BOOK V

Main Themes

1. Back to Communalism and Equality
    a. At the beginning of Book V, Polemarchus convinces Adeimantus to cut Socrates off and challenge him to defend his earlier claims about why holding women and children in common would be best for the city. (449c)
    b. Socrates had already hinted at his position on this, but, to his interlocutors, he didn't do a careful enough job of defending it. Such a controversial doctrine, they hold, should be held to the highest standard of justification.
    c. Socrates pleads with them that his argument in defense of this policy would take too long to unfold and so be ill-suited to their purposes. But, as Glaucon responds, "the proper measure of listening to such arguments in a whole life." (450b)
    d. Much as with the discussion of specific virtue, Socrates segues into his discussion of the sexual division of labor by appealing to an animal example. In a pack of hunting dogs, he argues, the females work just as hard as the males, and doing the same jobs. (451d)
    e. But if human females are to do the same jobs as their male counterparts, then they will have to be educated in the same way. This is especially true for female guardians. (451e)
    f. Socrates and Glaucon agree that this equal education of females might look "ridiculous in the present state of things," (452b) but that doesn't mean it wouldn't be ideal at some other historical moment. Historical conventions change, and so present conventions should not be allowed to inhibit speculation.
2. Different Natures
    a. The main problem standing in the way of the equal treatment of female guardians has to do with our understanding of the 'nature' of the sexes. Previously, Socrates and Glaucon had agreed that different natures are suited for different kinds of work. Such natural distinctions should guide the division of labor in society.
    b. But if male and female are two different kinds of nature, then shouldn't they have two correspondingly different kinds of work?
    c. Well, that depends on what we mean by 'nature!'
        i. Here Socrates pauses to reflect on the difference between Dialectic and Eristic. Dialectic is disagreement structured towards a productive end. Its goal is to help us set out the proper forms of things. Eristic, meanwhile, is mere disagreement for its own sake. It points out contradictions without suggesting productive ways forward. (454a)
    d. So: when we dialectically deploy a term like 'nature,' we have to be careful about how we're using it. This is what Socrates and Glaucon failed to do: "we didn't make any sort of consideration of what form of different and same nature, and applying to what, we were distinguishing when we assigned different practices to a different nature and the same ones to the same." (454b)
    e. If we add this extra level of nuance, however, we can say this: Though males and females may differ with regard to biological nature, they do not necessarily differ with regard to their 'practical' or 'technical' nature. That is to say: they can still be capable of excelling at the same practices or arts. (454d-e)

   f. The work of guardians—the ruling of the city—seems to be an art at which both male and female citizens could excel. Because of that, no difference in biological nature could militate against the possibility of female guardians. (455-456b)
   g. In that way, we can say that the current state of affairs is "against nature," (456b) while an egalitarian inclusion of females in the ruling class would be more natural.
3. Communal Families
   a. So far, Socrates and Glaucon have agreed on the possibility of cultivating female guardians. But they still haven't gotten at the question of creating a community of shared pleasure and pain that would bind the whole city together as a family.
   b. In order to attain such unity, Socrates suggests a bold platform: "All these women are to belong to all these men in common, and no woman is to live privately with any man. And the children, in their turn, will be in common, and neither will a parent know his own offspring, nor a child his parent." (457d)
   c. To accomplish this feat, Socrates suggests a vast web of lies that would act like a drug—deceiving the city in order to remedy it. (459c) A series of rituals and lotteries would conceal from people the breeding program and anonymized nursing that would lead to the best, most unified population of guardians.
   d. Through all of these machinations, the city will be able to attain its "greatest good"—unity. This unity will be based on the community of shared pleasures and pains, which will result from the replacement of the traditional family unity by a citywide sense of cohesion. (462a-b)
   e. Such a unified city would be the best kind of regime, since it would be most like a "human being." Interconnected in all of its parts, it would respond on behalf of any part that was threatened. (462d) There will be no more reason for faction or multiplicity, and so the communality of women and children will lead to the greatest good for the city as a whole.
      i. Faction is hatred of one's own, while war is hatred of the alien. (470b)
4. The Best vs. The Possible
   a. So Socrates and Glaucon have agreed that the communality of women and children would be best for the ideal regime. But would such an arrangement ever be possible in practice?
   b. This question prompts Socrates to reflect on the nature of possibility and ideality more broadly: "Can anything be done as it is said? Or is it the nature of acting to attain to less truth than speaking…?" (473a)
   c. The goal might be not so much to recommend practical policies for contemporary cities, but rather to sketch out a "pattern" (*paradeigma*) that can be aimed at by all. The just man aims at the paradigm of justice; the just city would do the same. (472-473)
   d. Still, Socrates allows that it's desirable to think of ways that we could change currently existing cities so that they would look more like the paradigm. He boldly suggests that there might be one single alteration that would change everything: this would be if "the philosophers rule as kings, or those now called kings and chiefs genuinely and adequately philosophize, and political power and philosophy coincide…" (473d)
   e. So perhaps we are left with this: the only way the Best could ever possibly become actualized in a real city would be if those who think about the Best were to actually become its rulers.
5. But What Is A Philosopher?

a. The idea of the philosopher-king raises the more fundamental question of what it means to be a philosopher in the first place.
b. First of all, to be a philosopher means to love and seek wisdom. It does not mean that you think you're already wise, of course.
c. Curiously, Socrates emphasizes straightaway that a 'lover of wisdom' must love all wisdom—not just certain parts. He is like a wine-lover who loves every kind of wine, not just a few flavors. (475b)
d. But what does it mean to seek all wisdom?
e. According to Socrates, it means to seek the patterns that bring unity to the apparent multiplicity of the world. Thought there are many beautiful and ugly things, many just and unjust things, there is only one 'beauty itself' or 'justice itself' that allows us to discern beauty from ugliness or justice from injustice in the first place. (476)
f. The many are content to live among the phenomenal multiplicity of things. They seek the beautiful and scorn the ugly; they praise justice and decry injustice. But they don't stop to think about the unified ideas of beauty or justice themselves.
g. This condition of the many is, according to Socrates, a dream-like state. (476c) They take the likenesses of things to be the things themselves. That is: they take the apparent multiplicity of just and unjust things to be justice itself, when in fact those things merely "participate" in an overarching form of justice.
h. The philosopher, meanwhile, tries to see these many things as participating in a more general form. By doing so, they seek wisdom as a kind of intellectual sight.

6. Knowledge & Opinion
   a. Socrates and Glaucon end Book V by trying to set the philosopher apart from the non-philosopher by differentiating knowledge from opinion.
   b. Knowledge, they argue, concerns 'what is.' Opinion, meanwhile, concerns 'what is and is not.' Knowledge pertains to those things that are always what they are—namely, the general forms in which apparent things participate. Opinion pertains to the multiplicity of apparent things, all of which participate in many forms. Because they do so, such phenomena look one way at one time and another way at another time—bigger in some ways, smaller in others, and so on. This is what it means to say that they 'are and are not.' Any object both is and is not *x*—from a certain point of view, under certain conditions, etc. But *x* itself is always *x*—otherwise we wouldn't have any grounds for seeing *x* in any phenomenon. (477-478)
   c. As Glaucon sums up the realm of becoming, of the opinable: "For the manys are also ambiguous, and it's not possible to think of them fixedly as either being or not being, or as both or neither." (479c)
   d. The realm of the forms and of knowledge is the realm of proper being. And philosophers, as wisdom-lovers, seek after the stability of this realm. This is—at least provisionally—what separates them from the many who are happy with the instability of the phenomenal world. The ideal city would need to be guided and safeguarded by those who saw beyond this instability and looked to the steadfastness of the political paradigms themselves.

BOOK VI

Main Themes

1. The Philosophical View
    a. Book VI begins where Book V left off—with the description of what a 'philosophical nature' looks like.
    b. The main factor seems to be this: the philosopher aims to "grasp what is always the same in all respects," while others "wander among what is many and varies in all ways." (484b) But to look at this multiplicity without spotting its patterns and forms is akin to being blind.
    c. Before we can pose the question of whether or not a philosophical person can be political, though, we have to further unpack the nature of the philosophical.
    d. The philosopher, aiming at what truly is, cannot be satisfied with the unsteady pleasures of temporal, embodied life. As Socrates asks, "To an understanding endowed with magnificence and the contemplation of all time and all being, do you think it possible that human life seem anything great?" (486a)
    e. Instead of limiting itself to its own life of phenomenal multiplicity, the philosophical soul looks to the ideas of goodness: wisdom, not blindness; courage, not pettiness; moderation, not love of money; and justice, not 'hard-bargaining.' (486) By catching a glimpse of these, it gets hold of a firm standard against which the ups and downs of life can be more accurately measured.
2. The Philosophic & the Political
    a. So: the philosophical soul seems to have a better shot at these kinds of virtues than do other kinds of souls. But none of these virtues necessarily means that the philosophical soul deserves to hold political rule.
    b. To bridge this gap between the philosophical and the political, Socrates resorts to imagery (or even mythmaking). (We can, of course, ask how this is meant to fit in with critical comments about mimesis earlier in the *Republic*.)
    c. The Ship: In the account of the ship, Socrates suggests to us that the city is led by the strongest, but not necessarily the wisest. Without a clear plan on how to pilot the city-ship, every loudmouthed person on board tries to take the wheel or, at least, give directions. But in such a context of competitive ignorance, anyone who actually knows the art of navigation would likely come off as a stargazing fool, either crazy or useless. That I show the philosopher appears to the many in the city. Though he 'looks off' to the ideal political paradigm, they think he is merely absent-minded and impractical. And so it becomes all the more difficult for the philosopher to seize the wheel. (488)
    d. But Socrates further adds that the philosopher should not even actively try to seize political control of the city. Instead, he must be asked to rule. The true philosopher would never be led by love of power or glory or honor to seize the reins for himself. (489b)
    e. Yet few will ever ask a philosopher to rule, often for the reason that there are so many faux-philosophers out there who claim to have knowledge but actually confuse knowledge with opinion, oneness with multiplicity, and so one. (490c-d)
    f. The odds are, quite simply, stacked against the development of sound philosophers in the contemporary city. Philosophical souls are often squelched out by distractions: love of honor, love of money, and so on. (491) The result is a brand of

sophistry that merely rebrands mob opinion as wisdom in order to sell it back to the mob. (493b-c)

g. But the mob, the many, the multitude will never truly become philosophical, for the simple reason that so few can accept the truth about what really is: "Can a multitude accept or believe that the fair itself, rather than the many fair things, or that anything itself, *is*, rather than the many particular things?" (493e) No!—according to Glaucon.
h. As things stand, no civic context, according to Socrates and Adeimantus (who joins in here), provides a fertile seedbed for philosophical souls. (497a-b) The result is that philosophers tend to retreat from civic life and focus on their own personal moral and intellectual formation.
i. But, Socrates insists, this is not the highest goal of philosophy. (497a) The greatest goal is to grant your philosophically trained soul access to the political realm, so that the city as a whole can be guided by truth about what is, rather than waffling opinion or blind ignorance.
j. And yet this is precisely what seems so impossible. We cannot figure out "how a city can take philosophy in hand without being destroyed." (497d)
k. Still, Socrates maintains that a philosophically ruled city remains possible, however unlikely. Perhaps some historical contingency will thrust philosophers into political power. Or perhaps some child of a ruler will be discovered to have a philosophical soul that can be cultivated properly. (499b-c)
l. Regardless, this contingent opportunity would have to be seized upon and cultivated, so that the class of guardians could be trained as philosophers—as those who strive after what truly is.

3. The City & The Good
    a. At 501a-e, we get something like a retroactive justification of the whole project of the *Republic*. A philosophical account of political life would have to proceed not by comparing current cities and their practices, but instead by wiping the slate clean and building up the paradigm of both city and soul from scratch. This *tabula rasa* approach is what the previous books have aimed to begin.
    b. Only by proceeding in that way could the philosopher hope to construct a city that would be wise, courageous, moderate, just, and—to put it simply—Good.
    c. But here Socrates takes a self-critical turn. As we might have suspected, he is not fully satisfied with his earlier 'proofs' of wisdom, justice, and so on. They were serviceable parallels, perhaps, but they still remained "deficient in precision." (504b)
    d. But it's the goal of philosophy to get more and more precise about these forms of things. The greatest study, Socrates argues, concerns the "idea of the Good." If we can start to think towards the 'good itself'—not just good things and bad things—then we might be able to ground our notions of justice (et al.) in something other than vague parallels. (505a)
    e. The "Good" is what "every soul pursues and for the sake of which it does everything." (505d) It is what guides all of our actions. And we are never satisfied with only its appearance. We want the actual good itself.
    f. But what is the determinate content of this 'Good?' That is not something Socrates thinks we can grasp with any immediacy. As he say: "let's leave aside for the time being what the good itself is…" (506e)
    g. Instead, he wants to talk about what the Good 'produces'—its offspring or interest. (*tokos*; 506e-507a)

h. So: what is it that the Good produces? It seems to be something like intellectual light—the light that lights up the space of thought. Here Socrates openly embraces his visual metaphor: just as there is seer, light (the medium of sight), and seen, so there is knower, light-of-goodness, and known. (508a-c)
i. And so: "say that the sun is the offspring of the good I mean—an offspring the good begot in a proportion with itself: as the good is in the intelligible region with respect to intelligence and what is intellected, so the sun is in the visible region with respect to sight and what is seen." (508b-c)
j. The Good is neither what knows ('knowledge') nor what is known ('truth'), but rather the cause of both. (508e)
k. The Good is lofty indeed: "Therefore, say that not only being known is present in the things known as a consequence of the good, but also existence and being are in them besides as a result of it, although the good isn't being but is still beyond being, exceeding it in dignity and power." (509b)

4. The Classes of Things
   a. By orienting itself towards the Good, philosophy is able to get somewhat clearer on the different ways the soul can relate to the world. Since not everything 'is' in the same way, the soul does not have the same kind of grasp on everything it comes across. Some things are so mutable and manifold that the soul can get no firm grip on them; other things are so stable and uniform that the soul struggles to hold on to their immutability. And there are various levels in between these two poles.
   b. Some things are mere images and so must be approach in terms of representation (e.g., a reflection of a ball; 509d). Others are embodied things that can be subject to opinion (e.g., the ball itself; 510a). Still others can be understood as hypotheses used for discursive thought (e.g., a mathematical formulation of the ball as a sphere; 510b). And yet others are forms themselves—the principles (*archai*) that ground hypotheses without need for further hypothetical suppositions. These forms are what true intellection (*noesis*) aims at, and they are what Socratic dialectic wants to help us discover. (511b-d)
   c. The philosophical soul, by cultivating dialectic and *noesis*, seems to have the best shot at attaining maximum clarity about what truly is. If it can do this, then it can presumably 'come back down' from these first principles and apply them to the hypotheses and messy phenomena that make up the rest of human life—including, we hope, the realm of politics. (Otherwise, the best we can do is become 'political technicians'—accepting certain premises and reasoning from them towards definite ends, but never thinking our way back to the principles of politics themselves! 510b)
   d. Socrates tries to sketch another image that would help us catch his drift here. He tells us to think of a line split up four ways (509d). First: cut the whole line up into unequal segments. Then cut those resulting segments up into unequal segments based on the same proportion. You'll wind up with four line segments of decreasing length.
      i. The longest part consists of images and representation.
      ii. The next longest part consists of things and opinion (and trust).
      iii. The next longest part consists of hypothesis and discursive thought.
      iv. The shortest part consists of forms and intellect.
   e. The image of the line can, admittedly, be confusing. Because of that, we can try to transform the line into a grid. That might help us visualize these tiers of being and thinking.

The Line as a Grid: Making Sense of Plato's "Line" in *Republic* VI

		Objects	**Being or Becoming?**	**Affections Produced** (*pathos*)	**Mode of Discovery**	**Examples** (taken with grain of salt)
Intellection (*noēsis*)	1	Forms (*eidē*; *archai*)	Being (*ousia*)	Knowledge (*epistēmē*)	Dialectic (*dialektikē*)	The form of a sphere
	2	Hypotheses (*hupotheseis*; *mathēmatika*)	Being	Thought (*dianoia*)	The Arts (*technai*)	A ball understood as a sphere
Opinion (*doxa*)	3	Things	Becoming (*genesis*)	Trust (*pistis*)	The Senses (*aisthēsis*)	An actual ball
	4	Images (*eikones*)	Becoming	Representation (*eikasia*)	The Senses (*aisthēsis*)	A picture of a ball

BOOK VII

Main Themes

1. The Cave
    a. After spending the end of Book V and much of Book VI outlining what, exactly, it means to be 'philosophical,' Socrates takes one more stab at describing the relationship between philosophy and politics at the beginning of Book VII. Adding to the imagery of the Ship and the Sun, we now find the allegory of the Cave. (514-516)
    b. In the cave are a number of people chained down, their faces forced to look ahead at a wall on which shadows dance. Behind them there are puppets frolicking in front of a fire, casting those shadows. To the people chained down in the cave, the only truth is the movement of the shadow-figures. The most knowledgeable among them is held to be whoever can recall the order in which the shadows appear and recite their names, etc.
    c. But if one of the prisoners were to escape their chains, they could see that the figures they took to be real were in fact mere images of other, more tangible things (i.e., the puppets). But beyond the puppets and the fire, they'd also find a path leading out of the cave entirely. Emerging into the light, they'd be blinded by the sun, since they'd never known such intense brilliance.
    d. After their eyes adjusted, they would encounter a whole world of things, all of which were more real than the kinds of imitations and images found in the cave (puppets, shadows). They might even look at the sun, recognizing it as the *cause* or source of everything both inside and outside the cave.
    e. This recognition would bring happiness to the escaped prisoner, though also a sense of sadness about the compatriots left behind in the cave, unaware of the broader world of real things.
    f. If the escapee tries to go back into the cave to tell his fellow prisoners about the real truth, however, he will not be greeted as a liberator. In their eyes, the only wise person is whoever's best at memorizing the shadow-play. If the escapee tries to disabuse them of their obsession with the shadows, or even free them from their chains, they'll likely grow angry with them, perhaps even trying to kill him.
    g. The situation of the escapee from the cave is meant to parallel that of the philosopher who tries to apply his knowledge to politics. Emerging out of the world of mere obsession with transient phenomena, they catch a glimpse of the idea of the Good—that intellectual sun which makes formal understanding possible.
    h. But once the intellectual sun has been glimpsed, it becomes very difficult to go back into the cave (of things and images) and act as though cave-life were the only kind of life. For one thing, as we already saw, the cave-dwellers might try to kill the philosopher for undermining the solidity of their obsessions, plans, and goals. And in addition to that, the philosopher might not even want to go back down into the cave at all, since the sight of the Good brings such happiness, such intellectual awakening, that it would seem a shame to give it all up in the name of darkness. (517)
2. Rethinking Education
    a. So what's a philosophical person to do? Trying to force-feed formal knowledge to the cave-dwelling masses is a fool's errand. But staying in the warm embrace of the

intellectual sun means that you'll live in isolation and never be able to share your insights, bringing them to bear upon society as a whole.

b. Perhaps, however, we have misrepresented the way education works. According to Socrates, we don't educate people by putting knowledge into their heads. Instead, by engaging other souls, our aim is to introduce them to the art of turning themselves around. By so turning, they can turn away from the play of images and toward 'what is.' (518)

c. Introducing others to this art is less about putting some new faculty into their heads and more about activating a faculty that's already there: 'prudence.' Whereas souls have to be trained to be courageous, moderate, or just, Socrates thinks that souls (or most of them, at least) have an innate sense of prudence or wisdom, which can be aimed at different kinds of things. One can be crafty in one's unjust dealings, for example, but one can also be wise in one's approach to approaching the idea of the Good. You may not be able to make people wise, but you can help them apply their wisdom to something 'higher' than their everyday, contingent, illusory concerns. (518-519b)

3. The Philosopher-Politician

a. But why would someone who'd come to know the idea of the Good even want to come back down and get involved in civic affairs? What could possibly motivate them to do so?

b. Glaucon is at first incredulous that Socrates would make the philosophers who ascend to the intellectual realm—those Blessed Isles—return back down to the realm of the prisoners. But Socrates reminds him of what they'd previously agreed about the paradigmatic city: "My friend, you have forgotten that it's not the concern of *law* that any one class in the city fare exceptionally well, but it contrives to bring this about in the city as a whole, harmonizing the citizens by persuasion and compulsion, making them share with one another the benefit that each is able to bring to the commonwealth." (519e)

c. So even philosophers have to bring their specific virtue and their specific work to serve the city as a whole! Even they must 'produce,' no matter how useless they might look at the moment. (It's a bit curious that 'law' gets so much decisive power here; why are the demands of the law superior to the intellectual perception of the Good?)

d. So, to sum up, we might say: the pure Politician uses prudence to manipulate the visible. The pure Philosopher uses prudence to glimpse the intelligible. But the Philosopher-Politician would use prudence to glimpse the intelligible and then to manipulate the visible in light of that (i.e., in light of the intelligible paradigm as a standard).

e. And so the philosophers must come back down from the heights, re-enter the cave, and govern the phantoms *as* phantoms!

4. Educating Philosopher-Politicians through Number

a. So, in the paradigmatic city that Socrates and Glaucon have been building with words, the best kind of guardians would be trained in philosophy without forsaking politics.

b. But how will might the guardians hope to approach this idea of the Good? Music, gymnastic, and the arts all have their place, but none of them truly refer to what really is. There must, then, be some other aspect of education that will grant this path of access to being and truth.

c. That path, Socrates suggests, lies in the study of Number. (522)
d. By 'arithmetic' or the study of number, Socrates does not mean applied mathematics, but the consideration of number itself. How is it that one thing counts as one and yet is divisible into many (cf. fractions)? How do we come to individuate the sensual world into individual objects? (523-524)
e. This might sound abstract at first (that's partially the point), but Socrates has a sensible way for us to approach this. Whenever we perceive conflicting sensual data, he argues, we are given an occasion to activate our intelligible faculties. When something seems both rough and smooth, for example, we have to think about whether that means it is indeed one thing or rather two things that have somehow gotten stuck together.
f. Once we begin to reflect on how intellect comes into judge sensual data, then we see how often this is the case. We're always intellectually dividing the world up or, conversely, synthesizing its parts into cohesive wholes. In other words: we takes 'ones' and turn them into 'manys' (*analysis*), and we take 'manys' and turn them into 'ones' (*synthesis*).
g. This kind of analysis and synthesis is at the heart of what Socrates means when he calls our attention to the study of Number. (524e-525a)
h. It is because these questions of Number shift our attention from the Sensual to the Intelligible that they are said to lead us towards Truth, in the sense of 'what truly is.' This is the realm where we are then to consider the forms of things and, ultimately, the idea of the Good. (525a-b)
i. Interestingly, Socrates adds that Number is also crucial when it comes to military strategy. Because of that, we can say that the study of Number elevates people with regard to both Philosophy (the study of what is) and War. And these, of course, are the two main fields of study for the Guardians! (525b-c)

5. More About Number
    a. Though mathematics can be applied to warfare, as Socrates reminds us, it is not such applications that primarily interest him. More important is that the study of Number—taken purely—points our souls towards the knowledge of what always is, not what arises and passes away within time. Geometry, like arithmetic, should aim at such timeless truths (e.g., the form of the triangle itself, not the construction of triangle-shaped items in the world; 527 b, d). The same goes for three-dimensional geometry and pure 'astronomy' (or physics—the study of the forms of motion; 529).
    b. A similar contrast between applications and pure pursuit can be found in many other fields of education (e.g., music, etc.). The point is this: rather than getting caught up in cataloguing and comparing the variety of phenomena out there, try to aim at the perfection of forms of knowledge. Approach the field in terms of intellectual problems, not examples or applications for their own sake. (531) It's the difference between memorizing tunes to play them back and understanding the underlying principles of, say, harmony.
6. Education Beyond Number: *Dialectic*
    a. So: the study of Number is the privileged path of access toward the idea of the Good. But does it take us all the way?
    b. Not quite! All of these forms of study, Number included, turn out to be but a "prelude to the song" of *dialectic*. (531d)
    c. It is dialectic that, ultimately, allows us to move through the intelligible realm in search of the forms of things. We do this, however, not by sitting alone in idle

contemplation, but by talking to each other—by discussing ideas (including politics), by giving account of things to one another and testing out those accounts. (531e-532a) (To give an account [*logos*], after all, is to be *logical*—rational; dialectical.)

d. On the journey that is dialectic, see esp. 532a: "So, also, when a man tries by discussion—by means of argument without the use of any of the senses—to attain to each thing itself that *is* and doesn't give up before he grasps by intellection itself that which is good itself, he comes to the very end of the intelligible realm…"
e. Dialectic, then, must take over from the study of Number on the last leg of our journey to the idea of the Good.
f. Like the escaped prisoner, the dialectical philosopher moves out of the cave and into the light. Going even beyond the realm of mathematical knowledge (i.e., the realm of intellectual representation), she comes to look at and understand the proper forms of things. If she's lucky, she might even catch a glimpse of the intellectual sun that allows her to perceive those forms—she might sneak a peek at the idea of the Good.
g. The arts, for their part, remain useful in pointing us to the intelligible and familiarizing us with the various hypotheses that they depend on for their functioning. But they don't quite take us to what truly is. (532c)
h. Dialectic, however, takes us closer to what truly is by *destroying the hypotheses* that uphold the arts! As Socrates puts it: "only the dialectical way of inquiry proceeds in this direction, destroying the hypotheses, to the beginning itself in order to make it secure…" (533c)
i. The Guardians, then, must be trained in Dialectic so that they will be able to give accounts of things to one another, rather than eristically bickering with one another. By doing so, they should be able to rise beyond representation, trust, and even thought, eventually arriving at knowledge of what truly is (being, *ousia*, rather than becoming, *genesis*). (534)

7. A Dialectical Education in the City of the Guardians
    a. Book VII finishes by looking again at some of the details involved in implementing this dialectical program of education in the paradigmatic city.
    b. The goal of such an education is not to add up some amount of piecemeal factoids, but to provide an overview of knowledge. See 537c, where the twenty-year-olds (!) have their education "integrated into an overview which reveals the kinship of these studies with one another and with the nature of that which *is*." (cf. your university educations!)
    c. And also 537c: "For the man who is capable of an overview is dialectical while the one who isn't is not."
    d. But there is a risk to this dialectical-educational platform. What if the ceaseless questioning of hypotheses back to their principles leads to a kind of moral relativism, nihilism, or libertinism?
    e. Socrates invokes the image of an orphan who finds out belatedly that her parents are not really her parents. Coming to terms with this, she no longer venerates them as her ancestral custom demands, but instead takes up with whatever kind of life suits her own particular beliefs and interests. (538)
    f. This is like the student of philosophy who, introduced to dialectic, abandons the moral and social convictions instilled in them by their parents. They becomes orphans with regard to conventional values. Because of this, they may just decide to live however they want, regardless of the old ways.

g. Socrates, interestingly, is against that kind of relativistic conclusion. He's not interested in simply inverting previous forms of law or morality. He wants us to think our way back to the principles of both, not to do away with them.
h. In order to avoid this devolution of dialectic into relativism, nihilism, or meaningless eristic combat, Socrates recommends that dialectical education be parceled out, bit by bit, over the course of a guardian's life.
i. After basic training in gymnastic and perhaps other arts, then, the guardians might receive a basic training in dialectic (about five years; 540). Then they will be thrust into practical matters—especially military exploits—until they reach middle age. At that point, apparently sobered by their life-experiences, they can devote themselves more fully to the contemplation of the idea of the Good, as well as to the application of intellectual insights to the realm of politics.
    i. Aside: It's odd that, at 537a, Socrates seems to suggest that introducing the young guardians to a form of dialectic through 'play' might be a safe way of bringing them to understand how it works. At 539, though, he explores the risks of teaching dialectic to the young and seems to come down in favor of delaying such instruction until much later. But what do we think? Can dialectic be taught through play? Is it as dangerous as Socrates says? Why must the good of the city be preserved if only dialectic can truly approach the Good itself? (Why not pure 'elitism,' in other words? Why Bodhisattva rather than just Buddha?)
j. Dialectic, then, is hugely powerful and very much to be valued, yet also dangerous. And so the city must use it wisely, if it is to contribute to the happiness of the whole, and not to the escape of the few to some Blessed Isles.
k. This, then, would seem to be the best the paradigmatic city could hope for: the rulers would become philosophical in such a way that they would benefit the city as a whole. The philosopher-politician would help realize the city on the model of the justly balanced-out human soul. This may be fairly unlikely but, in the grand scheme of things, Socrates finds it to be both possible and, ultimately, 'profitable.' (540-541; That last part is a cheeky call-back to Thrasymachus, perhaps!)

BOOK VIII

Main Themes

1. Aristocracy & The Political Paradigm(s)
    a. At the beginning of Book VIII, Socrates and Glaucon sum up the various features of the supposedly ideal city they'd been creating over the previous books. Such a civic paradigm would have to include: (543a-c)
        i. Communalism of women and children and education (at least among the guardians)
        ii. Shared stances on war and peace
        iii. Rulers trained in and selected for philosophy and warfare
        iv. Communalism of possessions (at least among the guardians)
    b. But this paradigm seems to correspond only to one 'type' of regime. Clearly, though, history past and present shows us that there are many other types of cities to be found. So how does the paradigm fit into this multiplicity of civic possibilities?
    c. Socrates proposes that, despite all this seeming variety, there are really only five different types of regimes. Just as with the ideal paradigm (corresponding to the just soul), each type of city has a 'type of person' who corresponds to it. By proceeding from the just city/person through the other kinds of cities/persons, we should be able to sketch out the types of regimes and how they all fit together. (544)
        i. This, in turn, will help us answer—yet again!—Thrasymachus' challenge about whether justice is truly more profitable than injustice. (545a) By looking at other, more unjust regime-types, we can test out their levels of profitability, happiness, and so on.
    d. The type of regime that rules the paradigmatic city is then given the name of "aristocracy." The kind of person corresponding to it would be considered "both good and just." (544e)
    e. Though such an aristocracy would seem to be the best kind of icty, it would, as we have seen, still be threatened from within. That's why such a firm system of laws and practices would be needed to prevent internal dissent, faction, and decline.
    f. But, Socrates admits, anything that comes to be in time (cf. *genesis*) is subject to decay (*phthora*). (546a) And so even the aristocratic regime will suffer corruption and decline. In doing so, it will open itself up to change, transforming into a progressively worse series of regime-types.
    g. If we want to take a look at the variety of regimes, then, we should frame them in this sequence of 'progressive decline.' At each stage of decline, a new 'generation' of corresponding 'men' will be born. For each regime-type, there will be a new branch on the family tree.
        i. Regimes declining over time→
        ii. Generations declining over time→
        iii. (That's the parallelism we're constructing here.)
        iv. (This is also where the astrological 'nuptial number' passage arises, which we'll slip past here…)
2. Timocracy
    a. Second after aristocracy comes 'timocracy,' the rule of those whose primary value is honor (*time*).

i. 'Primary value' is a modern gloss on 'what is good.' The timocrats find honor to be the highest good they can attain—even higher than the just unity that was prized in the aristocracy. The other cities, as we'll see, will have their own definitions of 'what is good.' But few, if any, are able to move from 'what is good' to the 'idea of the Good' itself—i.e., the normative idea that allows us to structure the world in terms of value at all.

b. The shift from aristocracy to timocracy seems to occur with the advent of private property. This new economic arrangement shifts the role of the guardians from benign protectors to semi-benign overlords. They now begin to accrue wealth and plunder, but their concern is primarily with the pursuits of honor and military valor. They prioritize *thumos* over *philosophia* and the logistical. (547-548)

c. The timocratic youth is the kind of person that corresponds to this regime-type. Born to an aristocratic family, he is trained well in rational pursuits, but is then corrupted and drawn to overvalue *thumos* thanks to his advisers and flatterers. His soul thus has a skewed proportion of the spirited to the calculating. (549-550)

3. Oligarchy
   a. After timocracy comes oligarchy, rule by the few (*oligoi*). Its main good is wealth.
   b. Oligarchy occurs thanks to the surplus wealth created by the warrior-state of the timocrats. Wealth and virtue appear to have an inversely proportional relationship, and so the ruling class become less and less scrupulous in the way it hordes money. The result is that one city becomes divided into two: the city of the rich and the city of the poor. (551) And a house divided against itself cannot stand—or at least has trouble doing so!
   c. The oligarchic person, then, is someone for whom money has become a surrogate for honor. They ward of disgrace by digging themselves deeper into avarice. The oligarchic man is the son of the timocratic man, whose love of honor had led him to be swindled out of his fortune. Stingy and fearful, the oligarchic son now keeps his money close and refuses to share. (553-554) Their soul is overwhelmed by its desiring part, by *epithumia* for money.
      i. As part of the description of the oligarchic man, we find the distinction between true virtue and merely instrumental virtue. The oligarchic man may act virtuously, but he does so only out of fear that his reputation—for keeping contracts, etc.—might take a hit. (554c-d) True virtue, on the other hand, is pursued for its own sake by a "single-minded and harmonized soul." (554e)
4. Democracy
   a. After oligarchy comes democracy, rule by the people (*dēmos*). Its main good is freedom.
   b. The wanton wealth-accumulation of the oligarchic polis leads to a city of luxury, desire, and untold pleasure. The stinginess of the oligarchic ethos is replaced by the liberality of those who want to be free to pursue whichever desires might occur to them. The elevation of 'freedom' as the supreme value flows out of this sense of license and licentiousness. (555-557)
   c. More specifically, democracies emerge when the oligarchic division between rich and poor becomes so extreme that the poor fight back to gain some measure of power—and win. As a result, they now have a say in government (via lot), just like the rich. All are politically 'equal,' regardless of whatever other features might make them unequal. (555-557)

d. 558c: "Then democracy would have all this and other things akin to it and would be, as it seems, a sweet regime, without rulers and many-colored, dispensing a certain equality to equals and unequals alike."
    i. Democracy might seems sweet for the moment, but it is ultimately unstable and makes it very difficult for people to pursue the kind of social and psychological order that we've found to be most beneficial for them.
    ii. The use of democracy, though, is that it provides a fertile seedbed for new regimes to emerge. (557d) Socrates mentions that, if Adeimantus and company want to build up a new regime on the model of the paradigmatic city, they would do well to start by operating in a democratic city (so easy to subvert).
e. The democratic man, then, is the offspring of the oligarchic man. Both are driven by desire, but not by the same kind of desire. The oligarchic man is driven by a "necessary" desire for money, which can then be used to procure other goods. The democratic man, however, finds himself driven by any kind of desire whatsoever, even—or especially—"unnecessary" desires. (559a) As a consequence, *epithumia* has an ever stronger sovereignty over the democratic soul.

5. Tyranny
    a. The final regime-type discussed in Book VIII is tyranny, the despotic rule of a tyrant raised up by the people.
    b. Tyranny emerges out of democracy when the self-defeating elevation of freedom implodes on itself. Freedom, it turns out, is both the supreme good and the undoing of the democratic city. Taken to its (il-)logical extreme, freedom leads to a kind of anarchy, where each person simply does whatever they want. No longer is there a distinction between rulers and ruled. (562b-d)
    c. 563d: "And they end up… by paying no attention to the laws, written or unwritten, in order that they may avoid having any master at all."
    d. But freedom actually enslaves a democratic people to its desires and, ultimately, to the tyrant they raise up. When this anarchy leads to controversy—especially, again, between rich and poor—the (poor) people raise up a leader who will supposedly set things right and restore their true liberty. But the "people's defender" has no real aptitude for real (in comparison with our paradigm), and so his reign will lead only to injustice and unhappiness for the rest of the city. (565-566)
        i. Here Socrates takes a moment to disparage the tragedians yet again, saying that they tend to promote democracy and even tyranny in their works. This may give some political edge to what earlier seemed like Socrates' stodgy take on poetry. (568c)
    e. Finally, the people will try to fight back against their 'offspring'—the tyrant, this monster they've created. But he will feel no loyalty to them. He is interested only in preserving his own power. And so democracy has seen to its own inevitable end in tyranny.
    f. 569b-c: "… the people, in fleeing the smoke of enslavement to free men [i.e. the wealthy in democracy] would have fallen into the fire of being under the mastery of slaves; in the place of that great and unseasonable freedom they have put on the dress of the harshest and bitterest enslavement to slaves."
    g. (But what about the tyrannical person? That, for whatever reason, must wait until the opening of Book IX…)

BOOK IX

Main Themes

1. The Tyrannical Kind of Person
    a. After running through the aristocratic, timocratic, oligarchic, and democratic types of both cities and people, Socrates and Adeimantus realize that they have more to say about the final type: tyranny. They've adequately addressed the tyrannical city, but not the tyrannic person.
    b. They begin by noting that, when they're dividing up all these human types, what they're actually doing is sorting out different kinds of desires. There are necessary and unnecessary desires, 'overcomable' and non-'overcomable' desires, and so on. (571b)
    c. Socrates singles out dreams as the site where our desires emerge in fullest force. All too often, even those who rationally restrain themselves while awake will find their deepest desires set free while asleep. To ward this off, Socrates recommends engaging in calculative meditation before bed, thereby soothing both your *thumos* and your desires. (572a)
    d. The tyrannical person, for his or her part, is overwhelmed by desire. Out of the abject freedom of pure democracy comes the madness of unbounded desire and the inability to discern between necessary and unnecessary desires. (572e-573a)
    e. "Love" itself is then referred to as a possible "tyrant" itself. (573b) It is love that rules the soul as a tyrant, forcing it this way or that.
    f. Overwhelmed by this misdirected love, the tyrannical soul becomes a sort of walking nightmare, letting the unbounded desire of dreams loose in the world of waking life. (574d-e)
    g. But it is not only actual, politically powerful tyrants that count as tyrannical people. In fact, a declining city will likely be full of such little tyrants, whose souls are enslaved to desire. Out of these little tyrants emerges one big tyrant, who actualizes the tyrannic type in the most grotesquely real way. (575c-d)
2. The Happiness of Tyrants
    a. When Glaucon enters the conversation, the topic shifts to whether or not a tyrannic type of person can ever be truly happy. They do seem, of course, to be surrounded by all the appearances we associate with happiness: money, luxuries, adoration, etc.
    b. And yet, despite appearances, the declining order of the Socratic typology would suggest that the tyrant would be the least happy kind of person. As Glaucon admits: "it's plain to everyone that there is no city more wretched than one under a tyranny and none happier than one under a kingship." (576e)
    c. Because of this, Socrates proposes that he and Glaucon "pretend" to be able to judge other people in a way that goes beyond their superficial appearance. (577a) It's a difficult enterprise, but the goal is to look past the surface of 'happiness' and get at what's really going on in a tyrant's soul.
    d. What they find is that the tyrant is in fact a slave—a slave to himself and his own worst desires. His calculating aspect is unable, even with the help of *thumos*, to restrain his *epithumia*. He has lost control of himself. As Socrates puts it: "the soul that is under a tyranny will least do what it wants." (577e)
    e. The tyrannical life thus turns out to be worst kind of life indeed. Bound in the prison of his own fears and loves, he is unable to control himself, let alone all those

he is said to rule. And so, even if his desiring parts are well-fed, the whole soul is at war with itself and so suffers the consequences. (579)

3. The Happiness of Kings
    a. Over against the tyrant we have the king—not just the actual philosopher-king, but anyone who is "king of himself." (580b-c) This is the condition of true happiness, because the whole soul is set in its right order and refuses to be at war with itself. This brings a kind of happiness that stays strong regardless of who's watching.
    b. But to see why this kind of philosophical soul is actually happiest, we have to unpack our concepts of desire and pleasure a bit more carefully.
    c. Socrates then posits three modes of pleasure that correspond to three modes of desire. These, perhaps unsurprisingly, can be set in parallel to the three parts of the soul and the three classes of the city. (580-581) They are:
        i. Desire for and pleasure in Knowledge (cf. the calculating guardians)
        ii. Desire for and pleasure in Honor (cf. the spirited auxiliaries)
        iii. Desire for and pleasure in Gain (cf. the desirous moneymakers)
    d. Here we might complain that there's no way to say which of these three kinds of pleasure is 'best.' Don't they all make people happy? How could you say that knowledge inherently makes people happier than Gain?
    e. To this, Socrates replies as follows. The philosophic soul has the best shot at happiness because they are able to attain all three kinds of pleasure, while non-philosophers get stuck in the bottom two tiers of desire. The moneymaker, for example, desires gain and profit so single-mindedly that they never move past that to seek honor, let alone wisdom. The philosopher, however, is able to moderately satisfy his acquisitive and honor-loving parts while on the way to knowledge. The philosopher is happy not just because he has the high pleasure of knowing, but also because of the 'profit' and 'honor' that come along with such knowing. (582)
4. Knowledge as the Highest Form of Pleasure
    a. Even having said that, Socrates acknowledges that there's more to discuss about why knowledge brings the highest kind of happiness. As he puts it: "of the three pleasures, the most pleasant would belong to that part of the soul with which we learn; and the man among us in whom this part rules has the most pleasant life." (583a)
    b. To defend this position, Socrates and Glaucon then take a closer look at pleasure and pain. They explore that relationship in terms of motion and rest. True pleasure and true pain would seem to be motions—actual occurrences that cause affections in the soul, either for better or for worse. But sometimes the mere cessation of such a motion—the occurrence of 'rest'—feels like pleasure or pain. When a great pain ceases, that can feel like pleasure, even though it's really just the end of pain. Conversely, when a great pleasure is taken away, it can be painful, even though there's no positive pain occurring. (584)
    c. The movements of desire—towards pleasure, away from pain—are thus highly relative and sensitive to temporal context. Our search for 'fulfillment'—pleasure and fullness are drawn close here—is always partial and temporary. But what if there were a form of fulfillment that never went away, like a barrel of wine that never went dry?
    d. Perhaps, then, true pleasure lies in our desire for what truly *is*. And it is knowledge that gives us the pleasing, fulfilling attainment of the self-same and unchanging, as we have seen. (585b-c)

e. The desire for knowledge, then, is the path towards satiety and satisfaction: "Therefore, if it is pleasant to become full of what is by nature suitable, that which is more really full of things that *are* more would cause one to enjoy true pleasure more really and truly, while what partakes in things that *are* less would be less truly and surely full and would partake in a pleasure less trustworthy and less true." (585d-e)
f. More being, in short, brings more fulfillment, pleasure, and happiness.
g. The just soul will then prioritize its desire for knowledge, though it will allow all three aspects of itself to be fulfilled in due measure: "when all the soul follows the philosophic and is not factious, the result is that each part may, so far as other things are concerned, mind its own business and be just and, in particular, enjoy its own pleasures, the best pleasures, and to the greatest possible extent, the true pleasures." (586e)
h. To have this life is to be a king of yourself and to avoid the horrific unhappiness of the tyrant.

5. The Monster, the Lion, and the Human
   a. Socrates then turns to an odd image to further develop his point in response to Thrasymachus' old challenge. (588b) He asks Glaucon to imagine (!) a threefold creature made up of a Monster, a Lion, and a Human Person. (588-589)
   b. The Monster is associated with Desire, while the Lion corresponds to Spiritedness and the Human to Calculation. But to pursue profitability through injustice is to disorder the relationship between these three aspects. It is to feed the monster and the lion at the expense of the human.
   c. Vice, then, is what enslaves the worst in the soul to the best, as we saw with the tyrant. And the 'best' in the soul is what Socrates calls, alternately, our most 'human' part or even our most 'divine' part. Calculation, allowing us to arise from the sensible and look to the intelligible, is both the highest human capability and something like a divine gift. (589-590)
   d. This divinely just order should rule over both soul and city alike: "In order that such a man [e.g., the moneymaker] also be ruled by something similar to what rules the best man, don't we say that he must be the slave of that best man who has the divine rule in himself? It's not that we suppose the slave must be ruled to his own detriment, as Thrasymachus supposed about the ruled; but that it's better for all to be ruled by what is divine and prudent, especially when one has it as his own *within* himself [cf. soul]; but, if not, set over one from *outside* [cf. city], so that insofar as possible all will be alike and friends, piloted by the same things." (590c-d)
   e. By ordering the correct regime within oneself, then, the philosophic soul will be able to bring just order to the city as a whole. By looking to the political paradigm, such a soul could build a city both within and without, ordering their desires and bringing about the conditions for true 'profit.' (591-592)

BOOK X

Main Themes

1. *Poiēsis* and *Mimēsis*—Making and Mimicking
    a. With the beginning of Book X, we are thrust back into the controversy over poetry and imitation. Socrates pats himself and Glaucon on the back for their previous ban on most forms of poetry (especially the tragic).
    b. Interestingly, Socrates admits that he retains a personal predilection for epic poetry like Homer. And yet, his philosophical exploration of imitation has revealed its dangers, which means that even Homer will have to be judged accordingly. For: "a man must not be honored before the truth." (595c)
    c. Turning again to the problem of imitation, Socrates starts out by reminding us about the forms: "we are, presumably, accustomed to set down some one particular form for each of the particular 'manys' to which we apply the same name." (596a)
        i. Aside: why are forms so closely linked to names here? Is that standard for Socrates? Isn't the problem that sometimes one name actually conceals many subtle distinctions, which can be discovered through dialectical thought?
    d. When a craftsman, for example, makes something (e.g., a couch), he proceeds on the basis of an idea he perceives in advance. He then makes the material thing in the image of the pattern or paradigm he 'saw' in his mind. But he did not at all make that paradigm itself. Rather, he had to accept it as a working presupposition before beginning his work. (596b-c)
    e. There is one kind of art and one kind of artisan, however, that can make all things, not just one kind of thing. (Such multiplicity is, of course, suspect.) That art is poetry and the artisan is the poet. (Painters come in for criticism here, too.) (597-599)
    f. Taking the experiences of the philosopher, the couchmaker, and the poet into consideration, we can say that there are three main tiers of 'being' here (597):
        i. The Idea (what truly is)
        ii. The Thing (made in the image of what is)
        iii. The Imitation (made in the image of the image of what is)
    g. The imitator, then, whether poet or painter, is three steps removed from what truly is. The tragic poet is "naturally third from a king and the truth, as are all the other imitators." (597e)
    h. These imitators know a little about a lot of different things, which is a dangerous skill. Rather than carefully examining each thing as to its form, they skip across all fields of things and act as though they're communicating real wisdom to their audience. (598) But in fact they are operating at a remove from reality in its truest sense.
2. Knowledge Undermined by Representation
    a. Socrates then draws a distinction between those who use and those who make. Those who make create what they create for the sake of those who use; e.g., the saddle-maker works on behalf of the horseman, but it's the horseman who truly knows how to use the saddle. It is the 'user,' then, who aims at knowledge (*epistēmē*), while the maker is content to operate on the basis of trustworthy opinion (cf. *pistis*). (601d-e)

b. The imitator, though, doesn't even have trustworthy opinions. Poets operate solely through imitation and representation (*eikasia*). (602a)
c. As we saw earlier, though, sensual data is often untrustworthy, confusing, and even conflicting. By playing around only in the sensual field, the poet is using mimesis to manipulate us sensually rather than cultivate us rationally. (602-603)
d. But the calculating aspect is the only thing that can bring order to our internal divisions and warring multiplicity. Poets, however, aim only to cultivate a bad regime in the soul. Lest they do so, we must keep them out of the good regime that is the paradigmatic city. (605a-b)
e. The risk of poetry, then, is that it pathologically inverts the relationship between ruler and ruled within the soul. Desire and representation reign, while calculation and knowledge are beaten down. (606c-d)
f. Even if poetry remains "charming," it must be severely limited in the paradigmatic regime. At most, only those songs and tales that elevate our sense of justice concerning gods and men would be allowed. (607)

3. The Immortality of the Soul
    a. At 608, Socrates and Glaucon shift to the topic of whether or not virtue leads to any kind of "reward" for the virtuous person. This, again, obviously calls back to Thrasymachus' nagging question about 'profit.'
    b. To tackle this question one last time, Socrates abruptly introduces the possibility of the immortality of the soul. (608c-d)
    c. Beginning from the premise that "what destroys and corrupts everything is the bad and what saves and benefits is the good," (608e) Socrates argues that the soul is the only thing that suffers badness without being destroyed by it. Vice and injustice are the 'evil' of the soul—they make it bad, but they don't actually kill it. Evil men live on alongside just men. Becoming unjust is not immediately lethal.
    d. But then, even if that's the case, don't souls probably still die when the body dies? Socrates doesn't think so. The badness that kills the body—disease, violence, etc.—can only affect the body. Evils are specific to the natures they affect. Since Socrates takes the soul to be a different kind of thing than the body, he can claim that it's nonsensical for bodily degradation to degrade the soul, let alone destroy it. (And so we notice no necessary decline in virtue or justice among those who are ill or dying.) (610)
    e. For these two reasons, Socrates thinks it plausible that the soul is immortal. He also adds to this that it would be unlikely for an everlasting thing (like the soul) to be inherently divided up and full of an internal multiplicity.
    f. Of course, we have seen throughout the *Republic* that the soul, in its current state, is in fact overwhelmed by internal divisions and multiplicity. And yet Socrates argues that this is a contingent fact about the soul. Its true nature, meanwhile, is to be singular and unified. (611a-b)
    g. That might be why justice is the virtue of the soul. Only justice re-orders the soul in such a way as to bring out its original unity and singularity of purpose. Philosophy, as the divine search for what truly is, allows the soul to approach its natural condition of being—immortal, unchanging, stable. (611d-e)

4. Justice and Reward
    a. In this sense, then, justice is its own reward, as far as the soul is concerned. Any superficial form of 'profit' that would undermine this just order would in fact turn

the soul against itself and scar its originally unitary nature. To pursue justice, on the other hand, is to find itself and become king of itself. (612)

b. We might take this to be a satisfying conclusion to the whole argument, but Socrates has one last twist in store for us. He tells Glaucon that, in addition to justice serving as its own reward, there might also be an additional kind of compensation for those who live a just life.
c. Given the immortality of the soul, there must be some other plane of reality where disembodied souls go when they die. It would be in such a 'place' that an invisible economy of reward and compensation would play out.
d. As Socrates says: "Thus, it must be assumed in the case of the just man that, if he falls into poverty, diseases, or any other of the things that seem bad, for him it will end in some good, either in life or even in death. For, surely, gods at least will never neglect the man who is eagerly willing to become just and, practicing virtue, likens himself, so far as is possible for a human being, to a god." (613a; *theōsis*!)
    i. Aside: Socrates also implies, at 613b-c, that in the long run, the just man will win out over the unjust man even in this life! Now that is a difficult doctrine to accept…
e. Perhaps surprisingly, given the screed against poetry earlier in Book X, Socrates decides to communicate his understanding of postmortem moral retribution by means of a myth: the Story of Er. (614-621)
f. In this story, a man named Er dies but is then sent back to live again, so that he can bear the message of the afterlife to his fellow humans. What he sees is this: disembodied souls are taken to a place of judgment, where they are reminded of their deeds in life and judged as to their virtue and justice. Those who fall short of justice are tortured (in proportion to how unjust they were—tyrants get the worst of it); those who are found just experience heavenly pleasures.
g. Er also has a vision of the cosmic 'spindle'—the interconnected mechanism of necessity, harmony, fate, and time that weaves each person's life into the overarching cosmic revolutions. But even though necessity ultimately rules all, each person is to blame for their own shortcomings. This is because we don't stay in 'heaven' or 'hell' forever; we're only there for about one millennium. Then we are reincarnated as other people or even animals. A divine lottery settles the order in which we choose our new lives—choose carefully!—as well as the *daimōn* who will accompany us throughout those lives. Because it is we who choose these things, it is we who are responsible for how our lives play out.
h. But, just as in embodied life, it remains difficult to discern good from evil in any reliable manner. Philosophy and knowledge still matter in the afterlife. Still, many souls that never bothered with such things will have trouble choosing their new lives. To think through the meaning of justice and goodness is thus of crucial importance both in this life and the next.
i. After the rest of this otherworldly drama has played out, the last thing that happens to us before we're literally born again is that we pass through the river *Lēthē*. This is the river of concealment, oblivion, forgetting. It wipes our memory clean of the lessons of our previous lives and the afterlife. But the philosopher is the one who truly loves and seeks truth—*alētheia*—the unconcealment of what really is. By training our souls to see 'unconcealment,' then, we might have some chance of fighting back against the oblivion of concealment. By doing so, we can seize control

of our inherent faculties (like prudence) and begin anew the art of turning around that is true education.

j. Perhaps we are persuaded by this myth, perhaps not. Regardless, justice remains its own reward while also retaining the potential for some unforeseeable future form of compensation. The subsequent history of thought—not just social and political—will continue to wrestle with this relationship between immanent and delayed forms of compensation for those who don't just appear just, but are, in fact, truly just.