. Aristotle claims (Metaphysics 1042a24) that sensibles are a combination of Form with matter:

Now a substance is an underlying subject; and in one sense, this is matter (by 'matter' I mean that which is not a this in actuality but is potentially a this); in another sense, it is the formula or the form, which is a this and separable in formula; in a third sense it is the composition of the two, of which alone there is generation and destruction, and which is separate without qualification, for of instances according to formula some are separable but others are not. In his Metaphysics (999b 34-9) he states that if Form did not exist there would be no knowledge of particulars:

If nothing exists apart from individual things, and these are infinite, how is it possible to get knowledge of an infinite number of individuals? For insofar as something is one and the same and belongs to things universally, to this extent we know them all. But if this is necessary and something must exist besides the individuals, it would also be necessary that the genera, whether the lowest or the ultimate, exist apart from the individuals. But we have just discussed the impossibility of this.... If nothing exists besides the individuals, there would be no intelligible object, but all things would be sensible and there would be no knowledge of anything, unless by 'knowledge' one means sensation.
In his Posterior Analytics, Aristotle states that only universals can be defined and known in the scientific sense. He distinguishes in 71b33 the "more knowable in its nature" (in Plato's term the "essence of a thing") from "more knowable to us:

Things are prior and better known in two ways: for the same thing is not prior by nature and prior to us, or better known by nature and better known to us. The things nearer to sense are prior and better known relatively to us, those that are more remote prior and better known without qualification. The most universal things are farthest from sense, the individual things nearest to it; and these are opposed to each other.

It was Aristotle's conclusion in Metaphysics (1018b32) that logically speaking, universals are prior, but in our perception the particular comes first. While we perceive the individual, perception is of the universal.

If we summarize Aristotle's logic on this point, we can see that according to his line of reasoning Forms must exist because: (1) sensibles are a combination of Form and matter, (2) there must be a Form if knowledge is to exist, (3) that only the Form can be known in a scientific way, (4) perception is of the universal. In essence, these statements are the same as those outlined in Chapters One and Two dealing with Plato's theory of knowledge. There we sought to prove the rationality of Plato's theory that true
knowledge was knowledge of the Forms. Now, using Aristotle's logic, we have attempted to prove the rationality of the idea that Forms ought to be considered transcendent (even though Aristotle objected to this idea). That this idea is plausible can be illustrated by reference to the circle. If we see a circle, there are three factors involved: a thinking mind, the particular circle and the concept of circularity. Now if circular objects and circular designs were removed from the world, our minds would still have the concept of circle. If we were to die, and everyone else on this earth were to die, all the individual minds and consequently all the individual concepts of circle would die also. But, according to Plato, the Form Circle would not. Circle as a Form would exist independent of any circle and independent of any individual idea or thought of circularity. Or put the same analogy into a slightly different context. Although this circle \( \bigcirc \) will exist for only a short period of time, in fact only as long as this paper exists, and although the concept of this circle will exist for only as long as our minds exist, nevertheless the Form Circle, after which all circles are copies, will exist independently of mind and its thoughts or concepts. From these examples, we can discern: (1) the particular circle, (2) the concept circle, (3) the
Form of Circle, and can conclude (according to Plato's argument) that while (1) and (2) are impermanent (variable), (3) is not only permanent but is, as well, transcendent. The above examples can be substituted for any of the other Socratic virtues like courage, justice, piety, or beauty. If we consider the Form Beauty, for example, we realize that that which seems beautiful today perhaps will not seem beautiful tomorrow, and that which looks beautiful in one light will not look beautiful in another. But the (3) Form of Beauty exists unchanged and independent of any (2) concepts of beauty and independent of the existence of a (1) particular example of beauty (46).

However, even if we can conclude that Plato's belief in transcendent Forms is plausible, we are not yet free from problems with his theory of Forms. If the particulars were, in fact, not permanent, as Plato maintains, it would be impossible both to recognize them and describe them and, therefore, impossible to posit from them a Form. Using this argument, Gulley claims that Plato's theory of Forms is inconsistent with his theory that sensibles are in a state of flux:

This doctrine clearly assumes that there are determinate and recognisable sensible characteristics; indeed it is a doctrine that sensibles are determinate and recognisable in so far as they 'participate in' and hence 'resemble' Forms.
There is a serious inconsistency, then, between this doctrine and the consequences drawn by Plato from the fact that sensibles are in flux (47). But I do not believe that Gulley is correctly interpreting Plato's idea of flux. In Plato's view, particulars were permanent in the Heraclitean sense. For Heraclitus, a building seemed more permanent than a flower but only because the permanence of the building was impermanence in slow motion. Particulars are sufficiently permanent to establish true opinion, claims Plato, but not to establish knowledge.

We have seen from the above discussion that the particular and the Form exist in the variable, material realm, and in the intelligible, invariable realm, respectively. But, we must now ask, if the Form is transcendent, existing independently of the particular, How exactly is the particular related to the Form? And precisely how is the Form related to the particular? When asked in the *Euthydemus* (301a) whether beautiful objects are identical with the Beautiful, Socrates replies that they are not but that there is present to each of them some beauty. "Then," said Dionysodorus, "If you have an Ox with you, you are an ox....?" In other words, how can one thing be made different simply by the presence of something different? Socrates suggests an answer to this question in the *Gorgias*...
(497e):

Do you not call good people by that name because of the presence in them of things good just as you call beautiful things those in whom beauty is present?

This answer is similar to Socrates' comment in the Phaedo (100d):

I cling simply and straightforwardly and no doubt foolishly to the explanation that the one thing that makes that object beautiful is the presence in it or association with it, in whatever way the relation comes about, of absolute beauty. I do not go so far as to insist upon the precise details—only upon the fact that it is by beauty that beautiful things are beautiful.

At first glance I must conclude that Socrates' statements that something is beautiful because beauty is present in it or it "partakes" or "associates" with beauty is not very helpful. I concur with Allen who states that no one who has failed to understand "This rose is beautiful," would find it illuminating to be told that the expression means "This rose partakes of beauty (48)."

In the Parmenides (132d), however, Socrates does offer a credible answer: that the particular is an imperfect copy of the Form:

But, Parmenides, the best I can make of the matter is this—that these forms are as it were patterns fixed in the nature of things. The other things are made in their image and are
likenesses, and this participation they come to have in the forms is nothing but their being made in their image.

Socrates' solution is the most logical way to construe the relationship of the Form to the particular. This relationship, however, leads in the Parmenides (132e) to the famous problem of "the third man" which suggests that the Form must be a copy of a second Form and it a copy of a third and so on:

And must not the thing which is like share with the thing that is like it in one and the same thing (character)...?

Certainly.

If so, nothing can be like the form, nor the form be like anything. Otherwise a second form will always make its appearance over and above the first form, and if that second form is like anything, yet a third. And there will be no end to this emergence of fresh forms, if the form is to be like the thing that partakes of it.

Runciman writes that the "third man" argument reduces the Form to the status of a particular. He argues that if whiteness is white, which must follow if white objects are white by resembling whiteness, then whiteness is one of the class of white objects (49). But I do not believe that Runciman has taken into account the fact that whiteness is not an object. He might search for the rest of his life but will not find whiteness. Guthrie, addressing himself to Runciman's comments on "the third man," agrees with my
conclusion:

Whiteness is an Intelligible (not visible) Form. When it enters a material object (say a face) its combination with body produces visible whiteness, an imperfect imitation of the transcendent Form in the only medium in which material objects can reflect it. The face, which was never perfectly white, may turn red by 'receiving' (Phaedo 102d-e) Redness instead of Whiteness, but Whiteness, whether 'by itself' or in us, will always be itself and nothing else (50).

But I do not believe that Guthrie clarifies the problem either. To speak of whiteness entering faces and of faces receiving redness is like saying that the Form of Circle enters the particular circle or the Form of Equality enters two unequal sticks. To answer the problem of the "third man", I think we must simply return to the discussion offered earlier of the Forms in which, by the example of the circle, we concluded that, since the Forms are transcendent, they can exist independently of the particular which imitates them. The particular is an imperfect copy of the Form, but the Form is not a copy of anything. It is that thing. This conclusion is similar to Findlay's solution to the problem of "the third man:"

...a Form's genuine self-predication or being itself, while being in a sense the paradigmatic source of its connection with self in its instances, is none the less to be distinguished from the latter, and so will not give rise to an infinite regress (51).
Although we may solve the problem of "the third man" by resorting to the fact that the Forms are transcendent, we are left with the question, How did Plato think that the particulars were related to the Forms? As we have already seen, Socrates' answer (see page 28 above) was that the particulars are copies of the Forms. But, as we have seen above (page 1), Plato did not view the Forms in the same light as did Socrates. Guthrie quotes Stallbaum who makes a distinction between the logical doctrine of universals held by Socrates and the metaphysical doctrine of Forms held by Plato. Guthrie states that in the Apology, Crito, Euthyphro, Laches, Greater Hippias, the Ion, Socrates makes no mention of transcendent Forms. All Socrates states in these dialogues is that if two things are to be called by the same name, they must share some common form or essence which is within each one (52). Similarly, Aristotle maintains in Metaphysics (1078B30) that Socrates "...did not posit the universals as separate." Likewise, Ross, in considering this difference in viewpoint between the two, concludes:

In the early dialogues, written while Plato was completely dominated by the influence of Socrates, it is natural that there should be no trace of transcendentalism; for Socrates was interested, as Aristotle says, only in ascertaining the nature which was common to all just acts, to all beautiful objects, and the like; but
as Plato's mind matured he moved gradually towards a transcendental view of the Ideas as entities existing on their own account and only imperfectly mirrored in sensible things and in human actions (53). Therefore, because Socrates did not believe in transcendent Forms, his explanation of their relationship with the particular will not be the same as that of Plato.

But precisely how Plato conceived of the Forms relating to the particulars is not an easy question for us to answer, for he uses such vague and complicated terminology to describe them that it is difficult to discover exactly what he had in mind. For example, in Euthyphro (6d-e) he states that Forms are in things and are that by which the particulars are characterized. In the Greater Hippias (300a) he claims that Forms are that which make the particulars have it. In the Lysis (217d-e) he says particulars are characterized by the presence of the Forms. In the Gorgias (467e) he suggests particulars share in the Forms. In the Greater Hippias (292d) he declares things are made beautiful when beauty is added.

That Plato believed the Forms were in some way immanent (54), however, can be concluded from his use of expressions like "in things," "characterized," "share in," and "being added," but, because Plato did not specify precisely how, I conclude, as did Ross (55), that these
terms are all used metaphorically. Circles can be thought of as "sharing" the Form of Circularity. Beautiful things can be thought of as being "characterized" by the Form of Beauty. Fighting, by the addition of courage, "shares" in the Form of Bravery. The answer to the question regarding the rationality of the relationship of the particular to the Form and the Form to the particular, then, is that Plato considered the Form to be immanent in the particular but, due to his metaphoric use of language, we cannot determine exactly how.

From this lengthy digression upon the transcendence of the Forms and their relationship to the particulars, we can now return to the statement made at the end of Chapter Three, namely, that one can only know what goodness is insofar as one has knowledge of the Forms. This discussion of the immanence of the Forms allows us to understand with a greater degree of clarity the idea that one's own goodness, or lack of it, is dependent upon knowledge of, or ignorance of, the Forms, for we now see that goodness is dependent upon the degree to which the transcendent Form is immanent in any particular, be it a quality, an aspiration, a decision, an action, and that evil results from lack of Form in the particular. From what we have discussed so far, we can conclude that Plato's idea that knowledge of good and
evil is dependent upon our having knowledge of Forms, especially of ethical and aesthetic Forms, seems plausible. But two difficult problems remain. Firstly, if there is a Form of a mathematical object, like circle, must there not be also a Form of Stone and of Hair and even of Mud?

Among Plato's commentators there is some disagreement about Plato's belief in Forms for what might be considered "neutral substances." Cherniss, for example, states that Plato's writings provide no "definite" and "unambiguous" evidence to conclude whether or not he believed in such Forms (56). Crombie suggests that Plato regards clay and hair as "indeterminate objects," matter "...left to its own devices corresponding to no definite ... character" (57). Lodge maintains that Plato recognized ideas of all things (58). Ross agrees with Lodge but qualifies his "all inclusiveness" by stating that when Plato wishes to cite typical ideas, he refers either to moral or aesthetic values or to mathematical entities. Ideas of substances, Ross concludes, are nowhere prominent except in the Timaeus, though they are involved with the theory since it was Plato's belief that there is an idea corresponding to every common name (59). Frazer agrees with Ross. He claims that the ideas which Plato primarily idealized and which he considered most important were not concrete ideas of things.
but abstract ones of qualities and especially of moral values (60). According to Aristotle in *Metaphysics* 1070a18, Plato believed that "...there are Forms as many as the things that exist by nature." By positing Forms, claimed Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 1078b30), Plato had to say there were Forms for everything--in other words, that he was logically committed to the position, not that he held it:

> For, in seeking the causes of the sensibles, Plato proceeded from these to the Forms, which are more numerous, so to say, than the individual sensibles; for there exists a Form bearing the same name as that which is predicated of many sensibles, of substances as well as of non-substances, and of these things as well as of eternal things. If we consider for a moment specific passages in the dialogues we find that Plato definitely did posit Forms for everything. In the *Timaeus* (28b), Plato concludes that there are Forms for everything:

> Now everything that becomes or is created must of necessity be created by some cause, for without a cause nothing can be created. The work of the creator, whenever he looks to the unchangeable and fashions the form and nature of his work after an unchangeable pattern, must necessarily be made fair and perfect.... Similarly, in the *Cratylus* (423e) he affirms that there are Forms for everything:
SOCRATES: Again, is there not an essence of each thing, just as there is a color, or sound? And is there not an essence of color and sound as well as of anything else which may be said to have an essence? Plato's belief in Forms for everything presents us with a serious problem. How can a theory be rational which posits that goodness depends upon absolutes which are not necessarily good? In the Parmenides (130d), Socrates admits he has been puzzled by this question. In response, Parmenides states (130e) that when Socrates has gained more experience in philosophy he will not despise unpleasant substances. A similar answer to the same question is given by the Stranger in the Sophist (227b). The art of the general is not to be considered a more superior form of hunting than is the "vermin destroyer." Similarly, in the Statesman (266d) the Stranger states that a philosophical enquiry is not concerned with degrees of dignity and does not despise the smaller more than the greater but makes straight for the truth. These three examples suggest to us that Plato felt the problem to be simply one of association of the Form with unpleasantness or triviality. To illustrate Plato's point, we might argue that it is easy to associate a particular example of beauty with a metaphysical idea of beauty because it is easy to attribute metaphysical properties to beauty. It is also easy to assign
It begins to be difficult for us to ascribe these properties to mud and hair. But the problem would not exist if we felt differently about hair or about mud. To the Australian Aborigine who uses mud to patch the cracks in his house, there will be ideal or perfect mud. Probably to the hairdresser there is ideal or perfect hair. Commenting on this problem, Guthrie asks "...does hair serve no purpose, or mud and clay with which bricks are made and in which cattle cool themselves (61)?" Plato's own example is the ideal shuttle in the Cratylius (389b). The proper definition of a shuttle is not a piece of wood such and such a shape but is a tool ideally suited for making clothing. The carpenter, though not a philosopher with the knowledge of the Forms, has an idea of what a perfect shuttle should be like because he knows what a shuttle is for. This is the same as our saying that the Aborigine would know what perfect mud is like because he knows what mud is for (62). According to this line of reasoning, common objects, like shuttles, have a utilitarian purpose, a goodness of function.

The importance of this idea of goodness of function to this treatment of Plato's doctrine of good and evil will hopefully be made clear in future chapters. At this point,
however, we can conclude that the idea of Forms for trivial and unpleasant substances is not irrational, since most substances do have a utilitarian purpose. In any case, Forms of substances or artifacts are not prominent in the dialogues, but because Plato's theory was based on rational inquiry, he found it necessary, as Aristotle claimed, to posit Forms for everything. Yet Plato's primary interest was in moral, aesthetic, and mathematical Forms.

However, one problem remains. If there can be a Form of Mud and of Hair must we not conclude also that there ought to be Forms for qualities which might be considered evil such as injustice, cowardice or hate? And if we can, doubt is cast upon Plato's theory that goodness depends upon knowledge of the Forms. Ross states that there is evidence that Plato did believe in the existence of Forms of evil:

> It might be possible for a theory of Ideas to dispense with an Idea of evil and with Ideas of its species, and to explain all evil in the sensible world as due to the fact that the relation of the phenomenal to the ideal is never one of perfect instantiation but always one of imitation which falls short of its pattern. But there is nothing to show that Plato ever took this line (63). For proof of this point, Ross cites the Republic (476a and 403b), the Sophist (257e and 258b), the Euthyphro (5d) and the Theaetetus (176e).
I agree that in the Republic (402b) Plato does seem to state that there are Forms for the opposites of qualities like sobriety, courage, liberality, and high-mindedness:

Then, by heaven, am I not right in saying that by the same token we shall never be true musicians either—neither we nor the guardians that we have undertaken to educate—until we are able to recognize the forms of sobriety, courage, liberality and high-mindedness, and all their kindred and their opposites, too, in all the combinations that contain and convey them...

I agree that in the Sophist (257e) Plato does seem to say that there is a Form for the "not beautiful":

STRANGER: So it appears that the not-beautiful is an instance of something that exists being set in contrast to something that exists.
THEAETETUS: Perfectly.
STRANGER: What then? On this showing has the not-beautiful any less claim than the beautiful to be a thing that exists?
THEAETETUS: None whatever.

After this passage he goes on to suggest, seemingly, at 258b that any "what-is-not" must have a Form:

STRANGER: Has it then, as you say, an existence inferior to none of the rest in reality? May we now be bold to say that 'that which is not' unquestionably is a thing that has a nature of its own—just as the tall was tall and the beautiful was beautiful, so too with the not-tall and the not-beautiful—and in that sense 'that which is not' also, on the same principle, both was and is 'what is not,' a single form to be reckoned among the many realities? Or have we
any further doubts with regard to it, Theaetetus?

THEAETETUS: None at all.

I also agree that in the Euthyphro (5d) Plato seems to imply that unholiness has a Form:

Is not the holy always one and the same thing in every action, and, again, is not the unholy always opposite to the holy, and like itself? And as unholiness does it not always have its one essential form, which will be found in everything that is unholy?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, surely Socrates.

I must admit that in the Theaetetus (176e) Plato does seem to state that there is a system of Forms for the evil just as there is for the Good:

SOCRATES: There are two patterns, my friend, in the unchangeable nature of things, one of divine happiness, the other of godless misery-- a truth to which their folly makes them utterly blind, unaware that in doing injustice they are growing less like one of these patterns and more like the other. The penalty they pay is the life they lead, answering to the pattern they resemble.

Yet in spite of the above examples, I do not believe that Plato posited Forms of evil qualities. I do not agree that there is reference to Forms of evil in the Theaetetus (176e). Plato is referring here to the ungodliness of the material world as opposed to the divinity of the intelligible (64). To explain the reference to Forms of unholiness in the Euthyphro (5d), I doubt that Plato could be referring to Forms here because at this early stage in
the dialogues the theory had not yet evolved. I do not believe that Plato in the *Sophist* (257e) is positing forms of evil. The "not beautiful" and the "not just" are collective terms for all the Forms other than the Form Beautiful or Just (65). The *Sophist* as a whole argues for a sort of "not-being" throughout the whole realm of the Forms. Every Form is different from countless other Forms. This "not-being" is not in any way opposite to being, it is merely different from it (66). These statements in the *Sophist* are like the ones in the *Phaedo* (105d-e) in which the "uneven," the "unjust" and the "uncultured" are terms for those conditions that do not admit (the "particular" is not "immanent in") the respective Forms.

Insofar as the *Republic* (402b) and (476a) is concerned, I feel that the problem of Plato's fairly definite reference to Forms of evil is not so easily resolved. The difficulty here is in knowing whether or not Plato is referring to his theory of Forms. Commenting on this same problem in the *Sophist*, Seligman states that Plato's term "beautiful" can mean "...both the beautiful itself (the form of beauty), etc., and that which is beautiful (67)." I should point out that this problem occurs in the other dialogues as well, but in these instances it is more easily resolved. For example, in the
Plato refers to "honourable" and "dishonourable" and "good" and "bad" as though there were a Form for each. But here he is discussing his theory of dialectic, not his theory of Forms:

SOCRATES: And also likeness and unlikeness and sameness and difference?

THEAETETUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And how about 'honorable' and 'dishonorable' and 'good' and 'bad'?

THEAETETUS: Those again seem to me, above all, to be things whose being is considered, one in comparison with another, by the mind, when it reflects within itself upon the past and the present with an eye to the future.

Similarly, in *Laws X* (900d), Plato discusses good and evil in terms not of Forms but simply of contrary qualities:

ATHENIAN: Then let them join us in asking what we mean by the goodness in virtue of which we confess the gods to be good. Come, now, prudence, may we say, and understanding belong to goodness, their opposites to badness?

CLINIAS: We may.

ATHENIAN: And again that valor is part of goodness, cowardice of badness?

CLINIAS: Assuredly.

ATHENIAN: And the latter qualities we shall call shameful, the former noble?

CLINIAS: No doubt we must.

Likewise, a few pages later in the same dialogue (906a-d) Plato states that righteousness, temperance and wisdom are good while their opposites, wrong, arrogance and folly are bad, but again, he is not referring to Forms, only to...
qualities. Section (402b) of the **Republic** is like the pasages from the **Laws** X and the **Theaetetus** in that Plato is referring to contraries but not to Forms. However, this is not the case with the **Republic** (476a) in which he definitely states that "the unjust" and "the bad" have Forms:

> And in respect of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the ideas or forms, the same statement holds, that in itself each is one, but that by virtue of their communion with actions and bodies and with one another they present themselves everywhere each as a multiplicity of aspects.
> Right, he said.

This statement supports a theory that Plato believed in Forms for evil qualities. Consequently, if these texts were the only evidence available, we would be left with no unequivocal answer as to whether Plato believed in Forms of evil. Fortunately, however, there are passages in which Plato states definitely that he did not. For example, in the passage from the **Theaetetus** (176a-b) he states most emphatically that there is no evil in the world of Forms:

> **SOCRATES:** Evils, Theodorus, can never be done away with, for the good must always have its contrary, nor have they any place in the divine world, but they must needs haunt this region of our mortal nature. That Plato did not assume Forms of evil we can verify by referring to the following passage in the **Phaedrus** (250a) in which Plato states that if souls become involved with
unrighteousness they forget what they saw in the world of the Forms:

Now, as we have said, every human soul has, by reason of her nature, had contemplation of true being; else would she never have entered into this human creature; but to be put in mind thereof by things here is not easy for every soul. Some, when they had the vision, had it but for a moment; some when they had fallen to earth consorted unhappily with such as led them to deeds of unrighteousness, wherefore they forgot the holy objects of their vision.

Had unrighteousness, in other words, evil, been one of the Forms, men by participating in it, would recollect, not forget these Forms. In his reference to the ugly and the unjust in the Republic (479d), Plato states that these belong to that region between "being" and "not-being", in other words, not to the region of the Forms:

Do you know what to do with them, then? said I. And can you find a better place to put them than that midway between existence or essence and the not to be? For we shall surely not discover a darker region than not-being that they should still more not be, nor a brighter than being that they should still more be.

In Socrates' discussion with Parmenides (130c-d) about the various kinds of Forms, he makes no mention of evil forms but only of trivia:

Are you also puzzled, Socrates, about cases that might be thought absurd, such as hair or mud or dirt or any other trivial and undignified objects? Are you doubtful whether or
not to assert that each of these has a separate form distinct from things like those we handle?
We can conclude from the preceding, then, that: (1) there are many passages in which Plato definitely states there are no Forms for evil, (2) there are many passages in which Plato refers to evil in the context of opposites but not in the context of his theory of Forms and (3) there is one passage in the Republic in which Plato seems to suggest Forms of evil. If we consider this problem in the light of Plato's theory of Forms as a whole, we must conclude that Forms of evils of any sort could not possibly exist since, according to the theory, Forms are principles of goodness, and evil results from lack of immanence of these Forms. We must deduce from this argument, therefore, that Plato did not posit Forms of Evil.

I think that there are two main reasons why there are passages in the dialogues which seem to suggest Forms for evil. As I stated above (page 31), Socrates posited a Form for every group of particulars which have the same name because to use names, he thought, was to assume a common nature among the things named. But in Socrates' use of the term, "form" meant a common essence, whereas Plato used the term to mean a transcendent Form. Therefore, the passages which seem to suggest forms of evil are only, in fact, reflecting the Socratic use of the term "form," meaning
"common essence." Secondly, Plato shared in the Greek habit of seeing the world in terms of opposites and, consequently, often referred to good and evil in this context, without being careful to specify when he meant Forms and when he did not (68). With the above conclusions Frazer agrees:

...that in the case of pairs of contraries, Plato made an Idea of only one of the pair; for where the contraries were not (like justice and injustice, courage and cowardice) opposed as good and evil, he had no hesitation in making ideas of both contraries, eg. of greatness and smallness, heat and cold. But of qualities distinctly bad, Plato never really constructed Ideas (69).

Guthrie maintains that we are left with much uncertainty on the subject because the dialogues never squarely face the question. But, in spite of this, Guthrie concludes that although the Forms are either negatively or positively exemplified, Plato does not make Forms of evil:

...two things can be said at once: first, the question was of no great interest to Plato; second, at no period did he allow a place for evil of any kind in the realm of the divine, which was the home of the eternal, changeless Forms (70).

That a particular may exemplify the Form either negatively or positively means it may be an example of Form, or a lack of Form. This line of thought is essentially Aristotle's system of form, matter and privation (Physics, 191b15). The first is perfection, the second is that which desires
perfection, the third is not a third component but a way of referring to the degree to which the Form is not actualized (71):

Now we, too (who recognize both 'form' and 'lack of form,' or shortage, as factors in becoming) assert that nothing can 'come to be,' in the absolute sense, out of the non-existent, but we declare nevertheless that all things which come to be owe their existence to the incidental non-existence of something; for they owe it to the 'shortage' from which they started 'being no longer there.'

This statement brings us back to our earlier discussion in which we stated that evil results from lack of immanence of the Forms (page 33 above). In view of all that we have discussed since then, we can now rephrase Plato's theory of good and evil. The goodness of the particular is dependent upon the degree of immanence of the Forms. Our knowledge of good and evil is dependent upon our having knowledge of the Forms, particularly those Forms relating to moral and aesthetic qualities. Evil is lack of immanence of the Forms in the particulars; evil is the result of our ignorance of the Forms.

To summarize thus far, we can state that in the preceding chapters we have attempted to determine that Plato's belief in a system of transcendent Forms of which the particulars are copies seems rational. We have also
attempted to give credence to Plato's theory that true knowledge of any sort and, consequently, knowledge of what causes something to be good, or of what constitutes goodness, is dependent upon one having knowledge of these Forms. In discussing the above two ideas, we have considered the rationality of the theory that evil results from our lack of knowledge of the Forms, or lack of Form in the particular. We are left, however, with one doctrine which has proven to be irrational, namely, the theory that the soul is immortal. To this we shall now turn.
PLATO'S THEORY OF SOUL

In the preceding chapters we examined the rationality of Plato's theory of knowledge and his theory of Forms as it related to his theory of good and evil. Now the credibility of these theories can be examined in the context of Plato's theory of soul. Before proceeding, however, we must determine exactly what Plato means by his term "soul." Lodge states that for Plato "...'soul' and 'mind' are intended to coincide in all respects (72)." Guthrie states that Plato uses the word "soul" to mean "...that which performs all vital functions like nourishment, reproduction, sensation and thought, through the medium of the body." Guthrie claims that, for Plato, the term "soul" "...meant mind or intelligence or that which animates the body" (73). Hamilton and Cairns state the word "soul" is a translation of the Greek word "psyche." It is more properly translated, depending on the context of the dialogues, as "...Reason, Mind, Intelligence, Life, the vital principle in things as well as in man (74)."

For the purposes of this study we will use the definition given by Hamilton and Cairns since it seems to come closest to the rather complex notion of soul suggested by Plato in the dialogues. In the Timaeus (51d) and in the
Theaetetus (186a), for example, Plato declares that it is the mind that apprehends the Forms. In the Philebus (59d), he affirms that the Forms are apprehended by reason, intelligence and thought. But in the Phaedo (66b-e) he concludes that the Forms are apprehended by the soul. Therefore, according to Plato, mind, thought, reason and intelligence, commonly referred to as nous (75), are in some way a function of the soul. In the same passage he also states that the soul contains "...loves and desires and fears and all sorts of fancies...", qualities commonly thought of as emotions, and that these come from the body. According to Plato, therefore, the soul contains not only mind, intelligence, thought and reason, but also emotion.

In Laws X (897a), Plato states that souls contain such "motions" as "...wish, reflection, foresight, counsel, judgement... pleasures, pain, hope, fear, hate, love...." We can divide these "motions" into two classes: wish, reflection, foresight, counsel, and judgement fit into one category; pleasure, pain, hope, fear, and hate fit into another. The former are activities of the mind; the latter of the body, being related to emotion and desire. In "Book IV" of the Republic (439a-e), Plato outlines this idea of duality within the soul in more detail. Here he divides the soul into distinct sections: the higher soul and the lower
soul. Reason and rationality, he declares, reside in the higher; appetites and desire in the lower. In addition, he notes (439e) that the soul contains something called "high spirit," a term which means "the passionate" (550b). According to Plato, high spirit sometimes aligns itself with reason, and sometimes with desire (440a-e).

In the *Phaedrus* (253-257), Plato illustrates in his story of the charioteer how these parts function together. Here the soul, which is analogous to the two horses and the driver, consists of three parts (76): the rational, the passionate or "spirited", and the "appetitive." The reason or rational part is the governor of the soul just as the driver is the governor of the chariot. The appetitive part of the soul is like the black horse which rebels against reason and control. The emotional or passionate part is like the white horse which, caught between the black horse and the driver, follows first one, then the other. But both the emotional and the appetitive are governed by reason (*nous*), just as the two horses are governed by the driver.

Because the Forms are apprehended through the mind, thought, reason and intelligence, Plato cannot mean that the soul in its entirety perceives the Forms; rather he must mean the Forms are perceived only through the reason, the higher part. This statement can be verified if we refer to
the dialogues. In the *Apology* (23a) and in Phaedrus (278d), Plato states that *nous* is the immortal part of the soul, the part which links man to the divine. He says the same thing in more complicated terms in the *Sophist* (248a). "We are in touch with becoming by means of the body through sense," he states, "...whereas we have intercourse with real being by means of the Soul through reflection." In the *Symposium* (211c) and in the *Republic* (532a), Plato describes cognition of the Forms as not simply remembering, as in the *Meno*, but realizing through "visionary experience (77)." According to Plato's description of the activities and functions of the soul, therefore, it is generally dual in nature, *nous* being the controlling part, emotion and desire the controlled. This is not different from our definition (page 49) which divides soul into "psyche" and "the vital principle of things." This two-fold division corresponds to the two classes of reality pointed out in Chapter Four, the "visible" and the "intelligible." The body, states Plato (the *Republic* (507d-511c), belongs to the visible and variable, while the soul belongs to the intelligible (invisible and invariable). The soul, then, belongs to the same class as do the Forms and, as stated above, serves as a link between the material and the intelligible worlds.

According to Plato in the *Phaedo* (67a), attachment by
the lower soul to the pleasures of the "variable" causes "contamination" of the entire soul:

It seems that so long as we are alive, we shall continue closest to knowledge if we avoid as much as we can all contact and association with the body, except when they are absolutely necessary, and instead of allowing ourselves to become infected with its nature. Here he explains that there are "true pleasures" and "false pleasures." True pleasures are those which draw one closer to the Forms, learning for example, and those which through "self-mastery" are controlled by measure, proportion and limit (Philebus 63a, 52c). False pleasures, he adds, are unlimited, disproportionate, or uncontrolled emotion, appetite or desire (Philebus 27e, 31a). The individual (soul) chooses to control or not, its own appetite and desire. Therefore, claims Plato, the individual (soul) through self-mastery (78), or lack of it, chooses to be either evil or good. "For as a man's desires tend," says Plato, "...so and such does everyone of us come to be (Laws X, 904c)."

From this lengthy digression on Plato's theory of soul, we can now understand how it relates to his theory of good and evil. Plato maintains that if the higher soul (nous) reaches the Forms, the soul in its entirety will attain knowledge and consequently, goodness. But, he
states, if the soul fixes its attention on the visible and variable, if the soul is controlled by the appetites, emotions and desires for pleasure, in other words, if the soul is controlled by its own lower nature, there is no chance of its ever attaining the Forms and, consequently, of its ever attaining knowledge.
It is not difficult for us to relate this concept that good and evil are dependent upon self-mastery to the earlier statement that good and evil are dependent upon knowledge or ignorance of the Forms. In most instances, whether or not we choose a life of appetite and lust can be dependent upon ignorance and knowledge, i.e., upon the wisdom of one's choice. But, we could argue, often appetite, desires and emotions come upon us regardless of choice. For example, even though one has knowledge of the Forms, one will nevertheless be jealous if one's wife runs away with someone else. Plato's answer to this problem is given in the Symposium (210e). Having had a "...vision of the very soul of beauty...." one will never again be seduced by the beauty of any individual.

The idea of transcending material beauty seems to most of us basically irrational. We must remember, however, that this kind of "self-transcendence" through mystical experience is central to the Eastern religious traditions (Advaita Vedanta) and is certainly a part of Christianity (St. John of the Cross, Thomas Merton, St. Augustine).
Therefore, since every religious tradition has instances of this type of self-transcendence, we can agree that the statement that emotions and desires of the material world can be transcended might be given credence, although the "mystical life" is not, for the most of us, very rational.

However, there are more causes of evil than ignorance and lack of self-mastery. For example, even if we are not susceptible to our emotions and desires, and even if we have knowledge, we still must face personal tragedy like sickness or death, or calamities like floods or hurricanes. And surely these must be considered evil. Plato does realize that evil often seems to result from forces over which man has no control. For example, in the Timaeus (86d), he states that bodily disorders cause disorders of the soul:

The truth is that sexual intemperance is a disease of the soul due chiefly to the moisture and fluidity which is produced in one of the elements by the loose consistency of the bones. And in general all that which is termed the incontinence of pleasure and is deemed a reproach under the idea that the wicked voluntarily do wrong is not justly a matter of reproach. For no man is voluntarily bad, but the bad by reason of an ill disposition of the body and bad education-- things which are hateful to every man and happen against his will.

Plato maintains in the Timaeus (87a-b) that malfunctions in
the body cause an infinite variety of evil conditions in the soul such as "ill temper," "meloncholy," "rashness," "cowardice," "forgetfulness," and "stupidity." Besides these causes of evil, Plato names in the Republic (617-618) one other. Evils like personal disease and calamity, Plato says, result from a force called "necessity."

According to Wheelwright (79), the Greeks of Plato's time believed necessity was responsible for whatever lay outside the "range of human planning." An event caused by necessity was accidental, something that had happened by chance (80). Guthrie states that Plato meant by his term "necessity" a cause "...'destitute of reason producing chance results without order.'" These events are not designed but just happen. Matter, explains Guthrie, has its own "...necessary characteristics indifferent to reason or to values." Fire for example "...may warm a house and cook meals, or it may destroy the house and kill its owner (81)."

In the Laws V (732b-d), Plato declares that these two antagonistic principles--reason and necessity--form a sort of "divine battleground" with the individual soul caught between. Sometimes the soul of the individual is under control of the one and sometimes under control of the other, and the best he can do is hope that his misfortunes will not last:
It should be our constant hope that God, by the blessings he bestows, will lighten the troubles that come upon us, and change our present state for the better, while, with Heaven's favor, the very reverse will always be true of our blessings. But, maintains Plato, even when the soul is taken over by necessity, in which case the evil is not the fault of the individual, nevertheless he is responsible for his own conduct and is required to become good. In the *Timaeus* (90a-e), Plato states that the "creator" has done his best within the limits set by necessity to facilitate the rule of the rational part, but whether reason or necessity emerges superior in the end is left to the individual.

Up to this point Plato's theory of soul, insofar as it relates to his theory of good and evil, seems basically rational. We cannot doubt the rationality of Plato's theory of self-mastery. Greed for pleasure is almost always destructive, and certainly we all know through experience that goodness, or lack of it, depends upon our ability to control our own self-centered drives. Similarly, we can agree that disease of the body can cause disease of the soul. Likewise, we must agree, much of what appears to be evil is caused by accident and chance. Physical diseases just happen, calamities occur for no reason. But in the *Timaeus* (91d-92c) Plato links his doctrine of self-mastery with his theory of immortality. He states that the
consequences of not achieving self-mastery are reflected not only in this life but also in the future life. He who has cherished knowledge will attain after death divine happiness. But he who has not, will be reborn as a bird or an animal or a fish (82).

Plato attempts in three instances to prove this theory (83). In the Phaedo (78b-84b), he states that since one's soul (nous) belongs to the same realm as do the Forms, like the Forms it is immortal. By way of proof, he argues that a Form will never receive a contrary Form. The Form Snow, for example, will never receive the contrary Form Heat just as the Form Even will never receive the contrary Form Odd. Soul, Plato argues, is what gives life to the body. Life always accompanies soul. It is an essential attribute of it. Life, he concludes in the Phaedo (106b), cannot contain its opposite, death and still remain soul. It is essentially deathless as snow is heatless:

Are we not bound to say the same of the immortal? If what is immortal is also imperishable, it is impossible that at the approach of death soul should cease to be. It follows from what we have already said that it cannot admit death, or be dead--just as we said that three cannot be even, nor can odd; nor can fire be cold, nor can the heat which is in the fire. Certainly, neither I nor any of Plato's commentators could be convinced by this discussion. Although snow is
heatless and fire is coldless, this does not mean that snow cannot melt or fire be put out. Besides, for such a theory to be tenable at all, Plato would have to believe that soul is a Form. Hackforth states that Plato gave soul the status of Form for this argument only (84). Guthrie, however, states that Plato does not regard soul as a Form (85). Personally, I do not see how the tripartite soul of the Phaedrus and the Republic, divided as it is between emotion and nous, could be considered to be Form, which by definition is unified goodness. The whole idea of good and evil soul--an evil soul transmigrating from one body to another or souls through pursuit of pleasure being brought down to earth and reborn as animals--is contrary to Plato's definition of Form. Even if we argue that only nous is a Form (a perfect particular), this would not resolve the problem, for both evil and good souls are considered by Plato to be immortal.

Plato tries a second proof for immortality in the Republic (609-610). For everything, there is an evil which destroys it, as eyes by ophthalmia, the body by disease, crops by blight, timber by rot, metals by rust, and so on. If there is anything whose specific evil cannot destroy it, it must be indestructible. The soul has its own specific evil, wickedness, which though it depraves, cannot
destroy. Therefore, claims Plato, though the body is destroyed by its natural evil, disease, the soul is indestructible.

I think this argument is equally unconvincing. Wickedness does not destroy the soul, but neither does disease necessarily destroy the body. According to Plato's argument, we could say that life—an essential attribute of both body and soul—has its own specific evil: death. Consequently, it is death that destroys both body and soul, not disease and wickedness.

In the *Phaedo* (85eff) Plato's analogy of the soul to the melody of the lyre also suggests an argument for immortality. Plato explains that a melody exists eternally independent of any instrument and is brought into existence by anyone who discovers the correct combination of notes. This discussion may prove the immortality of a particular song but not, unfortunately, the immortality of soul. Neither does Plato's discussion in the *Meno*. Here Plato attempts to prove not only that soul contains a priori knowledge, but also that it is immortal. In Chapter Two we saw that, although the *Meno* might suggest the existence of a priori knowledge, it does not prove the existence of immortality.

However, even though Plato believed in immortality,
he himself regards his theory of soul with some misgivings. For example, in the *Phaedo* (85c), he states that "...it is very difficult if not impossible to achieve certainty about these questions." A few pages later in the *Phaedo* (107c) he states that even if the soul is not immortal, one ought to treat it as though it were since it would be "...extremely dangerous to neglect it." Plato goes on to say (114d) that the facts are not necessarily as he describes them, but they must be something like this:

Of course, no reasonable man ought to insist that the facts are exactly as I have described them. But that either this or something very like it is a true account of our souls and their future habitations--since we have clear evidence that the soul is immortal--this I think, is both a reasonable contention and a belief worth risking, for the risk is a noble one.

In the *Phaedrus* (246a) he states that what the soul is we cannot say but only "...what it resembles." We must conclude, therefore, that Plato never intended us to take his figurative language dogmatically. When in the *Meno* (86b) Plato states "I would not take the oath on the whole story...," he surely means that he chooses not to be dogmatic about something which can only be discussed metaphorically. Similarly, in the *Timaeus* (72d) he admits that he is only suggesting a "probable" answer:
Concerning the soul, as to which part is mortal and which divine, and how and why they are separated, and in what company they are placed, if God acknowledges that we have spoken the truth, then, and then only, can we be confident; still, we may venture to assert that what has been said by us is probable, and will be rendered more probable by investigation. Let us assume thus much.

Although we must admit that Plato's theory of the immortality of the soul is not rational, we must deduce that Plato's point of view is. To admit that he "does not know" is to take a rational stance. But, we might argue, since the credibility of the theory of good and evil depends on the credibility of the theory of Forms, and this depends, to a certain extent, on the credibility of his theory that the Forms are recollected by the immortal soul, our attempt to give Plato's theories a rational basis has ended in defeat. Fortunately, however, we are not so easily beaten, for we are able to overcome this problem by turning to Plato's idea of dialectic, the theory which we will discuss in the next chapter as part of our discussion on Plato's the Good.
7.

PLATO'S IDEA OF THE GOOD

In "Book VI" of the Republic, Plato states that the Good is the cause "...of knowledge, and truth insofar as known," that the Good "...gives truth to the objects of knowledge and the power of knowing to the knower (508e)," that the good is the "...authentic source of truth and reason," that the Good is the cause of all"...that is right and beautiful (517c)," that it is through reference to the idea of the Good that "...just things and all the rest become useful and beneficial (505a)." The Good, therefore, according to Plato, is the cause of the Forms as well as the cause of knowledge and reason. In other words, the Good is the cause of the exact qualities which we have up to this point found essential to the grasp of what goodness is.

But what, we must ask, does Plato mean by his term "the Good"? Plato himself repeatedly warns that formulating a definite description of the Good is beyond his power. Consequently, his attempt to define the Good is by the use of analogy. The Good, states Plato, is to reason and the "objects of reason," as the sun is to vision, and the "objects of vision" (508b). The objects of reason, namely
the Forms, derive their "existence and essence" from the Good just as the objects in the visible world derive their "generation and growth" from the sun. And just as the sun provides light which enables the eye to see the objects of vision, the Good provides "reason and knowledge" which enables the soul to see the Forms. But just as the sun itself is not "generation and growth," nor is it the object of vision, the Good is not the Forms, nor is it "reason" and "knowledge" (509a). In other words, if we might introduce an analogy for what is already an analogy, just as a beautiful flower cannot be seen if light is absent, qualities, virtues, assets will not be used to good purpose if reason and knowledge are absent. And just as the beautiful flower derives its generation and growth from the sun, the Forms derive their goodness from the Good. For example, we will not know justice to be just, nor courage to be courage, nor bravery bravery, without reference to the Good as a standard of goodness against which one can know in what respect justice or courage or bravery are "good."

Plato's allegory of the cave (514-519) illustrates the same theory as that of the sun. In this analogy Plato is explaining that the "visible," "variable" world is like the wall of the cave, and the light of the fire is like the sun. The prisoners represent ordinary man blind to the
Forms. The objects and shadows of objects represent particulars and concepts of the particulars of the "visible" "variable" world. The ascent of the prisoner out of the cave, and his contemplation of the things outside the cave, is like the soul's ascent away from the "visible," "variable" world to the realm of the Forms. Just as the sun is the last to be seen by the prisoner after leaving the cave, the last to be seen by the soul is the idea of the Good (517c).

With these two analogies in mind, along with the definitions given above (page 63), we can see that Plato thought of the Good as a first principle, a super-form, the Form from which all other Forms are generated. Ross states that for Plato the Good is a supreme principle in the sense that it is "the supreme object of desire (86)." Stenzel says that for Plato the Good is "...the object of human perfection," "the function of a thing," "the purpose a thing serves (87)." Lodge states that for Plato the idea of the Good is "...a system of all the ideas unified and made intelligible in their interrelations (88)."

From the above sources taken together, we can now state that the Good is (1) the first principle or supreme Form, (2) the supreme object of human endeavour, (3) the function of a thing and (4) the unified system of all the
Forms. The next question we must ask is, How does Plato's the Good relate to his theory of Good and Evil? To answer this question, we must turn to Plato's theory of dialectic.

In the Meno and the Phaedo, Plato's theory of knowledge involves the questionable doctrine that Forms are recollected by the immortal soul. In the Republic, the Phaedrus, the Sophist and the Symposium, however, Plato reformulates this doctrine along less irrational lines and replaces it with his theory of dialectic. In the Republic (534b), he states that dialectic is (1) the science which is able "...to exact an account of the essence of each thing...." In the Phaedrus (265d), he claims that dialectic teaches one to (2) collect "...a dispersed plurality under a single Form," and it teaches the "reverse of this whereby we are enabled to divide into Forms...." the different species. In the Sophist (253d), Plato declares that the dialectician teaches one to (3) divide the forms "...according to kinds, not taking some forms for a different one or a different one for the same" and see "...one form connected in a unity through many wholes, and many forms, entirely marked off apart." Therefore, according to Plato's definitions, dialectic is a method to discover and comprehend through reasoning the unity of all the Forms in a single system. In other words, dialectic is
a method to attain the Good (see #1 and #4 page 109).

In the Symposium and the Phaedrus, Plato presents us with a theory of dialectic somewhat different from the one given above. Here, Plato maintains that the recognition of the Forms is most easily achieved through appreciation of beauty because Beauty is a Form whose counterpart on earth is obvious to the eye (Phaedrus 250b-d). Using beauty as an example, Plato shows in the Symposium (210b-211) that prior to apprehending the Forms, one's soul (nous) must have something like a "need," a "longing for," a "desire" to reach the truth, to know what "really is," just as the lover has a need or longing (eros) to reach the object of love (89):

Next he must grasp that the beauties of the body are as nothing to the beauties of the soul, so that wherever he meets with spiritual loveliness... he will find it beautiful enough to fall in love with...

And from this he will be led to contemplate the beauty of laws and institutions. And when he discovers how nearly every kind of beauty is akin to every other he will conclude that the beauty of the body is not, after all, of so great moment...

Whoever has been initiated so far in the mysteries of Love and has viewed all these aspects of the beautiful in due succession, is at last drawing near the final revelation. And now, Socrates, there bursts upon him that wondrous vision which is the very soul of the beauty he has toiled so long for....
In both the Symposium and in the Phaedrus, Plato portrays Beauty as the paradigm of the Forms (90). In fact, Beauty and the Good are regarded as interchangeable in the Symposium (201c):

Never mind, said Socrates, it was a lovely speech, but there's just one more point. I suppose you hold that the good is also beautiful?

I do.

Then, if Love is lacking in what is beautiful, and if the good and the beautiful are the same, he must also be lacking in what is good.

Just as you say, Socrates, he replied. I'm afraid your're quite unanswerable.

Thus, with his theory of dialectic, Plato provides us with a method of reaching both the Forms and the Good, a method not dependent upon a theory of immortality but dependent only upon (1) the reasoning power of the intellect to discern the Forms and the Good, and (2) the desire (eros) of the soul for goodness.

In the Republic (510d-c), Plato provides us with a second example of his theory of dialectic. Mathematicians posit various kinds of figures and angles which they regard as basic and known and with these work out their theorems. They make use of mathematics as models and diagrams, knowing that these are only reflections of the Forms, i.e., the circle itself, which is the actual subject of their inquiry. Plato gives a third example of his theory in the Phaedo
(75d-c). Here, in explaining that the sensible objects point
the way to realities beyond them, he links the example of
the mathematical Forms with the moral and aesthetic Forms.

Plato's idea that through dialectic one is able to
comprehend the Forms in the manner that one is able to
comprehend mathematical principles seems basically to be
plausible. But when he includes in this analogy the idea
that knowledge of the Forms bursts upon us in "wondrous
vision (Symposium 210c)," his theory seems to lose
credibility. While reasoning to first principles can be
considered a rational activity, having wondrous visions
cannot. This dilemma can be resolved, however, if we
examine in more detail both the rationality of Plato's
theory of dialectic and of his idea of the Good.
THE RATIONALITY OF PLATO'S IDEA OF THE GOOD.

G.E. Mueller states that Plato's idea of the Good consists of a dialectical movement called metaxy which means "in-between". The meaning of human existence, states Mueller, is a struggle from lack of Form to Form. Because we desire a good and not a bad life, we are in-between these dialectical opposites attempting to achieve our own goodness. In becoming aware of this dialectic, declares Mueller, we become aware of the possibilities of human excellence. Every good action is a reminder of the Forms and of the idea of the Good. Every bad action is a reminder of the lack of Forms. We discover our own excellence, or lack of it, through reference to the Forms and to the Good. If we did not have these, says Mueller, we would not be able to become good (91).

Lodge relates Plato's theory of dialectic to his theory of good and evil in the same manner as does Mueller. There is in human nature, suggests Lodge, an eternal conflict going on and, according to its outcome, men may be described as mastering themselves or sinking into slavery to
themselves. These conflicts are resolved by rising above the "competing and fluctuating sensations" to the Good. Objectively, he concludes, the Good is ultimate reality. Subjectively, it is the building up within the individual of the qualities embodied in the Good:

When conduct is directed by the idea of good, so that, in every situation which life brings, a maximum of positive value is sought...it passes over into the positive self-unfolding of the potentialities of the organism as a whole, and is thus indistinguishable from complete excellence, i.e., from the ideal life....(92).

Martin Buber presents an interpretation of Plato's dialectic similar to those offered by Mueller and Lodge:

Plato has repeatedly called thinking a voiceless soliloquy of the soul with itself. Everyone who has really thought knows that with this remarkable process there is a state at which an inner court is questioned and replies. There, he who is approached for judgement is not the empirical self but the spirit I am intended to become (93).

Support for this thesis can also be found in Aristotle's interpretation of Forms, according to which their perfection excites the development of human potentialities. Soul, according to Aristotle (Metaphysics 1048b), is a potency that can actualize itself either in the direction of the Forms, or away from them (94).

Before I discuss how this gives a rational basis to
Plato's theory of good and evil and to his idea of the Good, I must point out that there is a textual basis in the dialogues for the above interpretation of Plato's theory of dialectic. For example, in the Symposium (202b), Plato says that eros, considered to be the upward impulse to goodness, is intermediate between beautiful and ugly, good and bad:

Very well, then, she went on, why must you insist that what isn't beautiful is ugly, and that what isn't good is bad? Now, coming back to Love, you've been forced to agree that he is neither good nor beautiful, but that's no reason for thinking that he must be bad and ugly. The fact is that he's between the two.

In the Theaetetus (109a), he states that thought is a silent debate of the psyche with itself, with final pronouncement being right belief (95):

...when the mind is thinking, it is simply talking to itself, asking questions and answering them, and saying yes or no. When it reaches a decision—which may come slowly or in a sudden rush—when doubt is over and the two voices affirm the same thing, then we call that its 'judgement.' So I should describe thinking as discourse, and judgement as a statement pronounced, not aloud to someone else, but silently to oneself.

In the Lysis (217c-218b), Plato claims that the philosopher, desiring wisdom, must be neither wise nor ignorant. Also in the Lysis (217b), Plato, in attempting to discover the nature of friendship, explains that there are three classes: good, evil, and that which is neither. That which is
neither evil nor good becomes friendly with good because of the presence of evil. For example, the body, which is neither good nor evil, is compelled when it becomes sick (evil) to take medicine (good). Thus, concludes Plato, we can say that evil (disease) points the way towards good (medicine). Similarly, the soul, in a state of becoming good or evil, becomes friendly with good because of evil. Good, says Plato (220d), is loved on account of evil by souls who are intermediate between good and evil: "This then it appears is the nature of good. It is loved on account of evil by us who are intermediate between evil and good but in itself and for itself it is of no use." In the Gorgias (472d-476), Plato states that to inflict wrong is worse than to suffer wrong, since the more evil one is, the more one injures one's self. The greatest of all evils, says Plato, is to do wrong and escape punishment, since he who is punished is made better because he is rid of the evil in his soul. The man who flees from punishment is like one who needs an operation but is afraid of the pain and, consequently, is blind to the benefit it will bring.

This interpretation of Plato's theory of dialectic is also central in the Republic (509d-511e). Here Plato divides existence into three regions: the existent (the Forms), the non-existent, and that which is between the two
(the particulars). Corresponding to existence is knowledge; corresponding to non-existence is ignorance; and corresponding to the intermediate region is opinion. The soul, struggling to reach knowledge, is always caught somewhere between knowledge and ignorance. This is essentially the meaning of Plato's story in the _Phaedo_ (253-257) in which the soul is analogous to the black horse, the white horse and the charioteer. Plato presents a similar picture in _Laws V_ (732b-d). Here two antagonistic principles, reason and necessity, form a sort of divine battleground with man's soul caught in between.

At the end of the last chapter we gave credence to the belief that knowledge of the Forms and the Good might come through a process of dialectical reasoning. However, when we considered Plato's notion that knowledge of the Forms and the Good could also come through a sudden burst of "wondrous vision" we expressed some skepticism. But from the above, we can see that the process of dialectic is one of "grappling with values," as Buber maintains "...a state at which an inner court is questioned and replies...." William James, in giving a rational account of such a sudden illumination, explains that ideas previously peripheral in our consciousness sometimes suddenly take a central place in our psyche. Ideas, states James, work subconsciously or
unconsciously and tend to ripen in silence, a phenomenon he calls "unconscious cerebration" in which "...on a certain day the real meaning of the thought peals through for the first time (96)."

Findlay accounts for this process of "illumination" in a similar manner:

Our sense of values, moreover, as pervasively present in the intellectual as in any other sphere, makes us feel that what is standard, graspable, light-giving, directive, is not any and every mixed state or condition but only certain privileged sorts of state or condition, which stand out from others, and about which and between which other unprivileged states or conditions cluster and have their nearer or further place (97). Therefore, when Plato's idea of "wondrous vision" is stated in the more commonplace terms of James and Findlay, it does become plausible. Most of us at one time or another have wrestled with a decision. At some point in this process, an answer to the question being grappled with must materialize. It is not improbable that this would be like Plato's "wondrous vision."

The above considerations have shown how Plato's idea of dialectic both is central to his theory of good and evil and is, basically, plausible. With the help of his theory of dialectic, we can now examine the rationality of his theory of the Good. To begin, we have seen that the
contradiction between Forms and lack of form is the same as the contradiction between good and evil. The nature of the relationship between the Form and the individual is not only one of thought, as I outlined in chapter Three, but also one of need, desire and aspiration for goodness (the Phaedrus, the Symposium), as well as one of guilt, remorse, misery (the Lysis, the Gorgias). Or, stated in a slightly different manner, the extent of the goodness of one's life is determined by one's awareness of evil (the Gorgias), and this one realizes through reference to the Forms (the Symposium, the Phaedrus). As we stated earlier (page 70), in order for one's conscience to do it's job of telling one that one's actions are good or evil, it must have a principle of ideality (the Forms and the Good) upon which to base its decisions. Thus, this principle of ideality within one's conscience could be considered a sort of "internal psychical cause."

In order to understand this idea of cause fully, we must return to an earlier discussion (page 1). Socrates believed that things can only be understood in terms of their excellence. If one wants to know what courage is, one must ask someone who excels in that virtue, a great general for example (the Laches 1908). If one wants to know about the virtue of temperance, one asks a person who excels in
that virtue (the Charmedides 158e). Similarly, in the Phaedo (97c), Socrates says if one wants to discover the cause for anything the question to ask is, How is it best for that thing "...to be or to act or to be acted upon...?"

In the Greater Hippias (296e), he relates cause to that which is "beneficial." In the Gorgias (475a), he states that "...superior excellence is due to superior pleasure or usefulness or both." The term "cause" for Plato, therefore, is not like our meaning of cause which normally is thought of as cause and effect. For Plato, to understand the cause of something one must understand to what extent it is good.

We can readily understand the rationality of this idea of cause by referring to an analogy. If there were no difference in degree between the hockey-playing ability of Bobby Orr and of Eddie Shack it would be impossible for us to really understand what hockey-playing was. Without the principle of excellence or ideality we could never learn the difference between the success or failure of an activity and would be unable to understand the activity itself. In Platonic terms, we understand something by reference to its excellence. The degree of excellence we discover by the difference of degrees. It is precisely because Bobby Orr does come closer to the idea of excellence in hockey playing that we are able to understand hockey playing. The Form of
Hockey Player, therefore, causes us to understand the hockey playing of both Bobby Orr and Eddie Shack. This is not different from saying that the Form of Circle causes the two imperfect circles insofar as the circles are to be understood as circular. This position is the reverse of that outlined in Chapter Two. There, we stated that the difference of degree of circularity caused us to project the idea of the perfect circle. Here, the Form of Circle causes both of the above circles in that it makes them understandable. If we consider that the good for the hockey player is to score goals, we can understand that the Good is cause insofar as it is the end of an endeavour, the ideal on which the heart (eros) is set. This point is illustrated in the Gorgias (468b):

SOCRATES: It is in pursuit of the good, then, that we walk when we walk, thinking this the better course, and when on the contrary we stand, we stand for the same reason, for the sake of the good. Is it not so?

This definition of the Good brings us back to our definition given earlier (page 65), that the Good is "the supreme object of human endeavour." Thus, we can conclude that the Forms and the Good are cause in that they allow us to understand objectively both the endeavour and its intent. If we add to this definition that the Forms and the Good are subjectively operative within the human psyche as "internal
psychical cause," we are brought back to the discussion on page 71 of the idea of soul as self-moving principle. There, we suggested that souls could be at the same time in actuality and in potency. Now we see that the good and the Forms are both objective cause and are internal psychical cause. The soul, therefore, can be considered self-moving in that self-motion results from eros, i.e. internal psychical cause, being directed towards the Good, i.e. objective cause (the Symposium 204). The above discussion can be summed up by a quote from Aristotle (Metaphysics 1072b25):

And since that which is moved and is a mover is thus an intermediate, there is something which causes motion without being moved, and this is eternal, a substance, and an actuality. And this is the way in which the object of desire or the intelligible object moves, namely, without itself being moved. Of these, the primary objects are the same, for the object of desire is that which appears to be noble, and the primary object of wish is that which is noble. We desire because it seems rather that it seems because we desire, and thinking is the starting-point. Now the intellect is moved by the intelligible, and things which are intelligible in virtue of themselves are in one of the two columns of opposites, and of these, substances are primary, and of substances, that which is simple and in actuality is primary.

Conversely, we must add that just as the Good is cause in
that it provides an "actuality" towards which we move, lack of the good is also cause for it provides a lack from which we move. In this sense evil must be considered to perform a positive function in that it points to the Good.

With all this in mind we can entertain Plato's idea that the Good is not simply cause for the individual, but is, in fact, universal cause. Plato's claim that all life must function according to a principle of goodness does not mean that every inanimate thing is conscious of the good towards which it grows, but that life as a whole seems to be arranged according to the principle of what is best for its survival. This notion seems to me to be plausible. Life does seem to be arranged in such a way that reason or intelligence, in the case of man, or instinct in the case of animals, or simple biological drives in the case of plant life, is directed towards the survival of the species. Ultimately, the only criterion any entity has for determining the desirability of any action is its own survival. An action is desirable only if it will give good results. The frog survives because it instinctively arranges its life according to the principle of what is good for the frog's survival.

Mention of the frog reminds us of the problem of association mentioned in Chapter Three. There we discussed
the fact that it is difficult to imagine that stones or mud could have Forms. Now we can see how the Form of Mud or of Stone can have principles of excellence. The stonemason would view a rock against the principle of excellence in terms of building just as the frog would view the mud with a mind to the principle of excellence in terms of hiding. Mud or stones are part of Plato’s universal scheme insofar as they are used for some good purpose. When we pick up some mud, we do so because we think it good, just as when we stand or sit or walk we do so because we think it is good (the Gorgias 468b). As stated in the Symposium (205e), the cause of all that we do is the Good:

Love never longs for either the half or the whole of anything except the good. For men will even have their hands and feet cut off if they are once convinced that those members are bad for them. Indeed I think we only prize our own belongings insofar as we say that the good belongs to us and the bad to someone else, for what we love is the good and nothing but the good.

Consequently, the idea of the Good is for Plato a universal teleological principle (98).

If the Good were absent from Plato’s scheme, we might consider it nothing more than a fanciful rationale of self-assertion. After all, the good for the hockey player is to score goals and make money. If the Good is what we want or think most worth having, then the Good is nothing
other than egotistical desire. But, as outlined in Chapter 5, egotism and its accompanying train of appetite, desire and want can only end in self-destruction. Our drives through self-mastery must be directed not towards the subjective goods of the ego, but to the good of both ourselves and others, in other words, to the good of the whole. The good for self cannot be realized without including the good for others. Self does not live in a vacuum.

Beyond Goodness itself we do not need to go, concludes Plato. It is the justification of its own existence, like happiness in the Symposium (205a). One does not need to ask, Why does one want to be happy? The answer is obvious:

Well, then, she went on, suppose that, instead of the beautiful, you were being asked about the good. I put it to you, Socrates. "What is it that the lover of the good is longing for?"

To make the good his own. Then what will he gain by making it his own? I can make a better shot at answering that, I said. He'll gain happiness. Right, said she, for the happy are happy inasmuch as they possess the good, and since there's no need for us to ask why men should want to be happy, I think your answer is conclusive.

Now the rationality of Plato's idea of the Good and its importance to the rationality of Plato's theory of good
and evil as a whole becomes clear. Plato considers that virtues, moral qualities, physical assets, and material assets are good. For example, in *Laws* X (900d), Plato states that "prudence," "understanding," and "valour"; "righteousness," "temperance," and "wisdom" are good. In the *Gorgias* (467e), he states that "wisdom," "health," and "wealth" are good. In the *Euthydemus* (280), however, he qualifies these statements. Good things, he says, cannot be good if they are not used rightly. Anything, claims Plato in *Laws* II (661c), that might be considered good be it "...sight, hearing, sensation, life itself, are superlatively evil..." if not used properly. In the *Republic* (353), Plato cites an example. Lack of excellence in the pruning knife--dullness in other words-- is an evil which can harm the vine. Therefore, declares Plato, things or qualities are not good in themselves but are good only insofar as their uses and their function conform to that principle of excellence which Plato calls the Good. In summary, then, we can state that the Good is the teleological principle to which we look in making any choice, implementing any action, performing any function, for our decisions are made on the basis of what is the best. Our ability to be good or evil, therefore, depends on whether or not our reason has understood what is best. Even
a failure to achieve good results can be explained as the consequence of our being mistaken about what would be best. It is for this reason that Socrates insists in the *Meno* (77e) that to willingly choose to do evil is contrary to human nature. If we do, we are choosing what we think is good, ignorant of the fact that it is evil.
PLATO'S THEORY OF BALANCE AND PROPORTION

In the Timaeus (46d-47e) and in Laws X (897a-d), Plato attempts to explain the existence of good and evil by using cosmic and religious myth. In these dialogues, Plato maintains that the fact that there is a general order, sameness and regularity in the universe, as exemplified in the regularity and mathematical perfection of the movements of the planets, proves that a principle of intelligence or reason maintains the cosmos in a unified and balanced harmony. Reason must be more powerful than chaos, claims Plato, for if it were not the universe would not survive.

Reason or intelligence is called by Plato either God, Nous or the Demiurge (the Republic 530a, 507c, the Sophist 265c, the Statesman 270, the Timaeus 41a, 42e, 68e, 69c). In the Timaeus (27d-30c), Plato states that God made the visible cosmos in imitation of the Form Cosmos and put it in the invisible world-soul to maintain the cosmos in mathematical balance and proportion (46d-47e) (99). From time to time, however, reason or world-soul is subject to, or overcome by, evil. In the Laws X (896d-e) and in the Epinomis (988e), Plato posits world-souls with two natures,
the evil nature sometimes overpowering the good. In the *Timaeus* (49e) and the *Statesman* (270a), he posits a world-soul which is at times overcome by an independent force, necessity, causing natural calamities such as floods or hurricanes. But apart from these small differences Plato maintains in all four dialogues that world-soul is responsible for good (order, harmony, balance) but is subject from time to time either to necessity or bad souls which cause evil (chaos, disorder) (100).

The idea of reason or world-soul directing existence according to a principle of harmony, balance and order, reminds us of the description of the soul as a principle of self-motion in Chapter 8 (101). In fact, a step-by-step comparison can be drawn between Plato's ideas of the individual soul and of the cosmic soul. For example, just as evil is caused by unlimited appetites and desires overcoming the *nous* of the particular soul (page 53), evil in the cosmic soul is caused by the presence of bad souls overcoming the *Nous* of the cosmos. And just as necessity produces evil consequences such as sickness and misery in the individual (page 56), necessity produces calamities like floods, in the cosmos. Similarly, when *nous* is master of the individual, he will be good (page 53); so also when Nous is master of the cosmos, it will be harmonious. Conversely,
if *nous* is controlled by the unlimited and disproportionate drives of the lower soul, evil results (page 53); so also if *Nous* is controlled by the bad soul, chaos and disorder result.

Plato's idea of a cosmic soul analogous to a mortal soul (see also the *Philebus* 30a) is like his idea of a cosmic craftsman (102) analogous to the mortal craftsman. According to Plato, the Divine Craftsman created the cosmos by copying the Forms just as the individual creates an object. This idea is mentioned frequently by Plato in the dialogues. Socrates talks of "...painters, builders, shipwrights and other craftsmen..." modelling the raw materials after the Forms (the *Gorgias* 503e). Similarly, Plato in the *Timaeus* (28c-29a) describes "the artificer" as modelling the universe after "the eternal." In the *Statesman* (200d), Plato says that products of nature are works of divine art just as things made by man are works of human art. In the *Sophist* (265c), Plato states outright that God is a Divine Craftsman. If there can be any doubt left, we can refer to the *Republic* (596c) in which Plato affirms that God is related to the mortal craftsman:

But now consider what name you would give to this craftsman.
What one?
Him who makes all the things that all handicraftsmen severally produce.
A truly clever and wondrous man you tell of.
Ah, but wait, and you will say so indeed, for this same handicraftsman is not only able to make all implements, but he produces all plants and animals, including himself, and thereto earth and heaven and the gods and all things in heaven and in Hades under the earth.

Therefore, according to Plato, the mortal craftsman fashions his art by copying the forms. Thus we must conclude that, just as the soul of the mortal craftsman strives to achieve happiness by limiting its desires and directing itself towards the Good, the world soul of the Divine Craftsman strives to achieve harmony and balance by ordering itself towards the Good. Thus, in Plato's view, God is analogous to man, and the soul of God analogous to the soul of man.

But, we may exclaim, surely we ought not take all this talk of a Divine Craftsman maintaining harmony in the cosmos through mathematical order seriously. Besides, we might add, Plato's theory is based on his observation of the movements of the planets, which means that Plato is assuming that the geometry of the cosmos must be Euclidian. But this is not so. Two parallel lines will not travel through space forever without meeting. Yet Plato himself did not intend that his cosmic theory be taken as fact. In the Timaeus (29d), he states that one cannot hope to give a completely precise account of such subjects as gods and the origins of
the universe. He is, he states, giving a probable account (103):

Enough if we adduce probabilities as likely as any others, for we must remember that I who am the speaker and you who are the judges are only mortal men, and we ought to accept the tale which is probable and inquire no further.

Even though cosmic geometry may not follow the principles of Euclid, we must admit that the universe is organized according to a very definite mathematical scheme, for modern physicists emphasize that the universe operates entirely on mathematical principles. According to Barnett, it is the mathematical precision of the movements of the universe which allows scientists to investigate natural laws:

Modern physicists...emphasize that nature mysteriously operates on mathematical principles. It is the mathematical orthodoxy of the universe that enables theorists like Einstein to predict and discover natural laws simply by the solution of equations (104).

In view of this statement, therefore, we might conclude that Plato's belief in a mathematically ordered universe has some credibility. Precisely how this belief relates to our study is the topic of the next chapter.
10.

THE RATIONALITY OF PLATO'S THEORY
OF BALANCE AND PROPORTION

As we have seen, Plato believed that reason maintains cosmic harmony and balance. In the *Timaeus* (47c), Plato states that through understanding the harmony of the universe man could reach an individual harmony within his own soul and "...become like the divine so far as man can (105)." In this, Plato thought, lay the secret of goodness:

God invented and gave us sight to the end that we might behold the courses of intelligence in the heaven, and apply them to the courses of our own intelligence which are akin to them, the unperturbed to the perturbed, and that we, learning them and partaking of the natural truth of reason, might imitate the absolutely unerring courses of God and regulate our own vagaries.

Similarly, in the *Gorgias* (508a), Plato states that both man and the cosmos are bound together by order:

Wise men, Callicles, say that the heavens and the earth, gods and men, are bound together by fellowship and friendship, and order and temperance and justice, and for this reason they call the sum of things the 'ordered' universe, my friend, not the world of disorder or riot. But it seems to me that you pay no attention to these things in spite of your wisdom, but you are unaware that geometric equality is of great importance among gods and men alike....
In "Book IV" of the Republic (444d-e), Plato describes individual justice as a state of inner harmony, the appetites, emotions and reason working together in perfect unity and order:

And is it not likewise the production of justice in the soul to establish its principles in the natural relation of controlling and being controlled by one another, while injustice is to cause the one to rule or be ruled by the other contrary to nature? The Republic, in fact, is not just a piece of political theory but is an allegory illustrating a well-ordered and harmonious psyche. Plato shows that the virtues of the individual citizen ought to be the same as those of the state as a whole (106). Wisdom resides in the soul's reasoning faculty just as wisdom resides in the Guardians of the city who ought to take control of the people and keep their appetites within bounds. As health results from a harmonious relationship between the three elements of the soul, so the balanced relationships between the elements of the city create a condition of justice. Evil results when either the state or the individual lose their unity.

Plato presents a similar idea in the Laws (644e-645c). According to the Athenian, man's unwholesome appetites must be ordered by law (107). Just as each
individual should maintain balance and harmony within his soul, so also should the city maintain order and unity within itself. The better classes, declares Plato (the Republic 410c), should control through education, culture or law the worse, just as the better part of the soul should control the worse through self-mastery (440e). For this reason, philosophers should be the guardians of the people, for only they contain within themselves that knowledge (of the Good) which leads to balance, limit and unity (540a).

From the above, we can see that for Plato the individual soul is analogous to the state. Earlier, we saw that the individual soul was analogous to the cosmos. Now we can see that, for Plato, goodness of the individual, of the state and of the cosmos was dependent upon the soul being directed towards balance, order and harmony, limit, unity and proportion, just as earlier we saw that goodness was dependent upon the soul being directed towards the Forms and the Good. Therefore, we can conclude, as does Aristotle (108), that Plato's notion of the limited and the unlimited, unity and diversity, one and the many (the Philebus 64e-65a), are really just different terms for the Forms and the particulars, and Plato's idea of measure and proportion is really the same as his idea of the Good:

   SOCRATES: So now we find that the good has taken refuge in the character of the beautiful, for the
qualities of measure and proportion invariably, I imagine, constitute beauty and excellence.

PROTARCHUS: Yes, indeed.

SOCRATES: And of course we said that truth was included also with these qualities in the mixture.

PROTARCHUS: Quite so.

SOCRATES: Then if we cannot hunt down the good under a single form, let us secure it by the conjunction of three, beauty, proportion, and truth....

Similarly, in the Philebus (64e), Plato states that "measure" and "proportion" are essential to goodness. In the Timaeus (87d), he states that "symmetries" and "proportions" are essential to goodness, and that lack of symmetry and proportion causes evil. In the Phaedo, Socrates demands an explanation of the world which would demonstrate that what holds it all together is the power of the good expressed in terms of geometric proportion. In the Sophist (228a-c), Plato states that evil is a discord of the soul. Deformity of the body is called want of measure. An ignorant soul, he says, does not find its mark, the Forms, because it is suffering from "lack of symmetry."

According to Plato, everything in the world is a mixture of the Form and the particular, just as it is a mixture of the limited and the unlimited (109), and of order and chaos. Insofar as finitude or order prevails, something is good (the Timaeus 87c). Insofar as it does not, it is evil. From the preceding point of view we can
sum up Plato's entire theory of good and evil. First, because the Forms impose unity, limit, form, and order on the unlimited and the variable, knowledge is possible (Chapters 1-4). Secondly, when we attain through dialectic the Forms, we realize that they are the principles of unity, limit, and form (Chapters 3-8). Thirdly, the actualization of unity and form, measure and proportion, in the soul produce goodness in the individual, harmony in the state and order in the cosmos, just as do the actualization of the Forms and the Good (chapters 5-10). Fourthly, if we recall our original definition of the Good as the "...system of all the Ideas unified and made intelligible in their interrelations...(110)" we can understand that for Plato the Good is the unity of the Forms in their entirety, hence Plato's definition of the Good in the Sophist (253d) as "the One".

STRANGER: And the man who can do that discerns clearly one form everywhere extended throughout many, where each one lies apart, and many forms, different from one another, embraced from without by one form, and again one form connected in a unity through many wholes, and many forms, entirely marked off apart.

Finally, and consequently, evil is lack of unity, lack of Form, lack of order and harmony (Chapters 1-10).

Plato's whole concept of good and evil rests on his conviction that existence is rationally ordered by a force
which aims at balance and proportion, and through them goodness. Essentially, what Plato is saying is that goodness, or lack of it, is dependent upon the Form as "formula." If the ingredients are right, if the measure is correct, then the product will be good. This is not different from saying that the formula for a melodious song is its notes and bars in proper measure, or that the formula for a healthy human being is the correctly ordered and balanced information of the D.N.A. With interpretation Findlay agrees:

...it is by no means unintelligible to ourselves that being water, or earth, or air, or wood, or gold, or purple, or angry, or intelligent, or a man, or a dwarf-star, or an electron are all basically a matter of specific proportions or quantitative measures; this is the creed of modern science, for which we need not here argue (111).

We may choose to call the principle which creates and sustains this order by names other than the Good, God, Demiurge, Nous or reason. We may even choose to deny that such a principle exists. But we cannot deny the fact that for millions of years a balanced universe has allowed life not only to continue, but to continue in a manner which, for the most part, is ordered and unified. Indeed, if it were not, all life would perish in chaos. It is this fact that prompted Einstein to state that:
My religion, ... consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God (112).

I agree, therefore, with Plato, as did Einstein, that it is rational to suppose that a balanced universe demands a teleological explanation.
CONCLUSIONS

It is rational to say that particular stones or particular circles are what they are and not something else because of the specific proportion and measure which cause them to be so. Similarly, it is rational to say that they are rendered intelligible by the Forms which represent these specifications. It is also rational to say that these Forms together create a single systematically ordered pattern and that this pattern makes possible knowledge not only of particular stones, circles but of all existence because the specificity of the Forms gives stability and permanence to the flux of these particulars. It is also rational to say that certain aesthetic and moral Forms contained in this pattern provide us with a set of stable and permanent moral directives by which we are able to distinguish good from evil. Finally, it is rational to say that the supreme Form, the Good, is the teleological principle to which we look in making any choice, implementing any action, performing any function, for our decisions are made on the basis of what is the best. For the above reasons I conclude that Plato does succeed in relating rationally his theory of good and evil to "the world of human experience." In fact, it is because
Plato has been able to give a rational basis, not only to this theory but the other essentially "religious" theories considered in this study, that Plato has been called the "father of rational theology."
ENDNOTES

1. Socrates did not believe in the transcendence of the Forms. The function of the Forms for Socrates was: (1) to bring widely scattered things under one form so that the individual may make clear by definition whatever it is that he wants to say (the Phaedrus 265c-e), (2) to divide things according to their kind and "embrace" each one under a simple form (the Phaedrus 273d-c), and (3) to know the truth about everything on which one speaks or writes and to be able to isolate everything into a definition (the Phaedrus 277b-c).

2. According to Heraclitus, "permanence" is simply an example of change in slow motion. All structures are dissolving slowly, says Heraclitus, everything is in process of coming-to-be and passing-away. (Wheelwright, Heraclitus, 29).

3. Guthrie states that the Pythagoreans' changeless world of mathematics influenced Plato's belief in a system of changeless and perfect entities outside the material world. Where Plato differed in philosophy from the Pythagoreans, Guthrie attributes to the combined influence of Socrates and Heraclitus. (History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. 5, 426, Vol. 4, 251.)

4. According to Parmenides, intelligible being is the only reality. The sensible world is "...names that mean nothing, senseless babble..." (Seligman, Being and Not-Being, 5).

5. In opposition to Parmenides and Heraclitus, Plato believed in neither a completely changeless world or in a world of total change. (The Sophist, 249). See Seligman's treatment of this. (Being and Not-Being, 36).

6. For a complete treatment of this topic see Hamilton and Cairns, Dialogues of Plato, 474, 856f, 868f.

7. See also the Phaedo 78d-79d.

8. In the Theaetetus, the example given is the birds in the aviary (197b-200c). A man may possess knowledge in the sense that he has it stored in his mind, although he might not remember it. A man possesses all the birds (pieces of
knowledge) in his aviary. To catch a particular bird is to recall a piece of knowledge but there may be birds he cannot catch for the moment, in other words, cannot recall.

9. See also the Republic 490b, the Phaedo 78d-79d.


11. Ibid., 19. See below.

The circles do not look really round. You would never think they were true circles, for they seem to be almost egg-shaped. But—they are perfect circles. Using a compass, or a coin, you can prove this. The curving checkerboard fools the eyes.

13. Ibid., 35.

14. Jung, The Undiscovered Self, 58. I should point out that Plato, unlike Parmenides, gave partial being to the sensible world. In the Republic, "Book V," (477a), he states that the sensible world both is and is not. It resides half-way between being (the Forms) and not-being just as opinion lies midway between knowledge and ignorance. (See also the Phaedo 102b, Aristotle's Metaphysics 987b8.) Protagoras, by contrast, states that only "what seems" is. He claims in the Theaetetus 152a: "...as each thing seems to me, such it is for me and as it seems to you, such it is for you..." According to this doctrine "...my truth is private to me and your truth private to you."


16. Ibid., 477.

17. Ibid., 479.

18. That matter is unknowable is stated by Aristotle in Metaphysics 1036a2:
   "I mean the bronze or wooden circle, of these there is no definition, but they are known by being thought or sensed; and when the actuality of this knowledge ceases, it is not clear whether they exist any longer or not, but they are always spoken of and known by the universal formula. As for matter, it is unknowable in itself." In a more poetic manner Hoernle says "What a man knows is not a sun and an earth but only an eye that sees the sun, and a hand that feels the earth. The world which surrounds him is there only as an idea" (Idealism as a Philosophy, 162).


20. Ibid., 69.


22. Findlay, Ascent to the Absolute, 80. The intelligibility of the notion that knowledge is recalled rather than learned is well illustrated by Findlay:
   A man might learn what it is for something to be so and so, or for such and such to be the case, by being shown something that illustrated the exact opposite of the sense
we desired to impart, or by being shown something that vaguely approximated to it or pictured it, or by being shown something of which it was in some sense a natural complement, or even by wild words and ritual gestures that somehow 'got it across' (81).

23. See Bluck's detailed treatment of this topic in Mind, 1963, page 261. In the Sophist, Plato proves this point by showing that language can say what is not.


25. Cornford, Principium Sapientia, 52.


27. See Guthrie, History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. 5, 69. Also see the Theaetetus, 147a-c.


30. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Ethics, 139.

31. Hoernle, Idealism as a Philosophy, 52f.

32. Woltersorff, On Universals, 265f.


34. Whether or not mathematical entities do occupy the second section has been the subject of much dispute. Ross states that the lower section of the intelligible world contains mathematical ideas, and the higher section contains ethical ideas. (Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas, 64). Gould says that Plato thought of mathematical entities as a kind of reality intermediate between the Forms and the particulars because mathematical entities were the best examples of the Forms. Therefore, Gould concludes, mathematical do occupy the second section. (Platonic Love, 97). Both Frazer and Guthrie maintain that Plato believed the second section to contain mathematical entities. (Frazer, The Growth of Plato's Ideal Theory, 72. Guthrie, History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. 5, 509). Even Aristotle held such a view. (Metaphysics, 987b 14-15). Cherniss, however, claims that Plato does not posit an "intermediate class" of mathematicals. (Guthrie, History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. 4, 343.) In my opinion it is not clear
from the dialogues whether or not Plato believed that mathematical entities occupied the second section of the intelligible world, but I conclude that in view of the fact that mathematical entities can be considered to be perfect particulars, Plato did posit mathematical entities between the Forms and the particulars. Certainly mathematical entities are of primary importance to Plato since, as in the Meno, they exemplify his theory of Forms. This is the case in the Republic 510d and in the Phaedrus 75a-d. Here the thesis that the sensible objects point the way to the realities beyond them is extended from the mathematical to the moral and aesthetic Forms.

35. Guthrie states that the word *doxa* is variously translated as opinion, belief, and judgement. (*History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 4, 262.)

36. See the Euthyphro 11b, the Laches 194b, the Meno 79e-80b.

37. Guthrie points out that true opinion might be "unwitting apprehension" of the Forms. (*History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 5, 491.)

38. Seligman points out in Being and Not-Being: "We need to remember here the basic position that some forms blend, while some do not, i.e. are incompatible..." (95). The "weaving together" of Forms which ought not to be joined can produce either 'what is false' or 'what is not'.(14).


40. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides, 100.


42. Ibid., 51.

43. Hackforth, Plato's Phaedo, 9.

44. Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas, 15.


46. See also the Phaedo 78d-79b.


54. Seligman states: "The sensible world was after all the place where Socratic morality was to be put in practice..." *(Being and Not-Being*, 6, n.3).

55. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, 231. Ross writes: He Plato may have had an inkling of the fact that the relation is completely unique and indefinable. Both 'sharing' and 'imitating' are metaphors for it, and the use of two complementary metaphors is better than the sole use of either.


64. With this conclusion Guthrie agrees. See *History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 5, 99.

66. See the Sophist 257-259b. Seligman in *Being and Not-Being* states: Nor is the not x a species of anything. It is not a form with a nature of its own, but an umbrella under which we collect an indefinite number of kindred forms in virtue of a meta-formal character which they all possess, viz, participation in difference in relation to x. (83).


71. Gould, *Platonic Love*, 121f. Cherniss states that "...the phenomenal world is...negative evil...in the sense that it is the contrary of good." (The Sources of Evil According to Plato, Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays).


74. Hamilton and Cairns, *Dialogues of Plato*, XX.

75. Guthrie describes Plato's meaning of the word nous as that part of soul which gives an "...intuitive and immediate grasp of reality, a direct contact between mind and truth." *History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 4, 253.

76. In explaining Plato's tripartite soul, Guthrie states that since we cannot attribute both the desire and the restraint to the same psychological source, there must be at least two elements in the soul. The first, appetite, is controlled by reason. But reason by itself is not always strong enough to resist appetites. If we yield to them we feel anger or remorse. This suggests a "...third element, the spirited or passionate..." which normally helps reason or nous but is not identical with it." *History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 4, 474.

77. See also the *Meno* (81c), the *Symposium* (211a), the *Republic* (532a).
78. For a complete treatment of Plato's concepts of self-mastery see the Laws 734b, the Gorgias 491d, the Republic 430e, the Phaedrus 237d-c, the Laches 191d-3, the Republic 473d-e.

79. Wheelwright, Heraclitus, 36.

80. "Book X" of the Republic (617-618) illustrates this. Lots are thrown out to waiting souls by Lachesis, one of the daughters of Necessity. All lots are mixed up: some are high birth, some are low birth, some beggars, some tyrants, some animals, some man, all mixed up with wealth and poverty, sickness and health. Whatever lot each soul chooses, that is its destiny for life. Once the lot has been chosen, the individual soul is taken to Cloths, a second daughter of Necessity who ratifies its destiny. Then the soul is led to Atropis, a third daughter to make the destiny irreversible. After that it is passed beneath the throne of Necessity to be born.


82. See also the Phaedo, 81d-82b.

83. Guthrie claims that Plato borrows his doctrine of immortality and reincarnation from Pythagoreanism, but that he transformed their religious dogmas to support his own philosophy (History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. 4, 249).

84. Hackforth, Plato's Phaedo, 162, 165.


86. Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas, 40.

87. Stenzel, Plato's Method of Dialectic, 39F.

88. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Ethics, 80.

89. See also the Philebus, 58d.

90. This point is also mentioned in the Lysis (216d), the Protagoras (460d), the Timaeus (87c) and the Meno (77b).

91. Mueller, Philosophy of Dialectic, 131f.

92. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Ethics, 414.

94. See also Guthrie, History of Greek Philosophy, Vol.5, 146, Vol.4, 349.

95. See also the Sophist 263e.

96. James, Varieties of Religious Experience, 162.

97. Findlay, Ascent to the Absolute, 253.

98. With the above conclusion Guthrie agrees (History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. 4, 351). For the view that Forms are not teleological see Vlastos, Plato I, 138, 141f.

99. The idea that the unordered cosmos preceded God suggests that God was created. However, in the Timaeus (52dff) Plato suggests that God, who has always existed, had not yet asserted his influence. "Things were all together in such a way and condition as one may expect to find whenever God is absent." Space and becoming, Plato says in the Timaeus, "...existed before the heavens came into being..." and "...the contents of space were tossed hither and thither or at random in irregular and unbalanced movement without reason or measure" until touched by the hand of God. In other words, Plato is stating that chaos existed before God put it all in order. For Plato the cosmos as a whole was made in the likeness of the supreme generic Form. Guthrie cites Less, who states that Plato must mean a complete system of Forms containing within itself all the subordinate Forms whose likeness we can trace in the world of becoming (Guthrie, History of Greek Philosophy, Vol.5, 258). Many commentators have suggested that the Forms are thoughts in the mind of God. This notion, claims Guthrie, cannot be substantiated. In every dialogue in which they appear, their existence separate from and independent of any mind conceiving them is a leading feature. (Guthrie, History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. 5, 262)

100. There is a very interesting parallel between a statement made in the Statesman and a theory by Dr. Fred L. Whipple. In the Statesman Plato says that when the cosmos has moved for aeons in one direction under the hand of God, he withdraws his control and it reverses its movement. All sorts of evils spring up and threaten to destroy it until God, to prevent this, takes control once more (269cff). Fred L. Whipple of Harvard described in his "Dust Cloud Theory Hypothesis" how tiny dust particles are blown
together by the delicate pressure of starlight. As the particles cohere an aggregate is formed, then a cloudlet and then a cloud. When the cloud attains gigantic proportions, its mass and density will be sufficient to set a new sequence of physical processes into operation. Gravity will cause the cloud to contract and its contraction will cause its internal pressure and temperature to rise. Eventually, in the last states of its collapse, it will begin to radiate as a star. Theory holds that our solar system might have evolved from such a process. Assuming the possibility of such events as these, one might arrive ultimately at the concept of a self-perpetuating universe renewing its cycles of formation and dissolution, expansion and contraction, life and death, light and darkness, order and disorder through never-ending eons of time (Barnett, The Universe and Dr. Einstein, 104).

101. The credibility of Plato's idea of world-soul should also be mentioned in the light of modern physics. In the Laws (896a), Plato states that soul is the source and principle of motion. The definition for Plato of soul was the vital principle of things. (See page 54 above). Compare this with Einstein's unified field theory in which he states that all motion in the cosmos is simply change in the structure of the primordial field of matter and energy, which are in fact the same thing, for matter is simply concentrated energy. (Barnett, The Universe and Dr. Einstein, 14, 65.). Compare this also with Jung's suggestion that God is an eternally flowing current of vital energy (Psychology and Religion, 361).

102. One question which must be asked is how does Plato relate God to the Good? Frazer maintains that the question cannot be answered because the Platonic writings do not supply material for judging the problem since Plato never attempted to explain the personality of God. (The Growth of Plato's Ideal Theory, 79). Ross claims that Plato believed the Good and God to be not the same (Plato's Theory of Ideas, 43). On philological grounds the two terms are apparently different, but on philosophical grounds the terms may be equated. (Plato's Theory of Ethics, 497). Guthrie cites Wilamowitz, Hager, de Vogel and Archer-Hind as all maintaining that the Good and God are the same. (History of Greek Philosophy, Vol.5, 559). Guthrie himself, however, claims that there is no hint anywhere that the Forms of the Good can be equated to God. (Vol.5, 260). From the above conflicting statements we must conclude that the basic problem for Plato's commentators is his own ambiguity on his theory of God. Recognizing the difficulty
in the Timaeus (29a) he states ..."that the maker and Father of the universe is hard to discover and even when we do is impossible to explain to all men." He goes on to state that he is positing a probable account of the nature of the cosmos, not an account which he intends one to take with dogmatic seriousness (72d).

103. See also the Timaeus 29c, 30b, 49b, 53d. I should point out that contemporary scientific theories of the creation of the universe are almost as speculative as Plato's and the proponents of these theories would be the first to say that explanations of cosmic beginnings ought not to be taken as dogmatic fact:

"And upon examination such concepts as gravitation, electromagnetism, energy, current, momentum, the atom, the neutron, all turn out to be theoretical substructures, inventions, metaphors which man's intellect has contrived to help him picture the true, the objective reality he apprehends beneath the surface of things" (Barnett, The Universe and Dr. Einstein, 115).

104. Barnett, The Universe and Dr. Einstein, 22.

105. See also the Theaetetus 176b, the Phaedrus 253a, the Timaeus 90c, the Phaedo 82b-c. Barnett expresses a similar idea:

Man's inescapable impasse is that he himself is part of the world he seeks to explore; his body and proud brain are mosaics of the same elemental particles that compose the dark, drifting clouds of interstellar space. (The Universe and Dr. Einstein, 117).

106. That virtue and right conduct can be legislated is like saying that they can be taught. The message of Socrates' discussion with both Protagarus and with Meno is that, although virtue can not be taught, right opinion can (381-382). The Laws reflect virtue if they reflect right opinion.

107. Every law carried its appropriate penalty, ranging from a reprimand to loss of civil rights to death. According to Plato, any measure is right that will heal the diseased soul. Only if the criminal is judged incurable must he be put to death. By our standards, however, Plato is extremely free with the death penalty. One is put to death for murder, sedition (854b-c), open atheism(909a), temple robbery (854e) persistent perjury (937c), acceptance of bribes (955d), perversions of justice (938c), and dissenting harmful notions (952c-d).
108. Aristotle states (Metaphysics 1078b): It is also evident what the underlying matter is in virtue of which the Forms are predicated of the sensible things, and the One is predicated of the Forms; this is the Dyad, or the Great and the Small.

109. See also the Parmenides 128f, The Theaetetus 180c.

110. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Ethics, 80.

111. Findlay, Ascent to the Absolute, 256.

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