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MEKÂN KONUŞMALLARI

**GEOFFREY
BOWE**

SOCRATIC SPACES:

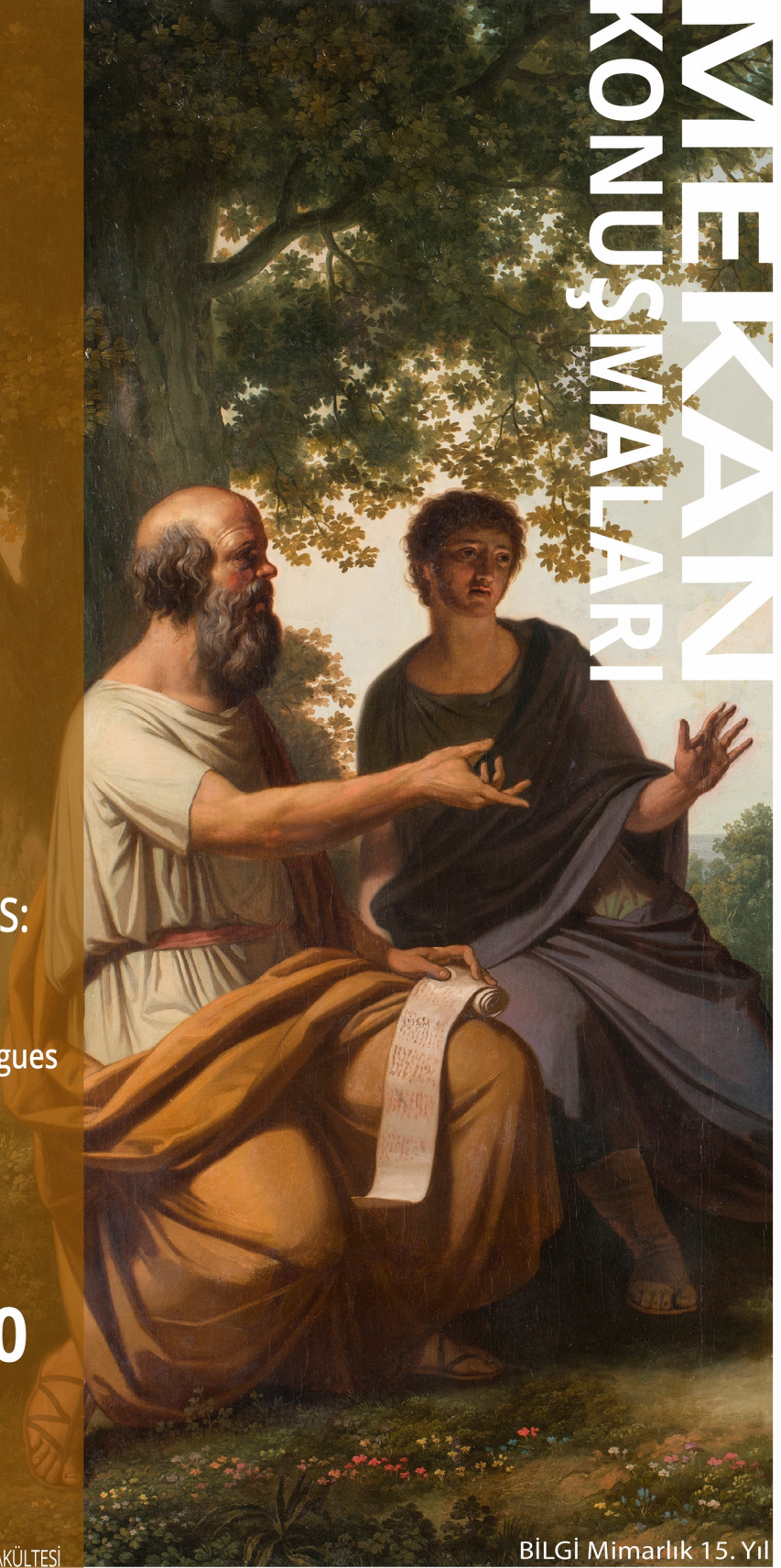
Ingress and egress,
Inside and outside
-setting in Plato's Dialogues

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saat. 18:00

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BİLGİ Mimarlık 15. Yılı



İstanbul
Bilgi Üniversitesi
LAUREATE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

Talk at Bilgi University 17 March: Geoffrey Bowe on Socratic Spaces

Date: 17 March 2020

Time: 18.00

Place: Istanbul Bilgi University Mimarlık Fak Kazandibi (inside library building entry floor)

SOCRATIC SPACES: Ingress and Egress, Inside and Outside – Setting in Plato’s Dialogues G.S. Bowe, Istanbul Technical University

Abstract

In his 1995 essay “Two Suppers,” the remarkable essayist George Steiner compares the Last Supper of Christ in the Book of John, and the Symposium of Plato. Both texts, suggests Steiner work on two axes; the first is the axis of day and night whereas:

“[t]he second axis relates to the first as space does to time. It is that of outside and inside. Once more, this binomial principle is so ubiquitous that we grow inattentive to the wealth of its implications. A door, an ante-chamber are, for those coming from outside, as dense with symbolic values and ambiguity as is twilight. Egress can be either as threatening as the dead of night or as liberating as dawn. The two axes intersect at numberless points. Moreover, just as there are minutes inside hours, hours encased in days, days circumscribed by weeks and the altering light and dark of the seasons, so there are external walls, inner precincts, rooms within rooms which segment and specify locale. The Symposium and the telling of Jesus’ last or paschal meal dramatize these delimitations and the acts of ‘border-crossing’ (literal transgression). In these two documents, the outside is, formidably, that of the city, of Athens and Jerusalem.”

Taking its cue from Steiner, my talk looks at various framings of Plato’s dialogues, in an attempt to articulate the significance of Plato’s choices of setting. I discuss Socrates conversation outside the city walls in the Phaedrus, Socrates’ inside the house of Cephalus in the Republic, Socrates’ lingering outside the house of Agathon in the Symposium, Socrates meeting on the steps of the King Archon in the Euthyphro, and Socrates’ refusal to leave the city of Athens in the Crito. I extend Steiner’s treatment of the axis of “inside and outside” to show the significance of these framings for understanding Plato’s construction of the dramatic figure of Socrates, and its significance for his philosophy in general.