The Form of the Good and the Soul's Transformation in *Republic* V-VII

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Philosophy MPhil Stud

Bloomsbury

London, September 2023

Declaration

I, Alba Miriello, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

In this thesis, I want to show that (a) the educational process that the philosopher undergoes in the middle books of Plato's *Republic* is transformative, and (b) this transformation is not confined to the last stage of the education when they finally achieve full knowledge of the Good but is progressive throughout their education.

Impact Statement

This thesis proposes an interpretation of the moral and intellectual progress of the philosopher-ruler. For the academic community, my aim has been to offer an interpretation of the process through which the philosophical soul ascends to Goodness. It carries with it a greater explanatory power in relation to the other parts of the soul, here referred to as the lower parts of the soul, and advances the understanding of the Platonic view of the soul.

My account builds upon the ideas of other scholars but seeks to provide more nuance and to let the text speak for itself. Inside academia, this thesis presents an account of psychic transformation in the ascent towards the Good which has not yet been considered by Plato scholars. While important studies on the transformation of the rational part of the soul have been done, scholars have tended to overlook the role played by the lower parts of the soul in the process. I propose to look at the full complex interesting picture Plato presents to us. I argue that a transformation happens, and I test the idea that it can interest the whole soul. If this is a plausible picture, the scholarly debate can be enhanced.

Outside academia, I identify two main benefits of this work: contributing to a discussion on what makes good leaders and presenting an account of moral education that can be applied in public institutions. The topic of this thesis, the Good, is relevant in politics. While I have not attempted to describe what Goodness is, this work asks how a political leader can develop morally, prepare themselves for leadership, and become good.
My thesis is also of relevance to educational settings. At its heart it is investigating the relationship between our ability to learn and our highest possible ideals. I hope that it can be taken as an inspiration for educators and can contribute to the public pedagogical debate.

To my love for philosophy.

Acknowledgements

My profound interest in the notion of moral transformation within the Platonic and Neoplatonic framework is the main reason for embarking on this work. While I have previously considered the notion of transformation in the philosophy of Plotinus (Miriello 2016), this account left me unsatisfied. Then, philosophical discussions in London indicated a new perspective. In the ascent towards the Good, as put forth by Plato, it was possible to retain the involvement of a complex tripartite psychic structure. What was needed was to look at the process of psychic transformation in the metaphors of Plato's *Republic.*

As I have worked my way towards my present views, there are many people I must thank. They include my supervisor Dr Fiona Leigh who listened to my stuttering first attempts to articulate my ideas with patience and taught my soul with a passionate and caring style, Dr Sophia Connell with whom my UK adventure started at Birkbeck, Prof. Mark Eli Kalderon, who has a special place in my UCL memories, especially since he said to a scared graduate student 'give yourself time to develop', and Prof. Raphael Woolf from whom I learned how to enjoy the trickiest constructions of the Greek. I also wish to thank Dr Elena Fiecconi whose attitude offered shelter in the fight for analyticity, Dr Merrick Anderson whose philosophical acumen provides a model to follow, and Dr Amanda Greene for her classes on Plato's *Laws*, some thoughts on which are included in this work. I am also extremely grateful to Prof. Sarah Broadie of whom I have been a student.

The views expressed here are, also, the fruitful synthesis of many conversations among friends at the Seminar on Neoplatonism at the Warburg Institute, KCL, L-CAP, and UCL. My thanks to Dr Margaret Hampson for her account of habituation which I saw developing from 2018 to 2021, Dr Jonathan Griffiths, Dr Branislav Kotoc, Dr Caterina Pelló, and Dr Saloni de Souza for their insightful comments on my work during many WIP sessions.

To Donatella and Luigi my parents and Nicole my sister. I also want to thank Zia Ste and Zia Roby and my grandparents for their care. My deepest thanks to Daniel Liam Richard for his love and to Joy, Tim, and Laurence.

I dedicate this work to

Mr V. K. Keeling and the Keeling Centre for Ancient Philosophy in London

Because it was light, whilst the rest was darkness.

Alba Miriello

SH Senate house room 302, Bloomsbury, London.

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Introduction:
Aim, definitions of terms, and summary

> [I]t's something you've heard about on more than a few occasions. […] it's the form of goodness that is the most important subject, since it is what brings about the goodness and usefulness both of just things and of everything else.
>
> (*Republic* 505a3-6)

In this passage of the *Republic,* Socrates describes the Good to Glaucon as the source of everything that is good and useful in the world. This source of goodness plays a critical role in Socrates' account of the perfect city in books 4 to 7 of the *Republic* and in his description of the ascent of those who seek to become the philosopher-rulers of that city. This thesis presents an interpretation of the transformation of their whole souls as they ascend towards the Good. To understand this most important subject, I will argue that we must carefully study Socrates' claims on the philosophers' journey, as described in books 6 and 7 of the *Republic*. I will further argue that the causal role of the Good in relation to the philosophers can be elucidated in light of the moral process that they undertake.

In this work I use "philosopher-ruler" to refer to Socrates' idealised leaders of his perfect city, while using "philosopher" to refer to those young trainees who are seeking to become philosopher-rulers through education, which includes their moral and philosophical training. As for the discussion on Platonic goodness, I use "Goodness" to refer to the Form

of the Good and "goodness" to refer to moral or intellectual goodness. I use "the Good", "Goodness", and "the Form of the Good" interchangeably.

My main aim in this thesis is to show that the *Republic* presents a story of the development of moral and intellectual virtues through the partial and total transformation of the whole soul as the philosophers go through the educational process and ascend towards the Good. I defend three main claims.

First, the educational process is transformative, in the sense that it changes the student's own moral condition. I am further concerned with the nature of this transformation. On my view, a partial transformation firstly occurs, relating to the lower parts of the soul. A complete transformation follows. It is an implication of this claim that goodness comes in degree. Second, this transformation is not confined to the last stage of the education when the philosophers finally achieve full knowledge of the Good, but it is progressive throughout their education. Third, the lower parts of the soul play a crucial role in the process of the soul ascending towards the Good.

The *Republic,* as I read it, develops a sophisticated account of moral development. This has not yet been fully appreciated by the literature. By arguing that the educational process is transformative in the sense that it changes the whole soul and by retaining the importance of the whole complex tripartite structure with which the philosophers are equipped, we can see that the *Republic* presents the idea that the soul of the philosopher

becomes progressively and increasingly good. The focus in this thesis is, therefore, not solely about knowing the Good but about becoming good.

Chapter Summary

The way in which these three claims will be defended in the thesis is outlined in what follows. In Chapter 1, I investigate the notion of transformation in the *Republic*. I argue that transformation is a complex phenomenon, with a partial transformation during the ascending process and a complete transformation at the end of this process. Using textual evidence, I start by presenting my own reading of the text, before turning to a targeted analysis of the secondary literature with the aim of strengthening my own positive claims. I exegetically review the account put forward by McCabe, who reads the ascending process, as I do, as transformational. However, by critically engaging with what is at *prima facie* a view that supports my own, I can conclude that my reading, while sympathetic to McCabe's view of transformation, goes further in explaining the complexity of the phenomenon according to the textual evidence of the *Republic*.

In Chapter 2, I further claim that the process by which the philosopher becomes good is a function of the whole soul. To defend this claim, I distinguish between becoming good and coming to know the Good. In this chapter, I interpret the "turning" of the soul as orientation in line with Storey's proposal. However, I conclude that his proposal can be further developed because it does not exactly define the causal role of Goodness in the soul turning process.

Building on this, in Chapter 3 I complete the investigation on the total transformation. To do so, as a total transformation applies to the rational part of the soul, I investigate the development of reason. To understand what the development of reason consists in, I enter the scholarly debate on psychic tripartition and argue that tripartition is very much at play in the discussion of the soul's ascendance towards Goodness. Most importantly it is helpful to understand the partial and total transformation of the soul.

However, I am aware that there are interpretations that go against the view I defend in this thesis, and so I discuss an example of this, from Sedley, who puts forwards a Socratic reading of the middle books. I introduce Socratic intellectualism to explore this potential objection to my own view. On a 'soft' intellectualist view, knowledge of the Good is sufficient for acting in accordance with Goodness. But I argue, against even a 'soft' intellectualism, in favour of the idea that (a) becoming good is itself a function of the whole soul and (b) acting in accordance with the Good continues to require the contribution of the non-rational parts.

I draw two main conclusions from this study of the moral psychology of the *Republic*. I conclude that the transformative effect of learning about the Good is not confined to the last stage of the educational process when the philosophers finally achieve full knowledge of the Good but is progressive throughout their education. Second, the account of Platonic moral progress I defend here favours a reading which privileges the emphasis on the whole soul's capability to become good.

In this thesis, I consider the following model of the soul. A model in which the soul acquires the virtues during the course of its progress through the educational provisions of a perfect city, and it is because the virtues that characterise the virtuous soul are themselves causally related to the Good, which gives them their truth and intelligibility, that the virtuous soul becomes good through becoming well-ordered and virtuous. This is a dispositional change. It itself is improving as those qualities improve.

1
Moral Transformation

1.1 The Puzzle

The philosophical ascent in Plato's *Republic*[1] is a process in which the Form of the Good plays a special role.[2] In the *Republic*, Socrates suggests that the philosopher-rulers of the just city will need to learn "the most important subjects" (τὰ μέγιστα μαθήματα, 503e3) – what justice, self-discipline, courage, and wisdom really are (504a5–6). Beyond these, the philosopher-ruler will need to reach the end (ἐπὶ τέλος, 504d3) of the "most important subject" (μέγιστον μάθημα) – "the form of the good" (ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα, 505a2).

In the *Republic*, Socrates appears to suggest that the philosopher must both study and learn about Goodness, but he also claims that they must excel in many subjects:

> 'And I suppose you think it's right for someone to talk about things as if he knew about them, when he doesn't [περὶ ὧν τις μὴ οἶδεν λέγειν ὡς εἰδότα]? […] Haven't you observed what ugly things all beliefs are without knowledge [τὰς ἄνευ ἐπιστήμης δόξας]? The best of them are blind – or do you think those who believe something true, but mindlessly [οἱ ἄνευ νοῦ ἀληθές τι δοξάζοντες], are any better than blind men going down the right road?'
>
> (*Republic* 506c3–9)

[1] The Greek text is taken by Sling (2003). I have worked mainly on Christopher's Rowe (2012) translation of the *Republic*.
[2] Annas 1981, 259; Strauss 1964, 128.

In light of this, how should we explain the relationship between the philosopher and the Good in the discussion of the ascent? Interpretations have typically focused on the attainment of the knowledge of the Good and thus tend to read the ascent as merely a discussion of education. In this chapter, I offer an alternative approach, one that narrows the gap between the ascent as a discussion of the acquisition of the philosophers' moral goodness and the Good itself. Drawing exclusively on Plato's *Republic*, I argue that the discussion of the ascent and the Form of the Good should be understood as a description of moral progress (among other things such as intellectual development, education, and the individual's responsiveness to Beauty).[3] According to the thesis that I propose herein, the ascent of the person who wishes to become Good (henceforth, the philosopher) and who thus pursues it in that sense is best interpreted as moral progress. That is, the manner in which the philosopher becomes good or virtuous is, I claim, a central concern of Plato's Socrates.

I shall begin by clarifying what I mean by the 'ascent'. I shall employ the term 'ascent' to denote the entire upward trajectory described in the Allegory of the Cave. This means that I use it to describe the journey of the free prisoner from outside the Cave to the realm of Forms.[4]

I start by analysing the passage which describes the ascent at 515c4-515d6. What the Allegory of the Cave claims—repeatedly and emphatically—is that the ascent is this journey upwards. At 515c4-515d6, the ascent is described as follows:

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[3] *Rep* 369a–376c; 302c–306d. In this thesis, Greek quotations are taken from the OCT editions. Translations from the *Republic* are taken from Rowe 2012.

[4] See also, Scott, D. (1999: 15–36), Gerson, L. P. (2004), Jelinek, E. (2015).

> 'Now think what it might be like for them to be released from their chains and cured of their mindlessness. Suppose something like this really happened: one of them was set free, and was suddenly forced to stand up, twist his neck round, then try to walk, and *look towards* the source of the light'. Given that he would be in pain as he did all this, and unable because of the glare to see the actual things that cast the shadows he used to see, what do you think he'd say if someone told him that what he saw before wasn't worth seeing anyway, and that he was seeing better now because he was that much closer to the truth of things'.
>
> (*Republic* 515c4-515d6)

There is a clear indication in this passage of a progression from the sensible to the noetic realm. In allegorical terms, the prisoner stands for the condition of human beings who are not exposed to philosophical training. It is an original condition of lack of philosophical education as the text will make clear. The language of the passage is a language of necessity and pain as a new status is reached when the prisoner is set free. No details are given about who (*ti*) sets him free. Importantly, the ascent described here can easily be understood as a key intellectual transition (seeing as intellectual seeing; turning as rational turning).[5]

However, I argue that certain words guide the reader towards an interpretation of the passage as a description of moral progress. To what extent, then, does the passage describe moral progress? It is this question that this chapter sets out to address.

According to the above passage, the ascent is apparently a self-sustaining process.[6] Also, in Book 5 the ascent is linked to a discussion of the moral progress of the philosopher:

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[5] For a detailed analysis of this interpretation, see (Annas 1981).

[6] Hintikka, J. (1973:25). See also Denyer, N. (2007), Broadie, S. (2022).

> 'So, this philosophical nature, as we've set it out, can go in either of two ways: if it receives the learning appropriate to it, I think it will inevitably *go on*, as it grows up, to every form of excellence; but, if it is sown in the wrong soil, and then sprouts and is nourished there, it will end up in quite the opposite way'.
>
> (*Republic* 492a)

Or [emphasis added],

> 'If the philosopher's nature, as we posited it, obtains appropriate learning, *it must develop* into and reach every virtue. But if it is sown in an inappropriate place and that is where it grows and is nourished, it will turn out the opposite except with the help of some god'.
>
> (*Republic* 492a)

Here, we are presented with a diachronic depiction of progress from one level to another. This progress has been interpreted in both epistemological and ontological terms. Against these interpretations, I shall argue in this chapter that the passage refers to the philosopher's psychic journey, which—the text clearly indicates—ends in a vision of the Good. Therefore, this moral dimension of the passage of the ascent is clear from the outset.

One might assume that this does not apply to the philosopher. In response to this criticism, we may examine 401e–402a:

> 'He [the philosopher] will have the sharpest eye for things that are deficient, either because they are not well crafted or because nature has left them lacking; he'll show a correct distaste for such things [opposite of fine or beautiful things] and turn to praising and taking pleasures in the things that possess the requisite

> fineness, receiving them into his soul and taking nourishment from them, so *becoming fine and good* himself.'[7]
>
> (*Republic* 401e–402a)

This passage is concerned with distaste and so with tastes rather than habits. However, I shall presently argue that we might interpret the passage as concerned with habits. This means that we must interpret the discussion on taste and distaste in ethical terms. In so doing, it shall become clear to the reader that, in the discussion of the ascent, it is the person who pursues the Good who morally progresses.

One might ask whether the *Republic* allow for an ethical reading of taste and distaste? I reply affirmatively. I must first and foremost acknowledge I have been highly influenced by Liebert (2013). In "Pity and Disgust in Plato's *Republic*: The Case of Leontius", Liebert argues that Socrates is "optimistic regarding disgust's potential utility as an opportunity for learning; that is, disgust can help the properly educated philosopher to develop a natural aversion to ugly things, making this behaviour ethical rather than intellectual".[8] Her reading of disgust is that disgust has an "ethical utility" in the discussion of justice.[9] Liebert writes

"Disgust, as a pre-rational means of evaluating the world around us, can be enlisted in this task, habituating the young to "hate" and reject vice in all forms as something ugly, alien, and blameworthy before they can understand the reasons why".[10]

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[7] *gignoito kalos te kagathos. Rep*. 401e–402a.
[8] Liebert, R. S. (2013 190). Pity and Disgust in Plato's *Republic*: The Case of Leontius. *Classical Philology*, *108*(3), 179–201. https://doi.org/10.1086/672002
[9] Liebert (2013: 191)
[10] Liebert (2013: 190)

Taking Liebert's view on disgust into consideration, and within the same framework suggested by Liebert, namely that there is an ethical dimension of disgust in the *Republic*, I claim that there is an "ethical utility" of distaste not only in the discussion of justice, as brilliantly argued by Liebert, but also in the discussion of the ascent. This ethical reading of taste and distaste helps us to appreciate how we are moving from taste as such to ethical habits.

Sequentially and progressively, the soul acquires ethical dispositions expressed in the text as a correct distaste for ugly things. At this stage of the transformation, there is neither cognition nor knowledge of the Good in the soul. However, the lower parts are actively involved in an ethical process which consists in a kind of "feeling", namely distaste and pain for ugly things and taste and pleasure for beautiful and good things. The soul is able, the passage says, to have and develop such an ethical disgust.

At 500c1-9 we read:

> *Socrates:* 'Right, Adimantus; because I imagine that if someone truly has his mind on things as they really are, he will not have time to look down at the preoccupations of mere mortals and fight with them, filling himself full of malice and ill-will. Instead, as he turns his eyes towards an ordered array of things that forever remain the same, and observes these maintaining their harmony and rationality in everything, and neither behaving unjustly nor being treated unjustly by each other, he will imitate these and model himself after them so far as he can. Or do you think anyone can avoid imitating a thing he spends his time with, and in awe of?'
>
> *Adimantus*: 'He can't,' said Adimantus.

> *Socrates*: 'So if the philosopher spends his time with the divine and ordered, […] he'll achieve such order and divinity as is possible for man […]'.
>
> (*Republic* 500c1-d4)

At this point, we must ask how this description of the ascent (henceforth, moral ascent) is linked to the Good. The text offers a suggestion as to where an answer to this question might be sought in the analogies of the Sun and the Line, the Allegory of the Cave and the Soul-Turning metaphor.

Let us examine the following passage in detail:

> 'And isn't *this*, Glaucon, the main theme-tune, the one that dialectic performs – one that, while it belongs to the intellect, finds it counterpart, in that image of ours, in the capacity [δύναμις] of sight, at that very stage at which it tries to look at [ἐπιχειρεῖν ἀποβλέπειν] living creatures themselves, to the stars themselves, and finally [τελευταῖον δὴ] to the sun itself? Just so, when someone tries [ἐπιχειρῇ] to make his way by means of dialectic, setting out after each thing as it really is, in itself [ἐπ' αὐτὸ ὅ ἐστιν ἕκαστον ὁρμᾷ], through argument and without any of the senses, and not giving up until he grasps what good really is, in itself'.
>
> (*Republic* 532a1-b2)

The analogies of the Form of the Good are designed to convey information about the role of the Good in this process.[11] However, scholars such as Penner, Sedley, and Rowe disagree as to the precise role that the Form of the Good is intended to fulfil. They have sought to understand the metaphysical role of the Form of the Good—that is, the role that the Form of the Good performs in relation to other Forms. According to some interpreters, these analogies should be understood as referring to the metaphysical role of the Good as it relates to other Forms.[12] According to

[11] See section 1.2. in this work for a discussion on the role of the good.
[12] See Santas (1980: 124) and Penner (2017: 31).

others, these describe the epistemological role of the Good in relation to other Forms.[13]

While we may not achieve a wholly accurate account of the role of the Good owing to the allegorical language used, a shift from an emphasis on the analogy of the Sun to another analogy—the turning metaphor—may help us to better grasp the role that the Good fulfils with respect to the subject who pursues it—that is, the person who wishes to become Good and thus pursues it in that sense. In addition, a comparative study of Socrates' ethical and psychological arguments in Books 3, 5, 6, and 7 can help us more precisely understand the role of the Good in the development of an individual's process of becoming good.

Why should we contemplate the role of the Good in the development of an individual who is becoming good? The rationale for investigating the role of the Good in relation to the moral development of an individual becoming good is easily settled, because the text provides evidence for it.

First, while Socrates' interlocutors are undeniably offered only allegories and similes for the Good, they are nonetheless also offered a key discussion of its importance and how one might ascend to it.[14] This justifies our investigation of the ascending process.

Second, in *Republic* 6, the education of the guardians is linked to the Form of the Good, and the whole soul (*soul of each*) is called to participate in a learning (by which we mean turning) activity. In terms drawn from the

[13] See Gentzler (2015: 200) and Sedley (2017: 76).

[14] Mitchell Miller (2007) discusses in detail the longer road that Socrates describes as cited in Mintz (2010) n.14, page 9.

earlier part of the *Republic*, the whole soul includes desires, spirit, and the rational part.[15]

Hence, the discussion of the ascent invites us to conclude that we must engage in the right pursuit and develop appropriate habits from childhood. The process by which we become good consists in our acquiring moral goodness in the whole soul. Our task now is to ask where this process of becoming good is highlighted in the analogies provided by the detail of the narrative.

However, not every analogy serves the purpose of conveying this moral process. To demonstrate this, I shall focus on the analogy of the sun to investigate whether it portrays the Good in its role in relation to an individual becoming good. Based on the analogy itself, I argue that it cannot, unfortunately, be understood as referring to the subject's moral development because it describes the metaphysical role of the Good. I thus conclude that it is not helpful in addressing my research question. Therefore, I shall focus on the soul-turning metaphor to demonstrate that it portrays the role of the Form of the Good as the cause of the subject's moral development. I shall then focus on Mary Margaret McCabe's (2015) reading of the ascent and discussion of the Form of the Good, which views it as a process, before concluding that this account must be supplemented with an analysis of the moral progress experienced by the subject.

1.2 From the Sun Analogy to the Soul Turning Metaphor

[15] *Rep.* 436a.

We are attempting to understand how, according to Plato's Socrates in the *Republic*, the philosophical soul becomes good. We saw in Section 1.1 that Plato's Socrates understood this as an arduous process. The textual evidence cited in support of this claim were clear in putting forward a view of the ascent as sequential and progressive. Our task is now to consider precisely what happens to the psychology of the learner of virtue while pursuing the Good. This section, therefore, asks where to look at in the text so to build and defend the positive proposal that moral progress is described in the text in the discussion of the soul's ascendance towards the Good. We will see that I shall affect a shift in focus from the sun analogy to the soul-tuning metaphor.

Before concluding this first chapter, I shall analyse the account of the process offered by McCabe (2015) as this critical engagement with a proposal of transformation very much in line with my own proposal of psychic transformation will help strengthen my own.

According to the narrative of the text, Socrates is discussing not the nature but the role of the Form of the Good in the noetic realm with two interlocutors. Their names are Glaucon and Adimantus. Investigations into the nature of such a Form are beyond human understanding, the text suggests in a humble and magical manner. So, the discussants investigate the metaphysical role of the Form of the Good. A detailed and accurate investigation on this it is also a difficult task for humans. So, at the end of Book 6, Socrates accepts to discuss on Glaucon's request the role of the Form of the Good in symbolic terms. The terms of the allegory constitute one of the most famous pieces of narrative within the Platonic corpus. We are introducing the Sun Allegory:

'In the case of things that are seen, I think you'll say that the sun is the cause not only of their being seen, but of their coming-into-being, their growth and their sustenance – even while not itself being coming-into-being'.

(*Republic* 509b1–3)

In this analogy, the sun is the most important element. The sun is described as a cause. Its causal power is that it makes all the other beings grow and all the other Forms intelligible. The details on how this causal relation exactly work are scanty and the interpreter is left with a hard task. There is, as a consequence, widespread disagreement among scholars as to what precise role of the Form of the Good is supposed to fill.

According to some interpreters, the role of the Form of the Good is metaphysical—that is, its function is to provide being to other Forms.[16] According to others, it is epistemological—that is, its purpose is to give intelligibility to other Forms.[17] In this chapter, I shall refrain from take a position in this debate, but I argue that, either way, this analogy is not helpful in addressing my question because it sheds light on roles of the Form of the Good that bear no relation to the process by which the individual becomes good.

An examination of the analogy of the sun reveals that it refers to two functions of the Good. The Good gives being to other entities, and the Good makes these intelligible. In the narrative, these functions are expressed by the symbolism of the light of the sun and growth.

[16] McCabe (2015: 120); Santas (1980) and Vegetti (2017). See also Broadie (2022) for a recent discussion.

[17] Rowe (2017: 88–90); Silvermann (2003) and Broadie (2022).

The analogy of the line posits the Good (the First Principle) as the foundation for the stages of knowledge and states that without it these are merely hypotheses.[18] Knowledge is made only by this foundation's existence; otherwise, the propositions would be suspended, and all questions would lose significance.

This analogy gives rise to both epistemological and ontological theories. However, despite its metaphysical and epistemological significance, the analogy of the sun cannot be accurately said to be concerned with the subject, let alone its moral development. The analogy helps us to understand what Plato means when he discusses the function[19] of the Good, but it does not help us to see how moral goodness is acquired. This is because the analogy of the sun does not introduce the human element in the discussion of the ascent, and it is thus unhelpful to understand the soul's ascendance towards Goodness.

Where to look, then? An assumption of this thesis is that the connection between the Good and the soul offered by a different analogy can be more explicative. By looking at the soul-turning passage, we can clarify the relationship between the Good and the whole soul. Socrates tells us that the eye of the mind, which stands for the intellect, is turned towards Goodness together with the rest of the soul, which includes the non-rational parts, according to the complex psychic tripartite structure of Book 4. Or, as Socrates puts it,

> 'It is more like an eye that cannot be turned from the dark towards the bright unless the whole body turns with it; it must be turned round, together with the whole soul, away from changing things, until it becomes able to bear looking at what is, and the most dazzling part of what is- and that, we say, is the good'.

[18] *Rep*. 511b.

[19] To clarify, according to my thesis, the Good has a function in relation to moral development.

(*Republic* 518c–d)

I shall analyse this metaphor in detail in Chapter 2, as it is essential to my main claim that the discussion of the ascent may be better understood as a description of an individual's moral progress that belongs to the whole soul. In this section, I note that this passage portrays Socrates as the advocate of the engaged moral inquirers who serve as the main engine of moral progress.[20] Each soul desires the Good, which, in turn, plays a special role in this pursuit, and the pursuit requires the whole soul. Hence, the subject who lacks the involvement of the whole soul cannot pursue Goodness.

In pointing to the activity of pursuing and to the whole soul, this passage indicates where we might look to discover why the role of the Good is essential to the process of becoming good.

A preliminary analysis of this metaphor suggests that a process is involved. Let us examine 518c6 – 518d2.

> 'It is more like an eye that cannot be turned from the dark towards the bright unless the whole body turns with it; it must be turned round, together with the whole soul, away from changing things, until it becomes able to bear looking at what is, and the most dazzling part of what is- and that, we say, is the good'.
>
> (*Republic* 518c6 – 518d2)

[20] For an alternative view of the metaphor, see Burnyeat (2000). According to the standard reading, the process of soul turning is linked only with the educational subject of mathematics. It is not a lengthy, sequential process that includes all the subjects of philosophical education[20]. It is restricted to one stage only, namely mathematics, which accounts for the full process from within the Cave to outside the Cave. He thinks that this reading of the text maps the definition of mathematics we found at 525a1. There, Socrates defines mathematics as the science able to drag the soul from becoming towards being. In allegorical terms, the world of becoming or the sensible world stands for the objects we look at within the Cave while the world of being or intelligible world stands for the divine reflections we look at outside the cave. Against this, see Storey (2023).

The sequence comprises the following actions. First, the whole soul turns with the eye, and then the eye with the whole soul becomes better able to see. Finally, the whole soul can have a vision of the Good.

In this section I argue that the Good in the discussion of the ascent has an causal role, namely to bring about the moral progress of the philosopher's soul.[21] To understand this causal role, I begin with an investigation into the role of the Platonic Good itself; given that the Forms are the standard according to which the soul is ordered,[22] their paradigmatic role is essential to the ethical system of moral formation.

The Good is presented by Socrates as the ideal goodness or perfection of each of the Forms. He describes it as a genuine cause (αἰτία)[23] in the sense that it guarantees a specific outcome, namely that the Forms are what they are: intelligible, perfect, and real exemplars. This means that there must be something about the Good that guarantees the effect of giving intelligibility to the other Forms. The intelligibility, perfection, and reality of the Forms is the phenomenon that must be explained while the Form of the Good is what explains it. It is the primary cause in the chain of causality.

We are not interested here in explaining further the causal role of the Good in relation to Forms. We need to move forward and explain its causal role in relation to particulars, such as the philosophical soul. The philosopher, as he comes out of his chains, looks towards the sun, i.e. the Good. The Good here plays a causal role in drawing his attention and in motivating his turning and movement upwards. The causality of the

[21] I capitalise 'Good' and its derivations when referring to the Form; the lowercase 'good' is used when referring to the property. In this I follow Hutchins and Adler (1952: *CMS* §8.93) where there is the recommendation to capitalise the terms 'the Forms,' 'Idea,' and 'the Good' when they refer 'to that which is separate from the characteristics of material things and from the ideas in our mind.'
[22] *Republic* 484c6; 500c3-d1; 540b.
[23] *Phaedo* 96a1.

Good, on my account of transformation, goes all the way down to the soul of the philosopher. We should think of a downwards causation which leads to the good properties of the whole soul. The Good has causal effects in the world and for the purpose of this thesis in the whole soul of the philosopher. I will provide an analysis of the effects of the Good upon the soul of the philosopher, without dwelling on the mechanism of causation. The effects on the lower parts of the soul and on the rational part of the soul are discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, respectively.

1.3 The Literature on Transformation: McCabe (2015)

Hitherto, I have identified passages that support an interpretation of the discussion of the ascent and the Form of the Good as conveying a view on the moral development of the learner of virtue or the philosopher. Our task now is to explain the nature of this process. Interpreters disagree as to how it should be interpreted.[24] For instance, Storey proposes an interpretation of the ascending process in light of the discussion on philosophical education and argues, as we will see later in Chapter 2, that the aim of education is to turn the soul around by orientating it towards Goodness.[25] McCabe reads the ascent and the discussion of the Form of the Good as referring to a process, but she links it with the process of dialectic and psychic transformation.[26] For her, the ascent is a process of dialectic that consists of an agent positing principle that are treated as self-evident while the Good then provides an independent verification of the

[24] McCabe (2015: 119).
[25] Storey (2022: 80).
[26] McCabe (2015: 119).

philosopher's system of thought.[27] The ascent is a transformational process, in her view.[28]

I now offer an exegesis of McCabe's account by focusing on key points that are particularly relevant to my main claims. The account of the ascent as the process of dialectic that McCabe (2015) proposes is in many ways built on the same intuitions regarding the processual nature of moral development as the account that I defend in this thesis. Her account begins by establishing what she considers to be a central thought in Plato's moral psychology—namely, that "by touching the hypothesised beginning, the philosopher is able to verify the system of thought that he has used throughout the process of ascent".[29] She rightly claims that "Plato's Socrates holds the starting points of the philosopher to be merely hypotheses or an entire structure of principles and consequences".[30] Thus, everything that depends on the Good is verified when the philosopher touches it.[31] This is also why, McCabe argues, we should recognise that, for Plato, dialectic comes in stages: for her there is "an earlier stage, when the philosophers asks questions and answers them in accordance with his system of thought; and a later or final stage when he is the spectator of the vision of the Good, where he verifies his hypothesis".[32] If this is the case, however, we need to be able to explain how the Good is recognised not only by the—distinctly human—rational part, but how we come to be aware of its reality outside the limits of our rationality.

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[27] *Ibid*. 120.
[28] *Ibid*. 120.
[29] McCabe (2015: 120).
[30] *Ibid*. 120.
[31] *Ibid*.120. *Rep*. 511b3-c2
[32] *Ibid*. 121.

To explain this, McCabe develops a view wherein dialectic is divided into stages.[33] In the earlier stage, the philosopher faces some puzzlement and difficulty.[34] She claims that "the philosopher faces the kind of difficulty urged against Socrates and his method of question and answer".[35] This entire structure of the process of dialectic maps the philosopher's cognition and psychological condition, and it is a key concept in McCabe's interpretation, which allows her to explain how the system of thoughts changes from this earlier stage to the final stage. As a notion that is frequently mentioned in *Republic* 4, particularly in the discussion of the ascent, dialectic, in McCabe's interpretation of the ascent, is intricately connected to the view of the soul at both the earlier and final stages of the process of ascent.[36]

In the system of dialectic for which McCabe argues, she claims that "the person practicing dialectic treats the hypotheses of dianoia as mere starting points, until he can arrive at the unhypothesized beginning".[37]

This distinction within the dialectical moment is also explained, McCabe says, by the fact that "the earlier stage—here, the stage of dialectic in which the philosopher faces the kind of difficulty urged against Socrates and his method of inquiry and answers the view of the soul—is neither complete nor final.[38] This means that this earlier stage of the process of dialectic can be coherent and sequential as well as processual, but it can also be wrong".[39] This is an important conclusion for McCabe's argument because it proves that this stage—and thus, we may assume, all previous

[33] *Ibid*. 120-121.
[34] *Ibid*. 120-121.
[35] *Ibid*. 121.
[36] *Ibid*. 121.
[37] *Ibid*. 121.
[38] *Ibid*. 121.
[39] *Ibid*. 121.

stages, are incomplete without independent external objective verification of their systems of thoughts.[40]

Based on the idea that this earlier stage of dialectic may be processual and sequential but also comprehensively wrong, McCabe argues that the Form of the Good, referred to as the 'unhypothesized beginning', provides 'the verification demanded by the process'.[41] She makes this claim with reference to the *Meno*?[42]

According to McCabe's view, then, the process of dialectic comprises *dianoia*, whereby the philosopher works on the basis of key principles that do not need to be questioned, and a final stage during which the philosopher, says McCabe, "touches the Form of the Good and validates the hypothesis formerly held during the earlier dianoetic stage".[43] Given that dialectic can lead to the final view of the soul, this sequence of stages is sequential and progressive.[44] McCabe thus proposes an account of the process of dialectic on the basis of which she believes that we can reconcile the philosopher's psychological condition and the systematic nature of what is known.[45]

Having provided the exegesis of the account, I shall now turn to the discussion of McCabe's interpretation of the ascent as dialectic. While the proposal I present and defend here is in line with McCabe's view of the dialectical process, it also departs significantly from her interpretation of the ascent, primarily on a matter of emphasis. For McCabe, the final stage of the ascent is revelatory of the philosopher's knowledge of the Good; by

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[40] *Ibid*. 121.
[41] *Ibid*. 123.
[42] *Ibid* 123.
[43] *Ibid*. 122.
[44] *Ibid*. 122.
[45] *Ibid*. 123.

contrast, I argue that it is the entire process of moral character formation that it is at stake.

1.4 Two Challenges for McCabe's View of Transformation

a) Knowledge of the good as the τέλος of dialectic in McCabe's account

Let us begin by investigating why, according to McCabe, in its psychological aspect, dialectic adopts in her words "a synoptic, systematic, and reflective view of what it concerns".[46] The verification offered by the Form of the Good is possible, McCabe argues, because the soul moves from in her words, 'from what it is true just by virtue of its coherence with its system, to what is true by virtue of some fact of the matter, independent of the mind of the philosopher'.[47] This is how the realistic dimension of the philosopher's knowledge comes into play. The false or erroneous system on which the hypothesis has been based during the earlier stage is now corroborated or exposed to falseness when the soul touches the independent and external criterion of correctness: the Good.[48] This is her interpretation of the role that the Form of the Good plays at the conclusion of the process as that which validates the previous system of hypotheses.

According to McCabe, the Good plays a role in the process of ascent.[49] This role is to be the source of value in dialectic for the philosopher's life.[50]

[46] *Ibid*. 121.
[47] *Ibid*. 120.
[48] *Ibid*. 120.
[49] *Ibid*. 123.

Regarding the source of value, McCabe believes that the Good becomes the principle according to which the philosopher organises and lives their life.[51]

Much of McCabe's interpretation of the ascending process is both innovative and plausible; the idea that the process is divided into stages is a natural interpretation of the Socratic discussion of the ascent and the Form of the Good.[52] However, McCabe's overall conception of explanation has several significant weaknesses. According to McCabe's view, Platonic conversation shares key features with knowledge, at least with Plato's conception of it: it is sequentially connected and reason-dependent, and it aims to provide an explanatory account, rather than finding truth.[53] Therefore, an inability to answer an interlocutor's question and to explain oneself satisfactorily results in the same psychological discomfort as the process of puzzling internally over a paradox. While thinking and reflection are silent and private activities, conversation as interrogation and response is external and communal.

The norms that govern the conversational act, for McCabe, explain Plato's conception of knowledge.[54] I argue that it is precisely this link that is more problematic for a Platonic account of explanation. McCabe believes that, for Plato, knowledge is as discursive as conversation. However, this is a specific conception of knowledge and explanation ascribed to Plato by McCabe and one that I think requires some critique. We might wonder whether the notion of explanation at work in the passage of the ascent is as systematic as McCabe's interpretation asserts. The issue is that, for

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[50] *Ibid*. 123.
[51] *Ibid*. 124.
[52] *Rep*. 505 a-c, 518c-d.
[53] *Ibid*. 122–124.
[54] *Ibid*. 120.

McCabe, the process of ascent aims towards knowledge of the Good, and the Good is, in her view, the aim of the process. Rather, if the emphasis is on the process, knowledge of the Good in itself becomes secondary and distinct. To accommodate her reading within my thesis, McCabe's view of the Good is framed as knowledge of the good *teleos* rather than the *telos* as knowledge of the Good.

b. Can McCabe's account explain the textual evidence at 518c6 where Socrates suggests that the ascent is a process that belongs to the whole soul?

Second, this processual and sequential nature of the process of dialectic does a lot of work in McCabe's account while also remaining an unclear notion. The philosopher's cognition progressively improves and is then validated during the final stage of the process, but it is highly unclear how the psychology of the agent improves and what such an improvement might consist of throughout the process' stages. Her account leaves the question of how the philosopher can shift so drastically between one system of thought to another unresolved. To clarify, by the two systems of thought, I mean the system based on hypothesis regarding what the Good is and the system when the philosopher knows the Good and recognises it as the source of value in his life. I hope that by clearly highlighting their difference, this helps to underline for the reader the need for an explanation of how one moves from one to the other.

Contrary to the text's observation that the process of ascent involves the whole soul (518c6), McCabe's interpretation accounts only for the rational part of the soul. As such, McCabe's account cannot explain the role of the whole soul.

Consequently, McCabe's interpretation of the process of ascent as a process of dialectic is, at best, underexplained in light of the textual evidence in support of changes in the whole soul and, at worst, inconsistent with the discussion of the role of the Form of the Good. On the one hand, therefore, McCabe's emphasis on the rational faculty appears to unduly diminish the role that the soul's lower parts play in the discussion of the ascent, rendering intellect the only part that experiences the change, if any, in a validation of the philosopher's system of thought by the Form of the Good, according to Plato's view. On the other hand, McCabe ascribes to Plato a specific view of explanation in relation to the norms that govern the process by which knowledge of the Good is acquired.

So, we are left wondering whether McCabe's interpretation of the process of dialectic, and of transformation more generally, actually centres the moral agent in the explanation of his ethical life. We may argue that after the soul has reached the Good, the Good is embodied in the philosopher-ruler as a perfect and ideal personality. He has internalised the united virtues, with practice conforming to the virtues without contradiction. The Good is then supposed to be expressed in pure virtuous practice rather than in pure meditation in the intelligible realm. However, this account does not convey how the learner of virtue approaches the Good gradually and how the cultivation of practical virtues happens at every stage of the ascent within the student's whole soul.

On the basis of the above observation, I argue that scepticism should be adopted regarding McCabe's rationale for claiming that it is the intellect (or the eye of the soul) only that is opened to the Forms because the Form of the Good must serve as the source of value, as McCabe envisages.

However, it is surely also possible that the Good is the source of value in dialectic, as McCabe claims, and that it is our intellect that grasps this. My answer in this chapter is that this is not the full story, as this process, I hope I have shown, involves moral progress.

Therefore, there are grounds for approaching McCabe's interpretation of the ascending process with a degree of scepticism and a reason to suppose that the view of the explanation that Plato defends in the process of ascent does not relate precisely to knowledge of the Good but rather to the process by which an individual becomes good.

1.5 Conclusion

My principal aim in this chapter has been to argue that the discussion of the ascent and the Form of the Good describes the moral progress of the individual who becomes good. First, I clarified precisely what I consider the discussion of the ascent to be—namely, the upwards journey described in the allegory of the Cave. I then outlined my strategy, which has been to look to the analogy of the sun and the soul-turning metaphor for clues as to how the process of moral transformation takes place in the ascent. I concluded that the analogy of the Sun is not helpful for my discussion of the philosopher's moral progress because it describes the ontological and epistemological function of the Good. Rather, the soul-turning metaphor is revealed to have both sequential and progressive aspects embedded within it.

In the concluding section, I have explained and criticised McCabe's processual view of the ascent. While McCabe's proposal aptly emphasises the moral and agential dimension of the ascending process, it ascribes to

Plato a specific view of explanation. In so doing, McCabe's account underexplains the moral progress of the whole soul, which is a central concern for Plato, as clearly mentioned at 518c6.

2

The Partial Transformation of the Lower Parts of the Soul

2.1 Becoming Good Versus Knowing the Good

The previous chapter explored the concept of transformation within the Platonic framework, and it argued for a reading of the ascending process as transformational. I have argued that the journey upwards of the soul, or the ascent, tells a story of a progressive amelioration of psychic abilities during the ascending process. Having gone through an account in the current literature, namely McCabe's view of transformation,[55] which reads the ascent as a transformational process, I concluded that this interpretation struggles to account for all the textual evidence, underexplaining important aspects of Socrates' view. While for McCabe, transformation happens at the end of the process and belongs to the rational part only, on the account I defend in this thesis, transformation is a more complex phenomenon. There is a partial transformation that

[55] McCabe (2015: 119).

happens every time the soul gets better, which we will see in detail in this chapter, and a final or complete transformation at the end of the process of becoming good, which will be the focus of Chapter 3. This means that, on my account of transformation, the soul comes to have a certain degree of goodness during the process. And at the end of the process, it has a greater degree of goodness, or complete goodness. Then goodness comes in degrees. In my view, therefore, for Plato goodness comes in degree.

Furthermore, while for McCabe transformation applies to the rational part of the soul only, I will now complete my account of transformation by arguing, in this chapter, that transformation belongs to the whole soul. This chapter build, therefore, on the previous investigation in a coherent way.

Building on this, in this chapter, I shall propose a distinction between the processes of becoming good and coming to know the Good – a distinction that is relevant here.[56] I thus distinguish between the epistemological attainment at the peak of the philosopher's training, knowledge of the Good itself, and the moral progress in becoming a good person, which does not require direct access to the knowledge that is eventually acquired.[57] Given that this distinction applies to the soul, I then develop a further issue worth exploring – that is, the question of what the soul is. Against the model that the soul is a particular and hence a candidate for approximating goodness and the idea that the Good might cause it to become good – that this is the 'moral progress of a particular' – it is worth considering a substantially different model in which the soul acquires virtues as it progresses through the educational provisions of a perfect

[56] I thank Prof. Woolf for suggesting this helpful distinction.
[57] This distinction and its details have been formulated by my examiners, Prof. Woolf and Prof. Rowett in person and in their comments during the viva voce examinations in October 2022.

city. It is because the virtues that characterise the virtuous soul are themselves causally related to the Good, which gives them their truth and intelligibility, that the virtuous soul becomes good by becoming well-ordered and virtuous. This is a dispositional change.

However, given the distinction, it is justifiable to doubt whether it is necessary to deny that something important occurs during the final intellectual stages, given that the relationship between knowing and being good can be broken. Therefore, in what follows I shall address this challenge to the claim that no important transformation ultimately occurs.

To further address this challenge, I consider the account offered by D. Storey (2022),[58] suggesting that his conception of learning as psychic turning and his reading of the 'Soul-Turning' metaphor accounts for Socrates' understanding of psychic moral development. Having examined Socrates' description of the 'Soul-Turning' metaphor and presented my interpretation of this metaphor. I shall expand on my perspective on the relationship in the philosophical soul between becoming good and knowing the good.

2.2 The Relevance of this Distinction in the Educational Programme

It is helpful to distinguish clearly between becoming good and knowing the Good and thus between the epistemological attainment associated with the peak of the philosophers' training (knowledge of the Good itself) and the moral progress that is undergone in becoming a good person (which does not require direct access to the knowledge that is eventually acquired). This distinction appears to follow the claim that nothing significant occurs in the final intellectual stages.

[58] Storey (2022: 3-10).

> 'So when someone surrenders himself to music to charm him with its pipes, pouring in over his soul through his ears, like a funnel, those sweet, soft, dirge-like modes we talked about, and he spends his whole life humming in tuneful delight, he at first softens up the spirited aspect in him, if he had one, as if he were tempering iron, making it useful [better] instead of useless and inflexible, but when instead of stopping he keeps on pouring, and puts it under a spell, the next moment he melts it into liquid, until finally it dissolves his spirit […].'
>
> (*Republic* 411 a6- b3)

This passage describes what I refer to as the pre-rational level of moral character formation. The pre-rational level, as I understand it, is associated with activities such as listening to 'soft, sweet, and dirge-like modes' through our ears by surrendering ourselves to music.

> 'Goodness of speech and concord and seemliness and good rhythm then all follow on goodness of disposition – not what we call "having a good disposition" by way of a pretty name for silliness, but a state of mind that is truly equipped with a good and fine disposition.'
>
> (*Republic* 400 e1-2)

Socrates continues,

> 'Rhythm and concord, after all, penetrate deeper down inside the soul than anything else.'
>
> (*Republic* 401d5-6)

> 'They [rhythm and concord] take the most powerful hold on it [deeper down inside the soul], causing it to share the seemliness they bring with them – provided, that is, that its owner is being brought up exposed to the correct music, because if he isn't, the effect will be the opposite.'
>
> (*Republic* 401e1-4)

This first stage of moral education does not presuppose any presence of independent thinking, because, in poetry, the young listen and are taught habits only by example.[59] This education is based on a simple criterion: individuals will approve of that with which they are already familiar while attacking and rejecting that which is new.[60] By learning to love fine and beautiful things and to hate ugly things from an early age, the young guardians will be better able to appreciate reasonable speeches and avoid fighting or arguing over what is valuable when they are guardians. This pre-rational stage of moral character formation is therefore necessary but not sufficient for the cultivation of refined habits, which will induce the young guardians to desire and enjoy the pursuit of the Good.

Familiarity in this context denotes, as I understand it, close exposure to ideals of fitness without any cognitive understanding or engagement of the young. It is a form of moral likeness or habituation.[61]

At this point, an attentive reader might ask whether this is merely blind, passive listening.[62] I shall respond by maintaining that this process is not passive but rather involves some perception from and of the subject. Thus, even if the young guardians, from childhood, are unable to understand or recognise the Good, they are nonetheless practising their capacities and becoming good. This exercise is not passive; rather, the soul is engaged in a non-rational way in this process. Let us offer an example to clarify this. The child imitates the gestures and habits that the model presents by incorporating them into their way of living and acting. By listening to fine

[59] *Rep.* 522a.

[60] *Rep.* 402a.

[61] For an insightful account of moral habituation in Aristotle, see Hampson (2021: 1-26).
I thank her for suggesting this to me.

[62] Hampson (2021). The picture of habituation I am presenting in Plato is heavily influenced by her account of habituation in Aristotle.

stories and sounds, the child develops the capacity to appreciate fine and beautiful sounds, and this pre-rational habituation will go on to distinguish them rationally at a later stage.

One might object to my focus on the process of becoming good, rather than on knowing the Good that there is textual evidence for the importance of knowing the Good for the philosopher-ruler. These may be found in the description of the end of the dialectical journey. For example, at 517c Goodness is seen by the dialectician after an arduous educational process. While it would be interesting to present a view of that which occurs at the end of the ascending process according to the details of *Republic* 6 and 7, I limit my investigation here to noticing a distinction between the journey upwards (continuously upwards, given that no descent is involved) in the description of the Cave allegory and this special – according to a view that had long been popular – vision that the philosopher has.

Given that the text proposed a distinction between knowledge of the Good and becoming good, I find it more fruitful to focus on becoming good and to infer from the text a plausible account of what happens at the end of the educational process and, consequently, its level of significance.

Below, I present textual evidence of what I take to be a relevant distinction – the distinction between becoming and knowing.

> 'And when they've reached the age of fifty, those that have stayed the course [διασωθέντας] and met the highest standards [ἀριστεύσαντας] in everything [πάντα πάντῃ] they've had to do or learn [ἔργοις τε καὶ ἐπιστήμαις] must now be led to the end-point [τέλος] of their journey'.
>
> (*Republic* 540a4-7)

This passage clearly highlights the way in which the philosophers must be tested during their educational process. There is a sort of selection in order to choose those who were the very best. The passage specifies, quite surprisingly, in what the philosophers must be good to be selected as philosopher-rulers. They must be the best in both actions and studies. Vasiliou thinks that this double requirement of actions (deeds in his own wording) and studies, - I quote - "appropriately foregrounds the dual role played by those who have arrived at this point. They are philosophers and rulers".[63]

Without the need for recourse to knowledge of the Good, while still developing morally, the intellect performs its function as a normative component within moral progress. This consists of the positive assessment that is expressed when the intellect makes any judgement that progress of some sort has occurred. Therefore, it is not a question of merely confirming or validating that which has taken place, *pace* McCabe,[64] but rather a question of judging it as a moral transformation. I am also not arguing that there is an epistemological transformation that merely confirms the already achieved moral insights that have been progressively acquired, as this would deny that becoming good is progressive in light of such knowledge.

My reader might now have two main questions: a) How can we determine that the soul is progressing morally or morally better than before if we exclude reference to the event that happens at the end of the ascending process, namely 'seeing' the Good? and b)given the distinction in place

[63] Vasiliou (2015: 53). For an alternate reading see Lear, J. (2006).
[64] McCabe (2015: 123).

and given that it can be broken, why deny that something significant occurs at the culmination of the journey upwards?

Building on b) above, I shall later consider later a challenge to my account of transformation. Is it necessary to deny that something important occurs during the final intellectual stages, given that the relationship between knowing and being good may be broken?[65]

2.3 Two Desiderata for Our Account of Moral Progress

a. The Platonic view of the Soul in the Republic[66]

As transformation, the main topic of this thesis, applies to the soul it is important to introduce and discuss an account of the soul. Is the soul a particular that dispositionally changes? My answer is yes.

It is worth considering a model in which the soul acquires virtues during its progress through the educational provisions of a perfect city, and it is because the virtues that characterise the virtuous soul are themselves causally related to the Good, which gives them their truth and intelligibility, that the virtuous soul becomes good by becoming well-ordered and virtuous. This is a dispositional change, but the soul is not the particular that approximates; rather, its virtues and other approximations to the Forms are the particulars that instantiate the Forms. Its goodness, justice, courage, approximate the true justice in the intelligible world. It improves as those qualities improve.

To understand the relationship between moral goodness and the form of the Good, we must first examine the nature of the soul. The reason for this

[65] I thanks my examiners for raising this point during the viva.
[66] I thank Prof. Rowett for helping me thinking about the soul in the discussion on moral development.

is that moral goodness is generated in the soul. The generation of moral goodness in the soul has its foundations in the learning process. Socrates directly traces this link when he uses the 'Soul-Turning' metaphor to describe the process of learning:

> 'But the truth, it seems, was that while justice was indeed something like that, it wasn't at all a matter of a person's external actions, but rather of what he did inside, in relation to his true self and what is truly his own, preventing each element in him from doing what belongs to others, and stopping them from meddling in one another's roles – in the true sense putting his own affairs in order, ruling over himself and setting himself straight, becoming a friend to himself as he fits together the three elements in him, so becoming moderate and well adjusted.'
>
> (*Republic* 443d-e)

This passage describes virtues, especially justice, as matter of internal harmony of different elements. These elements are the parts of the soul. It states that justice as a virtue is not about how a person acts, but how the different elements of the soul are in harmony and in a good relation among each other. This means that this picture of the virtue of justice relies on tripartition.

Similarly, at 442d, we find the account of moderation in the *Republic* and the description of this virtue is also in terms of tripartition:

> 'What about moderateness? We'll call the individual moderate, won't we, because of the friendship and harmony of these very things – when the ruling element and the two that are ruled shared the belief that the rational should rule, and don't fight like opposing factions against it?'
>
> (*Republic* 442d)

Socrates continues,

> 'In that case, it seems that goodness will be a sort of health of the soul, a state of beauty and well-being; badness will be disease, ugliness, weakness.'

> 'That is so.'
> 'So won't it also be true that fine and beautiful practices lead to the acquisition of goodness, […]?'
>
> (*Republic* 442e)

If we read this passage in conjunction with the passages on the description of the virtues of justice and moderation, we can see that a complex psychic tripartition is at place. Regarding the account of moral development, I argue here that the soul acquires the virtues during its progress through the educational provisions of a perfect city, and it is because the virtues that characterise the virtuous soul are themselves causally related to the Good, which gives them their truth and intelligibility, that the virtuous soul becomes good by becoming well-ordered and virtuous. This is a dispositional change, but the soul is not the particular that approximates; its virtues and other approximations to the Forms are the particulars that instantiate the Forms. Its goodness, justice, and courage approximate the true justice in the intelligible world. It is improving, as those qualities improve.

b. The turning of the soul

> Let us now turn to an examination of a key evidence for my account of moral progress. Socrates here describes a dunamis, namely the capacity for learning.
>
> 'Whereas', I said, 'our current argument indicates a different way of conceiving this capacity for learning we each have within our soul, and the instrument with which each of us learns. It is more like an eye that cannot be turned from the dark towards the bright **unless** the whole body turns with it; it must be turned round, together with the whole soul**,** away from changing things, until it

> becomes able to bear looking at what is, and the most dazzling part of what is – and that, we say, is the good'.[67]
> 'So whereas the other so-called excellences of a soul probably have a kind of resemblance to bodily ones, since if they're not already in a soul they can be brought about in it by habituation and practice, the particular excellence that wisdom does seem, more than anything, to belong to something diviner – which never loses its power, but becomes beneficial or useless and harmful according to which way it has been turned. Or haven't you noticed that if ever there's someone people call a bad man, but "wise" nonetheless, how keen-sighted his tiny little soul is, and how sharp at making out the things it's turned to? It's not that its sight is bad, just that it's been commandeered in the service of badness, so that the sharper its vision, the more bad it does.'
> 'Quite so,' he said.[68]

More specifically, on the increase of psychic capacities, Socrates says,

> 'And yet', I said, 'if this element, in someone of that nature, had been hammered into shape from childhood on, and had had trimmed off from it the concomitants of change that hold it down like lead weights, attached to it by gluttony and other such pleasures of excess, that make the soul look downwards instead of upwards – if it had been freed from these, and could turn towards things as they truly are, then the very same element in the very same people would be as sharp at seeing these as it is at seeing the things it's turned to now.'
>
> (*Republic* 519a8–519b5)

These passages are extremely rich, but for the purpose of this discussion I focus on the idea of progression is indicated linguistically in this passage by the use of the superlative ὀξύτατα ('in the sharpest way') at 519b5, which comes as a climax after the introduction of the adjective's positive form at 519a2 and its comparative form at 519a4. While Rowe translates this superlative as 'as sharp […] as,' I depart here from his translation, as it

[67] *Rep*. 518c3 – 518d2.
[68] *Rep*. 518d11 - 519a8.

appears that it fails in this instance to capture the climax rendered by the Greek form. Here, I offer my alternative for the final part of the passage:

> '[T]his same element in these same people would be able to perceive most sharply these things, just as it is able to perceive the things towards which it is now turned.'[69]

The reason for translating ὀξύτατα as 'the sharpest way' is that it describes an increase of the learning capacity to its maximum extent, which is – quite surprisingly – discussed metaphorically in terms of sight. In the *Republic,* however, during the pre-rational stage of moral judgement and before rational conscious judgement, we have seen that other abilities, such as listening, have been valuable.[70] When we consider these textual clues and the use of the adjective ὀξύ in this passage, we may glean an expression of moral judgement through the use of terms associated with the realm of sense perception.

Importantly, the Greek text uses the third-person singular of the imperfect active indicative of the verb 'to see' (ἑώρα, 519b3). Here, I translate the word with the more general verb of sensory perception ('to perceive') because, while this verb often refers to intellectual perception, it can also permit a much broader understanding of perceptual experience. I take this verb metaphorically to indicate a move towards a broad capacity as sense perception is broad, so a sort of intellectual capacity in a broad sense.

This language of sight helps to illustrate the development that our natures undergo as we progress towards the Good. As we focus our sight on better objects (such as things as they truly are), the content of our vision

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[69] *Rep.* 519b4–5.

[70] See 1.2 for a discussion on music in Books III–IV and its importance for educational purposes. For a brilliant comparison with Aristotle, Cagnoli Fiecconi, E. (2016).

becomes valuable and our moral vision develops concurrently. In this process, things that initially appeared to be irrelevant or that our gaze did not encompass become clearer and more visible to us; similarly, our nature is increasingly hammered, shaped, and refined by moral education in youth and by fostering its good features in adult life.

But what does this 'turning round' consists in? The text says that it is a re-orientation of the soul's gaze towards the Good. Or as Socrates describes it:

> 'This turning round of the soul there will be a special kind of expertise, which knows how the turning may be most easily and effectively achieved; and it won't consist in putting sight into something, but rather of contriving it in something that already has it, but has it incorrectly aligned, and isn't looking in the right direction'.
>
> (*Republic* 518d4 – 518d9)

This passage highlights how the soul turning metaphor introduces the orientation of the soul. My understanding of this passage is that the transformation of the soul has this first part which is to orientate the soul towards the Good. This means that there cannot be a complete turn unless the whole soul is looking at the Good.

2.4 Making sense of 518c8

Now let us consider the context in which we find 518c8. In Book 7 Socrates is interested in the philosophers' capacity for learning as they undergo their training on the road to becoming Guardians. Socrates wants to know what it is that will allow the philosophers to succeed in their studies and

training so that they can become able to see the Good[71] and to rule the city in a just way. When in this discussion on the capacity to learn (*ten enusan ekastu dunamin* 518c5) Socrates refers to the turning of the soul (*psuche*) and it says:

> 'Whereas', I said, 'our current argument indicates a different way of conceiving this capacity for learning we each have within our soul, and the instrument with which each of us learns. It is more like an eye that cannot be turned from the dark towards the bright unless the whole body turns with it; it must be turned round, together with the whole soul, away from changing things, until it becomes able to bear looking at what is, and the most dazzling part of what is – and that, we say, is the Good.'
>
> (*Republic* 518c4 –d2)

The linguistic usage of the preposition *sun* in the phrase "*sun ole te psuche*" at 518c8 clearly marks the collaboration of each psychic component in the turning metaphor. This is strong evidence for my claim that not only reason but the whole soul is turning. It is clear from the passage that Socrates considers it to be the whole soul (*sun ole te psuche*) that turns as the philosopher looks towards the Good, rather than only a specific part of soul, such the intellect (*to organon* 518c5).

There is disagreement in the literature about whether "whole soul" (*sun olo te psuche*) refers to the intellect together with the body, or, with reference to the complex tripartite structure of Book 4, to the intellect together with the other parts of the soul. We will see that Sedley argues for the former,[72] while I will here defend the latter.

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[71] In Chapter 3 I interpret the verb to see metaphorically as meaning a broader intellectual capacity, such as understanding.

[72] Sedley (2022:80).

Let us explain in more detail how this metaphorical language, which refers to the whole soul, applies in practice to the philosopher-rulers' educational programme and moral development. We have seen in Chapter 2 that the lower parts of the soul are habituated through training in music and gymnastics. Moving beyond the metaphorical language, the importance of training and habits are the entry point for a formation of moral dispositions. We don't find a direct discussion in this passage of how the lower parts of the soul are habituated, but the locution "the whole soul" points to the fact that the lower parts turn. Metaphorically the turning means that they are habituated, develop moral dispositions, and so become morally virtuous. This represents, on my reading, the partial transformation that the philosopher undergoes at the level of the lower parts of his soul.

A clear account of the structure of the soul has been presented in Book 4 and is not contradicted in this passage, nor in books 5, 6, and 7. There is therefore no abandonment here of the complex tripartite structure of the soul from Book 4 and so I understand "the whole soul" to be referring to the intellect, the spirited part, and the appetitive part. This understanding of the soul turning metaphor is reflected in Socrates' proposals for training of the philosophers, which are directed at all three parts of the soul. We need the complex tripartite structure to understand the practicalities of how the soul becomes good. In Chapter 3 I will present a critique of Sedley's reading, which proposes dismissing the relevance of tripartition in Book 7.

2.5 The Literature in Support of the Transformation of the Lower Parts of the Soul: Storey (2022)

In support of my account of the soul and my reading of the 'Soul-Turning' metaphor, I shall now turn to a targeted examination of an account in the literature that supports the thesis that turning means orienting the whole soul, as a particular, in the appropriate direction. Most interpret the text to mean that by 'turning the soul' Socrates refers to the whole soul, which – as Storey rightly points out – might include both the lower parts of the soul and the rational part. However, the question of what the role of Goodness itself in the metaphor amounts to remains largely unexplored. While I have constructed the chapter by building my position in relation to the primary test with careful exegesis of the latter to demonstrate its support for the position, this section compares and contrasts my position with other contributions in a more subordinate way.

a. Learning as Psychic Turning (Storey)

In the literature, Storey argues that the learning described in the discussion of the ascent is a turning process.[73] In 'The Soul-Turning Metaphor in Plato's *Republic* 7', he offers a formalisation of just such an account.[74] For Storey, the purpose of philosophical education in the discussion of the ascent is to 'turn' the soul around, and all educational subjects are involved in this turning process.[75] To clarify, by 'turning', he means the orientation of the soul towards being and truth.[76] Beginning with an analysis of a well-known passage from 518b6 that he calls 'The

[73] Storey (2022: 525 – 542).
[74] *Ibid*. 527.
[75] Storey (2022: 527).
[76] *Ibid*. 527.

Soul-Turning Metaphor', Storey argues that Plato attaches foundational importance to music and gymnastics while relegating mathematics to a specific moment outside the Cave.[77]

Thus, Storey argues that philosophical education is a gradual, ordered, and progressive process of the soul's orientation towards being and truth.[78] He asserts that: "the turning metaphor must be understood as a metaphor for education as such rather than as the effect of one or more educational subjects".[79] He maintains that: "education's goal is to turn the whole soul in the right direction so that, at the curriculum's conclusion, the student of virtue has correctly oriented both the instrument with which he learns (that is, the intellect or the eye) and the whole soul with its corresponding powers".[80]

It follows that, for Storey, the complex psychological theory introduced in the second part of *Republic* Book 4 is essential to our understanding of the 'Soul-Turning' metaphor.[81] He asserts:

> Socrates claims that, from start to finish, education is a matter of shepherding natural abilities in the right direction. Second: music and gymnastics are among the subjects that the soul-turning metaphor represents. […] Only music and gymnastics have the responsibility for shaping the fundamental motivations—for truth rather than reputation, justice rather than pleasure, and so on […][82]

[77] *Ibid*. 527.
[78] *Ibid*. 527.
[79] *Ibid*. 527.
[80] *Ibid*. 528.
[81] *Ibid*. 527.
[82] *Ibid*. 528.

Storey's conclusion is based on two main premises: first, that Storey considers the Platonic psychic tripartite structure to be in place in this discussion of philosophical education at 518b–d.[83] Storey's second premise is that Plato here abandons the dualistic, body–soul conceptualisation of virtue.[84] I shall discuss these premises in turn.

First, when Socrates states that the intellect 'is more like an eye that cannot be turned from the dark towards the bright unless the whole body turns with it,'[85] Storey understands this as a self-standing claim (hereafter referred to as Claim A) that for him "refers to the instrument with which we learn".[86] Storey then takes 'Claim B' to be a second self-standing claim that indeed refers to the instrument as a part but is mainly concerned with the whole soul.[87] His reading of the metaphor relies squarely on an analogy between the corporeal and the psychic.[88]

For Storey:

" the eye in the body corresponds to the Intellect in the soul, and education's goal is to turn the rational part of the soul – that is, the Intellect – in the right direction".[89]

Storey argues that Claim A refers to one part of the soul (the Intellect), not because education is concerned exclusively with this part but because the turning of this part is the goal of the educational process.[90] Claim B refers

[83] *Ibid*. 530.
[84] *Ibid*. 530.
[85] *Rep*.518c8.
[86] Storey (2022: 532).
[87] Storey (2022: 530).
[88] *Ibid*. 530.
[89] The eye stands for the intellect in the imagery Socrates presents at 518b–d. For textual evidence of the analogy between the eye and the intellect, see 436a8–b1; 580d7–e2.
[90] Storey (2022: 532).

to the entire soul, which includes the Intellect and the soul's two irrational parts.[91] For Storey, both Claims A and B are conditions without which the turn cannot be achieved.[92] From this, we might conclude that both claims are necessary but insufficient on their own.

Moreover, one might assume that if Claim A refers to the rational part of the soul, Claim B (given Book 4's complex account of the soul) might refer to its irrational parts. Storey, however, explicitly argues against this interpretation, as he interprets both claims as ultimately making the same point: the whole soul must be turned.[93] While one might argue that this counts the soul's rational part twice, the objection does not seem to hold, given that Claim A refers to the Intellect as a part of the whole, while Claim B refers to the whole, which comprises the intellect and the other two non-rational parts.[94]

Considering the educational curriculum discussed above, Claim B could then be interpreted in terms of the disciplines of music and gymnastics. However, caution must be exercised here; in saying as Storey does that: "music and gymnastics turn the whole soul".[95] For him, an education in music and gymnastics: "benefits all three parts of the soul".[96] The spirited part, he claims,: "would be tamed by education in music and gymnastics, while the appetitive part would benefit indirectly from such an education".[97]

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[91] *Ibid*. 532.
[92] *Ibid*. 535.
[93] *Ibid*. 535.
[94] *Ibid*. 535.
[95] *Ibid*. 535.
[96] Storey (2022: 535-536).
[97] *Ibid*. 536.

For the rational part of the soul, the benefit would consist of its partial turning of itself.[98] The partialness of this turn is only the beginning, but it is essential, the complete turning of the rational part, which will come later in the educational curriculum and will be the result, according to Storey's viewpoint, of training in mathematics and dialectic.[99] Having exegetically examined Storey's interpretation of the metaphor in support of my reading, I shall now turn to the criticism of Storey's view.

2.6 Critical Analysis of Storey: the Missing Good

Having provided an exegesis of Storey's paper in the previous section, in this section, I shall analyse it. The issue is that Storey's reading fails to consider the causal role of the Good.

The reader will have noticed that I am critiquing Storey for only taking the subject into account. Yet, I did not refuse investigation into the causal role of the Good. Therefore, my approach will not suffer from the same problem that I attribute to Storey, and such criticism is justified by the approach that I am taking in this thesis.

While Storey rightly emphasises the importance of learning, this emphasis on the character formation process must be accompanied by an account of progression. He does not provide an account of the role of the Good in the process. Therefore, we must equip our account of character formation in which the Good plays a role.

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[98] *Ibid*. 536.

[99] Storey has little to say about the benefit derived from this process. One possibility may be that the result of this ascending processual progressive activity towards the Good is beneficial. By the result, I mean the end of the process – the attainment of knowledge of the Good is beneficial because the philosopher realises what is valuable in life. This account, however, ascribes to the Good the power to be a transformative cause while restricting the transformation to the end of the process. According to my viewpoint, there is no discontinuity between the process and its outcome, and so the process must also be transformative.

To fully understand the power of the Good during the partial and then complete psychic transformation of the philosopher-ruler, we must explain how the components of the soul – in which we have witnessed the development of a love for truth and justice – are educated through habit and practice at this pre-rational level. In doing so, the manifestation of Goodness within the soul prior to the completion of the whole psychic transformation will be highlighted.

2.7 Implementing Storey's Reading

A vital insight into the power of the Good during the psychic arrangement of the philosopher-ruler is to consider how the good components of the soul are brought up by habit and practice at a pre-rational level. These components are a love for truth and justice. Quite contentiously, I propose therefore to understand the power of the Good as not distinct from its manifestation in the philosophical life. I defend this interpretative choice by arguing that the activity of the Good, its appearance in the good components brought up in the soul, can be one entry point for a correct understanding of the role of Goodness as a transformative cause. This is the way to implement Storey's proposal because the Good is largely missing in his account.

We have seen that the process by which the soul becomes good, in the narrative, is scantily expressed via the analogy of the development of the activity of seeing. The text leaves unclear what the exact role of the Good is in the transformative process. I propose that the development of vision gives us an entry point for an interpretation of the role of Goodness during the whole process, from beginning to end. Goodness is displayed and manifested in the good component of the philosopher's life. The Good

has its role in its appearance in the soul, both at the pre-rational and rational stage. To properly understand the manifestation of Goodness, an investigation into the good components of the psychic life of the philosopher is necessary.

a. Proposing the full picture: considering the good components of the psychic life.

During the agent's transformational process of becoming good, Goodness acts as a transforming cause for the whole soul. Its activity manifests in the acquiring Goodness without the need of rational endorsement first and corroborating this with the rational capacity. The Good is the cause which gives rise to good-making features at every stage of the transformational process. Its metaphysical independence is preserved at every stage because it is a paradigm for the features of the soul that the philosophers are developing. This externality or independence of the paradigm is not weakened by the insertion of Goodness within the process of becoming good.

One might object that due to its independence the Good should be found, as it is in the narrative, at the end of the transformational process. Due to its objectivity, the Good will give normative stability to the entire process and validate it.[100]

My suggestion that transformation is a process invites the conclusion that the philosopher's intrapsychic moral development is richer than what

[100] McCabe (2016).

other accounts have presented. The richness consists in the interaction between the Good and the psychic development of the agent. What we want is not only to have an explanation of how the good components are brought about but also of how we as agents have been able to develop such components. This is why the mere validation of Goodness on the agent's life is not enough. It does not tell us a story about the development of the agent's ability to gain and recognize the good features of their own soul.

Only by recognizing that Goodness is the goodness our soul has and therefore displays to the eyes of others can we have insight into the correctness of our way of developing and get to know how we got to possess Goodness. Such recognition will make the philosopher able to explain how they develop into a good person, both morally and intellectually.

So, building on Storey's interpretation of the turning of the soul, I make the (possibly contentious) assertion that we can understand the power of the Good through its manifestation in the good psychic components. During the process of becoming good, the Good functions as an informing cause for the agent's whole soul. Its activity manifests first in the agent's development of a good character and the agent's evaluative and reflective capacities at a later stage. At every stage of the turning, the Good is the cause of features that themselves produce good. The Good's metaphysical independence is preserved at every stage because it is a paradigm for the developing features of the soul. This externality or independence of the paradigm is not weakened by the inclusion of the Good in the process of character formation.

I contend, therefore, that we can add to Storey's account that the causal role of the Good extends to the whole soul.

> In the *Republic*, where we read: "You know, don't you, that the beginning of any process is the most important, especially for anything young and tender? It's at that time that it is most malleable and takes on any pattern one wishes to impress on it."
>
> (*Republic* 377 a- b)

In light of these pieces of evidence we are invited to consider that in order to be maximally successful in the pursuit of virtue a moral education is essential. It starts from childhood with the pre-rational stage of education and represents the beginning of any moral character formation. This stage is the most vulnerable, but also the most malleable.

This emphasis on the process of character formation must be accompanied by an account of progression. We do need to investigate the mechanism behind the development of good features in the soul. Therefore, we need to equip our account of character formation with a second feature: maximisation.

Understanding how the development of our natural nature is achieved and in what it consists is not an easy task. First, it is an internal development of the soul of the agent. Second, it is a development which is gradual and always increasing. It is never an empty activity of contemplation.[101] What is this complete transformation? And how it relates to knowledge of the Good? These are the questions that the next chapter aims to answer.

2.8 Conclusion

[101] Sedley (2013). See also El Murr, D. (2014) and White, N. (2006).

This chapter has presented an account of how the orientation and development of the soul occur and how good psychic features develop. The second major stage within the process of moral transformation remains to be addressed – namely, the rational endorsement and validation of those features that bring about moral goodness. In the next chapter, I shall explain how the soul's rational part orders its arrangement and how the ability to make evaluative judgements develops.

3

The Development of Reason and a Total Transformation

3.1 From the Development of Moral Dispositions to the Development of Evaluative Dispositions

We have seen in Chapter 1 that there is strong textual evidence in support of a reading of the ascent as a transformational process of moral development. In Chapter 2 an argument was made that this transformation applies to the whole soul, including the lower parts, and an analysis was given of the pre-rational partial transformation which takes place in those appetitive and spirited parts. Now, to complete this investigation on the moral progress of the philosopher, this chapter explores the development of reason in the ascending process and the capacity of this part of the soul to assess and judge.

According to my view of transformation, the development of the rational part completes the partial transformation. The soul of the philosopher acquires evaluative and epistemic dispositions as he ascends towards the Good, which is accompanied by a total transformation.

Further, to tie this discussion together in the final section, I will be considering the collaboration between the non-rational parts of the soul and reason within a single unified soul. So, I introduce a discussion on harmony as unity of the soul and link this back to the main discussion on

transformation by arguing that for the soul to be good involves harmony between the three parts.

In this chapter, I will first present my reading of the development of reason in Plato's discussion of the ascent. The development of reason consists of an orientation, and I will provide textual evidence of the orientation of reason in the ascending process. The ascent means that reason acquires intellectual dispositions to judge and assess things in accordance with the Good.

This discussion on the development of reason coheres with the discussion on the lower parts of the soul in Chapter 2, and together with it presents my overall view on moral development in Plato's *Republic.* However, I am aware that there is a recent reading in the literature that is incompatible with my view, and I will discuss it with the aim to strengthen my own positive proposals. I shall argue that a Socratic reading (i.e., based on the account of virtue as dependent on knowledge from the early dialogues) of the discussion of the ascent is unfounded.

I would like to test my reading against another account in the literature that presents a challenge to my proposal. In this chapter I will consider Sedley's view, starting with an exegesis of Sedley (2013), followed by a section of critical analysis. I will conclude that his interpretation of the ascent in the middle books of the *Republic* is not consistent with the text.

I present this reading as a challenge to my own proposal, which I have argued for in chapters 1 and 2, and which I will complete in Chapter 3. While I am aware of other possible challenges, I restrict my search to this targeted one because it presents an incompatible reading of the same textual evidence on which I have based my account. If my proposal stands

against this incompatible view, my interpretation of the ascent is therefore strengthened.

In this chapter I distinguish between two competing claims: a) that the rational part of the soul attempts to grasp the Good, and b) that the rational part of the soul becomes good during the transformational process. I argue in favour of the latter claim; providing an account of what it means for the rational part of the soul to become good and investigating the mechanism behind this process.

3.2 The Orientation of Reason

Reason is an important part of the transformative process, and deserves its own discussion to understand what moral development consists in at the rational level. What does it mean for the rational part to become good Plato's Socrates in the *Republic*? This is the question that this chapter proposes to answer. In line with the soul turning metaphor this involves the orientation of reason towards the Good. Let us examine 518e1 - 519a1. The soul turning metaphor has been introduced at 518d and Glaucon and Socrates are now developing the metaphor with respect to the rational part. Their discussion focuses on the excellences of soul and in particular on wisdom.

> 'So whereas the other so-called excellences of soul probably have a kind of resemblance to bodily ones, since if they're not already in a soul they can actually be brought about in it by habituation and practice, the particular excellence that wisdom is really does seem, more than anything, to belong to something diviner – which never loses its power, but becomes useful and beneficial or useless and harmful according to which way it has been turned.'

(*Republic* 518e1 - 519a1)

In this passage wisdom is a virtue that belongs to the rational part of the soul. There is a power within the rational part that is always there, never loses its power, and due to which reason has the ability to be turned towards good or bad ends. When wisdom is oriented upwards towards the Good the soul itself becomes good. If it is not turned towards the Good the rational part of the soul becomes harmful and useless. As is the case with the other parts of the soul, the rational part is described according to its own power and is presented as having an orientation.

There is a distinction made here between the lower parts of the soul and reason. This distinction, as the passage makes clear, is about the fact that the excellences of the lower parts can be brought about in the soul, if they are not already there, by habituation and practice. Meanwhile wisdom seems to always belong to the rational part of the soul and needs to be oriented. As in Chapter 2, we have described the lengthy and detailed process of habituation of the lower parts of the soul, in this passage we see a description of the orientation of the excellence of the rational part of the soul, wisdom, towards the Good. We are invited to conclude that the same process of orientation of the lower parts of the soul applies to the rational part. This must be first oriented and then educated. Here the transformation that belongs to the rational part is a less complex phenomenon, which involves the orientation of already present capacity to reason.

If the orientation of the rational part of the soul does not come, the soul has wisdom but it is turned towards evil ends. The text is clear that a wise soul can be a bad or vicious soul.

At 519a, we read:

> 'Or haven't you noticed that if ever there's someone people call a bad man, but "wise" nonetheless, how keen-sighted his tiny little soul is, and how sharp at making out the things it's turned to? It is not that its sight is bad, just it's been commandeered in the service of badness'.
>
> (*Republic* 519a 1- 6)

But how to interpret the remarks on the soul's orientation? An attentive reader of the passage at 518e1 – 519a1 can be captivated by the distinction by the excellence of soul and the bodily excellences as in the beginning of the passage cited above there is a distinction between the so-called excellence of soul and the bodily ones. On top of this there seems to be a particular excellence that is wisdom.

This would suggest at first glance the presence of a body-soul distinction in this passage. However, there is not an intellectualisation of virtue in this passage. Rather, tripartition is very much at play. The so-called excellences of soul are the ones that are brought up by habituation and practice in the lower parts of the soul as seen in Chapter 2. While the particular excellence that wisdom is belongs to the rational part of the soul.

This passage contradicts Socrates' suggestion in the early dialogues that reason alone is responsible for moral action. In the *Charmides* and *Protagoras*, having virtues means to have knowledge. The *Republic* contradicts this idea, with only not reason, but also the lower parts of the soul being involved in moral development. Indeed, the early dialogues

end in aporia, so cannot constitute strong evidence for supporting Plato's view. In the *Republic* we find a coherent set of ideas, where the tripartite structure informs the moral and intellectual training of the philosophers and where the three parts all play a role as the soul is oriented and ascends towards the Good. I therefore reject Socratic Intellectualism, the view put forward in the early dialogues by Socrates. This is the view according to which nobody can act against knowledge of which is the best course of action and moral psychology becomes an intellectual state based on knowledge.

Moral psychology in the *Republic* is based on the harmony of different elements in the soul working together sensitive to the environment they are nurtured in, all oriented in the same direction. We have already introduced the concept of harmony in the discussion of 500 c1-9 in 1.1.

This emphasis on the nurture of the soul comes at 491e. We read:

'Shall we declare that with souls, too, it's the ones born with the best natures that come to be outstandingly bad, if they receive a bad education in childhood? Or do you imagine that behind great crimes, and unmitigated badness, there lies an inferior nature, rather than a vigorous one that has been destroys by his nurture?' … 'So this philosophical nature, as we've set it out, can go in either of two ways: if it receives the learning appropriate to it, I think it will inevitably go on, as it grows up, to every form of excellence; but if it is sown in the wrong soil, and then sprouts and is nourished there, it will end up in quite the opposite way […].'

(*Republic* 491e1-492b2)

The context of this passage is about the soul. Socrates here makes a strong claim that nurture is part of moral development. He refers to souls (*tas psuchas* 491d10), rather than to intellects, as the recipient of education. As we have seen, when discussing the soul in the *Republic*, Socrates considers the whole tripartite structure rather than reason in isolation. As the lower parts of the soul acquires moral virtues through the educational programme, the same applies to the rational part. This means that the rational part acquires the intellectual virtues during the course of its progress through educational training. As we have seen in the discussion on moderation in 2.1 and we will see in the discussion on justice in 3.2, these virtues are causally related to the Good. This causal role of the Good is seen in the effects that it has in the soul becoming virtuous as described in 1.3

Habituation of the lower parts of the soul is equally important in the *Republic* as the training of wise intellect when it comes to the moral development of the philosophers. I therefore reject Socratic Intellectualism. I now turn to an examination of Socratic Intellectualism by presenting the scholarly debate on tripartition. My reason for discussing Socratic Intellectualism is the following: to show that it is not the doctrine of virtue applied to the *Republic*. I must discuss it in relation to the exegesis of an opposing view in the literature. This view relied on Socratic Intellectualism to defend the dismissal of tripartition in the discussion of the ascent in the *Republic*.

3.3 The Debate on Tripartition

To understand the view of the development of reason I defend in this chapter, we must join a long and vexed debate in the literature on psychic

tripartition in the *Republic*. It is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, to reconstruct the debate in detail. In what follows I do engage with this debate but in a slightly tangential way so to use the discussion in the scholarly community to strengthen my own positive proposal that tripartition is at place in the discussion of the ascent and it has a central role to understand the soul's ascendance towards Goodness.

First, I clarify what it is mean by tripartition in light of textual evidence. At 439e4 the parts are introduced through the use of the instrumental dative in the word: ἑτέρῳ. As discussed in chapter one and two, there are other passages in which tripartition is mentioned. In this section, I need to talk about tripartition in relation to the discussion of virtues in the middle books as it is there that the psychic components of the soul are also described.

Interpretations of Platonic virtue are frequently based on a distinction between Plato's account of virtue and that of Socrates.[102] While Socrates in the early dialogues disavows knowledge of virtue, claiming not to know what virtue is, he asserts that its connections to happiness can help us to understand it. Yet the Socratic dialogues end in aporia, and we are left with both the definitional question ('What is virtue?') and the methodological question ('How does one pursue virtue?') unanswered.

The complexity of the soul introduced in Book 4 challenges us to consider whether being virtuous is purely linked to reason or whether the non-rational components of the soul, correctly oriented and developed, could also play a role. At the rational level of moral character formation, the philosopher's acquaintance with the Good transforms their vision of the

[102] Ahbel-Rappe and Kamtekar (2006), Fine (2008).

world and their parameters for action, completing the formation of a good character with the development of an evaluative capacity.

Based on the contrast seen between Plato's early and middle period, some scholars have argued for an account of the virtues of the philosophers in which they claim that the complex tripartite psychology of *Republic* Book 4 presents an improvement on Socratic psychology.[103] Others disagree, arguing that Socratic psychology from the earlier dialogues is resumed and revisited in the middle books of the *Republic.*[104] The former interpretation considers the tripartite psychology as a clear shift from the Socratic doctrines presented in the early dialogues. Proponents of the latter interpretation claim that this explanation is insufficient because psychic tripartition is barely present in the discussion on the virtues of the philosophers.

3.4 Opposing view in the literature: Sedley (2013)

In his 2013 paper 'Socratic Intellectualism in the *Republic*'s Central Digression', Sedley argues that the account of the virtues presented in Book 4 is superseded by the philosophers' educational programme laid out in Books 5–7. According to him, the discussion of the soul's ascendance towards Goodness in the middle books of the *Republic* is a metaphysical digression.[105] He states:

> 'The difference between the philosopher and the talented scoundrel lies exclusively (so far as we can tell) in the way they each direct their intellectual gaze. No room is left here for the power of the two lower parts to drag the rational part down. Instead of the lower soul-parts competing with, and potentially

[103] Irwin (1995: 3-4; 148), McCabe (2015), Fine (2008), Kamtekar (2006), Penner (2007a).
[104] Rowe (2007a), Sedley (2007, 2013).
[105] Sedley (2013: 75).

> perverting, the intellect, the soul as a whole is seen as somehow pitted against the body. h e talented scoundrel's intellect has been weighed down – diverted from the truth – by its focus on bodily indulgences."[106]

He claims that in Plato's discussion on the virtues of philosophers, Socratic psychology can better explain what is distinctive about philosophical virtue than psychic tripartition can.[107] According to this intellectualist model of virtue, the philosopher is an individual who chooses intellectual wisdom as the ultimate end of his life. In doing so, Sedley writes, the philosopher disregards ends that are connected with the body because such an individual is concerned with wisdom and wisdom alone.[108] Wisdom is not concerned with bodily needs, but is focused only on the soul's agenda.[109] From this, it follows that Sedley understands philosophical virtue as intellectual wisdom and views the distinctiveness of the philosopher's virtue as its focus on the soul's concerns while excluding those of the body.[110]

Sedley's account of Socratic moral psychology in the middle books of the *Republic* relies heavily on Plato's previous dialogues.[111] For him, the Socratic psychology of these works resumes where early dialogues left off, and so his argument is based on intertextuality, which he relies on for two reasons—one theoretical, the other methodological.[112] Theoretically, Sedley thinks that Plato is still proposing that there is a universal end, that the soul desires to attain the Good, and that the philosophers are those

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[106] Sedley (2013: 81).
[107] *Ibid*. 74.
[108] *Ibid*. 75.
[109] *Ibid*. 76.
[110] *Ibid*. 88.
[111] *Ibid*. 88.
[112] *Ibid*. 89.

whose intellect understands exactly what the Good is.[113] Methodologically, Sedley thinks that an understanding of dialogues such as the *Euthydemus*, *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, and *Phaedo*—all of which display Plato's development of the intellectualist account of virtue—is essential for a full appreciation of *Republic* 6 and 7, believing that the *Republic* resolves the *aporia* of these earlier dialogues.[114]

In the *Republic*, according to Sedley, Socratic psychology overcomes the limits of the doctrine of the tripartite soul, which does not adequately explain what is unique to the philosophers' virtue.[115] For Sedley, philosophical virtue is unique in its focus on the soul's interests detached from bodily needs; it is an intellectual virtue.[116] As a result, philosophers, owing to their intellectual understanding, are the only ones able to possess such a virtue.[117] Sedley writes:

> The new account is thoroughly intellectualist. The lower soul-parts make no contribution at all. By this, I do not mean to suggest that the *Republic*'s earlier division of the soul into three parts has been altogether discounted. Nevertheless, moral psychology will here be explained in terms of the intellect alone, in a manner much more reminiscent of the *Protagoras,* and *Phaedo*, than of *Republic* 4. All moral states can be analysed as intellectual ones: every soul aims for the good and virtuous people are those with the requisite understanding to achieve this universal end.[118]

Sedley continues by arguing that the character of Socrates in the *Republic* is remarkably similar to that depicted in the early dialogues, he notes that

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[113] *Ibid*. 75.
[114] Sedley (2013: 77) takes the order of the Socratic dialogues to be *Euthydemus – Protagoras – Gorgias – Phaedo*.
[115] *Ibid*.75.
[116] *Ibid*.75.
[117] *Ibid*. 76.
[118] *Ibid*. 76.

Plato's Socrates shares the same psychic condition of *aporia* towards philosophical questions in both the *Republic* and the earlier works.[119]

Sedley states:

> We find ourselves in the company of a speaker who still has much in common with the Socrates of those aporetic dialogues. I mean by this a Socrates who does not claim to be able to define the Good.[120]

To support its interpretation, Sedley cites three pieces of textual evidence that are intended to demonstrate Plato's development of earlier Socratic moral theory*:* *Protagoras* 351b-d, *Gorgias* 500d-e, and *Euthydemus* 292e6-293a6.[121] I do not offer a full analysis of each passage here, instead I focus on the second protreptic passage of the *Euthydemus* as in a more targeted way helps explaining Sedley's interpretation of the "illumination passage" at 519b in the *Republic*. Furthermore, Sedley believes that the passages from the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias* must be read in a complementary way, with the former proposing an identification between goodness and pleasure that is then rejected in the latter, the *Euthydemus* presents both an identification between goodness and knowledge and its rejection.[122] I now provide an exegesis of Sedley's interpretation of the *Euthydemus* passage at 293a5 and the *Republic* Illumination passage at 519b.

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[119] Sedley (2013: 77).
[120] Sedley (2013: 78).
[121] Sedley (2013: 78).
[122] Sedley (2013: 78).

a. The Euthydemus: The Craft of Ruling and its Aporia

One of Sedley's main examples in support of his intellectualist account of virtue is the 'third wave' (τῆς τρικυμίας, 293a5) passage in the *Euthydemus*,[123] which he links with the 'third wave' (τῆς τρικυμίας, 472a4) passage in the *Republic*.[124] Both passages ask what the goodness that the philosopher-kings must know is, what its object is, and what knowledge of it is meant to accomplish for the philosopher; both texts argue that ruling is a craft and therefore a teachable skill.

Socrates in this early dialogue identifies wisdom with the craft of ruling. But the aporia found in the second protreptic passage of this early dialogue has led commentators to wonder whether the Socratic position is untenable and resolved in the *Republic*. According to the analogy introduced in the *Euthydemus*' first and second protreptic passages, wisdom is a craft. This classification seems faulty, however, as a craft is an instrumental good and not a good in itself, while Socrates clearly says elsewhere that virtue is a good in itself.[125] As a result, some have argued that Socrates' aporia shows the craft analogy to be flawed,[126] while others have advocated that the *Republic* resolves this contradiction.[127] For Sedley, the aporetic conclusion of the *Euthydemus*[128] and Socrates' puzzled state at the beginning of the *Republic*'s discussion about goodness are intertextual evidence of continuity between the two dialogues.[129]

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[123] For the whole passage, *Euthydemus* 292e6-293a6.
[124] The lexicon is the same at *Republic* 472a4 and at *Euthydemus* 293a5. In the *Republic,* see the use of the two superlatives 'τὸ μέγιστον' and 'χαλεπώτατον' for the introduction of the third wave at 472a4. See also the use of the temporal aspect with the particle 'νῦν' in the same sentence.
[125] *Apology* 41e.
[126] Irwin (1995: 66-70). Against this, see Annas (1999: 45).
[127] Sprague (1976: 90).
[128] *Euthydemus* 291a-c.
[129] Sedley (2013: 78).

In the first protreptic passage of the *Euthydemus*, wisdom is compared to carpentry, but this craft analogy is quickly rejected as problematic; Socrates and Cleinias are searching for a craft that, like wisdom, both makes things and uses what it makes, and carpentry falls short of this requirement.[130] To address the problem, Socrates introduces the notion of a craft that makes something but also uses what it makes, so that what it makes is used for good. Applying this criterion, Socrates and Cleinias arrive at the kingly craft:

> Find it, my dear man—I should think not! We were really quite ridiculous—just like children running after crested larks; we kept thinking we were about to catch each one of the knowledges, but they always got away. So why should I recount the whole story? When we got to the kingly art and were giving it a thorough inspection to see whether it might be the one which both provided and created happiness, just there we got into a sort of labyrinth: when we thought we had come to the end, we turned round again and reappeared practically at the beginning of our search in just as much trouble as when we started out.
>
> (*Euthydemus* 291b, tr. Sprague)

Finally, they conclude that the kingly craft, a craft of ruling, is the proper object of their search. The following questions reconstruct Socrates' line of inquiry:

(1) What is this art that we are trying to define? (290a9)

(2) Is it knowledge that makes others good? (292d4)

(3) How are the things that are made good useful for us? (291e; 292a11)

(4) What is this craft or knowledge? (293a5)

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[130] *Euthydemus* 292c; *Laches* 195d.

This sequence of thought would seem to suggest that the function of the ruling craft is to make others good by conferring itself on them. Annas and others see an infinite regress in this passage.[131] However, as the interlocutors begin their inquiry into the kingly craft, Socrates explicitly warns that they are entering a labyrinth. For Sedley, the reference to the labyrinthine status implies a way out, even if that is not explicitly stated.[132] This way out is found, according to Sedley, in the discussion on the Good in the *Republic*.[133]

b. Resolving the Aporia

While discussing the Good at *Republic* 505b8-10, Socrates claims that 'ordinary people think the good is pleasure, whereas the more sophisticated think it's wisdom.' Here, Socrates poses an identity question about the nature of the Good, offering two possibilities: pleasure and wisdom. However, both options fall short. Given that the discussants are searching for the source of value in the agent's life, restriction to either pleasure or wisdom would undermine the priority of the Good in the agent's value system. The claim that knowledge is the Good is circular; if one were to ask what this knowledge concerns, the only possible answer would be that it concerns the Good, which is precisely what we are trying to define.[134] Similarly, the Good is not identical to pleasure because there are bad pleasures. This would be contradictory to any account of the Good.

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[131] Annas (1999:639. See also Hawtrey (1981: 127-129).
[132] Sedley (2013: 80).
[133] Sedley (2013: 77).
[134] *Republic* 505b8-c5. For a distinction between 'the' good and 'a' good see Broadie (2022: 163).

This synopsis of the discussion on the Good in the *Republic* still does not seem to represent a solution to the aporia of the *Euthydemus.* Yet Sedley thinks that there are some key elements in the discussion on Goodness in the *Republic* which are answers for resolving the aporetic status.[135] But why should we see the aporia of the *Euthydemus* resolved in the *Republic*?

Sedley takes the discussion on metaphysical Goodness to be a solution to the labyrinthine puzzle of the *Euthydemus*, emphasising that both passages (one on the kingly art, the other on philosopher-kings) relate to leadership and ruling,[136] and drawing on the intertextual connections discussed above (Socrates' aporetic state and the use of the craft analogy). He writes:

> This is equally the Socrates of the *Charmides*, who struggled with the idea that a virtue might consist in knowledge which has nothing but knowledge as its object. In the *Republic* digression Socratic moral psychology is being resumed and developed, with the help, as we shall see, of refinements worked out in the intervening *Phaedo.* And this time the Socratic dialogues' repeated demand that virtuous knowledge has some object other than knowledge itself will at last be properly addressed.[137]

Sedley argues for a Socratic reading of the middle books of the *Republic*.[138] At the intrapsychic level, moderation, understood as a psychic harmony or orderliness, has a wide-ranging role and, contrary to courage and wisdom, resides in the whole soul.[139] Courage is defined through a reference to the role of reason.[140]

Sedley argues that: "the account of moderation in *Republic* 4 requires the parts of the soul to be distinguished in such a way that appetites are

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[135] Sedley (2013: 78).
[136] Sedley (2013: 78).
[137] *Ibid*. (78).
[138] *Ibid*. (78).
[139] *Ibid*. 430e4-432a.
[140] *Ibid*. 441e-444d.

controlled".[141] As a result, moderation is an ordered psychic state that entails harmony between the worst and the best elements in the soul. Such harmony is distinctive of this non-intellectual form of moderation. However, Sedley goes on by asserting that Plato provides a different account of moderation in *Republic* 7. This new account, in Sedley's view, is constitutively intellectualist because it relies on body–soul dualism[142]—a concept that is central to Sedley's proposal. As Sedley explains, moderation is understood here as an intellectual state in which the importance of intellectual desires is emphasised and bodily needs are devalued.[143] Moderation is the outcome[144] of a precise activity: the channelling of desires into intellectual pursuits by listening to and focusing on the desires of the soul while refraining from those of the body. This account of moderation is, in Sedley's view, an intellectualist one because moderation is not a psychic order that relies on a complex tripartite structure of the soul, but rather is a state of intellectual understanding.

c. Sedley's Intellectualist Interpretation of the 'Illumination Passage'

I have just explained how, for Sedley, earlier Socratic dialogues such as the *Euthydemus* contained an embryonic form of the intellectualist account of virtue, focusing on a comparison between the *Euthydemus* and the *Republic*. I also reviewed Sedley's arguments for his claim that *Republic*

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[141] *Republic* 430e4. Sedley (2013: 80-82).
[142] *Ibid.* 485d6.
[143] Sedley (2013: 79).
[144] Sedley uses the Latin phrase *ipso facto*, which I interpret as the 'outcome' of an activity. It refers to the idea that if A performs an action X (i.e., channelling desires into intellectual pursuits), A will then be *ipso fact*o moderate (σώφρων). This will be the outcome of A's activity.

Book 4 presents a non-intellectualist account of moderation, whereas books 6-7 propose an intellectualist account.

In this section, I analyse Sedley's reading of the passage on the vision of the Good in *Republic* 6. Sedley argues that Plato's intellectualist account of virtue reaches its climax in this passage because the narrative here presents the soul as free from any contamination by the worldly demands of the body. At 519b, Plato describes the soul's vision of the Good in terms of a turning metaphor:

> 'And yet', I said, 'if this element, in someone of that nature, had been hammered into shape from childhood on, and had had trimmed off from it the concomitants of change that hold it down like lead weights, attached to it by gluttony and other such pleasures of excess, that make the soul look downwards instead of upwards – if it had been freed from these, and could turn towards things as they truly are, then the very same element in the very same people would be as sharp at seeing these as it is at seeing the things it's turned to now.'
>
> (*Republic* 519b, tr. Rowe)

This passage is read by Sedley as a purely intellectual vision illuminated by the Good—a vision that does not rely on the psychic tripartition, which is mentioned only in passing[145] and will be inadequate for the soul's new state of understanding. He concludes:

> There is no hint that, in the process of philosophical enlightenment that is at issue here, the non-rational faculties exercise any independent sway.[146]

For Sedley, Plato holds an intellectual view of philosophical virtue that can be clarified by Socratic psychology. In his interpretation, philosophical enlightenment is understood as 'opening the eye' of the soul and turning

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[145] Sedley (2013: 80). In a five-word formula 'and with it the whole soul' at *Republic* 518b.

[146] *Ibid*. (80-81). See *Republic* 518d9-519b5.

the mind's eye, identified with the intellect, towards the Good. The intellectual gaze, he argues, can be orientated towards bad ends; this would result in a misuse of rational power, which harms the person exercising it. Should the intellect look towards the Good and beneficially exercise its powers, however, the soul benefits.[147]

Sedley's first claim, concerning the role of wisdom, gives it a privileged position among the virtues. His second claim completes the description of wisdom by focusing on its nature rather than on its role. Wisdom is a cathartic virtue,[148] not practical but purely intellectual, and it consists of redirecting the soul's gaze towards non-sensible objects, thereby transcending bodily concerns. In this way, Sedley explains philosophical virtues and their attainment in terms of wisdom alone.[149] One key feature of this explanation is that intellect or reason is a necessary for the attainment of philosophical virtue; another key feature is the exclusivity of this cathartic experience, which is confined only to the philosopher and its rationality.[150]

On this reading, it is tempting to think of wisdom as a state of complete purification. However, Sedley argues that wisdom is not only a state of purification but is also that which purifies.[151] We may elucidate this distinction with an example: Socrates is a truly courageous person because he possesses the true virtue of courage; he possesses this virtue because courage, as displayed by Socrates at his execution by the Athenians,

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147 *Republic* 505e5-9.

148 Cf. *Phaedo* 67b7: death as a kind of 'purification' of the soul, as it becomes free of the body and its concerns (67b7-d6; cf. 69b8-c7). Moreover, Socrates insists that the differentiation between the philosopher and the 'ordinary' person caused by this attitude leads to radically different conceptions of the virtue. I am here referring to the virtue of wisdom just in the *Phaedo* passage.

149 Sedley (2013: 77; 83).

150 Sedley (2013: 77; 83).

151 *Ibid*. 83.

follows and is aligned with the pursuits of Socrates' soul. Socrates, therefore, was courageous because he disregarded the fears and needs of his body.

3.5 Objections to Sedley's Proposal

I now turn to my objections to Sedley's claims. In particular I will provide a critique of his attempt to establish a Socratic reading of the ascent in the middle books of the *Republic*. I discuss these objections in turn, and I conclude that the parallel with Socratic intellectualism is unfounded.

a) First Objection – The Whole Soul at 518e-519a7

The issue is a textual issue. Sedley reads 518e-519a7 as describing a bipartition between soul and body. This passage is part of the philosopher's training programme. It is the description of the turning of the rational part and the text is clear that it can be turned and become "useful and beneficial" or "useless and harmful". A reference is made to the excellences of soul and these refer to those moral virtues that we have described in Chapter 2 and that the text says "they can actually be brought about in [the soul] by habituation and practice." The text does not refer to the body in this passage. Rather, it summarises how the lower parts of the soul develop goodness as moral virtue and the rational part of the soul becomes good.

In both the discussion of the soul turning metaphor and the allegory of the cave, tripartition is very much at play in the text. This tripartition refers to

the psychic structure introduced in Book 4 and never rejected. This is reflected in the account of virtue presented in this passage. Wisdom is related to reason, while the other excellences relate to the lower parts because the intellect must be "turned round, together with the whole soul".[152] As discussed in Chapter 2, the metaphorical structure of the turn towards the Good is reflected in the philosophers' training programme, which is directed in a structured way towards each part of the tripartite soul.

The following sections present further detail on why I do not support Sedley's Socratic Intellectualist reading of the discussion of the ascent.

b) Second Objection – The reference to Psychic Harmony at 443d4

At 443d5-e2, the complex tripartite psychic structure grounds the accounts of virtue. We read that 'the just man rules over himself' (443d4), and that he is the one able to 'become a friend of himself' (φίλον γενόμενον ἑαυτῷ, 443d5) 'when the three parts of his soul are harmonised together' (443d6).[153]

Under this intellectualist account, three kinds of virtue are delineated in *Republic* 5–7: i) the virtue of being wise, or wisdom, ii) the virtues of the soul when the soul is linked with the body, and iii) 'quasi-virtues', or demotic virtues.[154]

[152] *Rep.* 518c9.
[153] Cf. *Republic* 352a where the unjust person is said to be his own enemy.
[154] Sedley (2013: 80).

For Sedley, wisdom occupies the first rank of this structure as the central virtue of the philosophers' value system.[155] As he explains: 'Wisdom alone confers value on other supposed goods, the virtues included. And wisdom, properly understood, is the soul's purification from all that is bodily.'[156] His argument here can be split into two claims. The first states that wisdom is what gives value to all the rest, as the Good is said to be the cause of reality for all the other beings; the second that wisdom is the soul's purification from corporeal reality.[157] However, the discussion in Book 4 presents justice, rather than wisdom, as the principle on which all the other virtues depend.[158] Socrates in Book 4 had said that justice both in the city and in the whole soul is what governs the other virtues and makes them work at their best.[159] Let us look at the passage:

"if one had to decide which of these things contributes most to the goodness of our city by its presence, it would certainly be a hard decision: whether it was the unanimity between the rulers and the ruled, the preservation of beliefs about what is and is not to be feared, ingrained by law in the soldiers, or the wisdom to guard the city present in the rulers –

Or whether it was actually this (justice) that most contributed to making the city good, when present in child, woman, slave, free man, craftsman, ruler and ruled, namely that each single individual was doing the job that was his, and not meddling in what should be done by others".

(*Republic*, 433c-d)

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[155] *Ibid*. 80-83.
[156] *Ibid*. 83.
[157] *Ibid*. 82-83.
[158] As Sedley himself seems to acknowledge elsewhere, see Sedley (2014: 70).
[159] *Republic* 433b-c.

As such, Sedley's claims seem to understand a change of structure and focus within the text. While Sedley's reading may be plausible for a text such as the *Phaedo*, does it fit with the argument given in the *Republic*? Does Plato change his mind by substituting justice in Book 4 with wisdom in Book 6? If so, what are the motivations for such a shift?

In the Platonic hierarchy of virtues on which he bases his proposal, Sedley takes wisdom to be the highest virtue of the rational part of the soul, which makes use of Forms to come to judgements about the sensible realm.[160] This focus on rationality overlooks the acquisition of goodness by the lower parts of the soul. Furthermore, it understands ruling as the leadership by the intellect over the lower parts. An intellectual account of virtue neglects those fine and beautiful practices that stem from non-rational motivations but that nevertheless lead to the acquisition of goodness.

To be more explicit about what these are, they are the character virtues, developed through education of spirit and of appetite throughout the whole soul. We must not conflate the notion of virtue with the notion of goodness, but the virtues are good and they are specifically good states of the soul. Then, the presence of character virtue in the philosopher's soul will make him a unified and autonomous personality.
By neglecting this, Sedley's account seems to restrict the goodness of the complex psychological structure of the soul by assigning an evaluative capacity to reason alone. Let us look at the evidence for the necessity of psychic harmony.

[160] Sedley (2013: 80).

Socrates and Glaucon believe intuitively that being just is good for you, at least on the conception of justice that they articulate in Book 4. Being a just person, Socrates explains, is a matter of an internal disposition of the whole soul, and a just person must:

> "put his own affairs in order, ruling over himself and setting himself straight, becoming a friend to himself as he fits together the three elements in him, just like three defining sounds of musical attunement, highest, lowest and middle, along with any others there are in between; binding all these together (*sundêsanta*), so becoming moderate and well-adjusted, completely one instead of many."
>
> (*Republic* 443d2-e1)

This talk of harmony should not be taken in isolation. The *Republic* is a complete whole, and these middle books should not be read as a mere digression. The discussion on harmony is taken into Book 6 from Book 4. Let us read what Socrates says on the harmony of the city.

> *Socrates*: Cities come into existence, I imagine, because in fact none of us is self-sufficient; taken by ourselves, each one of us is deficient in many respects.
>
> […]
>
> *Socrates*: Thus it will be because one person recruits another to fill this or that need, and another another, and so on, and because our needs are many, that we gather many people together to live in a single location as partners and helpers, calling this shared habitation a city.
>
> (*Republic* 369 b- c)

This passage makes clear that there are lots of elements, both in the soul and in the city, coming together to form a harmonious unity. What is left in this passage about the prominent role of rationality? The *Republic* seems to send us mixed messages as it is undeniable that at 441e, Socrates says

that it is most appropriate for the soul to be under the rule of the rational part. Taking this as one of his strongest textual evidence of his interpretation of the relationship between reason and other psychic components, Sedley builds on this and argues that he also defines the other virtues in intellectualist terms.[161]

Against this, I reply that while not denying that the presentation of these virtues follows the statement about the importance of the rule of reason, this account of virtue can resist a purely intellectualist reading. I will, then, propose an alternate interpretation based on an argument from integration.[162]

To hold that an appetite can be virtuous is not incompatible with my reading of partial transformation as I have hope to have shown in the previous chapter that there is a progressive amelioration that belongs to all and each psychic component. This means that appetite and spirit (i.e., appetites and emotions) can become good and so virtuous.

What is lacking from Sedley's reading appears to me to be that the definitions of the virtues in the *Republic* do not merely appeal to intellectual psychic states or only to knowledge, but they reference more complex psychic content. If we fail to acknowledge this, we deprive the *Republic* of the richness of the transformative process it describes and end up dismissing the optimism Plato has that each part of the soul can become good.

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[161] Sedley (2013: 83).

[162] At the interpsychic level, for example, moderation is a kind of order (κοσμιώτες, *Republic* 430e5) and it functions 'by being spread literally through the whole of the city causing everyone—the weakest, the strongest, the middling, whether in wisdom or in physique—to sing the same song from high to low in unison', tr. Rowe. See also *Republic* 432a.

c) Third Objection – The Non-Mystic Philosopher

By rejecting tripartition in favour of body–soul dualism, Sedley portrays the philosophical soul in solitude and detached from corporeal needs.[163] In ascetic practice, the needs and concerns of the body must be suppressed because the soul's agenda is most important; similarly, within the soul, the lower parts must be disregarded in favour of the rule of reason. Ultimately, psychic tripartition and soul-body bipartition are incompatible.

Is intellectual contemplation of Forms as such the highest satisfaction for the philosopher in the *Republic*? My answer is a negative one.

The *Republic* offers up a different picture of the philosopher. He is very much involved in practical studies as well as intellectual pursuits, needs to get a lot of experience before being able to rule, and there is a lengthy discussion on how each part of the soul gets better within its environment. I hope to have shown in Chapter 2 that on my revised account of transformation, the transformative educational process brings about good states in the lower parts of the soul by making them moderate and gentle in agreement with reason. I read the philosopher as an incarnate person with a complex psychology, which will be applied when he comes to rule the ideal city.

Let's reflect for a moment on what we lose if we take the philosopher to be an ascetic. We lose the idea of the consent and agreement between all the parts of the soul and we also dismiss the nature of the philosophical soul, which is tripartite. On Sedley's reading we end up restricting the

[163] Sedley (2013: 80-82).

importance of the lower parts of the soul, making them irrelevant. So, Sedley's proposal is in tension with the text.

d) Objection 4 – Discontinuity between the Phaedo *and the* Republic

Contrary to Sedley's suggestion, there is no evidence that tripartition is rejected or abandoned in the *Republic* following its introduction in Book 4. Rather, there is a clear distinction between the *Phaedo* and the *Republic.* In the *Phaedo* the distinction and conflict between body and soul does not rely on a complex psychic structure. Excellence is attunement of reason with Forms and intelligibles; badness is the body and its needs. Another example of discontinuity between the two dialogues can be seen in the discussion on Homer.

In the *Phaedo* Socrates quotes Homer while discussing the conflict between body and soul:

> 'As Homer also put it in the *Odyssey*, where he says that Odysseus:
> Beat his breast and addressed his heart in reproach:
> Be strong, my heart: you have endured worse than this before.'
>
> *(Phaedo* 94d, Od. 20. 18-18, tr. Jones, Preddy)

Here his interpretation of Homer does not touch on internal opposition within the parts of the soul but is presented in terms of body-soul dualism.[164] Let us now look at Socrates' reference in Book 4 of the *Republic* to the same Homeric quote:

[164] *Phaedo* 94c.

> 'There's that evidence from Homer as well, in the shape of the verse we cited in that other context: "He smote his breast, and with these words reproved his heart"; clearly there Homer has represented what has made the calculations about the better and the worse as something distinct.'
>
> (*Republic* 441b)

At the point that this passage occurs in Book 4, tripartition has been introduced. I take these passages to indicate two different conflicts. In the case of the *Phaedo*, the conflict between soul and body, whilst in the case of the *Republic* the conflict between two parts of the soul, namely reason and spirit. The conflict demonstrated in the *Republic* is a conflict within the soul whilst the conflict demonstrated in the *Phaedo* is between the body and the soul.

3.6 Transformation: The Complete Picture

Let us now return to the main topic of this thesis: transformation. In Chapter 2 I have characterised the moral development of the lower parts of the soul as a partial transformation, which orients the appetites and spirit towards the Good. Moral virtues at this stage are acquired via habituation and practice. I then stated in Section 3.2 that a complete transformation is achieved when reason is oriented and ascends, with the rest of the soul, towards the Good. It is helpful at this point to link the discussion on the development of reason with McCabe's view of transformation, as her focus is on this final stage of the ascent. Now that I have also approached this last stage of the ascent, I can see how my

proposal is sympathetic with McCabe's view of the final stage, as we both take it to be transformative.

However, as mentioned in Section 1.4, my proposal applies and builds on her account, as my claim is that transformation is continuous throughout the ascending process and belongs to the whole soul. The process of transformation is exhibited at 525c4-516b3, where we can find a metaphorical description of how the philosopher acquires moral and intellectual dispositions through his relationship with the Good:

> 'Now think what it might be like for them to be released from their chains and cured of their mindlessness. Suppose something like this really happened: one of them was set free, and was suddenly forced to stand up, twist his neck round, then try to walk, and look towards the source of the light."
>
> (*Republic* 515c4)

> "unable because of the glare to see the actual things … he was seeing better now because he was that much closer to the truth of things, and turned towards things that more truly are."
>
> (*Republic* 515d2)

> "Then finally he would be able to catch sight of the sun."
>
> (*Republic* 516b3)

As we have seen, when Socrates describes the changes the philosopher goes through in this metaphor, he is speaking of the whole soul. While the rational part, rendered as sight, is given particular attention, every part of the soul is undergoing the process. At each stage the process is transformative, which we see in the way that Socrates describes the dramatic changes to the philosopher's state. In the language of the metaphor his physical state is transformed through the falling away of the

chains. His environment is transformed as he moves out of the cave. His inner state is transformed through his new ability to see and as his whole soul turns and then ascends.

While McCabe takes transformation to be linked with one subject within the educational programme, namely dialectic, and one part only of the soul, namely reason, my claim has been that it is continuous through the ascending process and so throughout the educational curriculum. For McCabe "the process of dialectic transforms the soul of the dialectician", i.e. the philosopher. "Each higher step is better than its predecessor." This means that every step is "nearer to the point when we are actually wise."[165]

While I acknowledge a goal, where a unity is found between the philosopher's various studies in their relationship to the Good, there is a more complex and subtle portrayal of the transformation of the philosophical soul. A picture where each part of the soul and the corresponding subjects in the educational programme are needed to reach the goal ascribed by the educational provisions of a just city: the Good. If we fail to understand and appreciate this, we have failed to recognise the richness of the transformative process Plato is presenting us with. Or better, in Socrates' words:

> 'And my view is', I said, 'that if the study of all the subjects we've talked about reaches as far as those aspects that unite them and make them akin, and is able to infer just what their affinities are, then engagement with them does contribute to the goal we're proposing and isn't labour in vain; if it fails to reach that point, it's all in vain.' (*Republic* 531d)

[165] McCabe (2015: 123).

3.7 Conclusion

As we have seen, in this chapter, Sedley argues in the *Phaedo* the body and the soul are conceived as opposite and then extends this reading to the *Republic*, arguing that in Books 6 and 7 Plato considers the body and the soul as not forming a unity. For Sedley, the fundamental principle according to which Plato develops his account of the Good in the *Republic* must therefore be purely intellectual: not justice, moderation, or courage, but wisdom alone. But if we consider the psychic activity of the philosophical soul in terms of psychic tripartition, it may allow for the possibility that a more complex structure than the one predicated on the rule of one principle could be arranged within the soul. I argue that this structuring consists of integration rather than pure leadership by one element.

4
Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that in the *Republic* the philosophers undergo philosophical training and a) that this training is transformative of the whole soul and b) the transformation is continuous during the ascending process.

In Chapter 1 I have defended my strategy of approaching the soul turning metaphor as insightful to moral development. I have departed from an analysis of the analogy of the Sun as I did not find it to be helpful for the question of this thesis on how the philosopher becomes good. I have concluded by discussing the causal role of the Good and the effects it has in the process of an individual becoming good.

In the second section of Chapter 1 I have defended claim a) by explaining my view on transformation. I have argued that in line with textual evidence transformation is a complex phenomenon which relies on an interpretation of key passages of the *Republic*. In a targeted way I have selected an account in the literature which was at *prima facie* sympathetic to my view of transformation. This account was put forward by McCabe (2015). By critically engaging with this proposal, however, I hope to have shown that her account of transformation can be built upon and does not take due account of all the textual evidence, especially at 518c9.

I have implemented McCabe's account and in this way I have clarified my own positive proposal of transformation. In doing so, a view of

transformation emerged in which it starts in a gradual way and then is completed at a later stage of the process.

Having set this framework, in Chapter 2 I have claimed and defended that transformation belongs to the whole soul. Building on the causal role of Goodness in Chapter 1, according to which the causality of the Good is seen in the effects it produces on the soul, I investigated the transformation that applies to the lower parts of the soul. I called this a partial transformation. In this partial transformation, the lower parts of the soul are trained and habituated and so oriented towards the Good. This moral habituation leads to acquisition of goodness in the spirited and the appetitive parts of the soul. I have built this proposal on the soul turning metaphor, as I found this metaphor to be helpful for the orientation of the lower parts of the soul. Whilst the analogies offered in the middle books are linked to the discussion of the ascent towards Goodness, it was the soul turning metaphor which provided strong textual evidence of the orientation of the lower parts of the soul. In doing so, I have discussed the interpretation of this metaphor as put forward by Storey (2022). I have concluded that whilst Storey's reading of the metaphor supports my own claim on the transformation of the whole soul, it does not explain the causal role of Goodness.

In Chapter 3, I have completed the investigation on the effects of Goodness in the soul and analysed how a total transformation is achieved. Building on Chapter 2, I have argued that the development of reason, in line with the development of the lower parts of the soul in Chapter 2, involves an orientation of the rational part of the soul.

Tripartition, I have also argued is very much at play at this stage of the transformative process and as the process is continuous throughout all the stages, so tripartition is never abandoned or rejected. To further strengthen my own proposal that the development of reason is built on tripartition, I have examined a view in the literature which challenges this by arguing in favour of Socratic Intellectualism in the middle books.

Having provided an exegesis of Sedley's view, I have then objected to his intellectualisation of virtue in the *Republic*. I have examined three of Sedley's main points and argued against each of them in turn. By rejecting Sedley I hope to have strengthened my own positive claims. In the concluding section of this chapter, I gave credit to the interpretation of transformation of the rational part as put forward by McCabe. Her account focuses on dialectic as the only subject aimed to transform the rational soul of the philosopher. This helped to both improve the coherence of my thesis, but most importantly to show that it is indeed the rational part that is transformed but there is a more complex story on transformation that the *Republic* wants to tell. A story that implies the development of the whole soul, in concert.

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