Hauptli's Lecture Supplement on Plato's *Republic* Part A[1]

[BOOK I]

1. Book I "A preliminary overview [327-354c]:

The First Book of the *Republic* provides an introduction to the concerns, themes, and theses of the text. Some scholars contend that it was written earlier than the remainder of the text and that it may have been intended as a "stand-alone" dialogue. Clearly, it more resembles the earlier Platonic dialogues than does the remainder of the text. Note that while the theses advanced in this First Book are not correct (according to Plato), they are also not wholly wrong either. For Plato, clearly, you must be right *for the right reasons*. The views expressed here (the importance of old age, wealth, giving individuals their due, and even advantage) are all important, but they must be rightly construed! The remainder of the work endeavors to provide the arguments for what Plato considers to be the right version of the themes and theses.

327c Pol: "Do you see how many we are? "Could you persuade men who do not listen? The passage is there to remind us of the nature of Socratic dialectic and of its prerequisites.

Cephalus: Old Age, Wealth, and Justice:

329c Cephalus cites Sophocles: "Old age and freedom from the many savage and tyrannical masters." The picture offered here is one of freedom from the **tyranny of the appetites** (sexual appetite is the specific example) and **the advantage of wealth for justice**. As is the case for most of the theses of the First Book, we must interpret this discussion carefully. It is not that Plato's Socrates believes that a life of sexual abstinence is the best, but that the advantage which old age brings is that it can facilitate the rational control of the appetites. It is this thesis, which he is ultimately in favor of, but this is to jump ahead of ourselves" Cephalus' point, in other words, needs to be interpreted (as it stands it is both right and wrong, and without the context of the overall understanding of what justice is, the rightness and wrongness can not be properly disentangled.

-331a Cephalus: "...the man who knows he has not sinned has a sweet and good hope as his constant companion."

331b Cephalus maintains that the *advantage of wealth* is that it is conducive to justice.

he believes that justice amounts to paying one's debts.

--331c Soc: **Weapon example**! The example shows that there is something wrong with this characterization of justice. Cephalus leaves the discussion, and his son Polemarchus takes over.

Polemarchus (Cephalus' son) **and Justice:**

331e Pol: Justice amounts to **giving to each what is owed to him** (citing the poet Simonides).

-332b Soc: What is "due" one's enemies?

-Pol: **Harm** is what is owed them, is what they're "due."

-332c Soc: Is 'due' being used correctly here? Practitioners of a **craft**[2] like *medicine* give others what is their due," so what do practitioners of justice--wherein lies their usefulness?

-332d The practice of justice benefits one's friends and harms one's enemies.

--Soc: "benefit in what sense?"

-333 Pol: Justice is beneficial in contracting situations "in dealings between people."

--Justice is useful in keeping possessions safe when they are *not* in use (it is useless when they are in use--in such cases other arts are more to the point).

--333e Soc: Isn't the skilled boxer also the one most skilled in defending against blows?

--334a The man most capable of guarding possessions will be the one most capable of stealing them? And, thus, the just man is a kind of thief?

-334b Polemarchus is puzzledâ€"but keeps to his definition.

-334c Soc: **Can one be mistaken about who one's friends and enemies are?** In such a situation, the definition means that the "just" man might merely be helping those whom he believes (falsely) to be his friends....

--**Note** that this point presages an important move in the criticism of Thrasymachus' orientation at 339c below!

-335a Pol: justice amounts to benefiting the friend who is good and harming the enemy who is bad.

335b Soc: **"Is it the role of the just man to harm anyone at all?"**

-Pol: Yes "the enemies who are bad!"

-Soc: Do horses, dogs, etc., become better or worse when harmed?

--335b-e Soc: ***Justice and harming human excellence* [*arete*]:** music instructors and riding-masters: can they by the practice of their crafts make men unmusical and non-horsemen? "Can the just, by the practice of justice, make men unjust?"

--**Critical Comment**: Note that the definition that is being critiqued here is both right and wrong. While the "proper ruler" is not supposed to "harm human excellence," **the ruling philosopher-kings and auxiliaries will have to defend the state** (at least against enemies from the outside, and probably from enemies from within), **and the idea that such rulers and soldiers will not harm others is, surely, ludicrous**. Thus later in the *Republic* Plato's Socrates has the rulers behaving more as the earlier "definitions" indicate! With, perhaps, a paternalistic qualification.
--Plato's view here is *not* the view of the age. In his "Does Piety Pay?" Socrates and Plato on Prayer and Sacrifice," Mark McPherran maintains that: "first, it seems unlikely that Socrates' disbelief [in the *Euthyphro*] in divine enmity and injustice per se would put him at risk of disbelief in the civic gods." Thanks to their exposure to the works of Hesiod, Sophocles, and Aeschylus, most Athenians were acquainted with affirmations of the gods' justice, and we hear of no one demurring at these expressions¦" .It is, rather, with his rejection of the negative side of *lex talionis* (that is, the "return of an evil for an evil" [part of this doctrine which holds that we should return a good for a good, a loss for a loss, and an evil for an evil]), and some of the propitiatory ***do ut des* [loosely: give as you receive]** aspects of cult that Socrates' doctrine of divine justice seems to present a threat to the civic gods and cult of Athens."[3] Clearly Plato's Socrates is calling for a significant change in the conception of justice given what he says here!

Thrasymachus and Justice:

336a Thr: "If you really want to know...stop scoring points...."
-Rhetoric *vs.* philosophy. Thrasymachus was a noted sophist—a teacher of rhetoric and oratory.

338c Thr: Justice (or the Right) amounts to the **advantage of the stronger**.

Soc: Before I praise this definition, I must understand your meaning.
Thr: "Each government makes laws to its own advantage..."
-339c Soc: Are the rulers in all cities infallible?
--339e Where the rulers are wrong about what is in their interests, if the subjects do what the rulers tell them to do, they will be doing what is to the *disadvantage* of the stronger!
--340c Clitophon breaks in to try to "rescue" Thrasymachus by maintaining that what he must have meant was "whatever the stronger *believes* to be in his interest."
--341 c Thr: "Do you think Iâ€™d call someone who is in error stronger at the very moment time he errs? "***I mean the ruler in the most precise sense.***"
-341c Soc: **Physician *qua*[4] Physician** (*vs*. the money-maker).
--341c-342d -Soc: What does the physician (in the precise sense) aim at? *Medicine* seeks the health of the patient, *horse-breeding* the good of horses, etc. (342d) "Surely, then, no doctor, insofar as he is a doctor, seeks or orders what is advantageous to himself, but to his patient."
--342e "...no one in any position of rule, insofar as he is a ruler, seeks or orders what is advantageous to himself, but what is advantageous to his subjects...."
--**Philosophical Aside:** Is Platoâ' Socrates describing politicians as they were then (or are now), or is he describing them as they *ought to be*?
-343b Thr: **What of shepherds?** You don't understand at all Socrates!
--Thrasymachus maintains that Plato's Socrates not only misunderstands the ***nature*** of justice, but also misunderstands its ***value***. His discussion introduces *the* ***second of the two major problems*** *that Plato would address in the Republic*: the "question" of the **value** of justice ("What is justice good for, and how "good" is it?"). The first question, of course, is "What is justice?" It is this question that we have been looking at so far, and of course, it must be answered before the second one may be addressed properly.
--343d-344c Thr: "**A just man always gets less than an unjust one**....A person of great power **outdoes**[5] everyone else." When people denounce wrong it is because they are afraid of *suffering* wrong, not of *doing* it.

---345 Soc: I believe that injustice is *not* more profitable, but let's examine the claim again.

-345d Soc: let us look at your idea carefully Thrasymachus' "the shepherd *qua* shepherd" (rather than money-maker). **Wage-earning is a different art/skill from the doctors, ship captains, and shepherds.** We will need to discuss how many crafts are necessary for the state....

--346e "...no craft or rule provides its own advantage, but, as we've been saying for some time, it provides and orders for its subject and aims at its advantage, that of the weaker, not of the stronger."

--347b-c No one will willingly want to rule and we will have to compel the good man to do so.... "Now, the greatest punishment, if one isn't willing to rule, is to be ruled by someone worse than oneself. And I think that it's fear of this that makes decent people rule when they do." *Cf.*, 420a & 465e!

--**Criticism:** Plato's discussion wants us to commit to a very particular version of "the principle of specialization:" he is going to talk as if individuals should have only one craft, trade [*techne*] that the physician, ruler, shepherd *qua* physician, ruler, shepherd has *only one trade*. Moreover, as we shall see, the trade one has is to be a life-time trade. But, how many "jobs," do you have? Is "wage-earning even a craft, trade or "*techne"*? And is the emphasis upon such all-encompassing specialization warranted? The physician is, and surely was at Plato's time, a physician, a husband, a father, a wage-earner, a citizen, *etc*!

347e **Which *profits* one most "justice or injustice?** Which is the "way" followed by those who are proper practitioners of the "art of life?"

-Socrates and Thrasymachus agree that there is such a craft (as justice), but they disagree over what happiness is (Thrasymachus maintains that it is "getting more than your fair share of what are commonly called the good things in life [**knowledge, power, happiness**]), and Socrates shows him that the unjust man actually doesn't resemble the "craftsman" in any of these facets "those who truly have knowledge, power, and happiness do not resemble the unjust man.

-349b Unjust men endeavor to "**outdo**" or "**overreach**" others "they try to have "more than their fair share."

--In this do they resemble men who know or men who don't? Do *experts* behave thusly?

--350d Thrasymachus blushes.

-351-352 Injustice implants hate and dissension, and an "unjust unit" becomes hostile to itself!

--352 "...injustice has the power, first, to make whatever it arises in (whether it is a city, a family, an army, or anything else) incapable of achieving anything as a unit, because of the civil wars and differences it creates, and, second, it makes that unit an enemy to itself...." Injustice causes a "**civil war**" within the soul [351d].

-352d Who is *happier*: the just or the unjust man? "

--352e-353e Things have *functions* or *excellences* [*aete*]: "carving knives, pruning knives, etc. The soul's function is that of "taking care of things," ruling," and "living." (353e): "...a bad soul rules and takes care of things badly and a good soul does all these things well." The good soul, in effect, "lives well." Can the unjust man live well? The just man is happy and "profits" from his justice, the unjust man is miserable.

354b "I seem to have behaved like a glutton, snatching at every dish that passes and tasting it before properly savoring its predecessor. Before finding the answer to our first inquiry about what justice is, I let go and turned to investigate whether it is a kind of vice and ignorance or a kind of wisdom and virtue. Then an argument came up about injustice being more profitable than justice, and I couldn't refrain from abandoning the previous one and following up on that. Hence the result of the discussion, as far as I'm concerned, is that I know nothing, for when I don't know what justice is, I'll hardly know whether it is a kind of virtue or not, or whether a person who has it is happy or unhappy."

[BOOK II]

2. The challenges of Glaucon and Adeimantus [357a-368c]:

Socrates is not the only one who is dissatisfied with what he has said to Thrasymachus. In this passage two figures step in to restate Thrasymachus' objections more carefully and to present Plato's Socrates with the two central challenges that he will endeavor to meet in the remainder of the book. Plato chooses his two *brothers*, Glaucon and Adeimantus,

for this role. While neither is of the same opinion as Thrasymachus, each feels that a better refutation of his view is called for. They press Socrates for such a response. Glaucon points out (357a-358) that there are both *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* goods, and he asks which Socrates thinks justice is.[6] Plato's Socrates responds that he believes that justice is both intrinsically and extrinsically good, and Glaucon challenges him to show that it is intrinsically valuable (claiming that most people would consider justice to be [at most] extrinsically valuable).

Glaucon imagines two individuals in possession of the **magical rings of Gyges** (359d) (rings which render one invisible and immune to prosecution for any wrong-doing) one a just individual and the other an unjust individual. He contends that many would think the just individual a fool if she or he didn't take advantage of the ring's powers. Glaucon asks Platoâ' Socrates to posit two ideal types of individuals (the perfectly just individual who reaps no extrinsic rewards from his justice, and the perfectly unjust person who reaps every imaginable extrinsic reward) and to convince us that the intrinsic rewards of justice are preferable (360e-361d). Adeimantus maintains that **while justice may pay, injustice is said to pay better** (363a). That is, according to him people are interested only in the reputation for justice. He demands that Plato's Socrates "...not...give us a merely theoretical proof that justice is better than injustice, but *tell us what effect each has in and by itself, the one for good, the other for evil, whether or not it be hidden from gods and men*" [367d-e].

357b **Glaucon**: **three types of good**: *instrumental*, *intrinsic*, and *both*.

-358e Many say justice is good for its consequences. But they really believe that injustice is actually better, though they all fear being wronged:

--**People believe it is fine to do wrong but they fear being wronged and, thus, they make "compacts" to neither do nor suffer wrong**. Imagine two individuals with Gygesâ€™ rings.
--360d "Every man believes that injustice is much more profitable to himself than justice, and any exponent of this argument will say that he is right. The man who did not wish to do wrong with that opportunity, and did not touch other people's property, would be thought by those who knew it to be very foolish and miserable."
--360e ***Imagine two "ideal types*:" strip the unjust man of all the negative consequences and "visit" them upon the just man, and, then, show that justice is indeed intrinsically valuable**.

362d **Adeimantus**: while justice may pay, injustice is said to pay better. ***People are interested only in the reputation for justice***.

-When justice is praised it is not justice itself that is recommended but, rather, the reputation for it!
-We need to be shown what harm comes of being unjust and what good comes from being just.

-367d-e Show us "in what way does its [justice's] very possession benefit a man and injustice harm him?" "Do not...give us a merely theoretical proof that justice is better than injustice, but *tell us what effect each has in and by itself, the one for good, the other for evil, whether or not it be hidden from gods and men*."

3. Socrates begins developing the ideas behind the ideal state [368d-373e]:

Plato's Socrates takes up these challenges by looking for justice in the state[7] where it may be more readily seen for what it is. He contends that once we recognize it there, we will be able to recognize it within individuals. In this section he begins to develop the initial ideas behind an ideally just state, or "Kallipolis."[8] Of special import will be his claims that individuals are not self-sufficient, and that a "division of labor" is called for. He will also emphasize the importance of each individual fulfilling the role or task for which she or he is most naturally suited. As this idea gets developed in later sections of the text, it becomes one of the central notions of the work. We can call this idea his "**Principle of Specialization**" that is, he claims that because a division of labor is necessary, each individual should tend to that trade (or craft) for which she or he is best suited.

368c Socrates begins his reply to these continuations of Thrasymachus' argument by developing an ideal state.

-368e In the State and in the individual, justice is the same.

--Is it? For us doesn't justice, primarily (exclusively?) obtain between and among individuals? Does it make sense to talk about justice *within* an individual?

-369b **Origin of the State: no individual is self-sufficient.**

--369b "...we aren't all born alike, but each of us differs somewhat in nature from the others, one being suited

to one task, another for another." **His Division of Labor Thesis** here yields, one page later, a **Principle of Specialization** [370b]—each individual should do that [single] task for which she or he is best suited. This thesis is not [simply] an economic thesis!

--**Note** the *social character of dialectic*. When he says that we are not self-sufficient, he is not thinking simply of biology or economic—or so I contend. The dialectical process that is to yield knowledge is a social process, and so if we are to achieve knowledge, we must "be" social!

--**Note:** while he is talking about "aptness," this leads (immediately) to "singularity"—that is, to the view that each person has ***one*** talent which she or he is "apt" for, and to the conclusion that one must "do" that job. *If* individuals are **"apt" for more than one job**, or if they can simultaneously perform several, then we need to look carefully at what follows. Moreover, **if there is no craft of ruling**, then the argument here is going to break down.

-370d The size of state and number of crafts grows as we think of the sorts of endeavors necessary—farmers will not make their own plows, tools, clothes, or shoes.

-372e-373c "It isn't merely the origin of a city that we're considering, it seems, but the origin of a **luxurious city**. And that may not be a bad idea, for by examining it, we might very well see how justice and injustice grow up in cities." Indeed, it is necessary to discuss a luxurious city if we are to deal with Glaucon's and Adeimantus' pointsâ€"if we are to contrast the just and unjust lives. So he "enlarges" the city adding many more "crafts."

--372a Plato's Socrates recognizes that a "minimalistic" state wonâ€™t satisfy most people (who will want "...couches, tables and other furniture...all sorts of delicacies, perfumed oils, incense, prostitutes, and pastries"). As the sequel will make clear, he thinks that (a) the non-luxurious city *is* better, and (b) there are reasons why he believes that *some* [or, better, most] people will not be "satisfied" with the non-luxurious city. The challenge posed by Adeimantus helps explain why he allows for more than the "necessary" crafts (why he develops a luxurious city): if he is to show what justice is and that it is intrinsically valuable, he must allow for both justice and injustice to arise (and must explain why the latter arises).

--372b-374a "We must no longer provide them only with the necessities we mentioned at first, houses and clothes and shoes, but we must call in painting and embroidery; we must acquire gold and ivory and all such things....That healthy community is no longer adequate, but it must be swollen in bulk and filled with a multitude of things which are no longer necessities, as, for example, all kinds of hunters and artists...." The city is increased in size and filled with a multitude of things that go beyond what is necessary for a city. Note the weird list of added trades at 373a!

-374c Again he notes the need for each individual to stick to a *single craft* (his "principle of specialization").

4. The need for guardians: to protect our valuables and ourselves [374-376d]:

The **lack of self-sufficiency** thesis and the **principle of specialization**, when coupled with the **development of a luxurious city-state**, make it clear a very important role which will need to be fulfilled is that of the "guardians." Without appropriate guardians, the ideally just state will be impossible. **While, of course, each role is important, Plato's Socrates will focus upon the guardians (and rulers) as it is this role that has not been properly defined and fulfilled in extant states**. He believes that the sort of role and knowledge necessary for farmers, iron workers, potters, shoemakers, shepherds, etc., is already well-known and does not require investigation or discussion. The fact that we don't have just states is to be explained by the fact that the guardians and rulers are not rightly trained (and, in fact, not rightly characterized). Thus, in this section, he begins to focus upon what those who would fulfill this task must be like. The remainder of this book will largely focus upon this "class" within the state.

373e-374a The need for **guardians** who protect the state: "then the city must be further enlarged, and not just by a small number, either, but by a whole army."

-374e "...to the degree that the work of the guardians is most important, it requires the most freedom from other things and the greatest skill and devotion."

-375b-c The guardians must have a *spirited temperament* but also *be gentle to their people*.

--375e-376c **Guard dog analogy**: "Then do you think that our future guardian, besides being *spirited*,[9] must also be by nature philosophical?....When a dog sees someone it doesn't know, it gets angry before anything bad happens to it. But when it knows someone, it welcomes him, even if it has never received anything good from him....In what way philosophical?....Because it judges anything it sees to be either a friend or an enemy, on no other basis than that it knows the one and doesn't know the other." Thus, **the guardians must have a *philosophic element in their nature*—they must *know* friend from foe!** We must, then, be concerned with the sort of education they will have. Explain why it is the guardians' education he is concerned with—If

something is wrong with the cobblers' education, is it as serious as if the *guardians* are miseducated?

--The Greek term *thymos* (or thumos) is used to indicate "spiritedness." It is a passion or emotion rather than an appetite. It carries connotations which are not found in any clear English term: for the Greeks of Plato's time (and before), it carries connotations of *bravery*, the *urge for glory*, and of *a spirited competitor*. For Plato the trait is both important and dangerous. The soul which is too filled with it can not be a good one!

5. Stories and the early education of the guardians [376e-412b]:

In this section, Plato's Socrates deals with **the early phases of the education of the guardians** (it is also the early education of all the citizens) and the sorts of stories and music which will be allowed in the state. The discussion emphasizes that:

> 378e the young cannot distinguish what is allegorical from what is not....That may be the reason why it is most important that the first stories they hear should be well told and dispose them to virtue. *Cf.*, 389b and 459d.

In other words, the *censorship* which he calls for is to have a *moral* purpose, and it is necessary given the character of the young and of some of the individuals throughout their lives. The educational program which he outlines will train both the guardians' minds and their bodies, and it will aim to establish a harmony in their characters—it will address both their "spirited" and their "wisdom-living" parts (411e). The discussion from about **376e-411d may read rather quickly**, though several of the passages discussing censorship repay careful consideration.

377 What of stories?

-377b-c "...we must first of all...control the story tellers. Whatever noble story they compose we shall select, but a bad one we must reject. Then we shall persuade nurses and mothers to tell their children those we have selected and by those stories to fashion their minds far more than they can shape their bodies by handling them."

-378e **"The young cannot distinguish what is allegorical from what is not, and the beliefs they acquire at that age are hard to expunge and usually remain unchanged.** That may be the reason why it is most important that the first stories they hear should be well told and dispose them to virtue."

-382b **While speaking of the censorship of stories, music, and so forth, Plato's Socrates also speaks at length about the importance of telling the truth: "...no one is willing to tell falsehoods to the most important part of himself about the most important things, but of all places he is most afraid to have falsehood here.** The tension between the importance of truth and the need for paternalism will arise at a number of points, and we will have to address it ultimately!

[BOOK III]

The discussion of the early education continues with a discussion of poetry, rhythm, love between boys and older men, and physical training. Most of this discussion (from 376 to 411d) may we skipped or "read with less care." Important, however, are the following passages:

389b "...truth must also be highly esteemed....though [untruth is] useful to men as a kind of medicine, clearly we must allow physicians to use it, but not private citizens....So it is fitting for the rulers, if for anyone, to use lies for the good of the city because of certain actions of the enemy or of citizens, but everyone else must keep away from them. **For a private citizen to lie to such rulers is wrong or worse than for a sick man to lie to his physician** or an athlete to his trainer about his physical condition, or for a sailor not to tell the navigator the truth about the condition of the ship or how he himself or a fellow sailor is behaving."

-*Cf.*, 378e and 459d.

-In his "The Ethicist" column in *The New York Times Magazine*, Randy Cohen maintains that: "informed consent, central to the doctor patient relationship, requires honest doctors. A patient can agree to a course of treatment with only a real understanding of it's impossible if a doctor simply makes things up."[10]

394e Stories often mis-portray the gods, they are fictions, they employ images and improper musical modes, they are used to scare and seduce. At best, for Plato, art *imitates* life, and he wonders whether the guardians should be imitative.

-400b Some forms of musical measure are suited to meanness and insolence, or madness and others to the opposite....

401d "Are these not the reasons, Glaucon, I said, why nurture in the arts is most important, because their rhythm and harmony permeate the inner part of the soul, bringing graciousness to it, and make the strongest impression, making a man gracious if he has the right kind of upbringing; if he has not, the opposite is true. The man who has been properly nurtured in this area will be keenly aware of things which are neglected, things not beautifully made by art

or nature. He will rightly resent them, he will praise beautiful things, rejoice in them, receive them into his soul, be nurtured by them and become both good and beautiful in character. He will rightly object to what is ugly and hate it while still young before he can grasp the reason, and when reason comes he who has been reared thus will welcome it and easily recognize it because of its kinship with himself. Yes, he said, I agree those are the reasons for education in the arts."

-His point is that virtuous habits are important in the early life for two reasons: (a) children are not yet capable of rational thought and can not direct their actions according to the dictates of reason; (b) they will find it easier to follow the dictates of reason if they are already predisposed in that direction by their habits (it would be more difficult on them if their habits tended to seduce their behavior in a direction reason would not lead].

402d-403d He offers a brief discussion of the love of men for boys and how sexual pleasure can be either good for the psyche or bad for it.

403d He discusses the education of the guardians must include physical training.

404e No Sicilian cookery or Athenian confectionery "they may promote disharmony in the same manner as bad art.

409a For one to be a sound judge one must be good and honorable and oneâ€™s training must have been carefully attended to.

-409b "...good people, when young, appear simple-minded and easily deceived, because they do not have within themselves any model of evil feelings." Good judges will be old rather than young. They will recognize injustice not from personal experience but, rather, from their studies!

410d To overemphasize either mental or physical training would be a mistakeâ€"an unbalanced individual is the result. The spirited part of a person's soul must be properly crafted so that neither harshness nor meanness but, rather, courage results.

-411e "It seems then that a god has given men these two means, artistic and physical education, to deal with these *two parts of themselves*, not the body and the soul except incidentally but *the spirited and the wisdom-loving parts*, in order that these be in harmony with each other, each being stretched and relaxed to the proper point."

6. Rulers, Auxiliaries, the noble fiction, and the Guard Dog Problem [412c-427d]:

In this section Plato's Socrates distinguishes the overall group of guardians into two classes: the **auxiliaries** and the **rulers**. He also deals with several problems that both his characterization of these classes and his educational program for them seem to pose.

412e "...we must choose from among our guardians those men who, upon examination, seem most of all to believe throughout their lives that they must eagerly pursue eagerly what is advantageous to the city and be wholly unwilling to do the opposite."

-Plato's Socrates is clearly saying that *in addition to having the wisdom-loving and spirited parts of their souls well-trained, the rulers of his ideal state are to have a very highly developed sense of* ***social concern*** (throughout their lives, he says, they are to be tested to see that they don't put their own advantage above that of the state).

-413a-e While no person would surrender **true belief** willingly, **one may be robbed of such belief by *theft*, *violence*, or *bewitchment*.** One may be persuaded away from the truth here or one may forget it. So, what we are looking for is the *best of the best*â€"these will be our rulers.

--Here we must distinguish between and discuss the relative merits of **true belief** and **knowledge**â€"what makes the latter preferable to the former (according to Plato)?

-414b "...isn't it truly most correct to call these people *complete guardians*, since they will guard against external enemies and internal friends, so that one will lack the power and the other the desire to harm the city? The young people we've hitherto called guardians we'll now call **auxiliaries** and supporters of the guardians' convictions."

In effect, the educational process which Plato's Socrates outlines is supposed to develop individuals who have been properly educated (wisdom and high spirit), who care for the state rather than for themselves (simply). Their appetites, of course, will be controlled. In short, these individuals will have a **harmony**. But will they want to rule, and will the other citizens accept them as rulers?

The noble fiction:

-415 Gold, Silver, Iron & Bronze: the *why* of this must be discussed: does the telling of the story amount to a contradiction for Plato? **Can an "ideal" [just] state be founded upon a lie?** Is the noble fiction a lie?

-Think about the following line of argument regarding the "myth of the metals." Given his definition of justice, such "lying" is just because:

--justice is doing one's job,

--the ruler's job is maintaining the right social order,

--"the myth of the metals" is necessary for social order,

--therefore, telling the "myth" is just telling it is the right thing to do.

The guard dog problem:

416 "The most terrible and most shameful thing of all is for a shepherd to rear dogs as auxiliaries to help with his flocks in such a way that through licentiousness, hunger, or some other bad trait of character, they do evil to the sheep and become like wolves instead of dogs."

-416b "Isn't it necessary...to guard in every way against our auxiliaries doing anything like that to the citizens because they are stronger, therefore becoming savage masters instead of kindly allies?"

-416b-417b "And wouldn't be a really good education endow them with the greatest caution in this regard? But surely they have had an education like that.

Perhaps we shouldn't assert this dogmatically, Glaucon. What we can assert in what we were saying just now, that they must have the right education, whatever it is, if they are to have what will most make them gentle to one another and to those they are guarding.

....Now, someone with some understanding might say that, **besides this education**, they must also have the kind of housing and other property what will neither prevent them from being the best guardians nor encourage them to do evil to the other citizens." Thus, Platoâ' Socrates places a number of "restrictions" upon their "life-style:"

--no material wealth,

--a life where all is shared in common,

--a "Spartan" existence (explain "Sparta" and contrast Plato's ideal state with the Spartan one).

--**Relevant Consideration:** it could well be suggested that the "restrictions" which Plato's Socrates places upon the life-style of the guardians may best be considered as a mechanism for instituting the continuing testing process which these individuals must undergo as we check to see that they always care for the good of the state (rather than for their own good)—*cf.*, 412e.

[Book IV]

The discussion continues with an objection from Adeimantus (that the rulers will not be happy), and that wealth and poverty can corrupt the rulers. It continues as Plato uncovers the "four virtues" in his "ideal state:" wisdom, civic courage, moderation, and justice. This then leads to a discussion of justice in the individual. The Book concludes with a discussion of the preferability of the just and unjust lives.

419-427d **Adeimantus' objection:**

Adeimantus objects that Plato's Socrates is not making the rulers of the city happy, since he is depriving them of the requirements for a good life (wealth, children, etc.). Plato's Socrates replies that this isn't really true, they are being provided with *what is really valuable*, rather than with the things people believe to be valuable.

419 "...you aren't making these men very happy and...it's their own fault....The city really belongs to them, yet they derive no good from it. Others own land, build fine houses, acquire furnishings to go along with them, make their own private sacrifices to the gods, entertain guests, and also, of course, possess...gold and silver and all the things that are thought to belong to people who are blessedly happy. But one well say that your guardians are simply settled in the city like mercenaries and that all they do is watch over it."

420b "...it wouldn't be surprising if these people were very happiest just as they are, but...in establishing our city, we aren't aiming to make any one group outstandingly happy but to make the whole city so, as far as possible. We thought that we'd find justice most easily in such a city, and injustice, by contrast, in one that is governed worst and that, by observing both cities, we'd be able to judge the question we've been inquiring about for so long."

--**Note:** given the challenges offered by Glaucon and Adeimantus (as well as Thrasymachus), Plato's Socrates can not simply try to make the rulers wealthy, wise, and happy. He must show how their possession of *justice* is good independent of whatever extrinsic rewards it offers. For this reason, amongst others, he can not simply set out to provide them with either advantage or happiness. He must show what justice is and show that it is *intrinsically* valuable. Thus, in fact (as the sequel will show), he does believe that these individuals are "outstandingly happy," but he must show what their happiness consists in, and why all should want it (if they can attain it).

--Here we should reflect again on the passage at 347b regarding Platoâ€™s Socratesâ€™ response to the question: "Why rule if one doesn't benefit [in the sense that Thrasymachus intends the word]?" Of course the response is that one does it because one *cares* for the city and one's fellow citizens, and because one would suffer if a less qualified individual rules. In short, the wise will rule because it is their *responsibility* to do so. *Cf.*, 465 & 519d-

e.

421d-e Both wealth and poverty will lead the guardians and the state astray.
424b "...those in charge must *cling to education* and see that it isn't corrupted without their noticing it, guarding it against everything. Above all, they must guard as carefully as they can against any innovation in music and poetry or in physical training that is counter to the established order."

-The main charge for the rulers will be to watch over the educational and nurturing processes of the state.

The Four Virtues in the City [427-434]:
In this section of the text, Plato's Socrates characterizes the four main virtues which the ideal state exemplifies. He is introducing us to the wisdom, courage (or bravery), moderation, and justice which are essential if a state is to be well-ordered. The next section will introduce the same concepts within the soul. Later discussions clarify, elaborate upon, and further develop the ideas introduced here. With these two sections we have the initial answer to the two main questions of the *Republic*—both the nature and the value of justice have been sketched.
427e Plato's Socrates claims that the ideal state sketched so far has four important virtues: wisdom, bravery, moderation, and justice:

-428c **Wisdom**: "Is it because of the knowledge possessed by its carpenters, then, that the city is to be called wise and sound in judgment?"
--429 "...a whole city established according to nature would be wise because of the smallest class and part in it, namely, the governing or ruling one. And to this class which seems to be by nature the smallest, belongs a share of the knowledge that alone among all the other kinds of knowledge is to be called wisdom."
--**Question:** Why does he say that this class will be, "by nature" the "**smallest** one?" Is his claim here a "logical" or an "empirical" one? While, it may seem natural within the state that there be fewer "rulers" than "auxiliaries" or "workers," why should this be so in the ideal state? Suppose all the "work" (including the protection work) could be done by slaves or machines, could everyone (else), then, be rulers? Note, also that when we speak, in the next section, about the individual, we can again ask "Why is this "part" of the soul the "smallest?"
-429b ***Civic* Courage** and the soldiers (or auxiliaries):
--429c Plato's "definition" of "***civic*** courage:" "...*the power to preserve through everything its belief about what things are to be feared, namely, that they are the things and the kinds of things that the lawgiver declared to be such in the course of educating it*." Clearly what he is speaking of here is not (at least not simply) what we normally call courage (just as the wisdom he speaks of is not what that word might normally connote). The "virtue" he is speaking here he called "high-spiritedness" when using the guard dog metaphor. What he has in mind is more than "intestinal fortitude," and at 430c the definition is said to apply to something called "civic courage." As we shall see even more clearly in the next section, what Plato has in mind here is not one of the appetites but, rather, a particular sort of *passion* (or emotion).
--In her *The Therapy of Desire*, Martha Nussbaum helps us see what sort of thing is being discussed here when she says that: "emotions" is the more common modern generic term, while "**passions**" is both etymologically closer to the most common Greek and Latin terms and more firmly entrenched in the Western philosophical tradition....what I mean to designate by these terms is a genus of which experiences such as fear, love, grief, anger, envy, jealousy, and other relatives "but not bodily appetites such as hunger and thirst" are the species....This family of experience, which we call emotions as opposed to appetites, is grouped together by many Greek thinkers, beginning at least with Plato, and his account of the soul's middle part.[11]
--In his *Varieties of Moral Personality*, Owen Flanagan maintains that the six basic emotions are: **anger, fear, disgust, happiness, sadness, and surprise**.[12]
-430d-e **Moderation** "...a mastery of *certain* kinds of pleasures and desires."[13]
--431 Self-control and the rule of the **better part** of the soul over the worse.
--431c-d Plato's Socrates talks of finding "...all kinds of diverse desires, pleasures, and pains, mostly in children, women, household slaves, and in those of the inferior majority who are called free." He contrasts this with "...the desires that are simple, measured, and directed by calculation in accordance with understanding and correct belief [which are found] only in the few people who are born with the best natures and receive the best education." In the ideal state, "***...the desires of the inferior many are controlled by the wisdom and desires of***

the superior few."
--These passages suggest what I will call the "aristocratic reading" of the text. They suggest that *the inferior many are constitutionally incapable of self-control* (and, thus, must have control imposed externally upon them). These passages should be contrasted with 518c: "...the power to learn is present in everyone's soul...the instrument with which each learns is like an eye that cannot be turned around from darkness to light without turning the whole body." The latter passage suggests what I will call the "**democratic reading**" of the text which suggests that even the inferior many are capable of self-control (though to be believable, this reading will have to allow that it is unlikely that they can impose this self-control unless they receive significant assistance). Critically considering the text and trying to decide which reading is the right one helps one understand the whole text better.

---Note, also, **that in this passage women are compared with children and household slaves in terms of the role of the appetites in their souls**. Plato explicitly takes up the role of women in his ideal state in a later section [451d-456c], and a study of his remarks there shows that he explicitly allows that women could be rulers (could do any of the jobs, trades, or crafts in the state). The explicit argument he offers there seems to make this sort of passage we are currently confronted with inexplicable, however, and we are left with an interpretive problem: *what is his **real** view of [the capabilities of] women*?

--432 Moderation is a kind of harmony and must infuse the whole state—all of the citizens must have a great deal of this particular virtue!

-Justice:

-433 "Justice...is exactly what we said must be established throughout the city when we were founding it....We stated...that everyone must practice one of the occupations in the city for which he is naturally best suited."
--433e "...the power that consists in everyone's doing his own work rivals wisdom, moderation, and courage in its contribution to the virtue of the city."
--434 "*...the having and doing of one's own would be accepted as justice*."
--Injustice and meddling (in others' tasks) "attempting to perform a task for which one is not naturally suited."
--**Philosophical Aside**: Plato's view here implies that we each have *one* particular "job" which we are suited for. Is this something he has successfully argued for? What he says may make more sense when he speaks, below, about justice *in* the individual. But, according to him, what is true of justice in the individual is also true of justice in the state (and vice-versa). Thus, if we don' accept that there is a single, particular, objective job which uniquely suits each individual, we must reject some of what he says here!
--**Note:** In his "Plato's *Euthyphro*," Peter Geach maintains that a "definition" may not be what we need: "the style of mistaken thinking...may well be called the *Socratic fallacy*, for its *locus classicus* is the Socratic dialogues. Its influence has, I think, been greater than that of the theory of Forms; certainly people can fall into it independently of any theory of Forms. I have myself heard a philosopher refuse to allow that a proper name is a word in a sentence unless a "rigorous definition" of a ˜word" could be produced; again, if someone remarks that machines are certainly not even alive, still less able to think and reason, he may be challenged to define 'alive'. Both these controversial moves are clear examples of the Socratic fallacy; and neither originates from any belief in Forms.
Let us be clear that this *is* a fallacy, and nothing better. It has stimulated philosophical enquiry, but still it is a fallacy. We know heaps of things without being able to define the terms in which we express our knowledge. Formal definitions are only one way of elucidating terms; a set of examples may in a given case be more useful than a formal definition."[14]

8. Justice in the Individual [434d-445e]:
In this section Plato's Socrates applies the picture which he has developed of justice within the state to the individual soul. He ***proves*** that the soul has "parts," and shows what the proper function of the various parts amounts to.
434d Plato reminds us that one reason for "describing" the ideal state was to "see justice writ large, so that we might more easily recognize it in the soul: "we thought that, if we first tried to observe justice in some larger thing that possessed it, this would make it easier to observe in a single individual. We agreed that this larger thing is a city, and so we established the best city we could, knowing well that justice would be in one that was good. So letâ€™s apply what has come to light in the city to the individual...."

-Note the relevance of this passage to the discussion of the "democratic" and "aristocratic" readings of the *Republic*—one could contend that he appears to emphasize here the importance of "justice in the individual"—tha it may be his "main target" and that talk of "justice in the state" may be more a means for discovering the former.

436b Plato does not simply assume that, like the state, the soul (or *psyche*) is composed of three parts, however. Instead, he offers a ***proof*** that there are at least three parts to the soul.[15] "Do we learn with one part, get angry with another, and with some third part desire the pleasures of food, drink, sex, and others that are closely akin to them? Or, when we set out after something, do we act with the whole of our soul, in each case?"

-436b (1) "...the same thing will not be willing to do or undergo opposites in the same part of itself, in relation to the same thing, at the same time. So, if we ever find this happening in the soul, we'll know that we aren't dealing with one thing but many."
-437e-438d (2) There exist the appetites (*e.g.*, hunger and thirst), and
(3) when we experience such demands, we have a particular object in view and aim to attain it to satisfy the appetites the appetites have objects.
-438d (4) Similarly, when we know we know something specificâ€"knowledge has an object.
-439b (5) "...if something pulls [the thirsty person] back when it is thirsting, wouldn't that be something different in it from whatever thirsts and drives it like a beast to drink? It can't be, we say, that the same thing, with the same part of itself, in relation to the same, at the same time, does opposite things."

-439c (6) Reason, of course, holds us back from drinking sometimes.

-439d (7) Thus there are at least two parts of the soul: "hence it isn't unreasonable for us to claim that they are two, and different from one another. We'll call the part of the soul with which it calculates the **rational** part and the part with which it lusts, hungers, thirsts, and gets excited by other appetites the irrational **appetitive** part, companion of certain indulgences and pleasures."

--Note: the "rational" part he "proves" here is one which is concerned with *calculation*—for example, it examines our appetites in light of their expected consequences. It is not clear that the use of 'rational' or 'reason' here is the same as the one which he will go on to discuss. If it is not, then he has not necessarily succeeded in fully differentiating the rational part of the soul in the sense he wants from the appetitive part. In short, there is the danger of an *equivocation* here.

-439e Is the "spirited part" a third part of the soul, or is it the same as one or the other of the two parts identified so far?

--Sometimes we struggle against our appetites and get angry with ourselves for having them or for pursuing their objects. "...anger sometimes wars against the appetites, as one thing against another." (440b) sometimes "...when appetite forces someone contrary to rational calculation, he reproaches himself and gets angry with that in him that's doing the forcing, so that of the two factions that are fighting a civil war, so to speak, spirit allies itself with reason." Plato's Socrates goes on to claim (440b) that *one doesn't find cases where spirit allies itself with the appetites against reason however.*

--440d Moreover, don't we find that sometimes when someone "...believes that someone has been unjust to him....the spirit within him [gets] boiling and angry, fighting for what he believes to be just....[he will] endure hunger, cold, and the like and keep on till it is victorious, not ceasing from noble actions until it either wins, dies, or clams down, called to heal by the reason within him, like a dog by a shepherd?"

-Thus, there is a *third* element in the soul—the *spirited* element. (440e) "The position of the spirited part seems to be the opposite of what we thought before. Then we thought of it as something appetitive, but now we way that is far from being that, for in the civil war in the soul it aligns itself far more with the rational part."

441d "...isn't the individual courageous in the same way and in the same part of himself as the city? And isn't everything else that has to do with virtue the same in both....Moreover...I suppose we'll say that a man is just in the same way as a city."

-441e –"...each one of us in whom each part is doing its own work will himself be just and do his own."

-441e-442b The proper order (and role) of the parts of the soul: reason (rules), spirit (allies itself with reason), and the appetites (are moderate).

-443c-444 "And justice is, it seems, something of this sort. However, it isn't concerned with someone's doing his own externally, but with what is inside him, with what is truly himself and his own. One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part....He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like the three limiting notes in a musical scale—high, low, and middle."

--As noted above, we generally treat justice as having to do with our *relationships with* others—that is, it has to do with external (rather than internal) actions and phenomena.

--444b **Injustice**, of course, is the imbalance of the parts—a civil war between the parts of the soul with the less fit seeking to rule!

--444c Justice and health of the soul.

445 **Which is preferable—justice or injustice?** Here he turns from the first (the definitional) question of the *Republic*, to the second (valuational) question. This question is like the question "Which is preferable: health or disease?"—both questions are really ridiculous, he contends, but he takes the issue up with a detailed "comparison-and-contrast argument" which occupies most of Books VIII and IX.

-Criticism: Renford Bambrough notes that: "the physician can learn from other physicians how to preserve and restore health, and he can teach his art and craft to his successors, because within well-known limits there are agreed standards for determining whether a body is healthy or diseased....But the diagnosis and treatment of spiritual ills is not on such a firm theoretical or experimental basis. There are no agreed standards for determining whether a soul or a city is healthy or diseased, just or unjust, and this is not because spiritual medicine is an under-developed science, but because it is not a science at all. *The lack of agreed standards of justice, which is Plato's main reason for pressing the analogy between justice and health, is also the decisive reason against accepting the analogy*. Plato's aim is to suggest that he himself *knows* what is ultimately and absolutely good. If we accept this suggestion, then politics and ethics become, for us, sciences like medicine, learning by experiment and experience how to embody in law and policy the given standards of justice and virtue. But we cannot accept the analogy unless we can accept the suggestion, and we cannot accept the suggestion because Plato can say nothing in its defense that could not equally be said by a rival claimant to ultimate and absolute knowledge of the good, in defense of a different set of 'absolute' standards."[16]

-Additional Criticism: Plato shows that an aristocracy (in his sense) is preferable in regard to *knowledge, virtue, power, and happiness*. **But are there *other goals* which he ignores which might tip the balance toward some other sort of state/individual—freedom, liberty, or moral choice for example?** Consider the following discussion: "often, what is not noticed is the invalidity of the inference that therefore all power should be given to the wise benevolent. Thus, if X is selling *his house*, even if an outside observer Y could get a better price for it, it does not follow that X must turn over the selling to Y. For it is X's house and he has the *right* to sell it, even if he does not get the best price available. Similarly, if X were to place his life in Y's hands and follow Y's directives, X might have a happier life than would otherwise be the case. However, X has the right to run his own life."[17] In this regard, note that Plato, in effect, deprives the individuals in his "ideal state" of the opportunity of *moral choice*: the ruled are not free because their desires are controlled by the philosopher kings and the philosopher kings are not free because they have knowledge and, thus, can do no wrong!

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Email me comments on this. I greatly appreciate comments and corrections--typos and infelicities are all too common and the curse of "auto-correct" plagues me!

File revised on 09/19/25

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[1] The citations are generally from Plato's *Republic*, translated by G.M.A. Grube, revised by C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992). Some of the passages are from the unrevised translation by Grube and other are from a number of other translations (as this supplement has been developed over decades! I concur with Reeve's recommendation that you wait to read the section of his " Introduction" titled "The Main Argument of the *Republic"* (pp. xiv-xviii) until after you have read the full *Republic*, but the initial portion of his Introduction: (pp. viii-xiii) and his "Prefaces" to each of the individual Books (I-X) are very helpful. The marginal page references in the text refer to a collection of Plato's works (*Platonis Opera* [Paris: 1578]) edited by Henri Stephanus' this edition's pagination has become the standard way of identifying and referring to Plato. Emphasis has been added to several of passages. One reservation I have with Reeve's Introduction, however, concerns his discussion of what is called "The Seventh Letter" on p. viii. I believe recent scholarship has established that it was not written by Plato (*cf*., Myles Burnyeat and Michael Frede, *The Peudo-Platonic Seventh Letter*," ed. Dominic Scott (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2011).

[2] As noted by our translator and editor, the Greek word here is *technÁ"* and it has connotations similar to 'science' today. The connotation carries the idea that the craft-person would have a "special" sort of knowledge.

[3] Mark McPherran, "Does Piety Pay? Socrates and Plato on Prayer and Sacrifice," in *The Trial and Execution of Socrates: Sources and Controversies*, eds. Thomas Brickhouse and Nicholas Smith (N.Y.: Oxford U.P., 2002), pp. 162-190, p. 169. The article originally appeared in *Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy*, eds. Nicholas Smith and Paul Woodruff (N.Y.: Oxford U.P., 2000), pp. 89-114.

[4] '*Qua*' means "in so far as"\/" So a physician *qua* physician is one whom we speak of as a doctor (rather than as a parent, driver, or money-earner.

[5] The word here is important, though the translation is a problem. C.D.C. Reeve indicates in a footnote to his revision of Grube's translation that 'outdoes' (or ˜overreaches') here means to "...outdo everyone else by getting and having more and more. *Pleonexia* is, or is the cause of injustice (359c), since always wanting to outdo others leads one to try to get what belongs to them, what isn't one's own. It is contrasted with doing or having one's own, which is, or is the cause of, justice (343a, 441e).

[6] An intrinsically valuable goal, or activity, is one that is pursued for its own sake. Such values are contrasted with *extrinsic* values where the goal or activity is valued for what it will allow one to achieve. Health, for example, might be intrinsically valuable (good-in-itself), while wealth is usually conceived of as extrinsically valuable (good-for-what-it-can-get-us).

[7] While our translator and editor use the word 'city', I will use 'state' as it will be more natural for us--we do not conceive of cities as self-sufficient political unities, but clearly, this is what is intended. In this era of internationalism, perhaps 'state' does not carry the relevant connotation completely either, but clearly Plato intends by his term a self-sufficient political unity of individuals.

[8] *Cf*., C.D.C. Reeve's "The Naked Old Women in the Palastra: A Dialogue Between Plato and Lashenia of Mantinea" in the 1992 *Fall Hackett Catalog* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992). Reprinted in *Plato's Republic: Critical Essays*, edited by Richard Kraut (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).

[9] The Greek term *thymos* (or thumos) is used to indicate "spiritedness. It is a passion or emotion rather than an appetite. It carries connotations which are not found in any clear English term: for the Greeks of Plato's time (and before), it carries connotations of *bravery, the urge for glory, and of a spirited competitor*. For Plato the trait is both important and dangerous. The soul which is too filled with it can not be a good one! Hence he adds the "philosophical (or knowledgeable) trait. He will elaborate on this character in Books V-VII.

[10] Randy Cohen in his "The Ethicist" column in *The New York Times Magazine* on September 17, 2006, p. 32.

[11] Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1994), p. 319.

[12] *Cf*., Owen Flanagan, *Varieties of Moral Personality: Ethics and Psychological Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1991), p. 41.

[13] As our translator and editor note, the Greek word here (*sophrosune*) has a wide meaning carrying the connotations of "...self-control, good sense, reasonableness, temperance, and (in some contexts) chastity. Someone who keeps his head under pressure or temptation possesses *sophrosune*."

[14] Peter Geach, "Plato's Euthyphro," *The Monist* v. 50 (1966), pp. 369-382, p. 371.

[15] It should go without saying, that one can not assume that Plato's concept of the soul (or *psyche*) is largely similar to the modern conception. The religious conception of the soul in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic faiths is influenced by Plato's conception (rather than the other way around). Similarly, of course, one can not try and analyze his conception along Freudian lines—though, of course, Freud's conception of the *psyche* is influenced by Plato's.

[16] Renford Bambrough, "Plato's Political Analogies," in *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*, ed. Peter Laslett (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), p. 108. The essay is also in *Plato, Popper, and Politics* edited by Renford Bambrough (Cambridge: Heffer, 1967). Emphasis has been added to the passage.

[17] Norman E. Bowie and Robert Simon, *The Individual and the Political Order* (2nd edition) (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1986), p. 130.