

03. Plato, *The Republic*

August 29, Sept. 5, 7, 12, 2000

[All page references refer to the Grube/Reeve translation]

[Already compared to Lisa's 1061 lectures Compare these notes with Mary's seminar notes.-can't find!]

Announcements:

- 1) Hand in RP #1
- 2) Anyone not signed the phone/email list or for team discussions?
- 3) I'll hand out team discussion schedule next week. For September 7, Tim Anspach and Shannon Sweat are team 1, Christian Price and Ryan Jenkins are team 2. (and anyone who hasn't signed up yet)
- 4) RP #2 posted. Due September 7, on books V-VII [What is the allegory of the cave? Why does Socrates argue that the philosopher must go back into the cave?]
- 5) Go over survey results

Book I

I. Three definitions of justice

A. **Q:** How does *The Republic* begin?

B. **Q:** What is the first definition of justice?

C. **Definition #1 (Cephalus):** Justice is doing right (Socrates changes this to "speaking the truth") and paying one's debts. (331c, p. 5-6)

1. **Q:** What is Socrates' reply?

2. Sometimes it's right to not tell the truth or pay your debts. You shouldn't return borrowed weapons to an insane man.

D. **Definition #2 (Polemarchus):** Justice is giving a man his due ("it is just to give to each what is owed to him," 331e). When Socrates presses him a bit on this (what "due" do you give to the madman with a weapon, above?), Polemarchus clarifies the definition and says that justice is doing good to one's friends and harm to one's enemies.

1. **Q:** What is Socrates' reply?

2. What if you are mistaken in your judgment and your friend is really your enemy, or vice-versa? Then you'd be harming your friends and hurting your enemies.

3. Socrates then says a just man harms no one.

a. **Q:** Why?

b. Because it makes a human less excellent, or worse in human virtue. **Go through** Socrates' dialogue, 335b-c, 10-11.

c. **Q:** From this argument can we identify what justice is? Virtue. But what is virtue? Can we tell from this? (Find your job and do it.)

d. **Q:** Does it really make you less excellent or less just if you are harmed by another? Isn't it the one who harms who is less excellent rather than the person who is harmed? Should one's justice be contingent on the actions of others?

4. Socrates also sneaks in an **undefended proposition** in his discussion with Polemarchus: He says that **justice is a craft** but never explains why it is. No one challenges him on this, though. 10-11; also 332c, 7.

E. Note that **Cephalus and Polemarchus's definitions of justice are tragic**: Justice means suffering in your turn, getting your just deserts. Justice is an eye for an eye. It's a typically Greek conception of justice.

1. Socrates dislikes the tragic conception of justice because it 1) **leads to a cycle of vengeance** that just goes on forever, 2) **it implies that the people involved aren't responsible for their acts**—it's fate to do these things; and 3) **it's relativist**: one's friends and enemies change, therefore so does justice. For Socrates a just act should be just regardless of the circumstances. A sailor doesn't sail good ships to his destination and sink bad ones.

2. **A tragic conception of justice can't establish order**, so Socrates demolishes it. He does it by ultimately flipping Polemarchus's definition on its head: from "harming one's enemies" to "the just man harms no one"

F. **Definition #3 (Thrasymachus)**: "Justice is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger" over the weaker. (338c, 14).

1. Thras says all rulers make the laws to their own advantage. **Read 15 (338e)**

2. **Q**: What is Socrates' reply?

3. The same as his reply to Polemarchus: Sometimes a ruler can be mistaken in his judgment or be ignorant of his true interests, and accidentally do what is in the advantage of the weaker rather than himself. 339c-340b, 15-16

4. **Q**: How does Thrasymachus reply?

5. A ruler never makes mistakes. **Read 16-17 (340d-341a)**

6. **Q**: Does this argument make sense? How does Socrates reply?

7. Socrates says that Thrasymachus is describing an expert. But anyone who is an expert in anything is not concerned with him/herself but their subject. A doctor isn't concerned with herself but her patients. A ship's captain isn't concerned with himself but with his sailors. A horse-breeder isn't concerned with himself but his horses. Thus, a ruler doesn't care for himself but his/her subject. 341b-342e, 17-19

8. **Q**: How does Thrasymachus respond?

Socrates has it wrong. The stronger man forces *others* to be just while he is unjust. A shepherd takes care of his flock in order to fleece them later. A cowherder takes care of his cows in order to fatten them for slaughter. **Read 19, 20 (343b-d, 344c)** That's why justice is the advantage of the stronger. Justice is what is advantageous to the stronger cos she can force others to act just (and thus to suffer) while she can profit by acting unjust. **Justice is for suckers**. The unjust man cheats, lies, and steals and ends up rich and happy while the just man is poor and ridiculed for being "square."

9. **Q**: What is Socrates's reply? (349b-350d, 25-7)

Example: A musician doesn't compete with a musician when tuning a lyre (or a guitar), she competes with a non-musician. (349e-350a, 26) Just like a doctor only competes with those who are ignorant of medicine, not other doctors. The unjust person competes with everyone, but the just person only competes with the unjust.

G. Note that **Thrasymachus's definition of justice is not tragic but tyrannical: Might makes right.**

1. Socrates dislikes this definition because it's 1) **relativist** (what is "just" for one ruler may not be for another) and 2) it **sows disunity**. It precipitates an endless struggle for power over who gets to make everyone else be "just."

2. Socrates wants a definition of justice based on fixed principles that are good for all time.

H. **Q:** Is Socrates's refutation of Thrasymachus's definition convincing?

II. Socrates's definition of justice

A. **Q:** What, then, is Socrates's definition of justice? (pp. 27-31, 350c-354c)

1. **Justice is virtue and wisdom, while injustice is vice and ignorance.** 350d, 27.

2. **Justice is unity.** 352a-c, 28-29

3. **Justice is fulfilling one's particular function (telos).** 352d-353e, 29-31. The function of the eye is to see, the function of a pruning knife is to prune, the function of a potter is to make pottery, etc. The virtue or property or excellence (*arete*) of a thing is what defines its function: the virtue of the eye is that which enables it to see, etc.

B. **Justice is not to exceed the right note**, as in tuning a lyre or a guitar.

Justice is to be in tune. The unjust man, who does not have knowledge, will go above or beyond the right note. The just man will have the right note, which creates harmony. **Justice is harmony, justice is virtue, justice is excellence (arete), justice is goodness.** To know the good is to do the good.

III. Plato has to do two things in the *Republic*.

A. He's already proved that justice is virtue and injustice is vice in his exchange with Thrasymachus.

B. **Define justice** and explore it further in depth (that takes up books I-IV)

C. **Prove that it is better to act justly than unjustly**, not just for the benefits acting justly brings but that justice is good in itself, regardless of the good consequences it produces. (That takes up books V-X)

D. In a sense, **the rest of the book is dedicated to refuting Thrasymachus's *realpolitik* definition of justice**, since Thras's definition represents "the general opinion" of Athenian citizens (358a, 34) The rest of the book is an exploration and defense of the definition of justice provided in Book I.

Book II-IV

September 5, 2000

- Book II: Skim 32-36 (357a-361b); 43-51 (368c-376c)
- Book III: 88-93 (412b-417b)
- Book IV: all

Announcements:

RP #3 (Due September 14, on *The Prince*, chaps. 1-9): Why does Machiavelli admire "armed prophets"? What is the significance of fortune and ability (sometimes translated as "prowess") for him?

I. Remember: Socrates has to do two things in the Republic

A. **Define justice** (that takes up books I-IV)

B. **Prove that it is better to act justly than unjustly**, not because people who act justly will be rewarded but because justice is good in itself, regardless of the consequences it produces. (That takes up books V-X)

1. **Gyges of Lydia's invisible ring allegory** (359d-360d, 35-36). Gyges finds a ring that makes him invisible. What would a just person do if she had such a ring? Seduce, rob, pilfer? If one acted justly only out of concern for the consequences, one probably would do these things. But one wouldn't do these things if one were just because it is right to be so regardless of the consequences.

2. [if you need to emphasize the point:] **Read** Glaucon 34, 358d

C. **Sum up justice** for Socrates as we find it in book I:

1. Justice is virtue and wisdom, while injustice is vice and ignorance. 350d, 27.

2. Justice is unity. 352a-c, 28-29

3. Justice is fulfilling one's particular function (telos). 352d-353e, 29-31.

4. Justice is harmony. Not exceeding the right note.

II. Imagining the just city

A. In order to see what justice is for the individual and why it is good to be just, it's easier to get a "bigger picture" of justice by examining justice in a polis. After all, the polis is just the individual enlarged. (368c-369a, 43)

1. **Q:** Is the community really just an individual enlarged?

2. **Q:** Is it correct to assume that justice for a polis is going to be the same as justice for an individual? Is he making an error at the level of analysis here?

3. One difference between the polis and the individual, Socrates notes: the polis is self-sufficient, the individual is not. (369b, 44)

B. Starts off by saying that **folks are born unequal**. We all differ in nature from each other. Thus, **some folks are best suited to one task**, while others are best suited for another. 370a, 45

1. Further, a person does a better job if she practices just one craft rather than many. He's against a citizen-army like the one Athens has, for example, because it means that a man has to practice more than one craft: warfare plus whatever he does for a living. 374a, 49

2. **Q:** Do you agree with Socrates so far?
3. Thus, the craft of certain people should be to guard the polis. (374e, 49) He calls this group the **guardian class**, which he'll later call **auxiliaries**. Much of Book III is about the education and creation of this elite class.
4. **Q:** How is this class of rulers to be created?

III. The Noble Lie

- A. In order to get people to accept this guardian class we have to tell them a few little fibs or myths. The first myth is the **Myth of Brotherhood**: the earth is the mother of all people. Thus, all people are brothers and sisters, and the land they live on is their mother and nurse and should be defended as such. (414d-e, 91)
- B. **Myth of the metals**: Folks are by nature divided into three classes of people, or "metals": bronze or iron (workers and merchants and craftsmen), silver (auxiliaries, or soldiers), and gold (guardians, or rulers). 415a-c, 91-92
1. Plato here is setting up a natural aristocracy. People are *not* all created equal according to him. The nature or "metal" of each individual gives her a particular function or place in this society.
- C. **Q:** What's "noble" about the noble lie?
1. **Q:** Is it ironic that he's establishing his perfectly just city on a lie? I thought the just man harms no one and the function of philosophers is to tell the truth.
 2. **Q:** But isn't our society based on some myths, too? Especially "All men are created equal" and the American Dream?
 3. Maybe the noble lie is a **strategy**. Socrates feels he has to tell it, given the society he lives in. It's a necessary compromise.

IV. The virtues of the just polis

- A. The kallipolis possesses **four key virtues**: wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice. 427e, 103, 428e-433e, 104-109
1. **Wisdom**: knowledge, good judgment, truth. This virtue belongs to the gold guardian class.
 2. **Courage**: bravery, freedom from fear (of death), judgment (i.e. determining whether an act is courageous or foolhardy). Courage is like a colorfast dye that won't wash out. **Read** 105, 4293-430a This virtue belongs to the silver auxiliaries.
 3. **Moderation**, or self-discipline: control of one's desires, temperance, judgment, obedience (for the bronze class). This virtue belongs to the craftsmen.
 4. **Q:** What is justice, then?
- B. **Justice**: Doing what is naturally "fitted" for you; doing your own job. **Read** 433a-b, 108. Find your own function or *telos* in life and perform it. Provided you do what is suited for you according to your "metal," you'll perform the virtue of what you're suited for and justice arises from this.
1. If you have bronze in your soul, i.e. if you are "fitted" to be a worker, do your task as best you can and don't entertain aspirations to rise above it. If you do try to "mix metals," that leads to disharmony and injustice.
 2. **Justice, for Plato, is harmony among all three classes** in the polis, and **among the three virtues** in the person. It is doing one's job and minding

one's own business without meddling in the affairs of the other class. This harmony of the 3 classes and the 3 virtues is justice.

3. **Injustice**, therefore, is the meddling of one class into the affairs of the other. If you do something you're not suited for, you create disharmony, both within the community and within you. **Read 434a-c, 109**

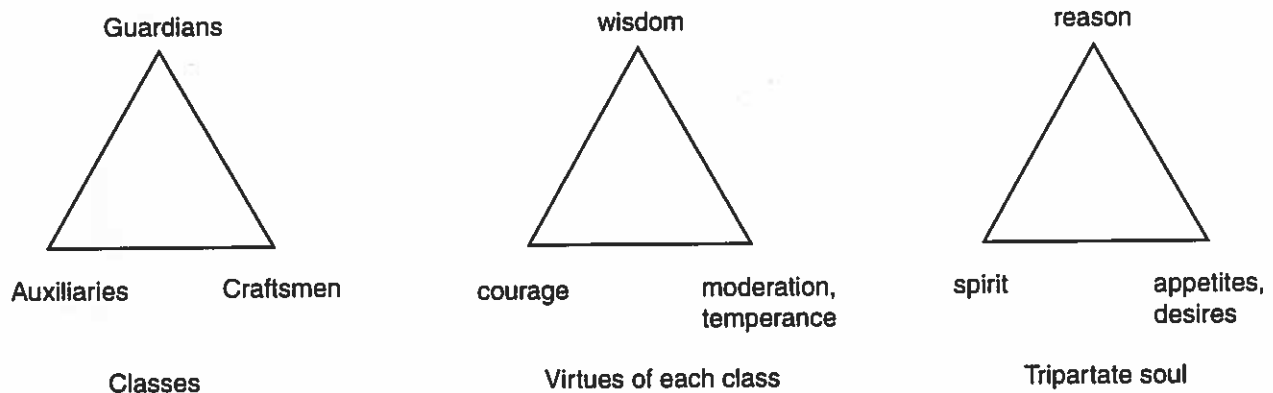
C. All three classes possess the virtue of moderation, auxiliaries also have courage, and guardians possess wisdom as well as moderation and courage. All of them can possess the virtue of justice.

D. **Plato is very concerned about conflict and division in the polis**, particularly among classes. Most poleis are actually two poleis, one rich and one poor. But since his kallipolis overcomes class conflict through the creation of the three groups of people it is genuinely one polis. 422e-423b, 98

E. He also creates a polis that is **very resistant to change**. He's even willing to censor the poets (including Homer!), music, and even children's games to prevent disharmony and disruption (99-100). Change is corruption for him. He wants the polis to be as changeless (and therefore as enduring) as possible. Relates to his theory of the forms.

III. The Tripartate Soul

A. The individual has the same three parts in his soul as the polis does. 435b, 110
The soul is simply a microcosm of the state. The state is the individual blown up.



Justice is harmony among the three parts

B. The soul consists of **appetites or desires, spirit, and reason**.

1. One's appetites are controlled through temperance.
2. Spirit or enthusiasm relates to courage
3. The rational part of the soul rules over the rest of the soul.

C. **When an individual allows his reason to rule over his spirit and his appetites, all three parts of the soul are in harmony, and this is justice.** None of the three parts of the soul become excessive or dominate the rest of the body. 442c-d, 118

1. **Read 443c-444a, 119-20.**

D. Everyone has all three virtues in their soul, but in different degrees. Craftsmen don't have as much reason (or spirit) as auxiliaries or guardians, but they can use what reason they do have to rule over their appetites and not reach beyond their station in life. **Only certain people can develop the virtues of wisdom and courage**, and those few are guardians and auxiliaries. **But all citizens can exercise moderation or temperance.** Justice is when you have balance among all three virtues.

E. Thus, **you don't need to have all three virtues in equal parts to be just.** You need to fulfill your *telos* whatever amounts of the virtues you possess, thus resulting in harmony of the soul, i.e. justice.

F. **Injustice** is disharmony within the soul, within the virtues. Plato is not just concerned about class war within the polis, he's also concerned about civil war within one's soul. His goal is to avoid such a war. 444b-c, 120

G. **Q:** What do you think of this definition of justice? Is it superior to Thrasymachus's (justice is what is in the interest of the stronger)?

September 7, 2000

Book V-VII

- Book V: skim 122-30 (449a-456b); read 146-56 (471c-480a)
- Book VI: all
- Book VII: 186-93 (514a-521b)

Announcements:

- **RP #3 posted** [Due September 14, on *The Prince*, chaps. 1-9: Why does Machiavelli admire “armed prophets”? What is the significance of fortune and ability (sometimes translated as “prowess”) for him?]
- Tripartate Soul handout has also been posted on the web in the “materials” page
- Always looking for suggestions on the web page. Need help with frames.
- Paper #1 assignment will be handed out next week

✓ **I. Recap on what justice is**

A. Justice is harmony is minding your own business is fulfilling one’s *telos*.

1. [Explain more: tripartate soul, etc.]

2. **Any questions?**

B. **Q:** If justice is finding your function in life and performing it excellently, would being an excellent thief be justice in Socrates’s opinion?

1. I’d say no, cos a robber disrupts the harmony of society.

✓ **II. The training of women and men alike (122-30, 449a-456b)**

A. Why would the kallipolis give women and men equal training? Aren’t the natures of men and women different, thus it would violate justice to not assign different work according to their different natures? (eg. 127, 453b-c)

B. Socrates replies that only certain differences and certain similarities matter in constructing the just polis. The only real difference between women and men is that women bear children and men beget them. But this difference is not significant. (128, 454d-e; 129, 455b) The difference that’s important is the “metal” in one’s soul, i.e. what class one belongs to or virtue one possesses.

C. **Q:** Is this an example of early feminism on Plato’s part?

1. Not really: E.g. 131-2, 457c

D. Keep in mind that **the Greeks’ central concern was for equality, not freedom**. They were more concerned about who was equal and who wasn’t than who is excluded from politics and wasn’t. For the Greeks, equality was not natural (they didn’t believe that “all men are created equal”) but that men are in fact created unequal, in talents, abilities, etc. Thus, this equality had to be constructed in political life. (see Saxonhouse, *Athenian Democracy*)

1. The Greeks weren’t concerned with who was free and who was a slave (that’s a concern for the Enlightenment). Instead, they were concerned with who was an equal and who was an unequal, and how to equals rule among themselves and over unequals. *Isonomia* over *demokratia*.

2. Thus, the condition of women, slavery, and imperialism were not morally problematic for ancient Greek citizens: these people were clearly unequals and required being ruled over.

III. **Philosopher-kings** (146-56, 471c-480a, Book VI)

A. Glaucon asks Socrates, **Can the kallipolis really be brought into existence?**

B. **Q:** What is Socrates's response?

1. It may not be possible to create a polis exactly like the one he's described, but it is possible to come close. (148, 473a)

2. **Q:** What is preventing the transformation of existing poleis into ones like the kallipolis? What one change is necessary in the cities today to create a kallipolis?

C. **Philosophers must become kings, and kings philosophers**

1. **Read** 148-49, 473c-e [See Crittenden notes on Book V (10/4) for help]

2. **Q:** What does he mean by this?

3. **Q:** Why would Socrates hesitate to say this?

4. **Q:** Why must philosophers become kings, according to Socrates?

5. There are at least **three reasons** for this.

D. **Reason #1: Only philosophers can see the truth.**

1. Other people can see or hear beautiful sights and sounds, but only philosophers are able to see the nature of the beautiful itself. 151, 476b

2. **Q:** What does he mean when he says philosophers can see the nature of a thing rather than just the thing itself?

3. **Opinion vs. knowledge:** Other people may have opinions on something ("that's beautiful," "that's ugly," "that's wise," etc.), but only philosophers have true knowledge of the thing itself. In other words, people have knowledge of all kinds of things: how to make something, how to fight in battle, how to reason, etc. Only philosophers, however, have knowledge of the nature or purpose of something.

4. Thus, for Socrates **politics should be run according to truth, not conflict**. That truth is: one man, one job. Find your task in life and do it. Philosophy's duty is to tell folks their "metal" and their role in the polis. The philosopher can do this because the philosopher knows virtue and how to distinguish opinion from knowledge.

E. The problem of **"the One and the Many"** (Hare, *Plato*, 9-13, 37)

1. **Q:** Why do we call it a "universe"? Why not "multiverse"? Cos of the One/Many problem

2. A recurring problem in Plato's thought and Greek philosophy in general. The dilemma is this: there is a plethora of phenomena in the world; can any unifying principles be found that can make order out of this chaos? **Is there some sort of coherence to the baffling diversity of the world?**

3. **Q:** Does this question have any relevance today? What are some current versions of it?

a. How can we create a unified country given all its ethnic, racial, religious, etc. diversity?

b. Is there one Unified Theory that can explain the universe?

c. Is there one theory that can explain society and its future development: technology, democracy, the economy, etc. (e.g. Marx)

4. Early philosophers tried to resolve this by suggesting the world was formed out of one single material, such as water (Thales). Some argued that the world was constantly in flux (Heraclitus), others that the world only seemed to be in motion, but really wasn't (Parmenides).

5. Plato believed **such unifying principles could be discovered through logic**. Combining Heraclitus and Parmenides, he argued that **there are two worlds: the world of appearances** or of the senses, in which things are diverse and in flux, and **the world of Ideas**, or the Forms (*eidos*), which are universal and unchanging. The world of the Forms is the "real" world for Plato.

F. The Forms (*eidos*)

1. An entity that defines the true nature of a thing of this world. The forms define the actual reality of an object or idea.

2. Think of the ability to know the forms as a kind of **sixth sense**. Think of it as the ability to literally see the forms, but through "the mind's eye," not the eyeballs. When Plato wants to "grasp" an idea, he means the term literally. Seeing and grasping the Forms is different from seeing and feeling only because you use different organs of perception. "Knowledge or wisdom is a kind of mental looking—a vision of the Eternal." (Hare, 35)

3. Think of **geometry figures**, like triangles and circles and lines. No such thing as a real, perfect triangle, line, or plane. A plane has only two dimensions, yet when we draw it it has a thickness. But we can imagine a perfect plane or square that all real-life planes and squares attempt to approximate.

4. This **ideal** or **definitive** plane or square in our head is like a form for Plato, but he also expands this notion to explain **objects** (the form of a chair or a horse, etc.) and **virtues** (the Good, Being, Knowledge, Justice, etc.).

5. The **forms are real**. Forms are the **ultimate reality**. They don't just exist inside someone's head. They're not ideal in that sense of the term. Even though most of us can't "see" or contemplate them, that doesn't make them any less real.

a. The forms are **universal and unchanging**. A bird may be an egg, hatched as a chick, grow up, and die, but the form of a bird remains the same.

b. There is a **hierarchy of realities**. Some things are more "real" than others. The task of philosophy is to move up the chain and get to the real.

6. **Philosophers know the forms**, i.e. they know the truths of the world. They obtain this knowledge through *theoria*, i.e. through dialectic and contemplation.

G. **Reason #2: The philosopher is most fit to rule**. This is proven through **the simile of the captain and the ship** 162, 488b-489b

1. **Q:** What is the simile? **Go over**

2. **Q:** What is Socrates trying to say here?

3. Some people are fit to rule or run a ship (i.e. philosophers). However, due to the chaos and deception that runs rampant in the polis or ship, quite often the most fitted to rule aren't able to rule. In fact, sometimes these people are mocked or persecuted.

4. Philosophers today are considered useless to the polis. In order to avoid ridicule or becoming corrupted by a corrupt society, Socrates advises that philosophers should avoid politics (as he has generally done). But in a suitable constitution, i.e. in a kallipolis, the philosopher's search for knowledge would be encouraged and appreciated by the polis, and the philosopher would come to rule for the polis's benefit.

5. **Socrates is criticizing democracy:** We should leave the ruling of a polis to those people who are naturally fitted to rule, not to ordinary citizens. Socrates is making a radical critique of Athenian democracy.

H. **Reason #3: Because philosophers don't want to rule.**

1. See Cave analogy, part V. below

I. Why so many philosophers become vicious (skipped)

IV. The good [this section is pretty rough: skip?]

A. Socrates says there is one virtue even more important than wisdom, courage, moderation, or even justice.

1. Q: What is that virtue?

2. The good. 178, 505a

3. **The good is not a matter of opinion or feeling** for Socrates. The good is something that is objective, factual, and knowable. We can know the good, and once we know the good we can do the good.

4. Q: What is the good, according to Socrates?

5. He begs off that question. Instead, he proposes to discuss "the offspring of the good," knowledge. 180, 506d-507a

B. **Sun analogy (181-82)**

1. The sun represents the good

2. Q: What three things do you need to see in the physical world? Eyes, the object itself, and light.

a. **Eyes** → **light** → **object**. The sun enables us to see the object.

b. **Soul** → **knowledge** → **understanding**, or the form of the thing, or first principles. **Goodness** enables us to understand, to "see" the truth/the forms.

c. The light (knowledge) is the "offspring" of the sun (the form of the good)

3. What enables us to see the element of good in an object is the mind/soul (i.e. the "eyes"). **Goodness is the source of all knowledge and is the ultimate form, just like the sun is the source of light and is the ultimate form of light itself.**

4. A good person is one who fulfills his/her function or *telos* in a society and within his/her soul. This person is *in fact* a good person. **Just people are good people.**

a. goodness → function (telos) → justice (harmony)

b. Justice is harmony is unity is excellence (*arete*) is goodness

c. **To know the good is to be good, is to do the good.**

5. Thus, **goodness is a statement of fact** for Socrates. If you fulfill your *telos* you are good.

C. Line analogy (183-84)

1. **Go over 509d-** and **draw diagram** on the board
2. **Shadows** are cast by **physical things**. Physical things are nothing but the shadows of **concepts**. Concepts, in turn, are shadows of the **first principles**, or forms. The forms are perfection.
3. **Example: Maple trees** cast shadows, but they don't understand the concept of the Tree, i.e. what distinguishes a tree from something else and thus makes it a tree. A concept gets you from the premises to the conclusion.

V. The Myth of the Cave

A. Explaining the cave

1. **Question:** What's in the cave?

A group of people are in a cave, chained so that they can only look straight ahead. The opening to the cave is behind and above them, so they can't see it. The cave is illuminated by fire (not by sunlight). All the people can see are shadows of people and things walking on a road behind them. Thus, all they can see are **images or illusions** and all they can hear are echoes. They don't see or hear real things. [What is Plato prefiguring here? A movie screen.] But because the only world these people know is in the cave facing forward, they take these illusions for reality.

2. **Question:** What happens?

Someone gets free and turns around. He sees the fire and people and the actual things they're carrying. These visions contradict what his previous knowledge of reality is.

- Question:** What is this person's reaction?

Pain and resistance. Leaving behind the shadows hurts and he doesn't want to believe that what he used to see is less real than what he's seeing now. However, once he's convinced that what he's seeing now is more real than the shadows, this person has knowledge of **physical things**.

3. **Question:** What happens next?

He is dragged (he doesn't want to gain more knowledge; he resists it) by force up the path and out of the cave and **into the sunlight**. Again, he feels pain and resistance to what his eyes show him.

Question: What does he see? He sees shadows, reflections, and then objects in the sky. Now this person has knowledge of **concepts**, for he needs these concepts to explain what he sees.

4. **Question:** What does he finally see?

Finally he is able to directly see the sun itself. He can see the true source of all objects and light, the sun. He can **contemplate** the sun and its purpose in the world. (He doesn't just see the forms, he falls in love with them. It's perfection and divinity and bliss. Philosophy as erotic.)

5. **The sun is a metaphor for the forms.** It's the highest form of knowledge. It is true knowledge. When you can look into the sun, that means you are contemplating the forms that constitute reality: the Good, Being, Reality, Truth, etc. Thus **philosophy is the study of true knowledge**, of true reality for Plato. It is the highest point of human existence. To "see" the Forms, i.e. to contemplate them, is true bliss.

6. **Question:** Where are ordinary Athenians in this myth?

They're in the cave mistaking illusions for reality. 187, 515a

7. **Question:** But what happens next?

8. The **philosopher has to back into the cave** to explain to everyone else what he saw, even if they mock or ridicule him. The **philosopher has a public duty** to try to encourage others to stop confusing illusion for reality. **Read 191-92, 519e-520a**

B. **Education** and the philosopher-guardian

1. **Question:** Does the phil want to go back into the cave?

2. No, he'd rather spend time in contemplation, for that is true bliss. **The philosopher does not want to rule.** But the role of the guardian isn't to make him or herself happy but to spread happiness throughout the city by creating the just polis. Thus **the philosopher has to go back to the cave and educate the rest of the people.**

3. Education isn't "putting knowledge into souls that lack it, like putting sight into blind eyes." 190, 518b-c. Knowledge isn't something we have to learn. It's already in us. Knowledge, or the truth, is within us; all persons have within them the capacity to know the good, even if not all can contemplate it in quite the same way as philosophers can. 190, 518c

a. Experience and education, then, don't teach us new things so much as they bring out or help us "remember" that which we already know. The **soul is immortal** for Plato and has been born many times, it already knows everything.

4. Education is like turning an eye away from darkness and directing it toward the light. It turns people away from illusion and toward the sun. The purpose of the philosopher is to **turn people toward the sun** so that the knowledge, which is already within them, can be brought out, can be "remembered." "there is no teaching but recollection." (from the Meno)

5. The role of the philosopher is to define ideals such as virtue, justice, the good, truth, etc. so that she can "turn people" around so that they can see them as they really are rather than taking the illusions they see now for reality.

6. Think of **education as polishing** one's metal and virtues. **The polis can polish your metal but it can't change your metal.**

C. **Q:** But why would a philosopher rule if he or she didn't want to?

1. **Because he owes it to the polis.** The polis has provided the philosopher with the education required to see the forms. The polis has "polished" the philosopher's metal, so he has an obligation to repay that gift.

2. The philosopher is more moral than people of other metals. She or he will do what is right even if she doesn't want to and even at great risk.

D. **Q:** Is Socrates right? **Should philosophers be kings?**

E. Plato and politics

1. **Q:** What is Socrates/Plato's opinion of politics, in your opinion?

2. **Politics for Socrates is a chore. Read 211-12, 540a-b** The philosopher would rather spend his/her time in contemplation, seeing the forms. But from time to time she has to come back to the cave (the "real world," for us) and rule, to ensure that the polis is just, which guarantees that future philosophers will be able to know the forms as well.

3. The philosopher returns to the cave to rule because s/he owes her education to the polis. Thus, the philosopher has a public obligation to repay that gift.

Politics is like paying tribute for the joy of philosophy.

4. **Socrates thinks of politics in terms of education:** educating people as to their place in society. **Politics is not a struggle for power, it is order,** which is achieved through education.

5. **Q:** Is there anything wrong with this conception of politics as an administrative chore best left to the experts? **[Explain what you mean by "administrative chore best left to the experts."]**

a. **No sense of politics as debate,** conflict, discussion, disagreement, compromise.

b. **Not democratic.** Socrates assumes that not everyone is equally capable of participating in governing the polis. One group of people is born to obey, while another group is born to rule. Philosophers never learn to obey, only how to rule. This will come to be quite disagreeable to Aristotle, who believes that virtue means the ability to both rule and be ruled.

c. **Leaves no room for human development and progress.** Any change in humanity is change for the worse, as his discussion of the 5 types of constitutions shows. Change is degradation. The notion that change is progress won't come around until Locke and other Enlightenment theorists.

September 12, 2000

Books VIII-X

- Book VIII: skim all
- Book IX: all
- Book X: skip

Announcements:

- **RP #3 posted** [Due September 14, on *The Prince*, chaps. 1-9: Why does Machiavelli admire “armed prophets”? What is the significance of fortune and ability (sometimes translated as “prowess”) for him?]
- Tripartate Soul handout has also been posted on the web in the “materials” page
- Always looking for suggestions on the web page. Need help with frames.
- Paper #1 assignment will be handed out Thursday

I. Summing up last week

A. **Justice** is harmony among the three classes/parts of one’s soul. Find your job and do it, putting your virtues in proper order. Harmony, stability. Justice can be objectively determined through proper education.

B. **What is knowledge?** The forms. Objective, universal, unchanging, intelligible through the “mind’s eye” or 6th sense. E.g. geometry figures

C. **Who knows the truth?** Philosophers. Therefore, philosophers must be kings, i.e. guardians must be philis.

D. **Why must philosophers be kings?** Three reasons (III.D., III.G., III.H., 9/7)

E. **The philosopher go back into the cave.** Q: Why? Public duty. He owes it to the kallipolis, which has furnished his education.

F. **The role of education:** to “polish” one’s metal. (V.B., V.C., 9/7)

G. **Plato’s opinion of politics** (V.E., 9/7)

H. [for today or next Tuesday:] Q: Is it better to act justly than unjustly? Does Socrates successfully refute Thrasymachus, in your opinion? [Give them 15 minutes to discuss in groups?]

II. Five types of constitutions

A. aristocracy —> timocracy —> oligarchy —> democracy —> tyranny

B. The kallipolis is an aristocracy. The reason Socrates wants to discuss the other four types of constitutions is because **if aristocracy is the best constitution and the kallipolis is the most just polis, then the just polis is the best polis.** Likewise, **the just person is the best person,** since the types of constitutions correlate to the types of souls. (215, 544e) Thus, Socrates will have proven that **it is better to act justly than unjustly.**

C. The **aristocracy** of the kallipolis is the best constitution. Its ruling virtue is **reason** (wisdom).

1. But even the just city cannot last forever. It will eventually become corrupted and fall, because humans are imperfect.

2. Q: What leads to the fall of the kallipolis?

3. A **mixing of metals**, which occurs through an error on the part of the guardians. This mixing will lead to “unharmonious inequality” and war as those

- remembers
- does not recall

with iron or bronze or silver in their souls try to rise above their station out of greed. 217, 546e-547a

D. The aristocracy is replaced by **timocracy**, or a military society like Sparta. The ruling virtue of a timocracy is **courage** (spirit).

E. The timocracy becomes corrupted (by women, of course) and gives way to **oligarchy**, or rule by the rich over the poor. The ruling virtue of this constitution is **desire**, though it is kept from becoming too excessive through temperance.

1. One consequence of a city divided into rich and poor is that it creates **drones**, the male bee that produces no honey but is instead a parasite. There are two kinds of drones, **stingers** (thieves) and **stingless** drones (beggars).

F. Eventually, the oligarchy falls and is replaced by **democracy**, which is also a class society but it is ruled by the poor rather than by the rich. [correct?] The ruling virtue in a democracy is also **desire**, but it is a desire without any temperance or moderation. The desires rule and all desires are equal. "And so he [the democratic personality] lives, always surrendering rule over himself to whichever desire comes along, as if it were chosen by lot." 231, 561b The democratic man holds **freedom** dear rather than wealth, as did the oligarch.

1. **Read** 232, 561c-d

2. **Q:** Does that sound like a bad life? Was it the life of democratic Athens?

3. **Q:** If a society is divided into classes that are at war with each other, as in oligarchies and democracies, **shouldn't there be at least two personalities per constitution rather than one?** Or does both the poor and rich person desire wealth and freedom?

G. Democracy eventually leads to anarchy, which in short turn leads to **tyranny**. The tyrant comes to power by presenting himself as the champion of the poor over the oligarchs, but once he takes power, power corrupts him. ("Absolute power corrupts absolutely." —Lord Acton)

1. The tyrannical man has no friends and no freedom because he has to be suspicious of everyone. Just as the city ruled by the tyrant is enslaved, so is the tyrant himself, mostly being confined to his own house. His soul, like his city, is full of "disorder and regret." (248, 577e) He is enslaved, poor, fearful, grieving, vicious, cruel and wretched. His waking life is a "nightmare." (246, 576b) E.g. **Saddam Hussein**, who sleeps in a different place every night, kills his advisers and family members because he can't trust them, etc.

2. **Read** 250, 579d-e

3. **The tyrant is the most unhappiest person of all.**

4. With the rise of the tyrant and the tyrannical personality **we have left the realm of virtue**. It's true that there is no virtue in a democracy, either, but it's still in the world of the real. With tyranny we've left the realm of reality and entered the world of shadows.

III. Why the just man is better off than the unjust man: Three proofs

A. Q: Given this description of the 5 constitutions and corresponding personality types, going from aristocracy (ruled by philosopher kings) to tyranny (ruled by the tyrant), can you tell me why, according to Socrates, is the just man better off than the unjust man?

B. **First proof:** The just man is always better off than the unjust

1. Read 250, 580a-c

2. The kingly man is just, and the tyrant is unjust. The kallipolis, like the kingly constitution, is happy, but the tyrannical constitution and the tyrant is always wretched. Thus, the just man is always better off than the unjust.

B. **Second proof: The tripartate soul**

1. The soul is divided into three parts, and there are three corresponding pleasures for each part: appetite, spirit, moderation. Likewise, there are three types of persons (corresponding to the three metals), philosophic, "victory-loving," and "profit-loving." 251 The profit-lover seeks money, the victory-lover seeks honor, and the philosopher seeks truth.

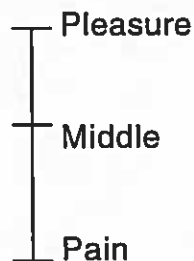
2. Of these three pleasures, only the philosopher has experienced all three. He/she has tasted all three pleasures but prefers the highest, while the other two personalities don't know the pleasure of learning. Thus, he or she is the best judge which of the pleasures is the best and thus the life of a philosopher is better than the lives of the other two types. 252-53, 582a-583a

C. **Third proof: Knowledge is the only true pleasure**

1. The other two kinds of pleasures are like shadows in the cave compared to learning. Learning is the only real pleasure. 253, 583b

2. **Most folks mistake pleasure for the absence of pain.** Most people don't know real pleasure, just the absence of pain. All they know is the calm middle.

a. **Draw diagram** from page 256



Most folks mistake the middle for pleasure. They only experience the bottom half of the realm of pleasure and pain.

b. **Example:** Hunger is pain, eating Taco Bell eases that pain. Most folks, however, mistake eating Taco Bell for pleasure when it's really just a calm "middle." They don't know the true pleasure of eating a real burrito like at Pancho Villa's. Thus they mistake Taco Bell for pleasure and may even ridicule those who tell them that Pancho Villa's burritos provide real pleasure.

c. **Example:** Knowledge of history. Ignorance of history is pain, but folks mistake knowledge of rote facts (who signed the DoI, the years Andrew Jackson was president, etc.) for real knowledge. These folks don't understand the true pleasure of understanding history and grasping its importance for how it has shaped the present.

3. This is a not-so-subtle critique of ordinary Athenians. **Read 257, 585e-586b**
D. **The multicolored beast** (260, 588c-589b)

1. The beast has a ring of many heads that grow and change at will. It is joined to a smaller lion and to an even smaller human being. Fashioned around all three of them as an outer covering is the body of a human, so that's what other people see.

2. The heads represent **desires** and **appetites**, the lion represents **spirit**, and the human represents **reason**. This is another way of talking about the **tripartate soul**.

3. **An unjust person** makes the multiheaded beast the strongest, starves the human part, and induces conflict among all three parts of the beast (i.e. soul).

4. **A just person**, on the other hand, puts the human being (reason) in control, and this reason domesticates the hydra head like a farmer who tends his animals, makes the lion his ally, and brings about unity and harmony among all three parts.

E. **Thus in every way—from the point of view of pleasure, reputation, or advantage—justice is superior to injustice.** Thrasymachus is wrong.

1. Those who put harmony in their souls, either by themselves or by submitting themselves to the wise rule of another, are better than those who seek advantage at the expense of others. **Read 262, 590c-d**

Overarching themes of the Republic

A. Knowledge is virtue. Virtue is the foundation of Greek philosophy.

B. The key point of the Republic: how to raise philosopher kings (and thus how to make society and humans just).

*Virtue = moral virtue as we understand it + excellence
(aretē)*

Republic, Book II-IV

September 5, 2000

I. Remember: Socrates has to do two things in the Republic

A. Define justice

1. Justice is virtue and wisdom, while injustice is vice and ignorance.
2. Justice is unity.
3. Justice is fulfilling one's particular function (*telos*).
4. Justice is harmony. Not exceeding the right note.

B. Prove that it is better to act justly than unjustly

1. Gyges of Lydia's invisible ring

C. Sum up justice for Socrates as we find it in book I:

II. Imagining the just city

A. It's easier to get a "bigger picture" of justice by examining justice in a polis first, then in the individual

B. Folks are born unequal. Some folks are best suited to one task

3. Thus, the craft of certain people should be to guard the polis. (374e, 49) He calls this group the **guardian class**, which he'll later call **auxiliaries**.

III. The Noble Lie

A. Myth of Brotherhood

B. Myth of the metals

3. Maybe the noble lie is a **strategy**, a necessary compromise.

IV. The virtues of the just polis

A. The kallipolis possesses four key virtues:

1. **Wisdom:**
2. **Courage:** Read 105, 4293-430a
3. **Moderation**

B. **Justice:** Read 433a-b, 108.

2. **Justice, for Plato, is harmony among all three classes and among the three virtues** in the person.

3. **Injustice**, therefore, is the meddling of one class into the affairs of the other. **Read 434a-c, 109**

D. Plato is very concerned about conflict and division in the polis

E. Change is corruption for him.

III. The Tripartate Soul

A. The soul is simply a microcosm of the state.

B. The soul consists of **appetites or desires, spirit, and reason**.

1. One's appetites are controlled through temperance.
2. Spirit or enthusiasm relates to courage
3. The rational part of the soul rules over the rest of the soul.

C. When an individual allows reason to rule over spirit and appetites, all 3 parts of the soul are in harmony. This is justice. **Read 443c-444a, 119-20.**

D. **Only certain people can develop the virtues of wisdom and courage, but *all* citizens can exercise moderation or temperance.**

— YAP COPY —

Questions on Plato, *Republic*

1. Is the philosopher-king's rule apolitical? If so, is that a problem?
In the kallipolis, decisions are made by contemplation among experts. There is no dialogue and debate, no democracy, and no influence on politics whatsoever by the bronze class. In a sense, the kallipolis is more by *divine administration* than by politics. Is this an ideal way in which to govern or a bad way? When "political power and philosophy coincide," does that ironically mean the end of politics?
2. Is it good to think of politics as an irritation to be carried out by experts?
It seems that politics are an irritation for Plato. They breed disagreement, conflict, deceit, distrust, disharmony, and, ultimately, injustice. Do you agree with Plato's assessment about politics? Or are politics central to the human experience? (Think back to the definition of politics provided in the first week of class if that helps you think about this question.)
3. Is the kallipolis totalitarian?
Some philosophers have referred to the kallipolis as "happy slavery." Is this an accurate description? After all, the many (the bronze) are completely subordinated to the few (the silver and gold). Or is the kallipolis "totalitarian" only for the guardians and auxiliaries, and since they're the rulers, not really totalitarian at all?
4. Is it possible for a society to be completely undemocratic like the kallipolis yet still based on principles of justice?
Does inequality and unfreedom always imply injustice? Is democracy the only kind of just regime?
5. Was Socrates one of the first feminists?
He argues that women should be guardians as well as men. Does this make him an early advocate of women's rights? Or does he try to make women guardians essentially by turning them into "weaker" males, thus destroying the feminine?
6. What questions would you ask Socrates if you were able to take Glaucon or Adeimantus' place?