Notes on Plato's *Republic*

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BOOK I

Main Themes

1. Defining 'Justice'
    a. Speaking the Truth and Settling Debts? (331c)
        i. The Simonides definition: honesty and balance (an economic model?)
    b. Giving Benefits to Friends and Harm to Enemies? (332d)
        i. Polemarchus' initial definition: friend/enemy distinction
        ii. Is 'justice' primarily a matter of war?
    c. Honoring Contracts and Partnerships? (333a)
        i. Polemarchus again; flows out of the question of whether justice is a military matter…
    d. The Specifically Human 'Virtue?' (335c)
        i. But what is a virtue? According to the dialogue, it is a quality specific to certain things and their key functions. The virtue of a horse is to draw a cart; but the virtue of a human is, somehow, to be just.
        ii. Does this serve as a definition of justice? Or is it merely a clarification of the relationship between human beings and justice?
        iii. On this definition of virtue, see later on at 353. Virtue seems to be the proficiency of anything to do the work that "it alone can do." (353a)
        iv. According to that definition of virtue, we could say that "justice is the virtue of soul." (353e)
    e. The Advantage of the Stronger?
        i. Thrasymachus argues that "the just is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger." (338c)
        ii. As Socrates soon points out, this is an ambiguous phrase. Is 'the just' what truly advantages the stronger? What appears to advantage the stronger? Merely the whim of the stronger? (All of these are on the table.)
        iii. The 'stronger' here seems to mean the ruling class, not the physically imposing.
        iv. If this were true, then (per Thrasymachus) justice would be "someone else's good," and a personal harm to the weak on whom it is imposed. (343c)
2. What is Justice good for?
    a. Holding on to Money! (333c-e)
        i. But money held in reserve is not used; is justice then the kind of thing that's used only in such 'useless' situations?
        ii. The dialogue gives us an odd series of models: the gameplayer is good at playing games; the housebuilder is good at building houses; but what is the 'just person' good at? (To foreshadow: what is their *virtue*?)
    b. Reinforcing the power of the ruling class? (338-339)

i. Thrasymachus' definition of justice suggests that justice is decided upon by the rulers for their own perceived benefit.

3. Human Fallibility
    a. Socrates seems especially concerned by our human propensity to make mistakes. (see 334c, passim) That goes not just for mistaken actions, but also for mental mistakes—errors about what we think we know. The world appears one way to us, but it may in fact turn out to be otherwise. To what degree does this affect our definition of justice?
        i. Think of the provisional definitions we saw above. How do we know what is truly owed? (Think of limit-cases where 'giving back what is owed' can lead to destructive outcomes…)
        ii. And how do we know who is truly a friend or an enemy? Couldn't we always turn out to be unknowingly unjust?
    b. The ruling class also suffers from this fallibility, which causes problems for Thrasymachus' definition of justice. (339-340)
        i. Socrates points out a potential contradiction: if justice is (a) the advantage of the stronger and (b) what the rulers say is just, then the observance of (b) could undermine the actualization of (a)—whenever the rulers are mistaken about what is truly to their advantage.
        ii. In other words, there is a crucial distinction between what *is* advantageous to the stronger and what merely *seems* advantageous to the stronger.
        iii. Thrasymachus responds that rulers are only rulers when they are not mistaken, not erring. Does this properly answer Socrates' objection? Is this a tenable definition of what a ruler 'is?'
4. Harm, Virtue, Justice
    a. At 335, the dialogue establishes a link between harm, virtue, and (in-)justice. If we define justice as the 'virtue' of humans, and if we define 'harm' as the decrease of another's virtue, then harming someone would mean decreasing their just-ness—that is, making them more unjust.
    b. This is a problem, because often we 'harm' people because we think they are acting unjustly. And yet, by harming them, we are merely making them even more unjust. So our recourse to harm ends up being self-defeating.
    c. What are we to make of this insight? Is Socrates advocating pure pacifism? (See 335e: "… it is never just to harm anyone.") Or do we have to instead think our way into his new, technical definitions—harm, virtue, etc.—before we can throw around our own –isms?
5. Ruler & Ruled
    a. At 342-343, Socrates and Thrasymachus argue about what the work of a 'ruler' really is. We could also the call this the 'virtue' of a ruler—what they are for, what they are there to do.
    b. According to Socrates, the art of rule concerns the advantage not of the ruler, but of the ruled. If a nominal ruler uses their position to enrich themselves, then they are not acting 'as rulers' but 'as moneymakers.' Getting rich is something they do, but it is not something that defines them as rulers.
    c. What defines people as rulers is that they rule other people for the advantage of those people. The 'advantage of the ruled' is the object of the art of ruling.
    d. Cf. 346e, where this relation is paralleled in every kind of art: the housebuilder builds houses for others, not for himself…

e. So: if justice is the human virtue that relates to the art of ruling, and if ruling is for the benefit of the ruled, then Thrasymachus' definition of justice as 'the advantage of the rulers' seems wrong. Justice, if anything, should be to the advantage of the ruled.
f. But is justice an 'advantage' at all? (See next section…)

6. Justice and Injustice—Which is Stronger?
   a. At 344-346, Thrasymachus and Socrates start to shift away from the definition of justice and start discussing which is stronger: justice or injustice? Injustice, according to Thrasymachus, is stronger basically because it allows us to get more stuff. (*Pleonexia!* Bloom's language is "getting the better of," but "getting more than" might be more to the point…)
   b. Socrates' response to this possibility is a bit unusual. He constructs an elaborate parallel between justice and the other arts. In ever art, he claims, the skilled aim to 'get more than' the unskilled, but not their fellow skilled folks. For example: a doctor struggles against bad medicine, not good medicine offered by other, equally competent doctors. (See 349-350)
   c. The just person, likewise, tries to get the better of the unjust, rather than other just people. She is not trying to 'win all the justice-points' for herself. The just person thus parallels the skilled artisan.
   d. Being skilled is also akin to being 'wise.' Skill at medicine is a kind of wisdom; so is skill at justice.
   e. All of this is meant to cast doubt on Thrasymachus' claim that it is more 'wise' to be unjust. If being just occupies the place of skill and wisdom in the realm of justice and ruling, then being unjust must be the opposite: lack of skill, lack of wisdom.
   f. Socrates parallels seem formally coherent here, but do we find them convincing? (Thrasymachus doesn't…)
7. 'Scales' of Justice
   a. After defending the wisdom of justice against injustice, Book I begins to foreshadow the rest of the dialogue. All this talk of the 'just person' seems to be subtle and confusing, and so Socrates proposes that the discussants look to a 'bigger' example of justice. Instead of describing what a just person would be, they could then outline what a *just city* might look like.
   b. This effectively raises the stakes of the whole discussion. It is not solely about one person's conduct, but about society as a whole. See 352d: "the argument is not about just any question, but about the way one should live."
   c. We could say that this is the question of how to live 'well.' But what does it mean to live well? At 353, Socrates connects this question to his definition of virtue. To live well is to live by being good at what you're good for—to accomplish your specific work by way of your specific virtue. The virtue of the human soul seems to be justice. Therefore, to 'live well,' to live according to one's virtue, is to be just. And if happiness follows from living well, then to be just is also to be happy.
   d. This link to happiness also further undermines Thrasymachus' claim about the profitability of injustice. If the maximum profit is a happy life, and if the happy life comes only through living justly, then living unjustly could never truly be more profitable!
   e. So we end up with the following chain: living well—living virtuously—living justly—living happily—living profitably (even maximizing one's profit). That's the program. But do we accept Socrates' parallels and equations?
   f. Well, do we?

8. Ending with a Curveball
    a. After all of this, we might think that Socrates will claim he has answered the question of what justice is, or at least that he has moved the ball forward. But he instead ends with a reflection on his own ignorance!
    b. The vagaries of dialogue led Socrates down a number of paths—justice as virtue, justice as wisdom, justice as more profitable than injustice—but none of these paths conclusively answered the question 'what *is* justice?'
    c. And so he says: "now as a result of the discussion, *I know nothing*. So long as I do not know what the just is, I shall hardly know if it is a virtue or not and whether the one who has it is unhappy or happy." (354b-c)
    d. All of these parallels we've tried out, then, cannot be considered conclusive definitions of justice. We have not yet reached the essence of the question.
    e. What are we to make of this surprising twist at the end of Book I? Is it meant to invalidate all that's come before? Or are we to retain these insights, arguments, and parallels as we move forward into the discussion of justice in the ideal city?

<u>Further Questions</u>

1. From Happiness to Justice (to Happiness?): The question of justice seems to arise out of Socrates and Cephalus' discussion of contentment in old age. Is there any significance to that? What is the connection between the possibility of happiness and the definition of justice?
    a. Recall that Cephalus claims contentment flows from achieving justice, in the sense of settling one's debts (with both humans and gods).
2. Wisdom against Philosophy: Polemarchus associates the definition of 'justice' as speaking truth and settling debts with Simonides (d. 468 BCE). (331d) Simonides was a poet from the generation before Socrates. Many regarded him as a sage or wise man. Socrates, however, evidently thinks something is off about Simonides' definition of justice. But is it simply that Socrates has a different definition of justice? Or is he questioning the whole strategy of the 'wise man' who declares definitions rather than pursuing questions?
    a. In other words—what's the difference between wisdom (Sophia) and seeking wisdom (philosophy—Socratic questioning)?
3. Frustration with Dialogue: At 336a-c, Thrasymachus enters the debate with gusto. He seems to object not just to Socrates' approach to justice, but to the whole dialogical exercise itself. What does that tell us about the purpose of dialogue more broadly? Is Thrasymachus' role in the *Republic* best understood through the content of his claims, the style of his engagement, or both at once?
    a. Cf. 338a: Thrasymachus wants Socrates to respond rather than ask the questions. But Socrates refuses, and Thrasymachus concedes. Why must Socrates only question? What do we learn from questions upon questions? (Perhaps that we often arrive at supposed answers far too swiftly…?)

BOOK II

Main Themes

1. Three Kinds of Goods
    a. Goods enjoyed in themselves
    b. Goods enjoyed in themselves and on account of other things
        i. This seems to be the 'best' kind of good. Socrates supposes that Justice should turn out to be this kind of good. (358a)
    c. Goods enjoyed solely on account of other things
        i. A.K.A. "drudgery." The hoi polloi tend to think that Justice serves only as this kind of good. It's merely useful for attaining other ends.
2. Glaucon's Legal-Historical Definition of Justice
    a. "And this, then, is the genesis and being of justice; it is a *mean* between what is best—doing injustice without paying the penalty—and what is worst—suffering injustice without being able to avenge oneself." (359a)
    b. Picking up from Thrasymachus' argument about the profitability of injustice, 'the best' possibility seems to be benefiting from unjust actions without getting caught.
    c. The worst, meanwhile, would be to have this injustice done to you without being able to fight back.
    d. The Ring of Gyges tale is meant to show that, if given the opportunity, people will commit all kinds of unjust actions in order to get money and pleasure. Nature pursues benefit, while law imposes equality. Unbridled nature would lead only to chaos, with everyone acting like the shepherd with his invisibility ring.
    e. Glaucon's definition equates justice with law and legal compulsion—but, of course, Socrates is still not satisfied.
3. Being and Seeming
    a. Glaucon's argument suggests that it's better to appear just while being (in fact) unjust, because that allows you to collect more gains without getting caught or even arousing suspicion. (It enables more *pleonexia*.)
    b. The opposite would, again, seem to be the worst: acting justly while appearing unjust to everyone else, and so undeservedly earning their scorn.
    c. But how are we to overcome this apparent disconnect between being and seeming? If our goal is to uncover who truly 'is' just, then "the seeming must be taken away," as Glaucon says. (361b) But is that even possible?
4. Adeimantus' Approach to Justice through Religion and Reputation (362-367)
    a. Adeimantus modifies his brother's argument by pointing out that the value of justice is that it allows people to build up good reputations. It is reputation—appearance, seeming—that drives justice.
    b. He links this question of reputation not just to other humans, but to the gods. By striving for a good reputation with the gods, humans begin to act more justly. They are motivated by hope for a reward.
    c. Still, seeming just looks like it's more important than being just. Adeimantus' talk of reputation merely clarifies that position.
5. Inventing a City in Words
    a. Socrates and Glaucon then proceed to build up the idea of a city from scratch. They invoke the division of labor and begin to assign different kinds of people to different jobs.

b. Very soon, the population balloons as the city diversifies due to economic complexity. We wind up with shoemakers and artisanal condiment makers.
c. This mutual dependence of citizens—seemingly based on socioeconomic imperatives—leads Glaucon to suggest that justice might have something to do with "some need these men have of one another." (372a)
d. One of the most important groups of citizens appears to be the "Guardians." They will be tasked with safeguarding the city and ensuring the rule of justice. But if they're going to be able to do that, they'll need to be *educated* in the right way. And so Socrates and Adeimantus proceed to outline their pedagogical program.
e. The two cornerstones of the guardians' education are Music and Gymnastic.
f. Music is not just tunes—though it does include them—but rather a general sort of cultivation of mental and linguistic capacities. Combined with the training of the body through gymnastic exercise, it can lead to a balanced crop of guardians. The aim is the mean between violent harshness and ineffective softness.
g. Another aspect of this education program involves what we might call 'censorship.' Many of the Greek tales about the gods involved lurid portrayals of sex and violence. By setting those tales aside and focusing only on the tales that feature gods acting justly, the ideal city could condition its guardians to revere both the gods and justice.
h. Socrates goes so far as to suggest that gods (or 'the god') are wholly good, having nothing to do with evil. Evil must have some source other than 'the god.' This is something like the theology of the ideal city.
i. Socrates and Adeimantus elaborate on this theology by reasoning that gods must be immutable—absolutely resistant to change—and true. They are "wholly free from lie." (382e) Gods never deceive or confuse; instead, they tell us about justice and how things really are. Civic education and literature should uphold this vision of the divine, which will lie at the conceptual core of the ideal city.
j. Book II ends with the idea of the *True Lie*. This is not the white lie of poetic speech, but a deep case of self-deception. "But I mean that to lie and to have lied to the soul about the things that are, and to be unlearned, and to have and to hold a lie there is what everyone would least accept; and that everyone hates a lie in that place most of all." (382a-b)

<u>Further Questions</u>

1. Quantifying Justice: At 369a, Socrates proposes that it will be easier to investigate justice in cities than in individuals, since cities are "bigger" and therefore might contain "more" justice. This is an odd claim. Do we agree with this link between civic justice and individual justice (we might even say 'psychological' justice)? Can we proceed from the city to the soul, as Socrates proposes?
    a. This is also where Socrates introduces the term *idea*. Once we proceed from cities to souls, he argues, we can consider "the likeness of the bigger in the *idea* of the littler." *Idea* can mean shape or form, or simply 'what is seen.' We should track this key term here, so that we can eventually see the role that 'formal similarity' will play in Socrates' approach to both philosophy and politics.
2. Spirit & Spiritedness: At 375a-b, Socrates starts talking about "spirit" or *thumos*. This is another key word, and it's one that can cause confusion. A more accurate translation might be "spiritedness." It's not spirit in the ghostly sense—the Greek had *pneuma* for that. *Thumos* seems to be a kind of courageous energy that can be channeled in different

directions. (Education plays a big role in which direction *thumos* goes.) It could make a warrior more fierce, but it could also allow an ascetic to hold his own desires at bay. Can we map this sense of *thumos* onto our own views on civic life today? Or have we managed to separate out military courage from other kinds of 'spiritedness?' Are these the same kind of thing, as Socrates suggests, or can we no longer believe that?

3. From Education to Religion: What are we to make of Socrates' comments about the gods at the end of Book II? Why is he so against 'change?' And how are the principles and characteristics of the divine supposed to relate to the values and aims of the city?

BOOK III

Main Themes

1. Fear and Instability
    a. Book III begins by picking up on Book II's investigation of the values taught to the guardians by various kinds of literature.
    b. If the goal is for the guardians to be strong defenders of the city, then we might want to avoid tales that instill fear or instability. Lamentations, myths about the horrors of Hades, and stories about laughing gods thus all come in for censure.
    c. Conversely, values like honesty and moderation should be instilled in the young. Only the rulers should be allowed to lie strategically: "it's appropriate for the rulers, if for anyone at all, to lie for the benefit of the city in cases involving enemies or citizens…" (389b)
    d. Instead of offering up flights of fancy, literature should aim to communicate a correct moral paradigm, in which the just are happy and the unjust are unhappy. Too many stories tell us "that many happy men are unjust, and many wretched ones just, and that doing injustice is profitable if one gets away with it, but justice is someone else's good and one's own loss." (392b)
    e. In other words: too many of our stories sound like they were written by Thrasymachus!
2. Narrative and Mimesis
    a. Book III makes a distinction between straightforward narrative (where events and ideas are merely reported) and mimetic narrative (where the author tries to adopt or evoke the voice of specific characters). The first is acceptable, the second is dangerous. (393-394)
    b. The difference between these two styles is expressed in terms of change. Straight narrative features minimal change, striving for an even-keeled tone. Mimetic narrative, meanwhile, features maximal change, full of variety and contrasts. (397b-c)
    c. (Socrates and Glaucon make similar claims about music at 399-400. In general, decreasing multiplicity and mutability is advised. There is a risk that excess pleasure (402e) could undermine the whole project of moderation that should be at the core of the guardians' training. Anti-*pleonexia* remains the order of the day.)
    d. But why is Socrates so concerned about mimesis or imitation?
    e. It may have something to do with the division of labor. Socrates suggests that it is easier for one person to be good at one thing than it is for one person to be good at many things. He's not a big fan of multitasking. (Cf. here specific virtue!)
    f. But imitation forces us to occupy many perspectives and voices, and so to do many things at once. It thins us out across too many representations. And so it hinders the single-minded focus needed in our quest to build the ideal city.
    g. The ideal city has to fight against this threat of double-ness or duplicity among its citizens. As Socrates tells Adeimantus, "there's no double man among us, nor a manifold one, since each man does one thing." (397d)
    h. Mimesis also risks giving us bad habits, especially if we spend too much time imitating bad characters with unjust actions. Mimesis, by establishing habits, can even alter our apparent 'nature'—usually for the worse. (395c)
3. Knowing Good & Bad

a. At 409a, Socrates tells us that, while a doctor rules a body by means of a soul, a judge "rules a soul with a soul."
b. But to properly rule a soul with a soul, that soul must have some way of differentiating a good use of the soul from a bad use. But does this mean that we should do bad things, so that we have a deeper knowledge of what badness is, and so can do a better job of fighting it? (Must we become our enemy in order to defeat it?)
c. Socrates doesn't think so: "For badness would never know virtue and itself, while virtue in an educated nature will in time gain knowledge of both itself and badness simultaneously." (409d-e)
d. So it seems best to train ourselves in the good use (the 'virtue') of our souls, so that we can know both the good and the bad, and judge things accordingly.
e. But why, precisely, does Socrates think goodness knows badness, but badness doesn't goodness? Can we mount a counter-offensive against this claim of his?

4. Spiritedness & Wisdom-Seeking
   a. At 410, Socrates and Glaucon return to music and gymnastic as the centerpieces of education. It's not the case, though, that music deals with the soul while gymnastic deals with the body. Instead, both music and gymnastic cultivate the soul, but in different ways.
   b. Gymnastic cultivates *thumos*, that kind of courage and fortitude needed to face the harsh realities of life. Music, meanwhile, encourages *philosophia*, the openness and sensitivity needed in our questioning and our search for wisdom.
   c. The properly educated soul would, then, aim to strike a balance between critical openness and vigorous firmness. (Easier said than done, perhaps?)
5. The Noble Lie
   a. At the end of Book III, Socrates introduces a controversial idea: that the social stratifications of the ideal city should be defended by a founding myth that deceives the citizens into thinking there is a natural reason for their historically contingent class position. This 'noble lie' is acceptable because it will reinforce the foundations of a city that will have the best chance at actually being just. (413-415)
   b. There are three social strata in this city: (1) the guardians; (2) the auxiliaries; (3) the farmers and craftsmen.
   c. The guardians and auxiliaries are both privy to this model of education and share the work of ruling. The guardians are older and so have more authority; the younger auxiliaries support their work. And the workers are ruled.
   d. Some citizens might object to these class distinctions and try to undermine the whole system. But if there were a founding myth that was held sacred by all, then such undermining would be much more difficult to pull off. Enter the Noble Lie!
   e. The Noble Lie begins by deceiving the citizens about their training and education. All of this will be said to be a "dream" obscuring the fact that they were in fact being fashioned underground—by 'the god'—out of certain metals. The guardians were made from gold, the auxiliaries from silver, and the workers from iron.
   f. The three-metal model will lock the three tiers of social stratification into place. The classes differ not merely because of their training, but because they are naturally different kinds. No one should seek to upset the hierarchy, because to do so would be to go against nature.
   g. To place a lie at the core of society might seem objectionable or contradictory, especially when we consider what Socrates says elsewhere about the desirability of honesty and truth. But the lie might be worth it, if it leads to maximum social

cohesion. The myth of the three medals should be good "for making them [the citizens] care more for the city and one another." (415d)

6. Property (or the lack thereof…)
    a. Book III ends with a description of the lifestyle that the guardians and auxiliaries will have to adopt if they are to avoid abusing their (substantial) power.
    b. They'll seemingly live and eat together in a centrally located camp. The Goldilocks rule will apply: they'll have neither too much nor too little. But Socrates is not afraid of taking his vision to its logical extreme: the guardian classes will have no private property. They won't be allowed to even touch actual silver or gold (even if they are themselves made of it!).
    c. Only by abolition of private property—at least for the ruling classes—can we ensure that the rulers will not abuse their power and exploit the ruled. Whenever people have houses and goods to worry about, they will act as house-owners and commodity-hoarders rather than as rulers (in the proper sense). If the guardians and auxiliaries are to show their virtue in the art of ruling, then, they will have to do so by holding to a *communalist* ethos.

<u>Further Questions</u>

1. Dialectical Wanderings: At 394d, Socrates tells Adeimantus, "wherever the argument, like a wind, tends, thither must we go." Three books into the *Republic*, we're now in a position to reflect on the dialectical method. Has Socrates stuck to his dialogical approach throughout? What consequences has this approach had for how the various arguments have unfolded?
2. The Limits of Education: Throughout Book III, Socrates and his companions seem to be laying out an educational program for the 'guardians' of the ideal city. At times, though, they seem to talk as if they're planning a system of education for all of the city's citizens, not just one (albeit important) class. Do you think the Socratic program of education can be extended beyond the guardian class? If not, would the rest of the citizens need a different kind of education, or no education at all?
3. Austerity and Moral Censure: Book III gives us a pretty austere portrayal of the city of the guardians. Exciting music and tasty food both get singled out for criticism. Does this attack on conspicuous consumption flow naturally out of Socrates' earlier arguments? Or is he simply relying on common moral sentiments against luxury?
4. Age & Power: At 412b, Socrates and Glaucon agree that "it is plain" that the rulers should be "older" than the ruled. Do they give any reason for this? Is this a claim standing in need of defense?

BOOK IV

Main Themes

1. The Return of the Question of Happiness
    a. Adeimantus (419-420) gets us started by pointing out that the lives of the guardians, who are supposedly the ruling elites, don't seem to be truly happy. They lack all of those accoutrements and delights that appear to accompany all supposedly 'happy' people.
    b. Socrates responds to this concern by emphasizing two distinctions (420-421):
        i. Whole vs. Part
            1. Adeimantus has considered only the happiness of the ruling few, not the happiness and beauty of the city as a whole.
            2. But, Socrates contends, true beauty comes only when everything is in its proper place.
            3. Happiness, like beauty, should be considered from this holistic point of view. Even if the guardians don't dwell in luxury, the city as a whole can be 'happy,' with each class receiving its allotted shares of happiness.
        ii. Being vs. Seeming
            1. Socrates also reminds Adeimantus of the distinction between what is and what merely appears to be.
            2. If the guardians dwelt in luxury, then they might be delighted by that luxury, but they would no longer be proper guardians in the sense that the dialogue has carefully laid out.
            3. Instead, they would merely seem to be guardians, while in fact being moneymakers and luxury-seekers. According to Socrates, this rule by 'merely apparent rulers' is the worst fate that can befall a city.
2. Unity and Multiplicity
    a. Socrates and Adeimantus then segue into a broader discussion about the unity and multiplicity of cities. Cities—especially empirically real ones—are in fact multiplicities, which can be broken down into smaller and smaller 'cities.'
    b. These lines of division usually follow economic lines. The dividedness of a city is often most pronounced when there is a large gap between rich and poor.
    c. Such gaps, Socrates notes, can be exploited by the city of the guardians. They can turn the poor against the rich by appealing to the former's desire for the latter's property. The guardians can do this especially well, since they themselves will have no base desire for such property.
    d. For its part, the city of the guardians will aim for maximum unity. It will do so by ensuring that each member of each class does the job that he or she is suited for. "One man, one job;" (423d) so the oneness of the city will flow out of the single-mindedness of each individual. Solidarity will arise out of this unity of tasks.
3. Re-Emphasizing the Importance of Education
    a. Again, Socrates and Adeimantus acknowledge that a sound educational program will lie at the root of their new regime. "It's likely," says Socrates, "that the starting point of a man's education sets the course of what follows too." (425b-c)
    b. Music, education, culture—this is the 'guardhouse' against lawlessness in the city.

c. Socrates subtly mocks those who spend time trying to make a precise law for every issue that might arise. (426) Instead, he envisions a *lawgiver* (427a) who would set down primordial principles, which would then be supported by a system of education that protects against dangerous innovations. Culture itself would then upholds the principles of law, preventing the need for a legalistic class obsessed with judicial details.

4. What, then, is Justice?
    a. Having sketched out the general shape of the city of the guardians—its attitudes about happiness, unity, and law—Socrates and his companions return to the fundamental question: what is just and what is unjust? 'Where' are justice and injustice to be found in the city of the guardians? (427c-d)
    b. Unsurprisingly, Socrates' method of pursuing this question is to proceed through a series of parallels and comparisons. He hopes to arrive at justice through a process of elimination.
    c. He begins by getting Glaucon to agree that the ideal city of the guardians would be a 'good' city. A good city, they agree, would also be a wise, courageous, moderate, and just city.
    d. If we're able to figure out what makes a good city wise, courageous, and moderate—so they suppose—we will then be able to see what makes a good city 'just,' if only by looking at what's left of its goodness (or good qualities, or good aspects, etc.). (428a)
    e. The wisdom of the city (428), they say, is to be found in the political or civic wisdom of the guardian class.
    f. The courage of the city (429-430d) is also to be found in the guardian class. It consists not just of military valor on the battlefield, but also the political courage to prevision the good opinions about what is lawful and what is 'terrible.'
    g. The moderation of the city (430e-431) consists of the ordering and mastery of its desires and pleasures. It involves both the rulers and the ruled, since the ordering of the city involves an acknowledgment of this hierarchy of rule on both sides.
    h. And so we are supposedly left with 'justice.' See 433a: "That rule we set down at the beginning as to what must be done in everything when we were founding the city—this, or a certain form of it, is, in my opinion, justice. Surely we set down and often said, if you remember, <u>that each one must practice one of the functions of the city, that one for which his nature made him naturally most fit</u>." Justice might consist mainly of "the practice of minding one's own business." (433b)
    i. It is through this sense of justice that the other aspects of civic goodness—wisdom, courage, and moderation—come to be, at least according to Socrates and Glaucon here. And it is through maintaining such justice that the preservation of the good city as a whole can be achieved.
    j. Injustice, then, would be to undermining the preservation of the just order by "meddling among the classes." (434b-c) This is unjust—evil, even—because it neglects the fact that the city can attain happiness as a whole only if each class does its proper work. Guardians must be guardians, auxiliaries must be auxiliaries, and craftsmen must be craftsmen. Rulers should not try to make money, nor should moneymakers try to rule.

5. From City to Soul
    a. At 434d-e, Socrates shifts the discussion from the city to the soul. If, he argues, this same definition of justice can apply to souls as well as cities, then we might be able to

make it stick. The "form itself of justice" should, he thinks, be able to fit both the city and the soul. (435b)

b. But this parallel between city and soul would only make sense if souls, like cities, had parts. But do souls have parts? Or is there just 'soul' itself, which can perform many different activities?
c. To get at this knotty philosophical problem, Socrates invokes a principle of non-contradiction so that he can also have a principle of individuation. See 436b: "It's plain that the same thing won't be willing at the same time to do or suffer opposites with respect to the same part and in relation to the same thing."
d. If that principle holds, then we can presume that the soul has 'parts' whenever it differs from itself on some matter.
e. Socrates and Glaucon think that this differing-from-itself occurs whenever the soul both wants something and forbids itself that same thing. In such cases, the 'wanting' corresponds to the *desiring* part of the soul, while the 'forbidding' corresponds to the *calculating* part. The desiring part seems driven more by affection than rationality, while the calculating part tries to subdue the affections to a longer-term rational plan. (439)
f. There is also a third, *spirited* part of the soul (*thumos*), which can ally itself with either the calculated or desiring parts depending on the situation. (440) Sometimes, the spirited part intensifies the desires of the soul; at other times, it draws forth a righteous anger that helps the calculating part restrain those very desires. Because it can swing either way, Socrates suggests that the spirited really is a third, distinct part of the soul.

6. The City-Soul Parallel
    a. Justice in the soul, then, would consist of a correct ordering of its three parts. (jump ahead to 441d-e) The calculating should rule the desiring by means of the spirited. In this way, the soul mirrors the just order of the three-tiered city.
    b. See 441a: "Or just as there were three classes in the city that held it together, money-making, auxiliary, and deliberative, is there in the soul too this third, the spirited, by nature an auxiliary to the calculating part, if it's not corrupted by bad rearing?" "Necessarily!"
    c. 441c: "… the same classes that are in the city are in the soul of each one severally and… their number is equal."
    d. So the basic scheme is this: City : Soul :: Guardians : Calculation :: Auxiliaries : *Thumos* :: Moneymakers : Desire…
    e. In the city, the maintenance of this just order guarantees the other three aspects of civic goodness. Wisdom is the calculating deliberation of the ruling guardians; courage is the spirited preservation of that wisdom; and moderation consists in the harmonious cooperation of the calculating and the spirited classes. (442)
    f. At 443c, Socrates makes the intriguing comment that civic justice is "a kind of phantom of justice." It's an image that helps us understand what is just, but it may not be justice itself in the strict sense.
    g. True justice, Socrates tentatively suggests, might lie within the soul of each human person. By maintaining the just order of its calculating, spirited, and desiring parts, a soul can make itself one out of many. By keeping each psychological class in its place, it can attain 'justice.' Any act that supports and upholds this three-tiered hierarchy of the soul can then be said to be a 'just' act. (443d)

h. In both the city and the soul, finally, injustice would have to be rebellion against this just order. (444b) Injustice is even like a kind of sickness, in that it upsets the natural order—in this case, not of physical health, but of political mastery. (444d)
i. After all this, Socrates and Glaucon return to Thrasymachus' troubling question: is injustice more profitable than justice?
j. Glaucon, keeping in mind this very specific notion of justice that they've worked out, now thinks that Thrasymachus' question is "ridiculous:" "If life doesn't seem livable with the body's nature corrupted, not even with every sort of food and drink and every sort of wealth and every sort of rule, will it then be livable when the nature of that very thing by which we live is confused and corrupted, even if a man does whatever else he might want except that which will rid him of vice and injustice and will enable him to acquire justice and virtue?" (445a-b)
k. What, in other words, would we profit by gaining the whole world losing ourselves?

Further Questions

1. Do we accept Socrates and Glaucon's final reduction of Thrasymachus' concerns to a matter of ridicule? They seem to be introducing a category—'livability'—that has not received much scrutiny in the dialogue thus far. How is it meant to fit in alongside these other categories of profitability, happiness, goodness, etc.?
2. Book IV ends with an intriguing but surprising anticipation of the discussion of different regime-types. Socrates and Glaucon agree very quickly—all too quickly, perhaps—that there must be as many types of regimes as there are types of souls. What might that supposition rest on? And what about their proposal that virtue has only one 'form,' while vice has many?
3. Between the principle of non-contradiction and the threefold division of the soul, there is a substantial discussion of what the 'proper objects of specific desires' are. (437-438) Socrates and Glaucon debate, for example, whether the proper object of thirst is 'drink,' or rather 'good drink.' This provokes Socrates to reflect on both what the word 'good' means in cases of desire and what the difference is between general and specific forms of knowledge. How does all of this hang together, and what kind of work is it doing for Book IV as a whole?