

PLATONIC THEMES IN DAME IRIS MURDOCH'S NOVEL *THE TIME*
OF THE ANGELS

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BY

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PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to show Irish philosopher Dame Iris Murdoch's moral arguments and Platonic themes in her novel *The Time of the Angels*. Murdoch firmly believes that human nature should be analyzed in human experience in order to learn ethical values, and furthermore demonstrate the good man in the light of Plato's Form of the Good. According to Murdoch, the notion of will and history are not enough to learn true ethical values. Murdoch firmly believes truth should be discovered by doing philosophy, but moral philosophy should centre the idea of love in order to teach ethics. In the *Time of the Angels*, Murdoch wants to prove that human beings can be saved by love, not by Form of the Good, because the latter cannot be defined. Murdoch's aim is to divulge morality in the light of art and Plato's metaphysical arguments, advocating for re-reading Plato in order to develop one's understanding of art and literature. Art should not be deemed unimportant, on the contrary it yields truth. Murdoch wants to prove that the enemy of the morality is selfishness and fantasy, not godlessness, and furthermore Murdoch wants to prove that Plato's Form of the Good should not be connected with the idea of God. Murdoch firmly believes that Form of the Good should be above everything. Moreover, Murdoch wants to picture the good man who manages to look at Plato's Form of the Good, without materializing Form of the Good in *The Time of the Angels*, exposing the possibility of goodness in the absence of God.

Keywords: *God, Eros, Transcendent principle, Plato, Form of the Good, Fantasy, Egoism, Selfness, Selfishness, Art, Literature, Virtue, Forms, Love, Jesus Christ*

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı; İrlandalı filozof Dame Iris Murdoch'ın ahlaki savlarını ve Platonik kavramları romanı *Melekler Zamanı*'nda göstermektir. Murdoch etik değerlerin öğrenilmesi için insan doğasının, insan yaşantısında aranması gerektiğine inanır ve dahası iyi insanı Platon'un iyi ideası ışığında anlatır. Murdoch'a göre irade kavramı ve tarih etik değerleri öğrenmek için yeterli değildir. Murdoch hakikatin felsefe yapılarak öğrenilmesi gerektiğine inanır, fakat ahlak felsefesi, etiği öğretmek için merkezinde sevgiyi almalıdır. *Melekler Zamanı* adlı eserinde Murdoch insanların sevgi ile kurtulabileceğini kanıtlamak ister, ancak iyi ideası ile değil, çünkü Murdoch'a göre iyi tanımlanamaz. Iris Murdoch, Platon'un metafizik argümanları ışığında ahlak kavramını açıklamayı amaçlar. Sanatı ve edebiyatı anlayabilmemiz için Plato'yu baştan okumamız gerektiğini savunur. Sanat, önemsiz bir konu değil tam aksine hakikattir. Murdoch ahlakın düşmanının bencillik ve fantezi olduğunu savunur ve Platon'un iyi ideasının insanüstülük fikri ile bağdaştırılmamasını kanıtlamak ister. Murdoch'a göre iyi ideası her şeyin üstündedir. Murdoch *Melekler Zamanı* adlı eserinde iyi insanı Platon'un iyi ideasına ve Tanrı'nın olmadığı dünyada Platon'un iyi ideasına bakmayı başarabilen kişi olarak sergiler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Tanrı, Eros, İnsanüstü prensip, Plato, İyi ideası, Fantezi, Egoizm, Benlik, Bencillik, Sanat, Edebiyat, İdealar, Erdem, Sevgi, Yüce İsa*

«Βλέπω την ομορφιά χωρίς να μπορώ να δω την καλοσύνη της.»

STUDENT OF SOCRATES

PLATO

Canım babam maalesef sana bu tezi zamanında gösteremedim. Sayın hocam size de söz vermiştim. Babam ve size sağlığınızda bu tezi göstermeyi çok isterdim, ama olmadı malesef. Platon iyi insanı Güneşe bakan kişi olarak resmetmiş ama Güneşe bakmak nasıl bir şey bilemiyorum ve sayın

Prof. Dr. Iris Murdoch da demiş ki ; “ben güzelin insanüstülüğünü yaşarım da iyinin insanüstülüğünü yaşayamam” sanırım bu sözün derinliği erdemin amaçsızlığı ile aynı...

Bu tez Ömer Faruk Hikmel ve Prof. Dr. Süheyla Artemel’in anısınadır.

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INTRODUCTION

MENO: Can you tell me, Socrates, can virtue be taught? Or is it not teachable but the result of practise, or is it neither of these, but men possess it by nature or in some other way?

SOCRATES:[...] If then you want to ask one of us that sort of question, everyone will laugh and say: “Good stranger, you must think me happy indeed if you think I know whether virtue can be taught or how it comes to be; I am so far from knowing whether virtue can be taught or not that I do not even have any knowledge of what virtue itself is.” I myself, Meno, am as poor as my fellow citizens in this matter, and I blame myself for my complete ignorance about virtue. If I do not know what something is, how could I know what qualities it possesses? (*Meno* 70a-71b)

As this passage from the *Meno* indicates, it is obvious that the most difficult response should be to define what virtue itself is. According to Iris Murdoch, the truth can be obtained by engaging with philosophy, which will also lead one to self-development (Murdoch, 1999, p.377). She believes that ethical values can be learnt without a transcendent principle. In other words, Murdoch argues that transcendent reality may be just a way of learning the Form of Virtue, yet there could be different ways, such as art and literature. Moreover, she believes that people do not need a transcendent reality to become virtuous (Murdoch, 1999, p.358). The aim of this thesis is to explore art and literature’s power on virtue and ethics while analysing the relationship between her interpretations of Plato’s Form of the Good and her approach to ethics in her novel *The Time of the Angels*. The second aim of this thesis is to prove that Murdoch is a Platonist.

The first chapter introduces Plato’s epistemology. Before exploring that, the introduction discusses the Sophistic context in order to understand Ancient Greek

ethics. People greatly appreciated the Sophists as they believed that true knowledge can be learnt due to them (Johansen, 1998/1991, p.100).

Having read Plato's early dialogues, we come to understand that Plato's assertions were shaped by Socrates' principles. Looking at the *Protagoras* and the *Gorgias*, we can see differences between Plato's assertions and the Sophists'. For instance, Protagoras, known as the wisest man in his age, claims that he can teach how to become virtuous and argues for man's inability to reach virtue on his own (*Protagoras* 323c). Gorgias claims that, owing to the craft of oratory, men can easily convince society. Therefore, they behave as if they were virtuous in the visible world (*Gorgias* 453e). Socrates is not familiar with the Sophists' assertions. Moreover, he believes that the sophists are not capable of teaching the essence of a thing. Therefore, he insists on rebutting people's arguments by asking questions. Although Socrates appears as a negative questioner, in fact, owing to his dialectical method, he wants to distinguish between knowledge and belief.

These differences will be clearly explained through the *Meno*. Through the *Phaedo*, the theory of re-collection, of *anamnesis*, will be explored to emphasize the psyche's role in Plato's metaphysics. Through the *Euthyphro*, the Socratic method of dialectic will be discussed since comprehending the importance of the dialectical technique would be beneficial to discussing contexts pertaining to the grasp of true knowledge.

Plato not only dismisses art from his state but neither does he trust artists. According to his argument, an artist is not able to create a new thing which has been created by gods. Moreover, an artist is merely able to imitate the external world (*Republic* 377e). Without knowing the Form of the Good, people are not going to be

successful, but the first question should be what the Form of the Good is. Further, how does Murdoch predict the Form of the Good in her philosophical view? These questions will be answered while exploring Plato's *Republic*.

The second chapter presents a significant summary of Murdoch's assertions on moral philosophy. She introduces herself a Platonist (Murdoch, 1999, p.xxv). However, some scholars want to place Murdoch in the existentialist camp. The second aim of this thesis is to rebut these arguments, and prove that she is a Platonist, although Murdoch creates existentialist characters in *The Time of the Angels*. On the other hand, Murdoch's perspective on art seems completely different from Plato's, if we focus on her article, "The Fire and the Sun," where she seems to have a great respect for art and literature, advocating their assistance in learning how to reach our self-being (Murdoch, 1999, pp. 460-461). .

"'On God and Good'" (1969) and *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts* (1967) are explored in this thesis in order to understand Murdoch's moral philosophy and virtue's connection with art and Platonism. She believes that Plato's Form of the Good should be sought in art and literature and that the Form of the Good should not be related to the idea of God. Therefore, it could be thought that Murdoch wants to emphasize that a person can become virtuous without needing God. In other words, moral values can be learnt when there is no God (Murdoch, 1999, p.463). This notion will be proven with a focus on Murdoch's articles and her novel.

Before giving a detailed summary of the third chapter, it will be useful to give some information about Murdoch's writing style in order to perceive her technique. Murdoch can be portrayed as a writer who wants to portray self-confident characters

in her many novels. Her purpose is to demonstrate moral values in a godless life while creating existentialist characters (Murdoch, 1999).

In the third chapter, Murdoch's novel, *The Time of the Angels* will be clearly analysed in order to prove that Murdoch is a Platonist. *The Time of the Angels* should be known as a philosophical novel, with the assumption that Murdoch's purpose is to show faith and morality in her novel.

In the story the main character is rector Carel Fisher, but in fact he is a rector of non God (Murdoch, 1966, p.170). Carel lives with his housekeeper, his daughter and his ward Elizabeth in London. Despite the fact that they live together in the Rectory, they do not have a lot in common. These characters are alien to each other, to values such as goodness, and to the idea of God and society. Pattie is a religious person although she never knows what piety itself is. Rector Carel's daughter Muriel tries to find out the Form of the Good. Muriel's cousin Elizabeth is a disabled girl and she might be portrayed as a mysterious character in the novel. Then, we meet a poor Russian character, Eugene, who just loves an icon without having a belief. Eugene has a son, Leo, who is portrayed as an immoral character.

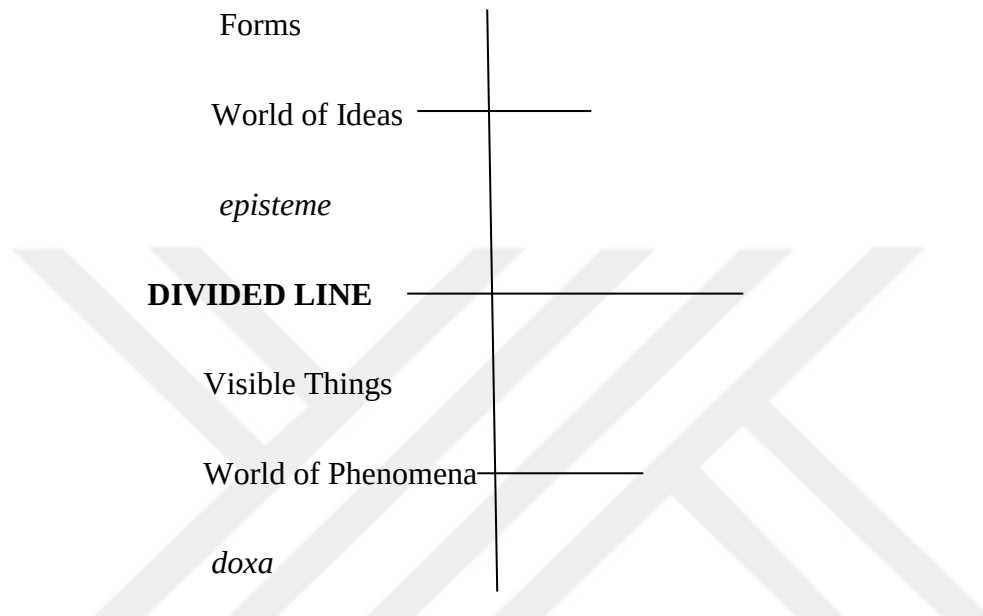
Carel Fisher has a brother, Marcus, whom he deliberately avoids. Marcus Fisher tries to write a book about morality that refutes the idea of God, while claiming himself a Platonist. Not only does Carel not want to see his own brother, but he also avoids everyone. Whether we can assume that Carel Fisher lost his humanity years ago when he lost his religion will also be explored in our reading (Murdoch, 1966, p.165).

This study aims to prove Murdoch's arguments about art and literature, in other words art and literature's power on ethics and moral philosophy, in relation to Plato's Form of the Good.

1. PLATO'S EPISTEMOLOGY

Plato supports a two-world doctrine (Johansen, 1998/1991, p.154), where “you have two kinds of things, visible and intelligible” (*Republic* 509d).

FORM OF THE GOOD



According to Platonism, the world of phenomena is not a real world. We come to understand the differences between knowledge and opinion, especially while the image of the divided line is introduced in the *Republic*. Plato believes that true knowledge cannot be accurately comprehended in the world of phenomena (Nehamas, 2000, p.173). Plato wants to point out the differences between knowledge and belief, *epistêmê* and *doxa*. *Doxa* means having true and false beliefs. Thus, it belongs to world of phenomena. On the contrary, *epistêmê* means having true knowledge, so true knowledge is the ability to comprehend the world of ideas (Johansen, 1998/1991, p.156).

Plato wants to demonstrate that the things which we perceive in the physical world are just shadows of the Forms. Men just have true and false beliefs instead of

having true knowledge in the world of phenomena, which is changeable and imperfect. True knowledge cannot be comprehended by using our senses, “many beautiful things and the rest are visible but not intelligible,” while true knowledge can be obtained by perceiving the Forms, because Forms are eternal and perfect (Johansen, 1998/1991, p.156). The Forms cannot be understood by a naïve realism because they do not exist in the world of phenomena. They should be understood by the psyche (ψύχη), not the senses, and American philosopher Kraut argues that we should develop our reason in order to understand the Forms in Platonism (Kraut, 1992, p.318).

1.1 Knowledge and Belief in the *Meno*

The *Meno* starts with a question on virtue. Meno wants to learn the meaning of virtue, whether it can be taught. When Socrates wants Meno to define what virtue itself is, Meno starts to give a great number of instances in order to explain virtue. For instance, if a woman manages to be obedient to her husband, this attitude can be given as a definition of virtue (*Meno* 71e).

On the contrary, Socrates thinks that exemplifying, or to put it differently, clarifying parts of virtue should not be its definition. He argues that “they are many and various, all of them have one and the same from which makes them virtue” (*Meno* 72d). When Socrates wants Meno to give a second definition, Meno thinks justice should be virtue, and continues giving examples to support his idea. He believes that courage, moderation and wisdom should be virtues (*Meno* 74a). Then he defends his third opinion in order to examine what virtue itself is, that desiring beautiful things and having power should be the definition of virtue (*Meno* 77b). According to Socrates, desiring beautiful things and having power cannot be the definition of

virtue, although they seem to provide good things. In other words, Socrates wants to emphasize that knowing virtue's parts cannot be its essence (*Meno* 79a). All of Meno's answers belong to world of phenomena. His assertions are not clear enough to divulge true knowledge.

Socrates is not satisfied with Meno's answers because he wants Meno to know virtue as a whole. At this point, it could be argued that one cannot apprehend true wisdom without knowing Form of the Good. In other words, we cannot define the Form of Justice or other Forms if we do not know their relations to the Form of the Good. Fine argues that "the Form of the good is the formal and final cause of the virtue Forms" (Fine, 2000, p.230). The ideas of courage and of moderation might be examples of just actions, yet just actions cannot be the true meaning of the Form of Justice. Truth and knowledge are grasped in the light of Form of the Good, because "Good over all concepts" (Santas, 2000, p.253).

When we focus on the *Meno*, we can see that Plato indicates the differences between knowledge and belief, although the Form of the Good is not mentioned. Plato introduces the Form of the Good's importance and its relation to the Form of Justice. Santas argues that "Form of the Good is 'the cause' of knowability of the Forms" (Santas, 2000, p.273). Socrates says that "we have found many virtues while looking for one, but we cannot find the one which covers all the others" (*Meno* 74a). We can grasp true knowledge under the light of the Form of the Good because it is the Form by which to understand all Forms in Platonism.

Plato believes that truth is only comprehensible by having true knowledge, and that true knowledge belongs to the world of ideas, since Socrates argues that "if then virtue is something in the soul and it must be beneficial, it must be knowledge"

(*Meno* 88d). Therefore, arguably, true knowledge is comprehensible through the psyche. In other words, if one did not perceive the Forms, one would not realize the differences between belief and knowledge.

On the other hand, Plato states that one cannot learn anything new because the soul must be immortal and learnt everything in the world of ideas before coming to the world of phenomena. Hence, we never learn anything new. We just recollect the things we had learnt before: “in the *Meno* Plato introduces knowledge gained by recollection” (Irwin, 2000, p.163).

Plato wants to demonstrate the distinction between knowledge and belief in the example of slave boy (*Meno* 82b-c). When Socrates wants the slave boy to figure out the size of a square, the slave boy tries to find out the answer, despite not having any wisdom in geometry. At first, the slave boy cannot give the correct answer, but then he manages to give the correct answer. Thus, arguably, all knowledge depends on pre-knowledge. In other words, humans can learn thanks to their pre-knowledge (Johansen, 1998/1991, p.172). Furthermore, Socrates asserts that we should value true knowledge rather than true opinions because truth is only gained by knowledge: “For true opinions, as long as they remain, are a fine thing and all they do is good, but they are not willing to remain long, and they escape from a man’s mind” (*Meno* 98a).

1.2 Immortality of The Soul and Re-Collection in the *Phaedo*

The main topic of the *Phaedo* is the immortality of the soul. In the *Meno*, the slave boy shows that knowledge can be gained by re-collection, but the theory of *anamnesis* is developed in the *Phaedo*, which emphasizes Socrates’ last hours and his ideas about death in order to prove the immortality of the soul.

While Socrates was waiting for his death sentence in the jail, Simmias, Cebes and Phaedo visit him in order to learn his ideas on death. Socrates believes that a person interested in philosophy should not be afraid of death because philosophy is a method of doing exercise on death (*Phaedo* 64a). Moreover, Socrates believes in a second life after death. Thus, he is not afraid of dying. According to Socrates' argument, worldly pleasures are not such important values to grasp true knowledge (*Phaedo* 63c). Therefore, truth cannot be discovered in the world of phenomena. Murdoch argues that "in the *Phaedo* the sensible world appears as a fallen realm which is a gross irrelevant hindrance to true knowledge, philosophy, and virtue" (Murdoch, 1999, p.428).

Socrates claims that death is not a destruction, but the soul's separation from the body in order to discover the truth. Inhibited by the senses, the soul is not able to find the truth (*Phaedo* 65c). Socrates believes that the body always disorients the soul and does not allow it to understand truth and wisdom (*Phaedo* 66a). Moreover, he wants to emphasize that pure knowledge cannot be grasped while living in the world, but pure knowledge can be gained after the death because the soul is capable of learning things by itself. Socrates believes that if a person has been interested in philosophy all his life, he manages to purify his soul. Murdoch argues that philosophy should be study of death in Platonism (Murdoch, 1999, p.355). Socrates wants to point out that the salvation of the soul is only gained by death because true wisdom can be assumed while abandoning pleasures and pains (*Phaedo* 67d).

Thus, it might be argued that Plato's aim is to prove the soul's intelligence. Annas argues that "wisdom is called a purification and release from the body, and is available only to those who truly strive for philosophical understanding" (Annas, 1999, p.61). The English word 'soul' is usually related to religious items, but the

Greek word ‘psyche’ is generally related to reason (Bostock, 2000, p.887). Despite the fact that Socrates’ thoughts on the soul generally seem to be associated with a transcendent reality, Plato’s goal in the *Phaedo* is to portray the philosopher as a person who is only interested in reasoning in order to have a virtuous life. We cannot comprehend true wisdom due to our senses. True knowledge is only grasped thanks to pure reasoning and doing philosophy (*Phaedo* 83a). Therefore, it may be argued that we cannot learn a piece of wisdom in the world of phenomenon, but just have a chance to recollect things we have learnt before we were born.

In the *Phaedo*, human beings already have some knowledge in their souls. Due to their senses, they may recollect things, but do not arrive at the truth. Since the Forms do not have any shape, they are only apprehended by way of pure reasoning (*Phaedo* 92e). Therefore, the Forms cannot be understood by using the senses, and Plato wants to show the differences between the philosopher and non-philosopher, between philosophical thought and non-philosophical thought (Bostock, 2000, p.891).

1.3 Socratic Method and Virtue in the *Euthyphro*

The main thesis of the *Euthyphro* is to demonstrate the power of Socrates’ dialectical method, *elenchus*, through the word ‘piety’ in order to determine what virtue is. According to Socrates, his fellow citizens have unexamined lives and prefer beliefs to the truth: “The aim of Socrates was to prove to people that they were ignorant, thus administering an intellectual and moral shock” (Murdoch, 1999, p.404).

Socrates believes that shadows have become more real than the truth. People might have some true and wrong beliefs, yet do not grasp true wisdom (Kraut, 2006, p.231). Socrates is accused by Meletus of making new gods instead of believing in old

ones. Therefore, he has gone to the Porch of the King Archon to learn the charge (*Euthyphro* p.40). Meanwhile, Socrates comes across Euthyphro in the Porch of the King, and learns that Euthyphro is prosecuting his own father. Although Euthyphro's father killed his servant by accident, Euthyphro believes that if he prosecuted his father would be appreciated by the gods. The *Euthyphro* starts with a discussion, “what is piety, and what is impiety?” (*Euthyphro* p.47).

Euthyphro believes that the meaning of piety is what he is doing, charging his own father with murder, whether his father killed his servant accidentally or intentionally (*Euthyphro* p.48). Socrates does not seem satisfied with this answer since it is not fundamental enough to define what piety itself is. His answer might be an instance of piety. Euthyphro gives the second definition of piety, what is dear to the gods and impiety what is not dear to the gods (*Euthyphro* p.51). Socrates finds Euthyphro's answer wrong. ‘Pleasing to the gods’ should not be the definition of piety. The gods have different opinions (*Euthyphro* p.51). Due to these different opinions, the gods might argue with each other. Therefore, a pious action may be loved by some gods and not loved by others at the same time (*Euthyphro* p.54).

According to Socrates, pious actions do not depend on the gods' admiration. Actions are not clear enough to divulge what piety itself is. Socrates wants Euthyphro to know the nature of piety in order to become a virtuous person. Thus, it might be claimed that a virtuous person cannot be one who just knows the parts of virtue because if one does not know the essence of a thing, he will not reach the truth.

In his third response, Euthyphro tries to explain piety by giving holy things rather than giving a fundamental idea of piety. Socrates uses his dialectical method to refute this assertion.

SOCRATES: But, friend Euthyphro, if that which is holy is the same with that which is dear to God, and is loved because it is holy, then that which is dear to God would have been loved as being dear to God; but if that which is dear to God is dear to him because loved by him, then that which is holy would have been holy because loved him. But now you see that the reverse is the case, and that they are quite different from one another. For one (*theophiles*) is of a kind to be loved cause it is loved, and the other (*osion*) is loved because it is of a kind to be loved. Thus you appear to me, Euthyphro, when I ask you what is the essence of holiness, to offer an attribute only, and not the essence—the attribute of being loved by all he gods. But you still refuse to explain to me the nature of holiness. (*Euthyphro* p.63)

Although Socrates seems to be an impious person during the dialogue, he wants to emphasize the differences between belief and knowledge in order to define what piety is. Since he thinks that if one does not know the nature of a thing, one does not manage to become a good person, Euthyphro's last definition of piety "learning how to please the gods in word and deed, by prayers and sacrifices" cannot yield its idea (*Euthyphro* p.72). According to Socrates, giving gifts and making sacrifices to the gods might be parts of piety, yet a virtuous person cannot be defined by these acts. Virtue can only be learned by way of true wisdom. The Socratic method shows the difference between true knowledge and opinion. The good should be good either because the gods want that it be good or because of itself.

1.4 The Form of the Good in the *Republic*

Imagine human beings living in an underground, cavelike dwelling, with an entrance a long way up, which is both open to the light and as a wide as the cave itself. They've been there since childhood, fixed in the same place, with their necks and legs fettered, able to see only in front of them, because their bonds prevent them from turning their heads around. Light is provided by a

fire burning far above and behind them. Also behind them, but on higher ground, there is a path stretching between them and the fire. Imagine that along this path a low wall has been built, like the screen in front of puppeteers above which they show their puppets.

It's a strange image you're describing, and strange prisoners.

They're like us (*Republic* 514a-515a).

The quotation above may be helpful to understand why Plato created his own ideal state: to seek out the truth and the most virtuous person. Plato believes that the Forms of states bring Forms of the soul. In other words, the truth cannot be found in tales. Plato always believes that a just state ought to be the meaning of just man (Murdoch, 1999, p.389).

The first chapter of the *Republic* starts with the importance of being wealthy. Due to wealth, a man can easily portray himself as a just person whether or not he is a good person in society. Cephalus argues that "wealth can do a lot to save us from having to depart for that other place in fear because we owe sacrifice to a god or money to a person" (*Republic* 331b). Second, Polemarchus suggests that justice is identified with benefitting friends and harming enemies (*Republic* 335e). Democracy in Athens is not supported in the *Republic* because the politician Thrasymachus argues that each regime has its own laws, and they make regimes for their advantages. Thus, justice becomes the advantage of the stronger (*Republic* 339b-340b).

However, Socrates does not agree with these arguments. Furthermore, he rebuts Thrasymachus' notion of justice. In the *Republic*, τέχνη (craft) assumes the nature of justice. Socrates wants to define the notion of justice by comparing crafts such as captain, doctor and horse-breeding (*Republic* 342a-343c). Therefore, justice should mean doing one's own business. Although we do not learn the nature of justice in the first book, we come to understand that it cannot be advantage of the stronger

and should be related to goodness and wisdom because Socrates believes that injustice destroys harmony of the state (*Republic* 352a).

At the beginning of the *Republic*, a just man is portrayed as an unsuccessful person, an unjust man as clever. Granted that an unjust man seems to be much stronger, he is not able to become virtuous. Annas argues that “conventional goods, that is do not add anything extra to the person who is virtuous, whose only concern with them is to use them wisely” (Annas, 1999, p.86). Plato questions the real meaning of justice and tries to clarify the relativity between virtue and justice in order to define the Form of the Good.

He wants to emphasize that unjust people appear to be much stronger, whereas injustice cannot belong to wisdom and virtue (*Republic* 350d). An unjust person seems to be an enemy of the gods and is not good at achieving good things, although he manages to appear as if he were more powerful and stronger.

Such a person is portrayed as a profiteer rather than as a just person because, while governing the city, unjust people make their own laws. Therefore, in Book II Glaukon thinks that injustice “is intermediate between the best and the worst” (*Republic* 359a). Aeschylus’ idea is given as an example in order to find out the real meaning of justice. Socrates believes that people want to be just for honours and rewards. Thus, people usually want to portray themselves as just and virtuous (*Republic* 361c). According to Socrates, man wants to be called just for its reputation and power, but does not know the essence of being a just person and is not aware of the connection between justice and virtue.

The Form of Justice has an important role in order to assume the Form of the Good. This idea might be proved in the following quotation:

One of the fundamental ideas that Plato puts forward in his defense of justice is that we should look for a general theory of goodness. His proposal is that when we say of a human body, or a human soul, or a political community, that they are in good condition, there is some common feature that we are referring to, and it is because they share this common feature that they are properly called good (Kraut, 1992, p.315).

Thus, Plato proposes a theory to define justice since Socrates argues that “there is the justice of a single man and also the justice of a whole city” (*Republic* 368e). Two cities are created in order to demonstrate the essences of justice and injustice, and justice’s connection with morality and virtue. The first city is self-sufficient and the second luxurious. In the self-sufficient city, men seem to be equal because everybody does his own business. Furthermore, justice can be found in the self-sufficient city (*Republic* 372a-c).

Plato argues that city starts to lose its justice when necessities increase. If a city became an expandable city expanded, bringing up virtuous men would be difficult. Consequently, Socrates wants to emphasize people’s desires (*Republic* 373a). Perfumed oils, pastries, couches, and furniture are exemplified as if they were people’s ambitious and hunger. Thus, the second city can be understood as an ambitious person. The idea of sufficiency can easily disappear when necessities turn into people’s desires. When vital needs are replaced by luxurious, a lot of new crafts can be found in the city. According to Plato’s argument, a person is not able to do his best while interested in many crafts at the same time.

Socrates mentions war policy, but it is a metaphoric use in order to demonstrate people’s abilities. It might be argued that war policy turns into true ethical values and that a virtuous person can be analysed through the guardians. A guardian’s nature is suited to guard the city, yet not of governing the city well.

Looking into Socrates' argument about the guardians, courageous has a positive meaning. Not only do the guardians have to fight very well, but also they should not show mercy to their enemies (*Republic* 375c). Thus, it might be claimed that the guardian character is used to describe how to educate men while emphasizing wisdom's importance in contemplating the essence of justice combined with virtue. Socrates emphasizes that nurses and mothers should be careful while educating children. Not only physical training, but also wisdom is very important to educate citizens, especially the guardians (*Republic* 377a-c).

Further, Socrates believes that bringing up good citizens depends on good images. Therefore, the most useful and beneficial stories should be chosen to educate virtuous citizens. Bad stories can yield bad images and bad images of the gods. In this respect, Socrates claims that the gods should be respected and not be portrayed as bad and vulgar. Moreover, the creators of the cosmos should be introduced as simple and true because the gods never deceive people (*Republic* 382e). False stories have a negative impact on citizens, enticing them to wrong behavior. Socrates prohibits poetry from the state since citizens can easily imitate bad images and imitating a bad character is easier than imitating a virtuous one.

Plato attacks Homer and poets in order to dismiss art from his state, accusing them of moral weakness. In particular, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are criticised. For example, Zeus is portrayed as having sexual desires in the *Odyssey* (*Republic* 390c-d). Depicting the gods in undignified and immoral ways may prove harmful for young people since they are moldable by stories. Artists are not capable of creating something new. Poets like Homer just imitate things, especially low life rather than goodness and falsehoods are pictured as if truths by artists (Nightingale, 2006, p.39).

For Plato, true ethical values cannot be found in literature and art because Greek poetry is not based on truth; it may damage its audience. The world of phenomena is just a reflection of the Forms. Thus, Plato's metaphysics explains his views on the evasiness of the artist and literature. At first glance, artistic representations seem to be real, but then we come to realize that it just pictures appearances. The physical world looks real, but is in fact merely a shadow. Reality cannot be represented by artistic approach (Nightingale, 2006, p.38). Events and objects are represented in the realm of appearance rather than metaphysical realm because artists and writers do not have any idea about metaphysical realm (Harland, 1999, pp.8-9). True ethical values such as goodness, justice, and beauty can be learnt in the metaphysical realm (Nightingale, 2006, p.40).

Socrates says that poets are unwilling to tell the truth further, that their belles-lettres depend on falsehoods, because he thinks that unjust people are always portrayed as happy and successful. In other words, injustice is demonstrated as a profit (*Republic* 394d-e). Looking at Socrates' arguments about imitation in Book III, he thinks a poet always hides himself. He speaks as if he were a different character, but in fact all speeches belong to his monologue (*Republic* 393c). Therefore, falsehood and madness belong to poets because Socrates thinks that the gods never imitate anything or deceive people by telling lies.

Despite the fact that poetry is usually criticized by Plato, music is not humiliated in the *Republic*. Plato believes harmony and rhythm help man educate his soul and become a strong and virtuous character with inner beauty. He wants his citizens to focus on music to bring them grace. Music education would teach them how to admit good things into his soul. Arguably, inner beauty should be more important than physical and physical appearance cannot mean being virtuous: "a fit

body doesn't by its own virtue make the soul good, but instead that the opposite is true—a good soul by its own virtue makes the body as good as possible'' (*Republic* 403d).

Yet, being affected by tragedies damages the soul. In Plato's metaphysics, the soul has different parts. The lowest part is unreasonable and a liar, the central part enthusiastic and angry, and the highest part sensible and good.

Murdoch argues, "Art and the artist are condemned by Plato to exhibit the lowest and most irrational kind of awareness, *eikasia*" (Murdoch, 1999, p.389). Therefore, artistic representations cannot be true ethical values. Human beings can learn by their souls, have an ability of recollecting things by their souls. Thus, they should protect the souls by which they learn, hence the development and protection.

It may be claimed that a sense of justice is found in doctors' souls. No matter how many sick bodies they meet, doctors preserve their justice while treating sickness (*Republic* 408d-e). Doctors should learn their craft from their childhood and should meet sick and bad bodies for experience. A judge and a doctor differ in their crafts, relative to exposure to evil. A judge, especially a young judge should not meet bad people from his childhood in order to protect his soul (*Republic* 409a). Thus, a good judge ought to meet good souls to become virtuous and just. A naturally virtuous person manages to be a wise man whereas a vicious person never assumes the essence of virtue and never becomes wise (*Republic* 409d).

It may be argued that a sense of justice shall be obtained in the city in order to reach to Form of Virtue (Dahl, 2000, p.689). While the Form of Virtue is questioned in the *Republic*, Plato puts emphasis on the Form of Justice in order to picture just and happy citizens (Dahl, 2000, p.695). If the citizens followed their own duties, they

would become happy. Owing to the happiness, they protect the idea of justice. They should not become selfish citizens, should not be jealous of each other. They need to learn how to share things.

Although the idea of common goods seems to be a utopic assertion, it could be claimed that the main idea is about sufficiency. Plato believes that an ideal state should be just, and a just state means a just man: “the overall aim of the *Republic* is to provide a defence of justice by showing that a person is better off just than unjust” (Dahl, 2000, p.689). Occupations are compared in order to distinguish between virtuous and vicious souls. Plato compares occupations to show a sense of justice.

At this point, it would be useful to examine the idea of sufficiency in the light of Murdoch’s approach. In *The Fire and the Sun*, she argues that the notion of beauty has an important role in Plato’s philosophy, since “virtue in general may not attract us, but beauty presents spiritual values” (Murdoch, 1999, p.417). Murdoch believes that, due to the notion of beauty, we can comprehend the Form of the Good in Platonism. Thus, Plato humiliates artists in order to save the Form of Beauty.

According to him, artists are so immoral that they cannot comprehend the essence of beauty. However, the moral aristocrat Plato does not seem to give importance to family life in the *Republic* since “marriage, the naving of wives, and the procreation of children must be governed as far as possible” (*Republic* 424a). Murdoch argues that Plato does not suggest family life, but that, if we re-read Plato, we come to understand that his main purpose “the erotic myths is to the effect that a sense of beauty diminishes greed and egoism and directs the energy of the soul in the direction of the real and the good” (Murdoch, 1999, p.418). Plato believes that human beings would be saved if they managed to grasp the truth. When we are able to reach

true knowledge, we can get closer to the Form of the Good. In *The Fire and the Sun*, Murdoch argues that dialectic is one of the most important methods to save the soul in Platonism. Plato believes that truth can be found through the dialectical method, not in poets' lies (Murdoch, 1999, p.404). Murdoch argues that *mimesis* should be known as a principle by which we come to understand that "There is only one true artist, God, and only one true work of art, the Cosmos" (Murdoch, 1999, p.429).

Plato wants to prove that morality should be gleaned from contentment and happiness and believes that there might be a common happiness in order to obtain justice. In Book IV, he emphasizes the importance of the soul in order to picture a virtuous character in connection with the idea of justice for explaining components of the soul. The parts of the soul are necessary to connect the idea of justice with virtue. In Book I, while Socrates, Thrasymachus, Polemarchus, Cephalus and Clitophon discuss the nature of justice, a just person is pictured as wealthy in order to explore the Form of Justice. Although the idea of harming is a traditional Greek notion of justice, traditional notions cannot be given in order to assume the essence of justice (Dahl, 2000, p.695). Therefore, virtue should depend on the soul. In Book IV we can see that the idea of perfection—meaning wise, courageous, moderate, and just—should prevail in the state. These should be in a person's soul for them to become virtuous.

Owing to wisdom, people will be able to make good decisions. Therefore, it might be claimed that wisdom means being just. The second part of the soul is like the courageous part of the city and courage should be known as a kind of preservation (*Republic* 430e-431a). A courageous man is never afraid of his fears, desires and sorrows when he encounters a difficulty. The third part should be moderate. Thanks to moderation, man is able to learn how to control his strong and weak parts. A well-

conducted city is argued for in order to picture a measured person and extreme desires and pleasures can be detrimental to becoming a self-controlled person. Plato suggests that desires should be simple and measured, and controlled by wisdom and education. If a person wants to master himself, he should preserve and control his soul's better part. Thus, the soul should have agency over the body (*Republic* 431a). In his explorations on justice, the essence cannot be defined but it cannot be men's desires and pleasures, either.

The function of the soul weighs heavier than function of the will. It could be claimed that, due to the appetitive part of the soul, men cannot come to understand the essence of justice. On the other hand, due to the rational part of the soul, men can easily desire for wisdom and truth. Moreover, a person should be measured by using his reason and Socrates says that "the rational part of the soul, unlike courage and wisdom, each of which resides in one part, [makes] the city brave and wise, respectively, moderation spreads throughout the whole" (*Republic* 432a). For this reason, men can learn all virtues thanks to the notion of justice because "justice itself is a kind of order or harmony" (Dahl, 2000, p.708).

Not only should an individual be wise, courageous, and just, but a city should have the same characteristic properties as the individual. Justice should be absorbed in order to learn other virtues (Dahl, 2000, p.708). At the beginning of the *Republic*, it is identified with a person who benefits his friends and harms his enemies. However, further reading suggests that rewards and reputations cannot be related to the Form of Justice, which may be defined as an inner phenomenon. Therefore, man ought to know how to control parts of his soul.

Book V suggests that the welfare of the city is one of the most important guiding principles, which should be provided by the guardians because goodness can come with the best education and training. Despite the fact that the idea of unity is associated with the guardians, the guardians do not seem to be suitable for the regime. Philosophers shall rule the state in order to obtain justice in the society, because an individual does not on the whole become just. Only philosophers are able to comprehend the truth since Plato believes that only philosophers are aware of the differences between belief and wisdom (*Republic* 474b-c). They are not interested in earthly pleasures, hence the need to portray them as the most successful characters, who enjoy developing their wisdom (*Republic* 485d-e).

In *The Fire and the Sun*, Murdoch argues that beauty has an important role in Plato's philosophy (Murdoch, 1999, p.387). Therefore, beauty should not belong to earthly things and should not be determined by artists. Plato points out that, although people seem to be aware of beautiful things, they are not able to explain what beauty itself is. While beauty is being discussed, one can see the differences between opinion and knowledge. Truth cannot be comprehended by opinions because knowledge and opinion do not have the same power (*Republic* 478a-b). Although lovers of opinion have some true beliefs about beauty, beauty cannot be clarified by their true beliefs because their true beliefs do not belong to the truth (Fine, 2000, p.232). At the end of Book V, philosophers are portrayed as the most successful and the most powerful characters and should be called 'lovers of wisdom', with non-philosophers called 'lovers of opinion' (*Republic* 480b). According to Plato's assertion, only philosopher-kings manage to arrive at true knowledge in the light of Form of the Good: "one can know what is good only if one knows the Form of the good; and only philosophers can achieve such knowledge" (Fine, 2000, p.219).

In Book VI, philosophers are aware of the differences between wisdom and desires. Therefore, they would refuse to follow desires such as erotic love and honour. A philosopher has a harmonious soul. To put it differently, a philosopher is never interested in increasing his conventional goods, but would be interested in increasing his wisdom. Due to his philosophic nature, his soul belongs to the love of truth.

One may claim that Plato refers to Socrates, especially in Book VI, while portraying a true philosopher. Socrates was not afraid of dying and did not escape from prison. Moreover, Socrates was not a money-lover because he did not sell his wisdom as the Sophists did. Plato wants to show that a true philosopher is never afraid of death. Furthermore, his world-view excludes feelings of inferiority and he loves grasping the truth.

In the Platonic view, contrary to most people, a true philosopher does not want to be portrayed as a just person for the rewards because his main purpose is to “show that justice is a genuine virtue” (Dahl, 2000, p.690). Plato’s arguments in Book VI demonstrate that beauty should not belong to the world of phenomena, that beautiful things cannot be learnt by beliefs and sense of art. In other words, the Form of the Good cannot be assumed by beliefs because Socrates argues that “many beautiful things and the rest are visible but not intelligible, while the forms are intelligible but not visible” (*Republic* 507c).

Plato believes that beneficial things should be achieved by justice and that justice comes with beneficial things. However, Socrates claims that what we know and what we believe cannot be the same and, without knowing the Form of the Good, we cannot reach the truth: “the majority believe that pleasure is the good, while more sophisticated believe that is knowledge” (*Republic* 505b). First, we ought to learn

what the essence of beauty is in order to define the good. Yet the good should not be defined as pleasure since the good is not identical with pleasure. Many beautiful things appear as if they were just and honourable, yet sometimes they do not belong to beauty in reality. Plato wants to distinguish between good and beautiful things in order to explain the Form of the Good. He tells us that true knowledge should be the truth, and sight-lovers do not know the essence of beauty. Therefore, sight-lovers cannot reach true knowledge, which is “knowledge of the Good over all other knowledge” (Santas, 2000, p.253). Plato believes that the good should be more prized.

Form of the Good is likened to the Sun and the Divided Line is given as an image in order to express true knowledge and truth, “to elaborate the application part of the Sun” (Fine, 2000, p.231). Socrates argues that, when people look at objects in the light of the sun, they can see them, but when they look at them in the dark, they cannot see them very well. In other words, those who look at visible objects in the dark just have beliefs instead of true knowledge. On the other hand, those who see in the light of the sun access true knowledge and true knowledge can be grasped under the light of Form of the Good. True knowledge must belong to the good: “knowledge is set over true propositions; belief is set over true and false propositions” (Fine, 2000, p.223).

In other words, the Form of the Good should be more important than other things, and Fine argues that “Plato believes that full knowledge of a thing requires knowing its relation to the Form of good” (Fine, 2000, p.230). If one does not know an object’s relation to the Form of the Good, one cannot reach true knowledge. Plato believes that one should comprehend the Form of the Good in order to understand the differences between truth and shadows, and Murdoch argues that “the light of the

Good makes knowledge possible also life’’ (Murdoch, 1999, p.388). Therefore, Plato establishes a theory in order to clarify ways of moral reasoning.

We come to understand Plato’s assertion about the Form of the Good by focusing on the Cave Allegory in Book VII. Plato wants to point out the differences between appearance and reality by likening people to prisoners who have been enchained since birth. These prisoners’ legs and necks are fettered, so they can just see in front of them (*Republic* 514a-b). There is a fire burning between them, and also there is a path between prisoners and fire. Plato imagines that there are some people along the wall carrying artificial objects. The prisoners are not aware of differences between appearance and reality. In other words, the shadows become more real than the truth, and Socrates say that “the truth is nothing other than the shadows of those artifacts’’ (*Republic* 514c). When one of them manages to escape, he will be able to see the outside of the world, and the sun itself.

Murdoch argues that “the sun represents the Form of the Good in whose light the truth is seen; it reveals the world, hitherto invisible, and is also a source of life’’ (Murdoch, 1999, p.389). In other words, Plato distinguishes between wisdom and opinion. He argues that belief and knowledge should not be the same. The Form of the Good should be the most fundamental principle and all sorts of virtues can be explained when their relations to Form of the Good can be assumed in Platonism.

In the *Republic*, the Form of the Good is above everything, so far as to assume degrees of other Forms. Murdoch argues that “The Forms are pure, separate and alone, The Form of the Good is above being’’ (Murdoch, 1992, p.405). The best metaphor to distinguish knowledge and belief should be the cave allegory. If we do not know how to distinguish between knowledge and belief, we will not be saved.

Plato wants to emphasize the importance of wisdom by the Cave Allegory. The prisoner managed to escape from the cave thanks to the light of Form of the Good, and for this reason did not want to turn back to the cave again. He managed to arrive at true knowledge.

When we handle the Form of the Good with a Murdochian approach, we can see that it should be known as a creative principle: “the light of the Good makes knowledge possible and also life” (Murdoch, 1999, p.388). However, Murdoch avoids explaining the the image of the Divided Line and focuses on the Form of the Good. The Form of the Good appears as a transcendent principle, is above everyting. Murdoch believes that “Plato’s Good is such an object, and can shine through lesser, even false goods; there is a place in Platonism for a doctrine of grace. However, God sees us and seeks us, Good does not” (Murdoch, 1992, p.83). The Cave Allegory shows that art does not give a clear sense to grasp the truth if we handle it in light of Murdoch’s approach.

2. VIRTUE IN IRIS MURDOCH

Murdoch's work generally explores themes of loneliness, alienation and social problems, preferring to create existentialist characters to ordinary ones (Murdoch, 1999, p.xi). On the other hand, she is not known as an existentialist writer and philosopher: "Her urge to find an alternative and more accurate description of our condition than it can provide, has long driven both her fiction and her philosophy" (Murdoch, 1999, p.xxii).

Her novels and articles want to picture goodness and idea of virtue in a world in which we cannot see a transcendent reality: "The Form of the Good is never identified with God" (Murdoch, 1992, p.403). However, it should not be understood that she humiliates the mystical approach (Murdoch, 1999, p.368). Particularly, this notion can be seen in her one of the greatest novels, *The Nice and The Good*, published in 1968, whose character Ducane "had no religious beliefs. He simply wanted to lead a clean simple life and to be a good man" (Murdoch, 1968, p.32). Murdoch's attitude, especially her writing style, has an existentialist approach, but she should not be evaluated as an existentialist as she is known for her great respect for Plato's ideas (Murdoch, 1999, p.6). Murdoch seems to be a Platonist.

Despite this, some of her assertions, especially about art and literature, seem to oppose Platonism. According to Platonism, pure reasoning and truth cannot be found in art. Plato accuses artists of immorality (Murdoch, 1999, p.391). However, Murdoch believes that idea of virtue and moral values can be comprehended by art: "Art is a higher truth and the artist is a kind of priest" (Murdoch, 1999, p.247).

In 1986, Murdoch wrote *Acastos*, which including two Platonic dialogues.

ACASTOS: I do, I refuse to define good art as good-for-society art. Art must be free and its own because that's how it will tell us the truth and show us the things that are really –high –and real – I mean, it's like the human spirit talking – good art just can't help being good for society, but artists mustn't think about that. Good artists are trying to understand something and show something which they see – their duty is to be good artists. Good art explains to us how the world is changing and it judges change, it's the highest wisest choice of morality, it's something spiritual – without good art a society dies. It's like religion really – it's our best speech and our best understanding – it's a proof of the greatness and goodness which is in us. (Murdoch, 1999, p.483)

Murdoch supports the power of art in explaining an idea of virtue contrary to Plato and supports a transcendent reality to divulge virtue. Although she does not seem to support some of the Platonic premises on art and literature, her novel *The Unicorn*, published in 1963, arguably proves that she is really a Platonist who managed to divulge Plato's Form of the Good in order to rebut existentialists and linguistic philosophers' arguments (Murdoch, 1999, p.xxiii). She believes that we can become virtuous and well-behaved people thanks to literature and art, though art should not be assumed as imitation (Murdoch, 1999, p.371).

Murdoch states that an artist's aim should not be serving the public, but on the other hand she seems to defend Marxist morality to divulge the importance of literature. According to her, if Marxist theory was perceived properly, moral philosophy would develop (Murdoch, 1999, p.337). In other words, it may be claimed that Murdoch wants to prove that art should not be thought as fantasy (Murdoch, 1999, p.248).

2.1 Form of The Good and The Way Of Eros in Murdoch

Artists are humiliated by Plato, but Murdoch believes that Plato is the greatest artist who succeeds in teaching true reasoning in light of the Form of the Good (Murdoch,

1999, p.462). In a 1984 dialogue with Jiddu Krishnamurti, Murdoch does not seem to believe in Christ. She seems to be against a Father-God. Murdoch handles the notion of self in light of Platonism while discussing with Krishnamurti.

She must have shaped her moral philosophy thanks to Plato's Cave Allegory. However, she never mentions the Divided Line during the conversation:

If one thinks of Plato's image of the cave that you are in the darkness and then gradually you move into the light. He also speaks about coming back into the cave, by which it means I think that you find some kind of liberation for yourself. (Krishnamurti, 2016)

Murdoch is an atheist philosopher. Therefore, the idea of God is not defended in her philosophy. However, she firmly believes in the Form of the Good.

In Murdochian philosophy, art and literature are valued in order to grasp the truth. But two concepts are never accepted in order to grasp the truth in Murdochian philosophy: the notion of will and the notion of God. She seeks Plato's Form of the Good in literature and art. Furthermore, Murdoch argues that "reading of Plato helps us to see how good art is truthful" (Murdoch, 1999, p.455).

At this point, Murdoch's argument might be proved with Debra Nails's assertion:

Plato did not invent Athenians with names, demes, and kin; he wrote about real people—some of them still active and living in Athens—people with reputations, families, neighbors and political affiliations, people who show up elsewhere in the historical records: lampooned in comedies, called as witnesses, elected to office, being sold, marrying, buying property, traveling, dying. Socrates' society was not only a matter of institutions and ideologies, but a matter of actual people. (Nails, 2002, p.xxxvii)

Murdoch believes that concepts of virtues and truth should be comprehended in light of literature and that Plato is a great artist. Nails also believes that Plato is a great artist

because she points that real people were written in the dialogues. Murdoch says she liberates herself thanks to Plato, so it could be claimed that she developed her moral vision on goodness thanks to Plato's Cave Allegory because she does not accept the idea of God to explain the idea of good. Furthermore, she believes that human nature ought to be analyzed in human experience in order to learn ethical values.

Murdoch argues that "The true *logos* falls silent in the presence of the highest (ineffable) truth, but the art objects cherishes its volubility, it cherishes itself, not the truth" (Murdoch, 1999, p.443). According to her, Plato attaches importance to beauty in his philosophy, but wants to exclude art to show the Form of Beauty (Murdoch, 1999, pp.387-388). For this reason, it could be claimed that Plato is Murdoch's *logos* to assume the Form of the Good.

In Murdoch's *The Unicorn*, *The Black Prince*, *The Fire and the Sun* and *The Idea of Perfection*, she does not support the transcendent reality strongly supported in Platonism: "There is only one true artist, God, only one true work of art, the Cosmos" (Murdoch, 1999, p.429). She wants to distinguish the Form of the Good and the idea of God as she writes "Plato *knew* that Good was not only real but supremely so, a certainty less apparently simple than belief in God" (Murdoch, 1992, p.401). The Form of the Good should not be connected to the idea of God in order to assimilate true ethical values.

Generally, *Eros* is described as a god of love in Ancient Greek mythology, but we see a different *Eros* while reading the *Symposium*, where he is not a god but one of the spirits (*Symposium* 203b). Diotima defines *Eros* as a daemon perpetually in love with beautiful things and wisdom because devoid of them: "He is in between wisdom and ignorance as well. In fact, you see, none of the gods loves wisdom or wants to

become wise” (*Symposium* 204a). Plato asserts the universality of Eros due to its attraction to creativity. Thus, it might be claimed that Eros appears in poets and philosophers as “every desire for good things or for happiness is ‘the supreme and treacherous love’ in everyone” (*Symposium* 205d).

Moreover, Diotima thinks that love always seeks out the good in order to have it forever (*Symposium* 206a). It could be said that the Form of the Good should be associated with the highest wisdom instead of relating to the idea of god while focusing on Eros’ desire for wisdom and beautiful things. For this reason, it could be claimed that Murdoch believes in Plato’s Eros to grasp the truth because she believes that love should be one of the most important values to comprehend true ethical values (Murdoch, 1999, p.337).

The Greek language has three words for love. The first is *agape* (ἀγάπη), which is God’s love, the highest love of God. Robinson argues that “this kind of patient love is possible because it comes from God. God’s love in us” (Robinson, 2015, p.62). *Agape* is expressed in action not feelings. It should be related to the idea of obedience, since it is not associated with feelings (Robinson, 2015, p.61). For instance, in Christianity, it is believed that Jesus Christ suffered a miserable death in order to save human beings (Johansen, 1998/1991, p.574). Christ obeyed God’s command and accepted sacrificing himself.

The second word for love is *eros* (Ἔρως). Robinson argues that *eros* should not be used in Biblical explanations, since it is associated with sexual love (Robinson, 2015, p.61). Moreover, Swedish theologian Nygren argues that “agape and eros oppose each other, with agape solely God’s love and eros human love” (Stenger, 2018, p.286).

The third word is *philein*, love of wisdom. ‘Philosophy’ (φιλοσοφία) occurred thanks to two Greek words: *philein* and *sophia*.

When we focus on Murdochian philosophy, we can clearly see that she puts emphasis on love and art, and upholds that truth can be obtained by engaging with philosophy (Murdoch, 1999, pp.337-362). Her philosophy cannot be related to *agape*. In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts*, she argues that masochism is the enemy of art and finds the notion of suffering a masochistic idea. Especially in “On ‘God’ and ‘Good’,” she upholds that the idea of suffering confuses mind. Furthermore, Christian theology is criticized by Murdoch, since she argues that “the central image of Christianity lends itself [to] just this illegitimate transformation” (Murdoch, 1999, p.367). It is clearly seen that transcendent authority is not supported in Murdochian philosophy.

On the other hand, while Murdoch upholds that truth can be obtained by engaging with philosophy, she emphasizes love and art to divulge her moral vision. . Therefore, *philein* should not be related to Murdochian philosophy because it does not include sense of beauty and creative force.

On the other hand, Eros is a creative spirit and love always seeks out the good in order to have it forever in the *Symposium*. Therefore, Murdoch’s aim is to divulge morality in the light of art and Plato’s Eros. Stenger argues that, “For Murdoch, then, desire is a type of love of the Good, and eros provides the energy to cut through human selfishness and the ego” (Stenger, 2018, p.288). According to Murdoch’s argument, Plato’s Eros should be understood as a principle which demonstrates the highest moral values. In other words, if we managed to comprehend the idea of love, we would be saved (Murdoch, 1999, pp.383-384). Not only can we grasp the truth,

but also understand true ethical values thanks to Eros's energy. Moreover, we come closer to the Form of the Good by virtue of Eros because it is a spirit "mediator and moving spirit of mankind" in Platonism (Murdoch, 1999, p.415).

For Plato, the Forms of the states bring Forms of the souls, which is essential to bring about the idea of justice. Murdoch agrees with Plato. She believes that people become good or bad due to political systems (Murdoch, 1999, p.414). However, she believes that idea of good and idea of justice should be sought through the light of love. Thus, we should follow Plato's Eros in order to understand the Form of the Good: "The way of justice is subservient to two higher ways, which I shall call 'the way of Eros', and 'the way of Cosmos'" (Murdoch, 1999, p.414). We can comprehend the truth when we manage to learn pure love

In other words, for Murdoch, love should be the measure of all things. Particularly, the way of Eros is seen in one of her greatest novels, *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* (1970). In it, we understand that Murdoch wants to prove the power of Eros, especially in the atheist character Rupert's ideas on morality:

Not that he located this goodness in himself. It was something very much exterior to him, but fairly near and very real. Rupert did not believe in God, in fact he even disapproved of belief in God, which he felt to be a weakener of the moral sinews. But in this he did believe, and under this star he would care for Morgan. He had loved people in this way before, though never anyone so close to him, and as far as he knew nothing but good had resulted. The top of moral structure was no dream, and he had proved this by exercise in loving attention: loving people, loving art, loving work, loving paving stones and leaves on trees. (Murdoch, 1970, p.359)

She wants to distinguish Plato's Form of the Good and the idea of God while divulging the idea of moral progress. According to her argument, morality should be learnt by the way of Eros, rather than a God.

Furthermore, when the sense of beauty and love defeat egotism, we manage to come much closer to Form of the Good and reality because “Eros is the desire for good which is somehow the same even when a degenerate ‘good’ is sought” (Murdoch, 1999, p.418). Murdoch advocates that Plato never trusts artists in order to protect the Form of Beauty, that “beauty in its instances is mostly seen (εκφανεστάτον), most moving, most reminiscent of the vision of it in heavenly purity” (Murdoch, 1999, p.416).

For Murdoch, although Plato despises all artists in the *Republic*, he points out that craftsman are able to reach the cosmic way (Murdoch, 1999). She could be portrayed as a philosopher who emphasizes the vitality of art as she never excludes it or literature from her philosophy. She believes a writer should avoid personal fantasies and personal ego in order to divulge reality because fantasies and personal ego damage art and literature. According to her, Plato does not trust art and literature because he is afraid of personal fantasies. In other words, personal fantasies can easily ruin literature and reality: “To overcome egoism in its protean forms of fantasy and illusion (*per tanti rami cercando*) is automatically to become more moral; to see the real is to see its independence and ergo its claims” (Murdoch, 1999, p.425). If a writer manages to avoid various types of ego and personal fantasies, we “experience the transcendence of the real” (Murdoch, 1999, p.425). Murdoch points that art should not be described as an unnecessary thing, and that we should distinguish real art from fantasy art in order to comprehend the truth (Murdoch, 1999).

On the other hand, Murdoch found Plato’s metaphysical approach much more successful than Christian theology. According to her, Plato’s Demiurge seems to be more morally brilliant than the Christian God and Jehoavah, because he does not want us to worship him and he always wants our happiness (Murdoch, 1999, pp.430-431).

Murdoch argues that reality is created by the mind in Platonism. The main principle should be mind (νοῦς) in order to grasp the truth and the Form of the Good: “The Demiurge is here the mediating figure between Being and Becoming. Good is seen as beautiful in the purified or even semi-purified gaze of active mind. We are kin to νοῦς and no one errs willingly” (Murdoch, 1999, p.432). The mythical creator Demiurge demonstrates power of the νοῦς in order to comprehend goodness and true wisdom. Thus, Plato’s God should be portrayed as symbolizing an unenvious mind (Murdoch, 1999, p.431). For this reason, it might be thought that Murdoch found Platonism much more dignified and clearer than a dogmatic truth in order to assume fundamental reality of goodness as she emphasizes, “we mustn’t look at Christ, but at our own rational conscience” (Murdoch, 1992, p.429). Murdoch indicates that reading Plato’s philosophy develops our reasoning in order to assume great works of art (Murdoch, 1999, p.455).

Having focused on Murdoch’s arguments about art, it might be claimed that art should be defined as an incomprehensible idea, but on the other hand it reveals the truth. Thanks to art, we come to understand the Form of the Good. If a writer manages to refrain from personal fantasies, he would protect the saving Eros and we would feel true *catharsis*. In other words, “Artists indicate or *invent* in the invention of their work, their own relevant *tests of truth*. A study of good literature, or of any good art, enlarges and refines our understanding of truth, our methods of verification” (Murdoch, 1992, p.86). Murdoch’s arguments about art demonstrate that it is more didactic than philosophy and theology because it is never afraid of demonstrating evil, which philosophy and theology fail to explain (Murdoch, 1999, p.449).

Murdoch firmly believes that, thanks to the good art, we come to understand the world, can develop our consciousness and learn how to live (Murdoch, 1992).

Despite the fact that Platonism accuses art of being immoral, Murdoch advocates that it should not be known as an insignificant thing. She wants to emphasize it as a destination in which we can experience the transcendence of the good.

2.2 On 'God' and 'Good'

For Murdoch, one can become a virtuous and humane person through the arts (Murdoch, 1999, pp.363-385). However, it should not be thought that she lost her faith to philosophy because one is able to grasp the truth by doing philosophy (Murdoch, 1999, p.337). She believes that moral philosophy has been losing its power recently, but suggests that it should be developed using Freud and Marx's scientific and political arguments (Murdoch, 1999, p.337).

Some scholars want to place Murdoch in the existentialist camp. For instance, Richard Moran argues that, "in order to distance herself from Sartre, Murdoch misrepresents what he actually says" (Robjant, 2011, p.1). Moreover, Moran believes Murdoch's vision includes Sartrean arguments.

This argument might be rebutted in light of Platonism. According to Platonism, one should distinguish belief and knowledge in order to grasp the truth. Moran wants to portray Murdoch as if she were an existentialist. However, while she creates existentialist characters in her many novels, such as *The Black Prince*, *The Time of the Angels* and *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, in "On 'God' and 'Good'," we come to understand that she does not find existentialist arguments helpful to develop moral philosophy (Murdoch, 1999, p.332-333). According to her argument, they have wrongly exaggerated the notion of will (Murdoch, 1999, p.338).

Murdoch never supported existentialist thinkers' attitudes and ideas, especially their approach to conception of will in order to define the idea of goodness in her career. In 1977, Murdoch had a conversation with Micheal O. Bellamy, who wants to learn Murdoch's ideas about Sartrean philosophy. Murdoch says, "I'm not very interested in his later philosophical development [...] I'm very anti-existentialist" (Bellamy&Murdoch, 1977, p.131). Having focused on Murdoch's response, how can we claim that Murdoch is a closet Sartrean? In other words, Moran prefers to believe in shadows rather than in truth.

Second, Moran claims that Murdoch develops a Sartrean conception of moral agency in *The Idea of Perfection*. In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts*, Murdoch defines existentialist philosophy as an old doctrine. Sartre defines it as an optimistic doctrine and that "pure knowledge is contradictory; there is only the point of view *engaged* knowledge ... in a determined point of view which one is" (Robjant, 2011, p.7). The function of the will is valued in Sartrean philosophy (Akarsu, 1994, pp.225-234). Whereas in *The Idea of Perfection*, Murdoch argues that the existentialist- behaviourists distinguish the notion of will from reason in order to debar reason from the use of normative words, and that existentialist philosophers prefer to use empty terms, such as good and right, in order to avoid using normative words. Murdoch believes that these empty words harmonise the emptiness of the will. For this reason, Moran should not claim that Murdoch's moral vision belongs to existentialist philosophy and that Murdoch is a closet Sartrean.

Having focused on David Robjant's article, we come to understand that Robjant wants to prove that Murdoch is not a closet Sartrean. However, Robjant only focuses on *The Idea of Perfection* and does not give a detailed explanation about Plato's Cave Allegory. Robjant should have done so since Murdoch many times

pointed out that she shaped her moral vision thanks to it. In the thesis, so many times we have emphasized that Murdoch is an atheist philosopher, yet our main purpose is to prove that Murdoch is a Platonist. Although she does not believe in God, she manages to keep her faith in the Form of the Good. Despite the fact that Murdoch avoids materializing the Form of the Good, she does not support the notion of will.

Murdoch advocates that true knowledge can be grasped by doing philosophy, that philosophy is a method in order to assume some Forms, such as the Forms of Human, of Religion and of Justice. Murdoch also points out that the language of philosophy should not be an ordinary language. It should be difficult. On the other hand, she argues that “art, especially, literature, is a great hall of reflection where we can all meet and where everything under the sun can be examined and considered” (Murdoch, 1999, p.461). Murdoch refers to Plato’s sun allegory and supports literature in order to divulge morality.

In fact, supporters and non-supporters of Murdochian philosophy make the same mistake. They avoid her novels in order to interpret her ideas. She should be known as philosopher, but also known as a writer in order to assume her philosophical thoughts. Murdoch’s arguments about morality ought to be valued or rebutted in light of her novels because discussing her articles is not enough to comprehend her moral vision.

Murdoch always advises re-reading Plato in order to develop art and literature. She hardly ever suggests Aristotle. Although art is saved in Aristotle’s philosophy, Murdoch never values him. Why does she always emphasize Plato’s Cave Allegory in order to defeat egoism and to develop art and literature?

In *The Fire and The Sun*, Murdoch portrays the imagery of the cave as an ironical artist and advocates that reality is known only by a true self-knower. In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts*, she argues that the self is represented by the fire in the Cave Allegory. We should not be blinded by the self and “Plato has given us the image of this deluded worship in his great allegory” (Murdoch, 1999, p.382). Murdoch developed her moral vision in the light of Platonism because she refuses the notion of will and the notion of God.

If we focus on Murdoch’s arguments carefully, we can see that the enemy of morality is egoism and fantasy. She trusts Eros to save us because Plato’s Eros is a human love and does not belong to a transcendent principle. The imagery of the Cave liberates Murdoch’s vision to save her soul her soul from fantasies and egoism. Murdoch wants to combine Plato’s Cave Allegory with art and literature in order to be a realist. She seeks Plato’s Form of the Good in art and literature.

The image of the Divided Line shows the theory of re-collection which is usually related to Christian theology since it indicates a two-world doctrine. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates’ thoughts on the soul generally seem to be associated with a transcendent reality. For this reason, it might be asserted that Murdoch does not give a detailed explanation about the image of the Divided Line, but prefers to focus on the Cave Allegory.

Murdoch finds previous moral philosophers much more successful than linguists in answering the question “‘What things are good?’ from the question ‘What does “good” mean?’” (Murdoch, 1999, p.339). Previous moral philosophers used to teach us a method which helps us distinguish between good things and the idea of good (Murdoch, 1999, p.339). Linguistic considerations are not explanatory enough to

picture a philosophical representation of the human because they never dwell on the idea of love and the idea of sin (Murdoch, 1999, p.340).

On the other hand, Murdoch finds Freud's scientific study of the psyche much more successful than existentialist and linguistic arguments in understanding human nature:

Freud takes a thoroughly pessimistic view of human nature. He sees the psyche as an egocentric system of quasi-mechanical energy, largely determined by its own individual history, whose natural attachments are sexual, ambiguous, and hard for the subjects to understand or control. Introspection reveals only the deep tissue of ambivalent motive, and fantasy is a stronger force than reason. Objectivity and unselfishness are not natural to human beings (Murdoch, 1999, p.341).

Freud's scientific study of psyche is helpful for Murdoch because she wants to emphasize that one should avoid egoism in order to assume ethical values (Murdoch, 1999). She believes that human beings ought to avoid selfishness to comprehend the idea of good and that moral philosophy should find techniques which help us avoid selfishness.

Murdoch wants to define idea of good in a world without experiencing the transcendence of the good. In other words, Murdoch wants to discuss idea of goodness itself, and suggests that idea of good should not be associated with the idea of God (Murdoch, 1999, pp.337-362). She thinks that praying to God is a focal point. Human beings are not self-sufficient creatures. They always need external help to survive. Faith in God always provides a good energy to religious people (Murdoch, 1999, p.345).

Murdoch argues that the conscious always finds out unity. If one moved away from the idea of God, one might have trouble understanding the idea of unity

(Murdoch, 1999, p.345). Murdoch's sense of unity appears as a pragmatic notion and she thinks that believing in God preserves us from hopelessness:

That a belief in the unity, and also in the hierarcal order, of the moral world has a psychological importance is fairly evident. The notion that 'it all somehow must make sense', or 'there is a best decision here', preserve from despair: the difficulty is how to entertain this consoling notion in a way which is not false. As soon as any idea is a consolation the tendency to falsify it becomes strong: hence the traditional problem of preventing the idea of God from degenerating in the believer's mind (Murdoch, 1999, p.346).

For this reason, that sense of unity is not enlightening enough to clarify virtues. Concepts of virtues should be correlated with other virtues to be understood. To put it differently, Murdoch thinks that moral philosophy should not avoid separating virtues while divulging concepts of virtues (Murdoch, 1999).

She continues her argument by mentioning a transcendental principle in order to define idea of good. However, she thinks that to explain a transcendental principle is not easy, although metaphysics cannot be declared without one (Murdoch, 1999).

She accuses modern empiricism of generating a false transcendence and a false unity, arguing that we should avoid egotism because true ethical values should not be comprehended by selfness: "'Value' does not belong inside the world of truth functions, the world of science and factual propositions" (Murdoch, 1999, p.347). On this point, it might be claimed that Murdoch supports Marxism in order to rebut modern empiricism's arguments: "An instrument for criticising the false transcendence, in many of its forms, has been given to us by Marx in the concept of alienation" (Murdoch, 1999, p.347).

While understanding Murdoch's argument about the idea of good, we can see that she puts emphasis on the idea of transcendence. The idea of transcendence ought

to be considered throughout the light of two words, *perfection* and *certainty* (Murdoch, 1999, p.349). Murdoch says that the idea of perfection is always impressive because it always directs us to the most valuable thing (Murdoch, 1999, p.349). Here, arguably, she wants to relate the idea of perfection to the idea of good (Murdoch, 1999, pp.349-350). She avoids relating it to the idea of God, but suggests that we can comprehend the idea of perfection in art: “the word seems naturally in place, and it is work of artists that we the operation most clearly” (Murdoch, 1999, p.350).

Plato’s Form of the Good might be associated with a transcendent reality in order to comprehend the idea of good, yet Murdoch wants to indicate that the idea of good should be apprehended in its own existence (Murdoch, 1999, p.359). She thinks that to believe in God is a consolatory idea because believing in God sounds meaningful. However, loving the idea of good does not make any sense because the idea of good cannot be comprehensible (Murdoch, 1999, p.361).

2.3 The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts

Murdoch assumes “that human beings are naturally selfish and that human life has no external point or τέλος” (Murdoch, 1999, p.364). With this assertion, human nature can arguably be determined via scientific study of the psyche. According to Murdoch, the psyche does not want to face the truth. It can be defined as a dreamer. Moreover, she thinks that the psyche always tries to seek out new energy sources and wants to protect itself from pain with theological interests (Murdoch, 1999, p.364).

Murdoch wants to indicate that theologians and thinkers are always observing human nature in an external reality, but suggests the detriments of this approach, “Our

destiny can be examined but it cannot be justified or totally explained” (Murdoch, 1999, p.365). She thinks human nature should be observed in human experience (Murdoch, 1999, p.365). The ideas of God, science, history and reason have been always given as external points of examples by theologians and thinkers in pursuit of human nature. Murdoch disagrees and refers to post-Kantian philosophical approaches, which hold that the most valuable thing should be the notion of will instead of a transcendent reality. In other words, the human will becomes much more important than the idea of God (Murdoch, 1999, p.366).

It could be argued that the moral sentiment of post-Kantian philosophy relates to the idea of freedom. However, Murdoch does not find this notion successful in defining human nature, either. She thinks it might be useful in political but not moral philosophy (Murdoch, 1999). She refers to Immanuel Kant’s argument on sublimity and morality and that human beings’ emotions can be related to pure reason (Murdoch, 1999). The idea of love is an important precept in Kant’s sublime and he suggests that human beings should distinguish between practical and pathological love in order to develop rational thinking (Murdoch, 1999). Although Murdoch finds Kant’s theory successful, she does not agree with exaggerating the notion of will (Murdoch, 1999, p.368).

While Murdoch firmly believes that she is a Platonist, not an existentialist, Plato puts on emphasis on pure reasoning, the power of *νοῦς*. Despite that emphasis, God is the measure of all things in Platonism. At this point, it should be claimed that Murdoch wants to cut Plato’s Form of the Good off from the idea of God in order to shape her moral arguments. In “On ‘God’ and ‘Good’,” she argues that Plato portrays the good man who manages to look at the Sun, but on the other hand says, “I have never been sure what to make of this part of the myth” (Murdoch, 1999, p.357). For

this reason, Plato's sun can be related to idea of God although Platonism puts an emphasis on the visible realm.

In *The Fire and the Sun*, Murdoch implies that Platonism does not support a consoling theology. Murdoch likens the Demiurge to an unenvious mind and compares it to the Christian Trinity. She criticizes Christianity, especially its figures of the Trinity, because the Form of the Good cannot be materialised. Murdoch states that "Plato helps us to see how good art is truthful. Dream is the enemy of art and its false image" (Murdoch, 1999, p.455). Although Murdoch never believes in God, she might not have given up believing in a spiritual world. She finds Plato's God more merciful than the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost and cannot believe in Christian religion because she defines suffering as a masochistic idea. Being an atheist does not mean being an existentialist.

Murdoch always says that the Form of the Good cannot be defined, but we can become closer to Form of the Good thanks to love and humble people (Murdoch, 1999, pp.384-385). At this point, what Murdoch wants to say by putting emphasis on 'humble people' should be questioned. In the *Meno*, Socrates argues that virtue of all is the same, but some of them manage to have it. In the *Republic*, the Form of Justice is one of the most important virtues to grasp the Form of the Good because Socrates indicates that Justice should not be valued for its reputation. Focusing on these arguments, it could be claimed that Socrates portrays the humble man.

According to existentialist philosophy, the Form of the Good cannot be defined, because function of the will determines values. The idea of good seems to be a function of the will. However, Murdoch refuses concepts such as freedom and courage, which are usually valued in existentialist philosophy. According to her,

goodness is not connected with these notions, but with modesty: “The humble man, because he sees himself as nothing, can see other things as they are” (Murdoch, 1999, p.385). For this reason, it could be suggested that although the Form of the Good is indefinable in Murdochian philosophy, the concept of good is connected to the idea of love and humility (Murdoch, 1999, pp.301-335). Thus, Murdoch is not an existentialist philosopher. Her essence belongs to Platonism.

Human nature can be discovered in art and literature in light of the Form of the Good:

These arts, especially literature and painting, show us the peculiar sense in which the concept of virtue is tied on to the human condition. They show us the absolute pointlessness of virtue while exhibiting its supreme importance; the enjoyment of art is training in the love of virtue. The pointlessness of art is not the pointlessness of a game; it is the pointlessness of human life itself, and form in art is properly the simulation of the self-contained aimless of the universe. Good art reveals what we are usually too selfish and too timid to recognise, the minute and absolutely random detail of the world, and reveals it together with a sense of unity and form. (Murdoch, 1999, p.371).

In Murdoch’s view, art should not be defined as an insignificant thing as it offers the most educational space in which the nature of virtue can be learnt (Murdoch, 1999, p). Owing to good art, we can be aware of all differences, such as forms of humans, of cultures all around the world. Having seen all differences in the world, we can learn how to think objectively: “Good art shows us how difficult it is to be objective by showing us how differently the world looks to an objective vision” (Murdoch, 1999, p.371).

According to Murdoch, artists should avoid masochism because masochistic ideas can damage intelligence (Murdoch, 1999, p.355). Further, she suggests that

reality and virtues can be comprehended in the arts: “The realism of great artist is not a photographic realism, it is essentially both pity and justice” (Murdoch, 1999, p.371). The most important science is mathematics for Plato in order to grasp the truth (Murdoch, 1999, p.373). Murdoch thinks that, thanks to mathematical thought, a new kind of reality can be assumed and virtue might be examined in light of disciplines, such as history, philosophy and chemistry.

However, Murdoch wants to emphasize that the whole of virtue cannot be examined in light of science because morality belongs to spiritual life (Murdoch, 1999, p.63). The notion of good cannot be defined by supporting ideas such as the idea of God, the study of history and the angel Lucifer because it is not easy to define the notion of goodness. On the other hand, “Goodness is connected with the attempt to see the unself, to see and to respond to the real world in the light of a virtuous consciousness” (Murdoch, 1999, p.376). Murdoch wants to clarify that, although the world can be understood in light of good, goodness cannot be defined. She wants to prove her notion by referring to Plato’s idea about goodness: “Plato says of it, ‘It is that which every soul pursues and for the sake of which it does all that it does, with some intuition of its nature, yet also baffled’ (*Republic*, 505)” (Murdoch, 1999, p.380).

Further, Murdoch wants to indicate that the idea of good cannot be explained completely, although it can be seen in great arts and modest people: “The indefinability of Good is connected with the unsystematic and inexhaustible variety of the world and pointlessness of virtue” (Murdoch, 1999, p.381). Her aim is to prove that human beings are not such supreme creators. They do not have any *telos* in their lives. Their aimlessness parallels the aimlessness of the world and they are blinded by egotism (Murdoch, 1999, pp.382-383). She wants to distinguish the idea of God and

the idea of the good by referring to Plato's Cave Allegory in order to prove the indefinability of the Good. This argument might be proved in the following quotation given below:

This barest sketch of the allegory of the cave will help us to get some of Murdoch's key ideas into focus. Murdoch, like Plato, thought that value is transcendent, though she did not believe in a god. She did not believe that value is created through human choice, but is to be discovered. Value or goodness is part of the fabric of reality that extends beyond the human realm. We discover goodness through development, though, as we'll see, we also "build up" value. In Murdoch's view, we come to appreciate value and to have it in our lives through the progressive refinement of consciousness. That is, we encounter moral goodness, and cultivate it in ourselves, through the quality of our consciousness, especially through our attention to the world around us. (Snow, 2013, p.3)

3. NOVEL OF IRIS MURDOCH

3.1 Summary of *The Time of the Angels*

In *The Time of the Angels*, Murdoch focuses on the character of the rector Carel Fisher, who used to be a priest in a London church and who wants people to believe that he is still rector. However, he is a rector of a “non-existent church” (Murdoch, 1966, p.13). Carel arguably lost his humanity when he lost his religion. Here, it is possible to claim that Murdoch wants to distinguish the idea of good and idea of God so as to picture the good man. He appears as an existentialist character and we come to understand why Murdoch has created such a character.

In the novel, the characters do not have a lot in common although they live in the same house. They are alien to each other and other people, reminiscent of the prisoners in Plato’s Cave. Carel lives with his housekeeper Pattie, his daughter Muriel and his ward Elizabeth. Pattie is a religious person who does not know the nature of love and the Form of the Good. She demonstrates the difference between *agape* and Plato’s Eros.

Muriel is an atheist, yet she manages to save her soul from selfishness and egoism. In the *Phaedrus*, Phaedrus says that “jealousy and keep the boy away from the good company of anyone” (*Phaedrus*, 239b). Therefore, love helps us assume Form of the Good, but false love shows a false good. In parallel with this argument, it could be claimed that Muriel does not comprehend the essence of love. She does not get on well with her father and is sometimes afraid of him. She dislikes Pattie, blaming her for the affair with her father, believing it killed her mother. She lacks any sociable circle besides her cousin Elizabeth, who seldom cares for her ideas and poems. Yet, Muriel and Elizabeth hardly ever talk to each other.

Elizabeth is disabled and a mysterious character in the novel, exemplifying the prisoner who does not manage to escape from the Cave and who believes in shadows. Brought up by her uncle Carel after her parents' death, he instructs Elizabeth in Latin, Greek and history, but she takes no interest in art and literature. Elizabeth generally appears as a misanthrope in the novel. Her cousin Muriel, less of a charming girl, is more fortunate as she sometimes goes out. These characters are alien to everything, such as community rules and the idea of God (Murdoch, 1966,p.42).

In the *Republic*, Plato indicates that forms of the state bring forms of souls and Socrates portrays the good man who manages to escape from the Cave (*Republic* 515d). In *The Time of the Angels*, we meet a Russian character, Eugene, who does not have any sympathy with the British people in the novel. Eugene used to have a luxurious life when he was a child in Russia (Murdoch, 1966,p.53). When the war starts in Russia, he and his family escape to Prague. Departed from his dear sister and mother and sent to a labour camp, Eugene continues his life in a refugee camp by getting married to a Russian woman he meets there. He looks after their son Leo after losing his wife (Murdoch, 1966, pp.54-55). Eugene does not have a good relationship with his son, who frequently rebels against his father and who refuses community rules in order to comprehend true ethical values. However, Pattie and Eugene are always in a good relation. Eugene arrives in London eventually and starts working at the Rectory.

, p.56Rector Carel has a brother, Marcus, who is Elizabeth's guardian. However, Carel brought Elizabeth up since his brother Julian died. Marcus only writes letters to Elizabeth because Carel does not allow him to see her. A self-proclaimed Platonist, Marcus is trying to write a book titled "*Morality in a World without God*" (Murdoch, 1966, p.71). Whereas Platonism supports a transcendent

principle in his many dialogues, in the *Apology of Socrates* Socrates says that “in fact the god is wise and ... his oracular response meant that human wisdom is worth little or nothing” (*Apology* 23b). Despite the fact not believing in a transcendent reality, Marcus “might modestly admit to being, after all, just a Platonist” (Murdoch, 1966, p.71). At this point, it could be thought that Murdoch wants to indicate moral values by comparing existentialist characters with mystical characters to define the Form of the Good in her novel.

One day, Marcus plans to enter the Rectory in order to see her and is surprised to find the Rectory in pitch dark, like a bottomless cave. Marcus and Carel are not in touch with each other, but Marcus loves his brother and feels sorry for him. As they meet in Carel’s room, the novel takes on a Gothic atmosphere: the room is so dark that they cannot see each other. Carel gets angry with Pattie and slaps her, accusing her of inattention, because he thinks that if Pattie had not opened the door, Marcus would not have seen him. He might be portrayed as a person who lost his mind because he does not think consciously, and who failed to save himself as a priest.

Pattie starts to think of Eugene because she sees him as a hope. While Pattie is thinking of Eugene, he enters and we learn that his icon has been stolen by someone. He feels sad about it. Eugene does not love his icon for a religious purpose; it symbolizes his subconscious. When he looks at the icon, he always remembers his happy days in Russia. At this point, Eugene might be likened to a prisoner who has been living in a cave for years, and furthermore Eugene does not want to escape from the cave, because he is alien to English society and the idea of love. Thus, it could be asserted that Eugene did not manage to find the way of Eros, because he materialized Form of the Good.

The novel starts with a conversation between Eugene and Pattie. When she sees an icon on the wall, she asks Eugene of its meaning. After Pattie learns the meaning of The Blessed Trinity, she feels herself secure. She cares about religion. Pattie did not have a happy childhood. She grew up in an orphanage, devoid of her mother's and others' love. She is a black woman and, owing to her skin colour, seems to be humiliated in society (Murdoch, 1966, pp.23-24).

After Pattie starts working in Carel's house, she falls in love with him. Although Pattie knows he is married to Clara, who is sick, she continues her relationship with Carel. She thinks that after Clara's death, the rector will marry her, but it never happens. Thus, Pattie becomes a slave to the rector.

One day, Muriel comes across Leo, a frequent liar. Their discussions on ethics prove that Leo does not care about ethics or God. Muriel, on the other hand, believes in the Form of Virtue but not in God:

Yes, I am an aesthetic type. I have no morals. You don't believe in God and all that carap, do you?'

'No,' said Muriel. 'Though that's not the same as having no morals.'

(Murdoch, 1966,p.68).

Leo values the function of the will. Therefore, he might be related to Sartrean philosophy.

We learn Eugene's of life while he is talking to Pattie. One day, Pattie visits Eugene in his room, and while Pattie is looking at the icon on the wall, Pattie wants to learn that whether he is a Christian or Russian Orthodox (Murdoch, 1966, p.56). Eugene's answer shows that he used to be a religious person. However, although he does not believe in God anymore, the icon seems to be important to him. Clearly, Eugene is an alien to English society and to the idea of love. In Platonism, the good

man is portrayed as one who manages to look at the Sun. Thus, it could be claimed that Eugene manages to see the sun.

Further into the novel, Muriel does not give up feeling upset for Elizabeth. She tries to talk to her father about her, but Carel seems angry with Muriel. He does not want other people to know Elizabeth's existence in the Rectory (Murdoch, 1966). Muriel makes a plan to introduce Elizabeth to Leo secretly and learns the most painful thing in her life that day. Before introducing Elizabeth to Leo, she wants to check her cousin's room. Elizabeth has some rules and if Elizabeth does not give permission, no one enters. Thus, Muriel tries to look into her cousin's room from a thin crack in the wall. She sees her father's unclothed body near Elizabeth and it is disclosed to the reader that Rector Carel has been raping Elizabeth for a long time (Murdoch, 1966, p.165).

Just then Marcus, concerned about Elizabeth and worried about his nephew, manages to enter the Rectory. Upon meeting his brother, he delivers the excuse of giving Eugene his icon (Murdoch, 1966, p.175). Marcus wants to see Elizabeth, but Carel refuses and asks him to leave immediately. However, he changes his mind, and agrees to talk with his brother. Marcus is afraid of made fun of by his brother (Murdoch, 1966, pp.170-171). Marcus wants his brother to give up being a priest if he does not believe in God any more. Carel's response indicates his hatred for Christian theology, and we find that he wants to introduce himself as a priest of non-God (Murdoch, 1966, p.170).

When Muriel, Elizabeth and Leo meet, Leo is surprised to find out about Elizabeth's existence in the Rectory. Elizabeth's existence is unknown to people because she has never been outside and always stays in her room. Although they are

not very close, Muriel feels upset for Elizabeth, who has been living in a dark cave, an alien to love. Leo is eager to meet Elizabeth because Muriel remarked on Elizabeth's virginity. Leo confesses to Muriel that he stole his father's icon for money and is rebuked by Muriel, who wants him to confess his crime to his father and further threatens him by withholding the meeting with Elizabeth.

When Eugene learns that the icon has been stolen by his own son, he thinks he could not raise Leo virtuously, although he thinks himself a devoted father. Eugene and Leo start to quarrel with each other aggressively. We come to understand that Leo is alien to English society and does not like English culture because he says, "you haven't even tried to be English" (Murdoch, 1966, p.115). Moreover, in chapter five (p.47) Murdoch implies that English people are proud of being English and see themselves to be the best.

Leo might be thought as a person dismissed from happiness because, although Eugene has tried to look after his son all his life, Leo complains about being stateless and homeless because he and his father are living in a small room in the Rectory. Leo is not satisfied with his life and he sells the icon for money, though he gives a different reason. Leo does not like English society, but he emphasizes that he does not forgive the Soviet Union for making him and his father stateless (Murdoch, 1966, pp.115-116). Moreover, he firmly believes that his father live in a dream world and, due to the icon, is creating a little Russia around him. At this point, we come to understand that Eugene does not seem to be upset for the icon any more, but he starts to worry for his son.

Muriel falls in love with Eugene. She starts to write poems for him. She plans to give the icon brought by Marcus to Eugene to win his love. However, Pattie gives

Eugene the icon before Muriel. On Muriel's finding out, a fight breaks between them (Murdoch, 1966). Muriel breaks Pattie's secret to Eugene, informing him of her affair with her father. Following their fight, Pattie enters Muriel's room and reveals Carel's true story to Muriel. Muriel finds out that Elizabeth is actually her father's own daughter.

We learn Rector Carel's life from Pattie (Murdoch, 1966, p.212). He fell in love with a woman, but his other brother Julian goes to America with her. After Carel learns that his brother runs away with his love, he is depressed. To avenge him, Carel seduces Julian's wife. At this point, he might be portrayed as a godless person. While discussing this with Marcus, we learn that Carel does not believe in God. Thus, it could be claimed that no one judges him.

One day, the Bishop visits Marcus and his girlfriend Norah. They start to talk about religion in reference to Carel's behaviour, who has lost his religion but continues working in the church. The Bishop refrains from any bad comments about Rector Carel, believes that Carel is a good and religious man and defines the notion of belief as a personal choice in Carel's case. When the Bishop wants to learn the topic of Marcus's book, Marcus emphasizes that he is writing about morality, not the idea of God and emphasizes that he is not a Christian. At this point, it could be thought that due to his expression about Christianity, Marcus might be understood as a Kantian who makes man God in his mind. Then, we can see that Marcus Fisher, Norah and the Bishop start to talk about Christian theology in light of Jesus Christ. Further, the Bishop argues that religion always helped people define the notion of belief in history, although in scientific age religion does not seem to be useful to define the notion of belief.

Having met the characters in the novel, it might be suggested that Murdoch wants to prove the Form of the Good's power in a world in which we do not meet a transcendent reality.

3.2 Platonic Perspective on *The Time of the Angels*

Arguably, not knowing the meaning of love and having been humiliated, Pattie wants to find salvation and hence is portrayed as a character in search of the idea of good in the light of a transcendent reality in the novel. Furthermore, it could be argued that some people try to understand the idea of good by connecting it to a transcendent reality. This notion can be clearly seen while analyzing Pattie's perception of goodness, who "assumes that he believes in God. This reassures and pleases her. God is vague but important in Pattie's life and she is comforted when other people believe in Him" (Murdoch, 1966, p.11).

However, Murdoch suggests that people can be saved by love instead of a transcendent reality, especially in *The Sublime and the Good*, where she suggests that, owing to the notion of love, we succeed in perceiving individuals (Murdoch, 1999). When we focus on Platonism in parallel with this notion, it may be claimed that Murdoch supports Platonism in order to define the Form of Love in her novel. Platonism supports a transcendent reality, but Plato avoids the notion of pain in his philosophy. In the *Timaeus*, we meet a merciful God.

Murdoch does not want to connect the Form of the Good with the notion of suffering usually emphasized in Christian theology. In Christianity, Christ is a creative force of God in order to comprehend the truth (Johansen, 1998/1991).

Therefore, if people followed Jesus Christ, they would be closer to the Form of the Good. In *The Fire and the Sun*, it is clearly seen that Murdoch does not support the notion of suffering (Murdoch, 1999). Thus, it might be claimed that Murdoch does not seem to support *agape* to divulge Form of the Good in *The Time of the Angels*. Furthermore, it might be thought that Murdoch wants to cut off the idea of love from Christian theology:

For the rest, a devout Low Church Christianity provided her cosmology. Lo where Christ's blood streamed in firmament. The idea of redemption, vague, and yet some how for her entirely factual, stayed with her as a consolation of a special kind. All manner of thing might not be well, might never be well, but the world could not be quite as terrible as it often seemed (Murdoch, 1966, p.26).

It could be claimed that Pattie did not manage to find the way of Eros, which should be related to the idea of good and happiness, not an exotic happiness (Buchholz, 1993). However, we can clearly see that Pattie's relationship with rector Carel depends on sexual pleasure. This argument might be proved in the following quotation given from the novel:

Carel's sweet affection, his quick touch upon her arms as he spoke to her, his fingers tracing out the bones of her neck, his tug at her hair, his clap to her behind, his strong grip sometimes upon her wrist, his playful flick at her cheek. Pattie felt she could have been happy so forever. And then one day, with the same beautiful naturalness. Carel took her to bed.[...] When she realized this a dreadful happiness took possession of her, a dark exotic happiness, not like the innocence of her joy, but very strong (Murdoch, 1966, pp. 27-28).

Murdoch was a Marxist before becoming a Platonist (Murdoch, 1999). In her *Sartre Romantic Nationalist*, she finds Marx's theory of alienation reasonable to picture a better society (Murdoch, 1953). Marx predicts that industrial capitalism

damages human relations, especially between the propertied and the proletariat classes (McLellan, 1977). He argues that class differences points a place where we can see self-alienation, which will also be detected in human relations.

In *The Time of the Angels*, Murdoch uses Marx's theory of alienation to divulge morality and human relations. For instance, Caryl is isolated from society, from religion, humanity, love and goodness because he does not want to see anyone. He does not want to answer letters. After making his speeches in the church, he started to laugh and says that there is no God (Murdoch, 1966). Marx's theory of alienation can be also clearly seen in Muriel and Elizabeth. Elizabeth has never been outside in her life, recalling the prisoner in the Cave Allegory.

Although Muriel and Leo appear as existentialist characters, it should not be thought that Murdoch supports post-Kantian philosophy in her novel. In "On 'God' and 'Good'," she refutes existentialist philosophy on grounds that the notion of will is not enough to learn ethical values (Murdoch, 1999). Therefore, Leo and Muriel should not be thought as existentialist characters.

In *The Fire and The Sun*, Murdoch argues that Plato emphasizes importance of the psyche in the *Phaedrus*, arguing that if we read Plato carefully, we can see that this myth shows us how egoism damages the psyche. (Murdoch, 1999). In the allegory of the chariot in the *Phaedrus*, the charioteer of the winged horses represents the mind in the allegory. The white winged horse represents the soul's goodness, virtue and beauty, and the dark winged horse represents its jealousy and ugliness. While the white winged horse is trying to fly to goodness, the other detracts due to its insatiability (*Phaedrus* 246a). In "On 'God' and 'Good'," Murdoch argues that

human beings ought to avoid egotism in order to comprehend the idea of good (Murdoch, 1999).

In the novel, we can see that Muriel does not believe in God, but it does not mean that Muriel is not aware of the idea of good and moral values. Being a good person depends on virtuous consciousness, not a transcendent reality. Muriel manages to purify her psyche from selfishness and egotism. In her essay, Murdoch indicates that a fat, relentless ego should be known as an enemy of moral life, that the psyche should be preserved from egotism and selfishness in order to learn true ethical values (Murdoch, 1999).

Karl Marx's theory of alienation can be clearly seen in Eugene's life: "He had never made himself a place in English society, he had never even got a foot on to a ledge or finger into a cranny" (Murdoch, 1966, p.48).

Murdoch defines the idea of God as a moral help in her article "On 'God' and 'Good'," even though Murdoch does not believe in God. Therefore, it may be asserted that looking at the icon gives a powerful energy to Eugene psychologically, although he does not believe in God.

In the novel, we can see that Murdoch likens Eugene to prisoner who does not know the Form of the Good: "Very slowly it had come to him that after all the building was empty. The vast presence was simply some trick of the gloom. There was nothing but the darkness" (Murdoch, 1966, p.57). Even though Murdoch believes in Plato's Form of the Good to comprehend true ethical values, she finds some Marxist instances useful to discuss the concepts of virtues. In "On 'God' and 'Good'", she indicates that we should consider various types of virtues to explain the notion of virtue. Namely, we ought to consider virtues' relations to other virtues.

While Murdoch is explaining the virtue of courage, she gives a political example of a concentration camp in order to define the virtue of courage (Murdoch, 1999). This notion can be explored in *The Time of the Angels*, for instance, although Eugene likes looking at the icon, he cannot see the notion of happiness while looking at it. On the other hand, we can see that Eugene pictures happy people who work in refugee camps in his conversation with Pattie:

Camp life is dream, Pattie. It's all right for the welfare workers. Oh, I've seen so many of them, so cheerful, so pleased with themselves! Nothing makes feel happier and freer than seeing other people suffering and shut in! Well, they were good enough people those welfare workers, you mustn't think me a cynic. But between their self-satisfaction and our dream somehow the reality was lost. Perhaps God saw it. Only a saint could be in there truth there (Murdoch, 1966, p.58).

This quote points to the human experience in order to define moral values, and Murdoch avoids explaining the notion of virtue in light of an external reality. She firmly believes that human beings should be understood in reference to the human nature (Murdoch, 1999).

Murdoch finds Freud's debates on psyche successful in relation to Platonism (Murdoch, 1999). In *The Fire and the Sun*, she argues that "Freud's condition of neurosis represents this refusal of reality in favour of magical self-deception" (Murdoch, 1999, p.420). The condition of neurosis might be seen in Rector Carel's behaviour. He did not manage to protect his psyche from egotism and fantasy, falling alien to the society, goodness, his brother and the idea of God:

'Please don't keep trying to see me, Marcus. I am not in your world either. It is only by some metaphysical mistake that we can apprehend each other at all'
'Carel, how can you be so *unkind*, so *unchristian*.'
'Come, come. I don't think we need descend to that'

‘You haven’t stopped believing in God, have you, Carel? That at least –’

‘You are the one who knows that in this age no intelligent person really believes in God. I am told you are writing a book about it.’

‘But it is not true, is it, Carel, about you, all the things they say –’

‘I don’t know what they say’

‘That you don’t believe any more but you go on –’

‘If there is no God there is all the more need for a priest.’

‘But, Carel, it would be wrong, awful –’

‘If there is no one there no one is going to mind.’ (Murdoch, 1966, p.79).

Having focused on the quotation given above, it might be thought that the characters are existentialists. However, Platonism explains the theory of Forms in the light of opposite notions. In other words, Platonism defines true knowledge by giving opposite notions, especially this notion can be clearly seen in the *Phaedo*, where Socrates says that “an opposite must necessarily come to be from their opposite” (*Phaedo* 70e). An atheist means one who refuses the idea of God and a religious person accepts the idea of God. Although Marcus is an atheist, he thinks his brother should continue believing in God because Carel is a priest and a priest should not behave the way Carel behaves. Therefore, a right decision should be made by pure reasoning, namely, in light of the Form of the Good. In other words, true opinion belongs to virtue. In “On ‘God’ and ‘Good’,” Murdoch argues that Plato’s Form of the Good should be known as intellectual comprehension in order to grasp the truth (Murdoch, 1999). Therefore, Marcus’s attitude can be evaluated in the light of Platonism.

Murdoch never pictures the idea of good while explaining it (Murdoch, 1999). It might be claimed that Murdoch thinks that being a good person does not belong to the notion of faith, but to a virtuous consciousness. For instance, in the novel we can see that, despite the fact that Marcus and Norah do not believe in God, they pay for

Leo's education and never tell this to Leo and his father (Murdoch, 1966). It could be claimed that Murdoch wants us to explain the essence of good in light of the psyche instead of relating it to the notion of faith.

It could be suggested that Murdoch wants to picture the idea of God as a mythological truth in her novel (Murdoch, 1966). In "On 'God' and 'Good'", Murdoch argues that Form of the Good should not be searched in an external reality in order to grasp the truth (Murdoch, 1999). The idea of God might be related to the notion of perfection in order to comprehend the idea of good, but Murdoch firmly believes that goodness cannot be grasped in an external reality (Murdoch, 1999). In Christian theology, Jesus Christ is portrayed as a guide in order to learn the Form of the Good, in other words, the Son of God ought to be related to Logos (Johansen, 1998/1991). When we focus on Murdoch's arguments about morality, especially in *The Fire and the Sun*, she does not accept a theological logic in order to comprehend the Form of the Good (Murdoch, 1999). Therefore, it might be claimed that she wants to cut Jesus Christ off from the Form of the Good in order to define the essence of good in her novel.

We especially see this notion while the Bishop, Norah and Marcus Fisher are talking about Christian theology. Murdoch profoundly indicates this through the Bishop:

The Bishop smiled. 'I am not speaking of course about a person' he said. 'A person could be dispensed with. Indeed must be dispensed with. What we have to experience is not the destruction but purification of our beliefs. The human spirit has certain deep needs. Do not misunderstand me when I say that morality is enough. It was the mistake of the Enlightenment to imagine that God could be characterized simply as the guarantor of the moral order. God could be characterized simply simply as the guarantor of the moral order. But

our need for God is something which transcends morality. The slightest acquaintance with modern psychology shows us that this is not a slogan but a fact. We are less naïve than we were about goodness. We are less naïve than we were about sanctity. What measures man as a spiritual being is not his conventional goodness and badness but the genuineness of his hunger for God (Murdoch, 1966, p.94).

Marcus feels upset after he learns the Bishop's ideas about Jesus Christ. Despite the fact that he does not believe in Christianity, he thinks other people should (Murdoch 1966).

At this point, his attitude might be analyzed in light of Platonism and mystical thought. In *Existentialists and Mystics*, Murdoch argues that existentialist characters value the will. In other words, they never support the idea of God (Murdoch, 1999). However, the mystical character seems to have some trouble with some notions. It cannot comprehend the difference between the notion of good and the notion of nature. Despite the fact that the mystical character seems to abandon believing in God, he does not abandon the idea of spiritual world (Murdoch, 1999). Therefore, Marcus might be an example of a mystical character because, although he does not believe in Jesus Christ, he wants other people to believe.

Moreover, he refuses being a Christian and introduces himself as a Platonist (Murdoch, 1966). In the *Meno*, human beings cannot learn something new because they just recollect things due to the good education. They cannot learn something new. The theory of recollection seems to be similar with Christian theology. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates argues that we can comprehend true knowledge by our souls. Thus, Platonism does not support the sense perception. Moreover, Socrates advocates that, after death, the souls are never destroyed and will continue learning with the gods. Platonism suggests that human beings should imitate the gods in order to be virtuous

people, especially in the beginning of the *Republic*. However, in the Cave Allegory we can see that Platonism avoids connecting the Form of the Good with the idea of God. On the other hand, in the *Timaeous*, Plato never excludes the idea of God in his philosophy. Murdoch argues that Plato established the theory of Forms because he needed a moral mind to explain moral values and that we can grasp the theory of the Forms thanks to rational thought, but they can also be seen in a theological light (Murdoch, 1999). Thus, it could be claimed that Murdoch seems to have dilemmas like Platonism.

Murdoch says that Plato portrays the good person who manages to look at the sun (Murdoch, 1999). If we focus on her arguments carefully, she avoids materializing the Form of the Good like Plato (Murdoch, 1999). She wants to point out her notion about Form of the Good in her novel to emphasize that it should be comprehended by a virtuous consciousness (Murdoch, 1999).

Although Murdoch is introduced as a British novelist and philosopher, she was born in Dublin. In 1978, Murdoch she says, “Of course, I’m not English, I’m Irish” (Dooley&White, 2019, p.999). In *The Time of the Angels*, we can clearly see Murdoch is criticizing English society. Murdoch’s arguments might be evaluated in the light of Platonism in order to assume the differences between Britishness and Irishness. In *Axioms, Duties, Eros*, Murdoch believes that human beings are joined to the world thanks to Plato’s Eros because “It gives sense to the idea of loving good” (Murdoch, 1992, p.496). In the *Meno*, Socrates argues that shape is a limit of solid in order to perceive colour, but it does not define the Form of Virtue (*Meno* 76a). For this reason, it could be asserted that the Form of the Good does not have any shape because the idea of good is nameless. Parallel to these arguments, it might be said that the good man should not be sought in races and religions. Murdoch suggests that the

good man should be sought in humbleness in *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts*. For this reason, it could be thought that Murdoch's aim is to give a social message, not a political argument in her novel.

In the *Meno*, Socrates says that virtue should be one, but that it cannot be taught because it does not have any teacher (*Meno* 96c). In the *Protagoras*, Protagoras argues that it is possible to become a good person for a while, but not forever (*Protagoras*, 343d-e). When we focus on early Christian thought, we see Jesus Christ as an inner teacher who teaches moral values (Johansen, 1998/1991). Christian theology suggests following Christ in order to be a good and virtuous person.

Murdoch seems to agree with Platonism because she believes that human beings are selfish and do not have any aim in their lives. Thus, their lives should not be observed in reference to external reality (Murdoch, 1999). It could be claimed that Leo does not become a good person in light of a transcendent reality. Socrates says that virtue does not have any teacher. Murdoch and Platonism state that people are naturally selfish. Following Christ is not enough to become virtuous because Murdoch does not support the notion of external reality in her moral philosophy. Thus, Leo should not be portrayed as an immoral person because of being atheist. On the other hand, it might be suggested that Leo is immoral due to being devoid of love.

Murdoch firmly believes that moral philosophy centres the notion of love in order to mention ethics (Murdoch, 1999). In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts*, she argues that the Form of Virtue is comprehended in light of true vision with a qualified consciousness (Murdoch, 1999). Moreover, she believes that the idea of good cannot be defined, yet, due to the Form of Virtue, we manage to come closer to the notion of good. In other words, the Form of Virtue should be related to a

qualified consciousness in her novel. Arguably, Plato's Cave Allegory refers to a qualified consciousness, the notion of pure reasoning.

Murdoch suggests that qualified consciousness brings the notion of justice and that we can comprehend this notion due to love (Murdoch, 1999). Thus, it could be suggested that Leo does not have a qualified consciousness in order to comprehend the Form of Justice because he seems devoid of the Form of Love. Leo makes his first appearance in his discussion with Muriel on moral values as he discloses his atheism (Murdoch, 1966). Leo may be thought as an existentialist character, because Murdoch says that existentialist philosophy makes man God (Murdoch, 1999).

Murdoch does not seem to support existentialist philosophy because she believes that the notion of will does not give a true vision of ethics. Furthermore, she claims that the notion of will abolishes the notion of love while explaining ethics (Murdoch, 1999). Therefore, it could be claimed that Murdoch rebuts existentialism's arguments through Leo. On the other hand, it could be claimed that, despite the fact that Platonism seems to support pure reasoning, it never abolishes the Form of Love. Socrates emphasizes importance of love in the *Symposium*. According to Murdoch, Plato's Eros should be known instinctively, which helps with the comprehension of reality (Murdoch, 1999).

In general, Murdoch believes that human beings can be saved by love, and we can see this notion in *The Time of the Angels*. For instance, Muriel starts to feel sad for Eugene after his icon is stolen and plans to buy him a small present to make him happy. Muriel also feels upset for her cousin Elizabeth because Elizabeth has been living in her room for a long time and never been outside. Muriel does not believe in God, which spares her from salvation in an external reality. Muriel has been trying to

write poems in order to be a happy and virtuous person. If we focus on Murdoch's moral philosophy, she does not despise people who believe in God, yet does not support the notion of external reality (Murdoch, 1999).

In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts*, Murdoch indicates that some concepts, such as the notion of modesty, the notion of good and the notion of virtue, might be useful to understand the Form of the Good (Murdoch, 1999). However, she avoids materializing the Form of the Good like Plato, who portrays the good man who manages to look at the sun yet does not explain the meaning of the sun. Despite the fact that the Form of the Good seems to be an indefinable notion in Murdochian philosophy and her novels, she pictures the good man who manages to be a modest person (Murdoch, 1999). Furthermore, she believes that the modest person should not be seen in post-Kantian philosophy because the notion of will only values the notion of freedom (Murdoch, 1999). Moreover, she avoids connecting the notion of freedom with the Form of the Good in Leo's case.

Further, Murdoch believes that the modest person does not want Form of the Good for its benefits (Murdoch, 1999). Therefore, it could be claimed that Muriel and her uncle Marcus are modest people. Despite the fact that Marcus and Muriel do not believe in God, they manage to come closer to the Form of the Good. It could be claimed that Murdoch wants to show that the notion of religion and the notion of will do not determine the Form of the Good and the good man, but the notion of the self does. We see this notion while Marcus is helping Leo. After Leo quarrels with his father about the icon, he decides to get the icon back. He visits Marcus to take some money (Murdoch, 1966). Despite the fact that Marcus knows that Leo is a liar, he helps him without any interest. Muriel buys a Russian box to make Eugene happy.

Muriel and Marcus might be portrayed as people who manage to find the way of Eros, a desire which shows goodness (Murdoch, 1999).

Even though Plato was homosexual, his homosexual identity is never mentioned in his metaphysics. However, Murdoch emphasizes his homosexuality to show Platonic love. In *The Fire and the Sun*, she argues that homosexual love could be evaluated as a moral point in the *Symposium* (Murdoch, 1999). Moreover, she argues that clean and pure homosexual love should be understood as a transcendent image of unrelenting nature of beauty (Murdoch, 1999). In the *Lysis*, the Virtue of Friendship is also explained in the light of homosexual love. Therefore, Murdoch refers to Platonism to define pure love. Furthermore, pure love and innocent feelings do not damage human relations.

Platonic love can be assumed as a moral point in Murdoch's moral philosophy and in *The Time of the Angels*. Murdoch's argument about homosexual love can be clearly seen especially when Leo visits Marcus for help with the icon:

Marcus turned. Leo was picking up his overcoat. Marcus took the coat out of his hand. Leo started at Marcus and his face filled out with serenity, it glowed. He said 'Aah –' Marcus threw the coat on to the floor.

'What's the address of the shop?' said Marcus

'Here, it's on this paper, I've written it down.'

'I'll go and see the shopman,' said Marcus. 'I promise nothing. Now get out.'

Leo picked up his coat and scarf and put them on. He looked at Marcus now with the same serene beam, radiating not gratitude so much as a gentle solicitous pity. Then with a deliberation which was almost that of curiosity he reached out and touched Marcus on the shoulder. It was a tentative tap, not like a caress. Marcus caught Leo's retreating wrist, squeezed it violently, and threw it from him. For a moment they faced each other, staring. Then Marcus

moved back, putting the table between them. ‘Get out’. (Murdoch, 1966, p.127)

Homosexual love is also an unrelenting nature of beauty when Marcus is trying to have a word with his brother about his attitudes. Carel gets angry with and smacks Marcus (Murdoch, 1966). Moreover, Marcus does not tell of his brother’s slap to Norah while they are talking about him. He starts to think that his brother wants to enlighten him when he smacks him. Thus, he believes that this slap should be a mark of love (Murdoch, 1966).

In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts*, Murdoch argues that consciousness is developed by a metaphor. She indicates that moral philosophy should not avoid using metaphor to divulge the notion of virtue (Murdoch, 1999). In her view, Plato explains the Form of the Good by giving the Cave Allegory as an explication of truth (Murdoch, 1999). In *The Time of the Angels*, Murdoch uses Plato’s Cave Allegory to divulge the Form of the Good. All the characters have been living in a cave for years. Some of them try to find the Form of the Good in an external reality, some in human nature and some in love.

The first person to escape from the cave is Eugene. Having argued with Leo, Eugene comes to understand that the icon is not the Form of the Good. He lives in a small room in the Rectory that is always foggy and dark, like the weather in London. He is always looking at the icon. Yet, when Eugene wakes up one day, he is taken by surprise and he cannot believe in his eyes. He sees the sunshine in his room. Then Eugene gets used to looking at the sun (Murdoch, 1966). Murdoch always says that Plato portrays the good person as one who manages to look at the sun and that he never connects the Form of the Good with the idea of God. Eugene might be an example of one who starts to think consciously after seeing the sun, finding the way

of Eros. After seeing the sun, he offers to Pattie to go on a walk in the snow. After he takes his gloves off and starts to feel the snow, Eugene starts to be aware of nature and life (Murdoch, 1966). That is the day when he understands that the Form of the Good is undefinable. Thanks to Eugene, Pattie manages her own escape and has her first innocent memory (Murdoch, 1966). After Eugene comes to understand the meaning of real happiness, and he proposes to Pattie.

According to Murdoch, due to the love of beauty, truth can be grasped. When one manages to grasp the truth, one can easily avoid fantasy and egotism (Murdoch, 1999). Eugene and Pattie manage to find the way of Eros. Plato's accusations that artists are immoral, especially in the *Republic*, rests on his distrust in sense perception. In the *Phaedo*, this is explained in his theory of re-collection. In the Cave Allegory, Plato points to pure reasoning to comprehend the truth. Therefore, it may be claimed that Eugene's icon is an image of the Form of the Good, but the notion of nature shows real beauty. In other words, when Eugene starts to think consciously, he comes to understand that he should not have materialized the Form of the Good.

As we have mentioned, Murdoch suggests metaphoric discourse in her moral philosophy. When we focus on that discourse in *The Times of the Angels*, we can see that she does not support Christian theology in order to divulge morality. In other words, Murdoch seems to be against the Father-God. Arguably, she opposes the notion of suffering in order to reach true moral values. One becomes a virtuous person as one manages to avoid egotism and selfishness,.

Murdoch upholds that Plato points to pure reasoning when he wants to show the notion of enlightenment, that suffering is a kind of mental illness and has no value in Platonism (Murdoch, 1999). On the other hand, she argues that the notion of

salvation relates to the idea of suffering in Christianity and does not support the doctrine of purgatory to divulge the idea of good (Murdoch, 1999). Being a good person does not depend on religion but on a virtuous consciousness, which is not the product of pain.

In *The Time of the Angels*, Murdoch criticizes the notion of pain ironically, especially in the argument between Pattie and Carel, which turns into sexual intercourse even though she has had an enjoyable day with Eugene (Murdoch, 1966, pp.156-157). Pattie does not have a virtuous consciousness. She is still in the cave and arguably does this out of her faith in salvation through pain. Therefore, it could be claimed that Pattie believes in *agape*.

Her attitude might also be thought in light of Kantian philosophy because Kant says that emotions should be connected with reason, and that human beings ought to be aware of the differences between practical and pathological love in order to grasp the truth (Murdoch, 1999). In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Concepts* Murdoch emphasizes that the Form of the Good should not be understood in the light of Kantian philosophy because it values the notion of will in order to define the truth (Murdoch, 1999). Therefore, in the light of Kantian philosophy Pattie might be portrayed as a person who does not know the difference between practical love and pathological.

Moreover, Murdoch argues that the Form of the Good is more important rather than the idea of love because false love directs to a false good. The notion of love should be known as a passion and energy which directs us to the Cosmos, but not equal to the Form of the Good. In *The Fire and the Sun*, Murdoch argues that Eros should be known as a principle in order to understand the Cosmos, but on the other

hand Murdoch points that Plato's Eros should also be known as a sophist (Murdoch, 1999). Pattie and Carel's relationship might be thought in the light of Kantian philosophy, but, if we focus on *The Sovereignty of Good Over Concepts*, Murdoch wants to distinguish between the notion of will and the notion of psyche (Murdoch, 1999). For her, human beings should be explored in the light of psyche, not will. Thus, Pattie does not protect her psyche from ego and fantasy and might be portrayed as a person who does not manage to comprehend the Form of the Good.

Mary Warnock argues for Murdoch as an existentialist philosopher (Murdoch, 1999). This notion might be refuted by analyzing *The Time of the Angels*. Contrary to Warnock's claims, Murdoch rebuts existentialist arguments, for instance in Marcus and Carel's discussions on moral values in light of atheism. Marcus thinks that one does not need to believe in God to learn moral values (Murdoch, 1966). At this point, it could be thought that Murdoch wants to cut Plato's Form of the Good from theology. Despite the fact that Carel is introduced as a priest of non-God, it might be thought that Murdoch created this character to rebut existentialist arguments because, although Carel does not believe in God any more, he says, "It is not as the German theologians imagine, and the rationalists with their milk-and-water modern theism, and those who call themselves atheist and have changed nothing but a few words" (Murdoch, 1966, p.171). Murdoch further distinguishes between the notion of will and the notion of psyche to emphasize the Form of the Good. She should be known as an atheist philosopher and writer, and not an existentialist.

A Platonic reading of her work will be useful in order to comprehend Murdoch's arguments about ethics. In the *Republic*, Plato points to the Form of the Good in order to ponder true knowledge, especially through his sun allegory, where we learn that the seasons and the years are governed by the sun's power (*Republic*

516b-c). The sun allegory might be connected with a transcendent reality. In the *Timaeus*, Plato suggests that an unselfish mind is able to understand the Cosmos, can understand the world in the light of Form of the Good. Although the idea of God has an important role in Plato's metaphysics, he avoids relating Form of the Good to the idea of God. In "On 'God' and 'Good'," Murdoch argues that the idea of God should be known as a hopeful notion because loving God has meaning, but loving the Form of the Good does not have meaning. Thus, she wants to distinguish the idea of God and Form of the Good (Murdoch, 1999). In *The Fire and the Sun*, she argues that Plato's Eros should be known as a principle to understand the Cosmic way (Murdoch, 1999). Thus, it could be argued that she wants to centre the idea of love in her philosophy.

In *The Time of the Angels* Murdoch questions the essence of goodness and moral values, but not relative to the idea of God. Therefore, it could be asserted that Murdoch creates atheist characters, but should not be portrayed as an existentialist philosopher because of it. She emphasizes that the notion of will is not enough to comprehend the Form of the Good in *The Sovereignty of Over Other Good Concepts* (Murdoch, 1999).

At this point, Murdoch's argument might be connected with the Euthyphro Dilemma from Platonism. In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates questions that whether the good is good because the gods want it or for itself (Euthyphro). Socrates believes that the gods have different opinions, so arguably the idea of good cannot be explained in light of a transcendent reality. Furthermore, the Form of the Good should be above everything. For this reason, it could be asserted that one does not have to believe in God in order to comprehend the Form of the Good. The Euthyphro Dilemma is seen in Caryl's discussions with Marcus about God:

We do not know the truth because as I told you it is something that cannot be endured. People will endlessly conceal from themselves that good is only good if one is good for nothing. The whole history of philosophy, the whole theology, is this act of concealment. The old delusion ends, but there will be others of a different kind, angelic delusions which we cannot now imagine. One must be good for nothing, without sense or reward, in the world of Jehoavah and Leviathan, and that is why goodness is impossible for us human beings. It is not only impossible, it is not even imaginable, we cannot really name it, in our realm it is non-existent [...] With or without the illusion of God, goodness is impossible to us. We have been made too low in order of things. God made impossible that there should be true saints. But now he is gone we are not set free for sanctity. We are the prey of the angels (Murdoch, 1966, pp.173-174).

Thanks to Eugene's icon, we can learn many things about the characters. Despite the fact that Marcus does not believe in God, he takes the icon back because he promises Leo, but takes the icon back without any interest. The day after Marcus speaks to Carel about God and moral values, he comes to understand that his brother is mentally deranged (Murdoch, 1966). He starts to think of saving his brother. At that time, Marcus comes to understand that Carel cannot be saved by goodness because goodness does not belong to human nature (Murdoch, 1966). Plato does not introduce Eros as a God in the *Symposium*. Eros is a daemon, an instinct. Murdoch argues that Eros should be known as a creative force which demonstrates the highest morality in the world (Murdoch, 1999). Thus, it could be claimed that Marcus understands that he cannot save his brother with the Form of the Good since it does not belong to human nature. In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts*, Murdoch argues that human beings are selfish creatures without purpose who should be analyzed in reference to their nature, not external institutions (Murdoch, 1999). We can see Murdoch's notion about human beings in her novel *The Time of the Angels*, especially when Marcus

comes to understand that Carel can be saved by love. Love seems to be a real human activity (Murdoch, 1966).

As regards Muriel, who is afraid of her father and dislikes Pattie and feels concerned about her cousin Elizabeth who is not friendly to her, she is a lonely person. She is asked to leave the Rectory by her father. Murdoch avoids defining the Form of the Good like Plato and claims that the Form of Virtue can be learnt through arts that teach objective thinking. In its dialectical processes art purifies the soul (Murdoch, 1999). Muriel loves writing poems. Murdoch's *The Fire and the Sun* reveals that the notion of faith does not determine the notion of mercy. Mercy is always demonstrated by theological examples to teach the Form of Virtue, but Murdoch wants to show the merciful person in the light of art. Thus, Muriel might be portrayed in light of this argument.

In "On 'God' and 'Good'," Murdoch confesses her ineptness in understanding Plato (Murdoch, 1999). If we focus on her argument, the Form of the Good should be valued more than the Form of Love because Murdoch believes we cannot define the Form of the Good, though it has been defined under the light of history, reason and theology. Moreover, we cannot understand the essence of good under the light of love because, in "The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts," false love shows a false good. We cannot grasp the truth (Murdoch, 1999). The Form of the Good cannot be defined but we can see its light on modest people (Murdoch, 1999).

Muriel might be pictured as not distinguishing the Form of the Good and the Form of Love. In her loneliness, Muriel wants to find the Form of the Good under the light of love. Murdoch wants to value Plato's Form of the Good more than the Form

of Love. The indefinableness of the good might be seen in Muriel's attitude. We should not relate the Form of the Good to the Form of Love.

In "Metaphysics and Ethics," Murdoch suggests that we should distinguish between what is good and what things are good (Murdoch, 1999). Morality should not be related to concepts, such as metaphysical arguments, notion of the will (Murdoch, 1999). In Platonism, we comprehend the truth under the light of the Form of the Good, but Plato never explains the meaning of Form of the Good. Therefore, it could be claimed that human beings cannot succeed in being a good man, but might manage to see the light of the Form of the Good. In "On 'God' and 'Good'," the enemy of morality is sado-masochism and the psyche should be protected from fantasies and egotism in order to learn how to love (Murdoch, 1999). The notion of suffering confuses the mind and the self cannot see justly. Plato's philosophy should be known as the study of death not the study of suffering (Murdoch, 1999). Murdoch believes that human beings are selfish creatures who dream in order not to face reality (Murdoch, 1999). Thus, she believes human beings try to understand morality under the light of theology, history and reason. However, she also believes that the enemy of morality is the relentless ego and selfishness.

In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts*, Murdoch says that post-Kantian philosophy is not enough to learn ethics, because it just values the notion of will to define morality (Murdoch, 1999). In "On 'God' and 'Good'," moral philosophy should centre on the idea of love because the notion of will is not enough to comprehend the Form of the Good (Murdoch, 1999). Murdoch argues that if we continue valuing function of will, we turn into neo-Kantian Lucifers (Murdoch, 1999).

Thus, it could be argued that Carel does not protect his psyche from selfishness and, because of his sado-masochistic fantasies, turns into a Lucifer. Carel should not be pictured as an immoral person because of his atheism, but because of his fantasies. Murdoch wants to show that neither theological facts nor the notion of atheism determine the good man.

After Pattie learns of Rector Carel's love affair with his own daughter, she writes a letter to him and she leaves the Rectory. In her letter, we learn that Pattie loves Carel with her soul and body (Murdoch, 1966). After Carel reads Pattie's letter, he commits suicide. It could be claimed that rector Carel loved Pattie with his body and soul, although he seems to be a tyrant. At the end of the novel, Elizabeth and Muriel manage to escape from the cave because Muriel knows that she has to look after her sister, a relic from her father. Eugene goes to new place to purify his soul and Leo starts to study Russian literature. Although Marcus does not manage to save his brother, he learns something that the Form of the Good cannot be defined but people can be saved by Plato's Eros. Thus, he decides to write his book about the idea of love instead of the idea of good.

CONCLUSION

The discussions in this thesis had a view to prove that Dame Iris Murdoch is a Platonist and furthermore to picture the good man who manages to look at Plato's Form of the Good in a place devoid of a transcendent reality. In the first part, the Plato's epistemology was given in an exploration of the theory of the Forms. According to Platonism, we cannot comprehend the truth in the world of phenomena, because Plato believes that true knowledge cannot be clearly perceived by our senses. Perceptions of the physical world are just shadows of the Forms and true knowledge is comprehensible only in the world of ideas.

In the *Meno*, Socrates indicates that true knowledge can be apprehended thanks to the psyche, seen especially in the example of slave boy (*Meno* 82b). The example reveals that we should value true knowledge rather than true opinions because truth is only gained through true knowledge. Furthermore, Plato indicates that all knowledge must depend on a pre-knowledge. Thus, it may be claimed that Plato wants emphasise pure reasoning. According to Socrates, virtue cannot be taught because virtue does not have any teacher. Thus, it could be that Socrates has taught the most important thing in the *Meno*.

In the *Phaedo*, despite the fact that Socrates' thoughts on the soul generally seem to be associated with a transcendent reality, Plato's goal is to portray the philosopher as a person who is only interested in reasoning in order to have a virtuous life in light of recollection theory. Plato believes that we cannot comprehend true wisdom due to our senses, only through pure reasoning and philosophy (*Phaedo* 83a).

In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates indicates that, if one does not know the nature of a thing, one has to believe in shadows. The emphatic point Socrates teaches is that piety does not mean endearing the gods, if we do not know what piety itself is.

In the *Republic*, Plato argues that truth cannot be comprehended in tales, especially in the Homeric epic. Forms of the states bring Forms of human souls, so truth can be grasped in light of pure reasoning, in light of the Form of the Good in his philosophy, but Plato never explains its meaning. He emphasizes pure reasoning because he believes that we can grasp the truth thanks to the mind. According to Platonism, human beings should know the difference between opinion and knowledge in order to grasp the truth. Thus, Plato likened people to prisoners who have been living in a cave since they were born. In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concept*, Murdoch argues that “the *Republic* is to be thought of as an allegory of the soul” (Murdoch, 1999, p.377).

In the second chapter of the thesis, Murdoch’s arguments are handled to comprehend her moral arguments. According to her, we should re-read Plato to develop art and literature because she believes that Plato is the greatest artist (Murdoch, 1999). Although she creates existentialist characters in her novels, Murdoch introduces herself as a Platonist.

Murdoch is an atheist philosopher for whom moral values should not be sought in external reality. Although her novels might reveal Murdoch as an existentialist writer, she emphasizes her own Platonism (Murdoch, 1999). In *The Fire and the Sun*, Murdoch argues that dialectic should be known as a method to purify the soul in Platonism (Murdoch, 1999). She finds Platonism successful in divulging human nature and the notion of psyche in light of the Form of the Good because in

“On ‘God’ and ‘Good’,” she states that the Form of the Good should be comprehended in the visible realm, thus rejecting its relation to the idea of God in her moral philosophy.

Murdoch supports that a person’s goodness owes itself to nothing whereby we can suggest that the Form of the Good is not materialized in her moral philosophy. In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts*, she pictures human beings as selfish creatures without telos in their lives (Murdoch, 1999). Human beings have tried to find salvation for centuries, but Murdoch believes that human life should not be sought in an external reality (Murdoch, 1999). Arguably, the Oxford thinkers misunderstood Murdoch, because in “On ‘God’ and ‘Good’,” she argues that moral philosophy should centre the idea of love to teach ethics. She argues that existentialism makes man God and values the notion of will, but she believes that ethics is not learnt by valuing this notion.

In *The Fire and the Sun*, she refers to Plato’s Eros in order to emphasize the idea of love. Platonism never excludes the idea of love, although it supports the idea of God. In the *Symposium*, Socrates says that, due to love, we can understand what beauty itself is. It could be claimed that Murdoch is really a Platonist because she does not want to relate the Form of the Good to Kantian philosophy, history and religion. According to her, moral life’s enemy is egotism and selfishness; immorality is not a consequence of atheism. Religious faith gives a powerful energy, but virtuous person should not be portrayed in the light of religion (Murdoch, 1999). She wants to show that a person should be good for no reason and that being a good person depends on a virtuous consciousness. In *The Sovereignty of Good Over Concepts*, the Form of Virtue and the Form of the Good cannot be defined because they have to be aimless like human life.

Moreover, Murdoch believes that enemy of the moral life is fantasy because personal fantasies damage the psyche. Fantasy is the enemy of the arts, too. Murdoch emphasizes the importance of art in its ability to teach objective thinking and its encouragement of imagination. Plato does not trust art because he fears art's brave character. Nevertheless, Murdoch upholds that re-reading Plato will develop our appreciation of art and literature (Murdoch, 1999). In *The Fire and The Sun*, she delineates how Platonism can teach one to protect the psyche from selfishness. It could be claimed that her religion is art, not God the Father, and that Murdoch's *logos* is Plato, not Jesus Christ.

The Time of the Angels includes Platonic themes. In "Art is the Imitation of Nature," Murdoch argues that art should not have any aim and artists do not have to give any moral messages because art is an aimless notion like human life. *The Time of the Angels* does not give any moral messages. Murdoch does not want to teach morality in her novel but to indicate the indefinableness of the Form of the Good.

Despite the fact that all its characters are atheists, it should not be thought of as an existentialist novel. Murdoch's goal is to refute post-Kantian philosophy's arguments in light of Platonism, emphasizing the psyche in the demonstration of ethical values. Virtue depends on psyche and character, not religion. The notion of religion does not show the Form of the Good because it cannot be sought in selfish human beings' lives. Caryl Chessman is proof that Kantian philosophy is not enough to teach ethics. The notion of will cannot yield the Form of the Good. Moral philosophy should centre on the notion of love.

Murdoch wants to emphasize the Form of Love in her novel. Although the Form of the Good is far from human beings, it can shed light on our understanding of

life. Immorality feeds not on godlessness but lovelessness, demonstrated through Leo. The Good cannot be explained “because of the immense distance” (Murdoch, 1999, p.381). Parallel to this argument, the good man should not be sought in any religion or ideology. In the *Republic*, Socrates says that justice should not be desired for its reputation if we do not know justice as a whole. The good man knows the pointlessness of virtue. Therefore, he does not want anything for its reputation. Murdoch suggests that we should seek the good man in humility because the modest man manages to see pointlessness of virtue, is never blinded by self.

Murdoch emphasizes that philosophy should be known as the study of death, not the study of pain, as she leads Caryl Fisher to suicide. The notion of suffering confuses the intelligence.

Even though Plato’s Eros is known as a Sophist, Eros always desires good and beautiful things (*Symposium* 206b). In *The Fire and the Sun*, Murdoch argues that we can become closer to the Form of the Good thanks to the way of Eros, which should be known as the highest morality to understand the world. Thus, it could be claimed that Marcus is an instance to prove Murdoch’s notion. He comes to understand that he cannot save Caryl with the Form of the Good, because it is not a human activity. On the other hand, love is a human activity.

Murdoch indicates that human beings are saved by love, thanks to Plato’s Eros. I would like to finish my last sentence with Murdoch’s sentence, “I can *experience* the transcendence of the beautiful, but (I think) not the transcendence of the good” (Murdoch, 1999, p.348).

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