

## Republic Bk V–VI 471c–502c<sup>1</sup>

Earlier in Book V, Socrates develops his view of the ideal city further. He tries to convince Glaucon and the others of two things: (a) women can be guardians too (see, e.g., 456a), and (b) the family is to be abolished (perhaps only for the ruling community; see, e.g., 457d). These are the so-called ‘two waves’ (cf. 472a). The third (and largest) wave appears towards the end of Book V. This wave–analogy brings out that there are serious obstacles that stand in the way of making the ideal city feasible or acceptable. The subsequent Book VI begins the exploration of philosophy and philosophers.

1. What is the third wave? (473c–e; see also 501e)
2. What is the difference between sightseers and philosophers? (475d–476b)
- 3.★ Explain the difference between knowledge (ἐπιστήμη, *episteme*), belief (δόξα, *doxa*), and ignorance or incomprehension (ἀγνοιας, *agnoias*). (477c–480a)
4. What are the key features of the philosopher? (485c–487a; cf. 490c, 494b)
- 5.★ Adeimantus suggests that the public opinion of philosophers is quite low (487d). In reply, Socrates presents an analogy with a ship. What is its point? (488a–489b)
- 6.★ Why are philosophers so rare? (490e–491b; 496b)
7. Sketch the simile of the beast. What does it suggest? (493a–e)

*Background.* (a) The ‘sightseers’ or sight-lovers are those who are enchanted or impressed by appearances or sensory experiences (cf. 476b); the Greek word φιλοθεάμονες (*philotheamones*) literally means ‘lovers of spectacles’. (b) Throughout the reading, Plato makes allusions to something as it is *itself*, such as beauty itself (τι αὐτὸ καλόν, *ti auto kalon*). He means the *idea* (ἰδέα) or *form* (εἶδος, *eidos*) of beauty, or beauty as such, or Beauty, in which the beautiful things ‘partake’ (τὰ μετέχοντα, *ta metechonta*, cf. 476d). Getting a share of the idea of beauty makes things beautiful. More of this central metaphysical theory later. (c) ‘Reality’ (e.g., 476e) is a translation of τὸ ὄν (*to on*) or ὄντος (*ontos*, see 501d), which lives on as ‘ontology’. This is the study of what there is, or what exists. (d) At 485c, knowledge is linked with truth. In the *Theatetus*, Plato suggests the standard definition of knowledge as justified true belief. (e) Sophists (such as Thrasymachus) are paid teachers of philosophy. Plato clearly dislikes them: he thinks they corrupt the youth (492a), which is an allusion to the charge against Socrates. (f) At 496c, Socrates mentions ‘his deity’ or *daimonion* (δαιμόνιον). He mentions this ‘spiritual sign’ in other dialogues, e.g., *Apology* 31d, where he describes it as ‘a voice, and whenever it speaks it turns me away from something I am about to do, but it never turns me towards anything’.

<sup>1</sup> Waterfield translation chapter 8.