Prof. Scott advances three basic theses, which I formulate as follows:

(1) A structural feature of the Republic is "revisitation." The key example is
the assessment of the just and the unjust men in Book II. In Book IV this topic
is revisited in light of the progress the dialogue has made. Through the
psychological theory Socrates proposes in Book IV, "an entirely different
perspective" into the benefits of living a just life has been gained: a
"psychological" and "internal" conception of justice has replaced the "external"
and action-based conception offered by Glaucon (Scott, 1-3).

(2) The cave allegory reflects this structure of the Republic as a whole. In
other words, it offers an image of just the sort of revisitation at work in the
surrounding books of the dialogue. So, for example, the prisoner turns back to
the shadows after seeing the fire, and then the prisoner re-revisits the shadows
after seeing the sun. The revisiting in VIII and IX of the psychological
argumentation of IV is thus pictured in the allegory itself.

(3) Despite what appears to be a promise of metaphysical re-revisitation,
namely Socrates' admonition at 506a that "no one will adequately know the just
and fair things themselves before [the idea of the good] is known,"\(^1\) there is
almost no revisiting of the conclusions of Book IV from the new perspective
gained through the metaphysical and epistemological labors of Books V-VII.
Thus, Scott argues, "There seems to be no point at which Socrates makes
explicit use of the metaphysics of V-VII" (Scott, 10) when he continues the
argument of IV in Books VIII and IX.

Given the allure of the metaphysics of Books V-VII, this may seem both
strange and disappointing, and indeed at one point Scott refers to the arguments
of the later books of the dialogues as "based merely on the tripartite psychology"
(Scott 19; emphasis mine). They represent a psychological revisitation of the
earlier argument, but no more than that.

The one exception to this pattern is the argument from pleasure at 585c:
"without the metaphysics of V-VII, [this passage] would read as complete
gibberish" (Scott, 16). Ultimately, however, Scott counts this as only a
"glimpse of what metaphysical re-revisitation . . . might be like" (Scott, 17),
rather than a full-blown version of a metaphysical revisitation.

Concerning the first thesis: I think Scott is on to something very important
here. Precisely as Scott takes it to be, the Republic is a very carefully
constructed composition, and the task of the commentator is to explain its
coherence. Since the dialogue contains several various and distinctly disparate

\(^1\)Throughout I cite Alan Bloom's very literal translation (Bloom, 1967).
stages, the burden on the commentator is to uncover what might be termed a "dialectical device." In other words, the commentator must articulate principles which explain the "movement" of the dialogue between its stages. While "revisitation" is both plausible and promising, I believe it is not the best candidate for such a "device," and I will explain why shortly.

Time will not permit me to treat in any detail Scott's second thesis, namely that the cave image reflects the surrounding argument of the Republic. I offer only a brief remark. Scott describes the περίοδος of the cave as a "smooth" set of transitions. The picture he conceives is one in which the prisoner leaves the cave, grows accustomed to the sun and the objects outside, and then returns back down again to see the shadows for exactly what they are. While this is, of course, a very natural way to read the image, the details of the cave are actually, and disturbingly, more complicated. To mention just one: the puppets that cast the shadows onto the cave wall are artefacts (514c1, 515c1) whose movements are produced by unidentified puppeteers. Indeed, almost everything in the cave—the chains in which the prisoners' legs and necks (but not their hands) are held, the puppets, the fire in the cave, the wall—are artefacts. The image thus seems to suggest that pre-philosophical life is thoroughly artificial. If this is the case, it becomes difficult to understand how knowledge of "reality," which is pictured in the image as natural (i.e., the released prisoner sees the stars, moon [516b]), would actually help much in the cave. After all, there is σοφία (516b5) in the cave and it seems to consist in the ability to predict the sequence of images projected onto the wall. Since that sequence is determined by decisions made by puppeteers, and nothing natural, it is not clear how, for example, a glimpse of the moon would contribute to an understanding of life in the cave.

Scott's third thesis is that, with the exception of the argument from pleasure, there is no metaphysical re-revisitation of the psychological argumentation found in Book IV. Again, Scott finds this puzzling, and it is really this puzzle that the bulk of his paper tries to solve.

I agree with Scott that metaphysics plays little role in VIII-IX. But unlike him, I don't find this puzzling. To explain why, I offer a thesis of my own, which I will here be able only to sketch.

There is no metaphysical re-revisitation, because the arguments of Books V-VII are themselves not metaphysical or epistemological in character. Instead, like the earlier books, they too are best described as being psychological.

Let me explain by first noting what Scott says about the beginning of Book V: "The digression of V-VII had begun with Polemarchus and Adeimantus asking about the rulers of the ideal state" (Scott, 10). This isn't exactly wrong, but it's not specific enough to be exactly right. Scott shies away from the fact that what disturbs Adeimantus and Polemarchus, and then later Glaucon and Thrasymachus (450a), is the communalization of sex. What sparks their interruption is Socrates' assertion that when it comes to "women and children,