Repetition, remaking in *Republic*

- Justice has the same form in the state and in the person (Bk IV)
- Restarting the whole argument again, starting in Bk II after Bk I unsatisfactory (357a-358b, pp. 33-34)
- Re-creating an entire city in theory, starting from scratch (Bk VII, 541a, p. 212)
- Giving here a theoretical model that can only be partially imitated in reality (Bk V, 472c-e, pp. 147-148; Bk VI, 501b, p. 174)
- Dangers of imitating bad characters in poetry & drama (Bk III); dangers of imitative art that doesn’t stem from true knowledge (Bk X)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of the city</th>
<th>Role</th>
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</table>
| **Citizens**     | • Military  
|                  | • See each other as similar, as equals; not great differences in wealth  
|                  | • Live together in military groups; don’t live with own families until partway through adult life  
|                  | • Can’t engage in manufacture of goods or trade or amass wealth  
|                  | • Children educated by state from age 7 (men & women)  
|                  | • Can engage in political rule |
| **Manufacturer class** | • Make goods, engage in trade, can amass some wealth  
|                  | • Can’t engage in political rule at all |
| **Serfs**        | • Farmers; work the land owned by the citizens  
|                  | • Can make money on surplus they grow  
|                  | • Can’t engage in political rule at all |
It was Sparta, actually

• Athens and Sparta had been bitter enemies in a war from 431-404 BCE; this text written just a few decades later.

• Plato remaking the Spartan constitution to some extent
  o Though by focusing the rulers on reason and objective truths about justice rather than on military values such as honour and victory
  o Spartan consitution seems to be the “timocratic” one in Bk VIII, 547c-d, p. 217-218
Athens & Sparta
Democracy in Athens

Assembly of Citizens: male, Athenian parents, completed military training (age 20)

- No women, children, slaves, foreigners
- Met around 40 times/yr, about 5000-6000 people each mtg
- Anyone allowed to speak at assembly
- Decided on laws & policies put forward by Council of 500
Democracy in Athens

Council of 500
• Voted on which laws/policies to take to Assembly
• Chosen by lottery; one year terms; 50 out of each of 10 “tribes” (geographical areas)
• Each tribe serves as “presidents” for 1/10 of the year; presidents organized meetings of council
• One person serves as Chair of the presidents for one 24-hour period only (can only serve once)

Ten Generals
• Elected by assembly, one from each tribe
• Planned military campaigns
Democracy in Athens

People’s courts
- All citizens over 30 can serve as jurors
- Jurors chosen by lot on day of trial at last minute
- Anywhere from 500-1500 jurors per trial

Things to note
- Significant equality in rule—many positions chosen by lottery
- Speaking well in public could be very important—sway political votes in assembly, sway jurors in courts
- Sophists: teachers of rhetoric (Thrasymachus was one) were popular
Peloponnesian War (w/Sparta)

- 431-404 BCE; Athens loses

- **Rule of 30 tyrants** (404-403 BCE)
  - Set up by Sparta, anti-democrats
  - Took over judicial function; only 3000 people had right to trial and to bear arms
  - Exiled democrats, took their lands; killed people to take their money and lands
  - Tried to get Socrates to arrest an innocent person (he refused)
  - Plato’s uncle (Charmides) and great-uncle (Critias) were part of the 30 (Critias was their leader)
Plato (c. 428-347 BCE)

- From aristocratic, wealthy and politically active family
- Did not go into politics—why? Intro to our text p. ix
- Invited to try to get a ruler of Sicily to be a philosopher-king; ended badly
- Set up a school of philosophy (“The Academy”) around 385 BCE

Plato Silanio Louvre, via Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.
Socrates (c. 469-399 BCE)

- Wrote nothing, so far as we know
- Walked around Athens engaging people in philosophy discussions
- Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* suggests he may not have been a fan of democracy
- Tried and executed for impiety and corruption of the youth
  - Friends with infamous traitor to Athens, Alcibiades; didn’t leave town when 30 in power, like other democrats did; not punished like other democrats

"Socrates Louvre" by Eric Gaba, via Wikimedia Commons. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5
Title, characters, setting

- “Republic”: constitution
- Not a real conversation, but characters were real people
- Setting: Piraeus, port of Athens—how/why significant?
  - Connected to rule of 30 and the democratic resistance
Socratic method of *elenchus*

1. Ask another person what they think X is, where X is often some abstract concept like piety, beauty, justice, courage, etc.
   - Flatter that person by telling them they’re smart; say you don’t know the answer and need to be taught
2. Use questions to get that person to see that there are problems with their view
3. The person revises their view, tries again
4. Do (2) again
5. Repeat

In some dialogues, no answer is reached; the interlocutor just gets fed up and leaves
Plato, Apology:
Socratic wisdom: “I am wiser than this man; it is likely that neither of us knows anything worthwhile, but he thinks he knows something when he does not, whereas when I do not know, neither do I think I know; so I am likely to be wiser than he to this small extent, that I do not think I know what I do not know” (21d).
Socratic method of *elenchus*

What might be the point of this sort of method? What might it accomplish?

What could be some of its dangers?

Where/how do you see the elenctic method in Book I of *Republic*?
Book I: Cephalus and Polemarchus

• **Cephalus:** Example of someone who lives well but only b/c getting old and appetites relaxing, and has enough money so doesn’t have to cheat others (329c-331b)
  - Justice is speaking the truth and paying debts
  - Drops out of discussion—not interested in looking further

• **Polemarchus:** gives a poet’s view of justice (but do the poets really have knowledge? Book X says no)
  - Justice is giving each what is owed: good to friends, harm to enemies
  - P goes along with S’s criticisms of his views & eventually agrees...
Book I: Thrasyymachus

- Many sophists (incl. Thrasyymachus): moral relativists (no objective truth about moral values); just aim for what is in your best interest

- T’s view of justice: the advantage of the stronger (338c, p. 14)
  - In each city/state, the stronger element is the rulers
  - The rulers make laws to their own advantage
  - They declare these laws to be just for the subjects—justice means obeying the laws
  - Therefore, justice works to the advantage of the stronger
**Book I: Thrasymachus**

**Socrates’ view of rulers:** The true rulers are those who rule not in their own interest, but in the interests of their subjects (341c-342, pp. 17-19)

- Analogies with doctors, ships’ captains, shepherds—these will reappear later in the text

**Note:** In rest of the text Socrates repeats aspects of T’s argument with some changes

- The rulers are the ones who determine what is just and unjust and others must follow this
- But rulers get the objective truth about justice and that is what is enforced
- Which works in the interests of all, not just the rulers
T’s view of the unjust person: has the best life because gets more than the just (money, power, etc.) (343d-344c, pp. 19-20)

- The very best life is that of the tyrant (344a, p. 20)

Socrates’ view of the unjust person: injustice causes dissention within, making someone incapable of achieving anything (351e-352a, p. 28)

- returns to this question and criticizes the life of the tyrant in Book IX as the worst life
Thrasymachus is not convinced (350e, p. 27); Socrates is not satisfied with the argument either (354a-b, p. 31)

Why use elenctic style only to drop it later?

• Maybe Plato repeating it to reveal its problems
• If people think philosophical discussion is just about winning b/c there is no objective truth, elenchus not going to work
• Note criticism of elenchus in Book VII (538d-539c, p. 210-211)
• Maybe need to be brought up in entirely different state to recognize the truth about justice
Overall argument in *Republic*

**Two questions**

1. What is justice, in the state and in the person (soul)?
2. Is it better to be a just person than an unjust one?

**Answers**

1. Justice in each exists when the various parts each perform the work they are supposed to, stay in their roles
2. Better to be a just person, both in itself & because of the external rewards you can get (end of Bk IV, Books VIII-X)
Book II: What most people believe about justice

• Injustice better, but the weak agree amongst themselves to be just b/c too weak to do injustice w/ impunity (358e-359b, pp. 34-35)

• Justice is good only instrumentally, not intrinsically (357b-358a)
  o if external sanctions taken away, everyone would be unjust (Ring of Gyges example)

• Ranking of lives
  o Best: be unjust, appear just
  o Middle: be just, appear just
  o Worst: be just, appear unjust
Book II: What Soc needs to argue for

Glaucon and Adeimantus want Socrates to show:
(358b, p. 34 and 367e, p. 42)

• Justice is good in itself (intrinsically good), no matter how people appear, no matter the rewards they might get

• Injustice is intrinsically bad, no matter if people never seen to be unjust—so life of clever tyrant is not best
Why argue for the nature and value of justice in the city and the person by starting off creating an entirely new city in theory?

Map of Assos, via Wikimedia Commons, public domain.
The *kallipolis*

- Division of professions according to our “natures” (Bk II, 370b, p. 45)

- Political, social, economic structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Virtue (Bk IV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rulers</td>
<td>Rulers</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliaries</td>
<td>Military, police force; enforce the ruler of the rulers</td>
<td>Courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>Manufacture goods, engage in trade</td>
<td>(Moderation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The *kallipolis*

What keeps the rulers and auxiliaries from being corrupted and ruling for their own interests?

- Living conditions (Bk III), including families (Bk V)

- Education
  - Rules for poetry and drama in Bks II, III, X
  - Books V, VI and VII: learn the true nature of justice, goodness, moderation, courage, etc., so can put these models into practice in the city (Bk V, 484c-d, p. 158; Bk VI, 500d-501c, pp. 174-175)
The *kallipolis*

• Qualities of the rulers
  
  o Love the city the most (Book III, 412d-414a, pp. 89-90)
  o Are philosophers! (Bk V, 473c-d, p. 148)
  o Capable of discovering the true natures of things (Bk VI, 485a-b, p. 158)
  o Prefer pleasures of soul to those of body (Bk VI, 485d-e, p. 160)
  o Won’t fear death (486a-b, p. 160)
  o Won’t be likely to be unjust, if not money-lover or cowardly

• Rulers won’t want to rule (Bk VII, 521a-b, p. 193)
**Justice**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Part of city</th>
<th>Virtue</th>
<th>Part of soul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rulers</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Courage</td>
<td>Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>(Moderation)</td>
<td>Appetite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Justice in both state and soul: “doing one’s own work and not meddling with what isn’t one’s own” (Bk IV, 433b, p. 108; also 442d, p. 118)
Emphasis on unity

Unity in state
- avoid great disparities in wealth, or you’ll have two cities rather than one (Book IV, 422e, p. 98)
- “myth of the metals” (end of Bk III)—all are related, born from the earth
- Rulers & auxiliaries live together, don’t have separate families
- Moderation means state is harmonious: all agree on who should rule (Bk IV, 432a, p. 107)
- Cause of decline from the best state is “civil war breaking out within the ruling group” (Book 8, 545d, p. 215)
Emphasis on unity

Unity in soul/person

• Just person harmonizes self so all three parts work together: “from having been many things he becomes entirely one, moderate and harmonious” (Bk IV, 443d-e, p. 119)

• Contrast with democratic person in Bk 8
  o Treats all desires as of equal value
  o He lives “always surrendering rule over himself to whichever desire comes along, as if it were chosen by lot” (561b, p. 231)
Better to be just than unjust

Justice as health of the soul (Book IV)

- “To produce **health** is to establish the components of the body in a natural relation of control and being controlled, one by another, while to produce disease is to establish a relation of ruling and being ruled contrary to nature” (444d, p. 120)
  - Justice in soul is “to establish the parts of the soul in a natural relation of control, one by another”
- **Health** results in physical well-being, and **justice** results in mental/spiritual well being: virtue is “a kind of health, fine condition, and well-being of the soul, while vice is disease, shameful condition, and weakness” (444d, p. 121)
Better to be just than unjust

Why the tyrannical person is least happy (Bk IX)

• Enslaved by appetites he can’t control, so can’t do what he wants, not free (574 d-e, p. 245; 577d-e, p. 248)
  o Echo Book I: Cephalus is glad to be getting old and escaping from the appetites, “like a slave who has escaped from a savage and tyrannical master”; appetites are “mad masters” (329c-d, p. 4)

• Soul in disorder (577e, p. 248)—not in the natural order of reason ruling

• Full of fear, regret (577e-%78a, p. 248; 579e, p. 250)

• Friendless (580a, p. 250)
Better to be just than unjust

- **Book IX (p. 251-end):** why the person in whom reason rules is happiest
- **Bk X:** *instrumental* value of justice
  - Why the just person will get external rewards, both from other people and from the gods
  - Will be able to choose one’s next life well (618c-e, pp. 289-290)
- **Questions:**
  - Has Socrates adequately shown that justice is good *intrinsically*, even if one is thought unjust?
  - If you could guarantee you wouldn’t get caught, would you be unjust, or has Soc given a good enough reason why that would still be bad?