4th Edition (PDF v. 4.0, created January 9, 2016)

Reason and Persuasion
Three Dialogues By Plato: Euthyphro, Meno, Republic Book I

Non-cartoon illustrations are from H. Schliemann, **Mycenae, A Narrative of Researches and Discoveries at Mycenae and Tiryns** (Scribner, 1878).

Book designed by John Holbo.

The text is set in Hypatia Sans Pro.

Chapter 10

REPUBLIC BOOK I

Summary of Sections

Prologue: Seeing Things

[327A-328B]

After attending a festival in honor of Bendis, Socrates, Glaucon and Adeimantus are obliged to go home with Polemarchus and friends, where they meet his father, Cephalus.

Cephalus: Telling Truth & Paying Debts

[328B-331B]

Cephalus speaks of old age and the value of money. Being old needn't be a bad thing, so long as you have good character. The main benefit of wealth is to allow you to speak truth and pay what you owe to gods and men. But is this a good definition of justice? Speak truth and pay debts? If your friend has gone mad, and wants weapons back that he left with you, should you give them back? Cephalus' account cannot be right. Cephalus withdraws, leaving the argument to Polemarchus.

Polemarchus I: A Friend Does Good to a Friend, Evil to an Eenemy

[331E-334B]

Polemarchus takes up where Cephalus leaves off. Justice is giving to each what is owed. A friend will do good to a friend, evil to an enemy. So: justice must be the craft of doing good to friends, evil to enemies. But what use will justice then be, except in time of war? It will be useful in partnerships, and when things are held in trust. An awkward consequence: always justice is useful when the things concerned are useless, useless when they are useful. Also, it turns out the just man must be a sort of thief. Polemarchus denies this was what he had in mind.

Polemarchus II: Do Good to our Friends When They Are Good … The Just Man Harms No One

[334B-336A]

Polemarchus reaffirms his Simonides-inspired thesis that justice is helping friends and harming enemies. Does 'friend' cover only real friends or also apparent friends? The former. But soon another modification is needed. It is argued that the just man will harm no one. Polemarchus agrees.

Thrasymachus I: Justice Is the Advantage of the Stronger

[336B-340C]

Thrasymachus explodes in irritation. He demands that Socrates not just ask but answer. He will not accept definitions like 'justice is the right'. But what if one of the forbidden answers is the right one? Thrasymachus says he has a better answer. Justice is the advantage of the stronger. But what does this mean? It is a theory of politics. Different governments establish different laws, but always for their own advantage. These laws are called 'justice'. But are the rulers infallible? No. So sometimes justice is both the advantage and the disadvantage of the stronger, according to the terms of the definition.

Thrasymachus II: Measuring With a Precise 'Ruler' … Craft Analogies

[340C-343A]

An attempt at repair. Did Thrasymachus mean: what the stronger thought to be to his advantage? He instead defines 'ruler' narrowly, to exclude anyone who mistakes his advantage. A new tack: what is the point of a craft like medicine or piloting a ship? To heal the sick and keep the passengers safe. Do crafts like these seek their own advantage or that of those they serve? That of those they serve. The arts are rulers and overseers of their subjects? Yes. But no craft commands the disadvantage of what it serves; rather, its advantage. By implication, this will apply to justice.

Thrasymachus III: The Advantages of Injustice

[343A-347E]

T: Your nanny never taught you the difference between shepherds and sheep. Rulers, like shepherds, tend their flocks for their own advantage. Thrasymachus delivers his great speech in favor of perfect injustice. S: you do not seem to be discussing the art of shepherding — and ruling — according to the accepted strict sense. In general, the art of getting paid must be distinct from the various other arts.

Thrasymachus IV: Does the Just Man Try to Gain Advantage Over the Just?

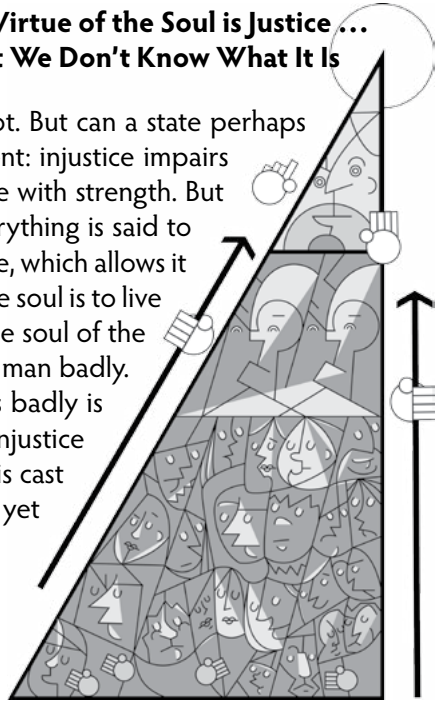
[347E-350C]

But is Thrasymachus at least right that the life of the unjust is more advantageous than that of the just? S: do you admit that justice is virtue and injustice vice? Skilled musicians and physicians do not try to better others who also know what to do; they only seek to better than those who do not know. Therefore, the just are like skilled craftsmen, the unjust unlike them. The just are likely to be good and wise, the unjust the opposite.

Socrates: The Virtue of the Soul is Justice … Yet We Don't Know What It Is

[350D-354C]

Does injustice have strength? It seems not. But can a state perhaps wield power without justice? An argument: injustice impairs coordination; therefore, it is incompatible with strength. But are the just happier than the unjust? Everything is said to have its function and corresponding virtue, which allows it to perform its function. The function of the soul is to live and regulate life. Its virtue is justice. So the soul of the good man must live well; that of the bad man badly. He who lives well is happy; he who lives badly is miserable. Since misery is unprofitable, injustice can never be profitable. And yet: all this is cast in doubt by the fact that we do not know yet what justice is.



YESTERDAY I WENT DOWN to Piraeus 327
with Glaucon, son of Ariston, to offer up my prayers to the goddess and to see how they would celebrate the festival, which was a new thing. I was delighted with the procession the inhabitants put on, but the Thracians' was just as beautiful, maybe more. When we had finished our prayers and watched the show B
we headed back into the city. Just then Polemarchus, son of Cephalus, happened to catch sight of us from a distance as we were starting home and told his servant to run ahead and bid us wait. The servant grabbed me from behind by the cloak, and said, Polemarchus says to wait.

I turned around and asked where his master was.

There he is, coming after you, so wait for him, said the boy.

Of course we will, said Glaucon. After a little while, Polemarchus C
caught up. With him were Adeimantus, Glaucon's brother, Niceratus the son of Nicias, and several others who had been at the procession.

Polemarchus said to me: Socrates, it looks like you and our friend here are already headed back to the city.

You've guessed right, I said.

But don't you see how many of us there are, he replied?

Of course.

You'll have to be stronger than all of us, or you'll have to stay where you are.

Isn't there another way, I said: namely, we could persuade you to let us go?

But can you persuade us if we won't listen? he said.

Certainly not, replied Glaucon.

Then we aren't going to listen, you can count on it.

328 Adeimantus added: Don't you know about the horseback torch-race in honor of the goddess? It's going to be this evening.

Horses! I replied. That's something new. You mean the riders will carry torches and pass them, like batons, during the race?

Yes, said Polemarchus. Not only that but there's going to be an all-night festival, which will be worth seeing. Let's get up after dinner and go see it. We'll get together with lots of young men there and
B talk. So stay. Don't spoil the fun by leaving.

Glaucon said: It looks like we have to stay.

Then that's the way it has to be, I replied.

So we went with Polemarchus to his house; and there we found his brothers Lysias and Euthydemus, and with them Thrasymachus the Chalcedonian, Charmantides the Paenian, and Cleitophon, son of Aristonymus. Polemarchus' father, Cephalus, was there too. I had C not seen him for a long time and thought he looked very old. He was sitting on kind of a cushioned chair, with a garland on his head, since he had just finished making sacrifice in the courtyard. There were other chairs arranged in a circle, and we sat down by him.

He greeted me eagerly, and then said: You don't visit me as often as you should, Socrates. If I were still able to visit you, I wouldn't D have to ask you to come here. But as I can't, you should come down to the Piraeus more often. For I have to tell you that the more the pleasures of the body fade, the more the pleasure and charm of conversation increase. Don't say no, then. Keep company with these young men, come visit us and make our house your home.

I replied: I like nothing better than talking with my elders, Cephalus. I think of them as travelers who have taken a journey I may have to E make myself, so I ought to find out from them whether the road is rugged and difficult, or smooth and easy. So this is the question I would particularly like to ask you, who have arrived at that stage in life the poets call the "threshold of old age" — Is life harder towards the end? What can you tell us about it all?

I will tell you, by Zeus, he said, that my own feeling is this, Socrates. Men my age flock together. We are birds of a feather, as the proverb 329 says. At our meetings most of my friends weep and moan — they long for the pleasures of youth, and reminisce about sex and drinking and feasting and everything else like that. They feel annoyed, as if they have been robbed of something great, and say life used to be good, now it's not worth living. Some complain about old peo- B ple being disrespected in their own households. They sing a sad

song blaming age for being the cause of all their woes. But to me, Socrates, they put the blame in the wrong place. If old age really caused all these evils, I — and every single other old man, for that matter — would feel the way they do. But I don't, and neither do others. I particularly remember what the poet Sophocles said, when
C he was old and someone asked, How's your sex life, Sophocles — can you still make love to a woman? Be quiet, he replied, I'm glad to be done with all that. I'm like a slave who has escaped from a crazy, brutal master. I thought he was right then, and I still think so today. Because old age certainly does bring with it great tranquility and freedom. When the fierce passions relax their grip on us, then, just as
D Sophocles says, we escape the clutches not just of one crazy master but a whole gang of them. The truth is, Socrates, all these complaints, all those about family as well, are due to one cause — not old age, but a man's character. If a man is calm and happy, he won't mind the weight of old age on his shoulders. If he isn't, Socrates, both age and youth alike will be unbearable.

I admired him for saying all this, and — wanting to hear more — I tried to get a rise out of him.

E Yes, Cephalus, I said. But I think most people wouldn't buy it, coming from you. They would say you bear your old age well not because of your character but because of your money. For, they say, it's easy being rich.

You're right, he replied. They wouldn't buy it, and there's something to that, but not as much as you might think. I could answer back the same way Themistocles answered that Seriphian who insulted
330 him, saying he wasn't famous on his own account but because he was Athenian. To that he said: It's true. I couldn't have been a famous Seriphian, but you'd be a nobody Athenian. The same applies to those who are poor and miserable in old age. A man of good sense won't find it easy being both old and poor. But being rich won't make you happy if you lack good sense.

Can I ask you, Cephalus, whether you made your fortune or inherited it?

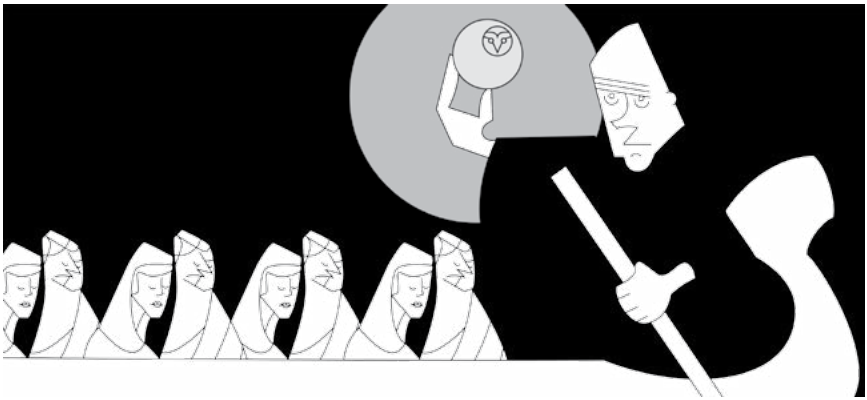
Made it! Socrates, do you want to know how much I'm a self-made man? When it comes to money matters, I'm halfway between my B
father and grandfather. My grandfather, after whom I'm named, doubled and tripled what he inherited, which was about as much as I have. My father Lysanias ended up with less. So I'll be happy to leave to my sons no less — in fact, a bit more — than I started out with myself.

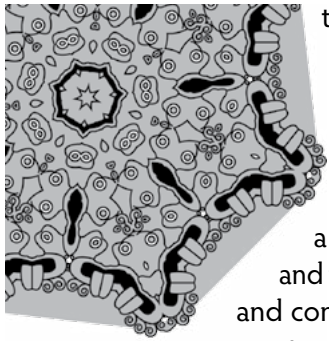
That's why I asked, I replied, because you don't seem to obsess about money. Men who don't inherit often do. Those who make C
money love it twice as much as other people. For just as poets love their own poems, and fathers their sons, so the self-made men love what they make, their money, as their own creations — also, money comes in handy, as everyone knows. So rich men are hard to get along with. They don't talk about anything but money.

That's true, he said. D

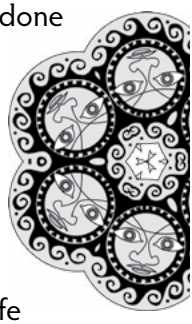
Very much so. But may I ask another question? What do you consider to be the greatest benefit you have derived from your great wealth?

Most people probably wouldn't believe me if I told them. But let me tell you. You should really know, Socrates, that when a man thinks he is near death, he starts to care about things, be afraid of things — things he never gave a thought to before. All those stories about Hades he used to laugh at, about how the dead are made





E to pay for all the wrongs they committed in life. Now the stories torment him with the thought that maybe it's all true. Furthermore, the man himself, either due to the weakness of old age, or because he is getting closer and closer to the things beyond, sees them a bit more clearly. He is overcome by doubts and fears, and he begins to reckon things up and consider whether he has ever done wrong to anyone. The man who finds he has committed many unjust deeds in life both wakes from his sleep with a frightened start, as children do, and lives with despair by day. But the man

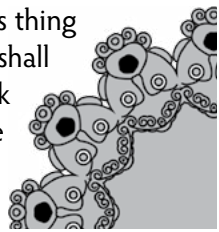


331 who finds he has a clean conscience, sweet good hope is constantly beside him — a good nurse in his old age, as Pindar says. For he put this thought very charmingly, Socrates, that whoever lives his life justly and righteously,

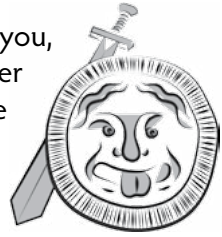
> Sweet hope
> Who above all guides the wandering purpose of mortals
> Gladdens his heart, walks by his side,
> And comforts his old age.

These are wonderfully fine words! Thus I lay it down that this is the
B chief value of acquiring wealth, not to every man but to a man of good sense. Namely, he need not deceive or defraud anyone, even unintentionally. Nor does he leave this world afraid that he owes sacrifices to the gods or debts to men. Having money is more than a little help in this regard. And of course it has many other uses. But on balance — setting one thing against another — I, for one, affirm that this is the most profitable use of wealth, for an intelligent man.

C Well put, Cephalus, I replied. But concerning this thing you have been talking about — namely, justice — shall we say, without qualification, that it is this? To speak the truth and give back whatever you may owe anyone? Isn't doing these very things sometimes just and sometimes unjust? I mean something like



this. If you have a friend who leaves weapons with you, when he is of sound mind, then asks for them back after he goes mad, no one would say that you should give them back, or that someone who did return them was a just man; no more than you would say you should always speak the truth to someone in such a seriously disturbed frame of mind.



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You're absolutely right, he replied.

But then, I said, speaking truth and returning what is owed is not a correct definition of justice.

To the contrary, Socrates — interrupted Polemarchus — this is the exactly correct definition, if Simonides is to be believed.

Very well, said Cephalus. I bequeath the argument to you all. I have to look after the sacrifices.

Polemarchus is your heir anyway, isn't he? I said.

Yes, indeed, he answered laughing, and went away to the sacrifices.

TELL ME THEN, O NOBLE HEIR to the argument: what it is that Simonides had to say about justice that you feel is correct? E

He said that to give back what is owed to each person is just. I think in saying that he spoke well.

It's not easy to doubt the word of a wise and inspired man like Simonides, but his meaning — though maybe it's clear to you — is far from clear to me. To go back to what we were just saying, of course he doesn't mean that I should return weapons to anyone if he asks for them back when mad. And yet a thing held in trust is a 332
sort of debt owed, isn't it?

True.

The weapons shouldn't be given back to anyone whatsoever, if he should ask for them sometime when he is mad?

Certainly not.

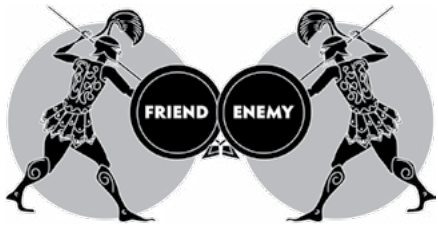
When Simonides said justice was the repayment of what is owed, he meant something different from this sort of case?

Something very different, by Zeus, for he thinks that a friend ought to do good to a friend, never evil.

I see. You mean, then, that to return a thing owed to another — for
B example, to give back gold that someone has deposited with you — if some harm would come about due to the return, and if both parties are friends, is not the repayment of what is owed. That is what you would think he would say?

Exactly.

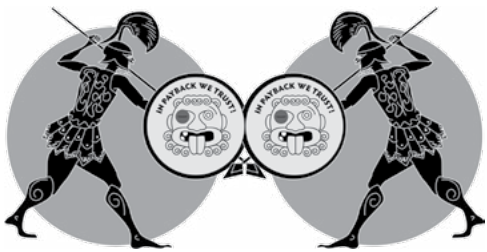
And are enemies also to receive what we owe them?



Certainly, he said, they are to receive what we owe them. An enemy, I take it, owes an enemy what is due or proper to him — namely, something bad.

Simonides apparently spoke of the nature of justice in that way poets
C speak — very obscurely, for he really meant that justice is giving to each man what befits him. This he termed 'what is due.'

That must have been what he meant, he said.



By Olympus! I replied. And what if someone were to ask him, Simonides! What due or proper thing is provided by the craft of medicine, and to whom? What answer do you think that he would give?

He would of course reply that medicine provides drugs and meat and drink to human bodies.

And what good thing is provided by the cook's art, and to what?

Flavor to food. D

And what is it that justice gives, and to whom?

Assuming, Socrates, that we are to proceed on the basis of the analogy, then justice is that craft which provides good to friends and evil to enemies.

Then he means that justice is doing good to your friends and evil to your enemies?

I think so.

And who is best able to do good to his friends and evil to his enemies with regard to sickness and health?

The physician.

Or when they are on a voyage, amidst the perils of the sea? E

The ship's pilot.

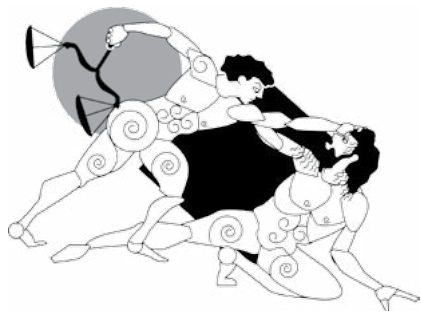
And with regard to what actions, and with a view to what end, is the just man best able to harm his enemies, while doing good to friends?

In warring against the one, and siding with the other.

But isn't a doctor useless to those who aren't sick, Polemarchus?

That's true.

And a ship's pilot is likewise useless to those who don't sail?



Yes.

Then justice will be useless to men who aren't at war?

I can hardly agree with that.

You think justice may also be of use in peace?

333 Yes.

Like farming for getting grain?

Yes.

Or shoemaking for getting shoes — that is what you mean?

Yes.

So what similar use or profitable power does justice have in time of peace?

When it comes to making contracts, Socrates, justice is of use.

And by contracts do you mean partnerships, or something else?

Partnerships.

B But is the just man or the skillful player a more useful partner at a game of, say, checkers?

The skillful player.

And when it comes to laying stones or bricks is the just man a more useful partner than the mason?

The opposite is the case.

Then in what sort of partnership is the just man a better partner than the mason, or than the harp-player — in just the way that the harp-player is the better partner when it comes to plucking the right notes?

In partnerships concerned with money, I think.

Yes, Polemarchus, but surely not in the use of money when you want to buy something in common. For you don't want a just man to go

in with you when it is time to buy or sell a horse. A man who knows horses would be altogether better, no? C

Certainly.

And when you want to buy a ship, you go in with a shipwright or pilot?

True.

Then in what joint venture of gold or silver is the just man to be preferred?

When you want the money to be kept safely in trust.

You mean when money is not wanted, but put away somewhere for the time being?

Precisely.

That is to say, justice is useful while the money is useless?

That is the inference. D

In the same way, when you want to keep a pruning knife safe, justice is useful to the individual and to the state; but when you want to use it, better call a gardener?

So it seems.

And when you want to keep a shield or lyre safe, not use them, you would say justice is useful; but when you want to use them, a soldier or musician is the man for you?

Necessarily.

And so on and so forth in all other such things. Always justice is useful when the things concerned are useless, useless when they are useful?

It would follow.

E Justice surely doesn't turn out to be worth much if it's only useful in connection with useless things. But let us consider a further point: isn't it true that the man who is the best at landing punches — in a boxing match or in any kind of fighting — is also best at blocking punches?

Certainly.

He who is best at preventing or curing disease is also best at inducing it?

I think so.

334 He who is best at securing an army camp is also best at stealing a march on the enemy, regarding all their stratagems and affairs?

Certainly.

Then he who is a good holder of anything is also a good thief of it?

That, I suppose, would follow.

Then if the just man is good at holding money, he is good at stealing it.

According to our argument, so it would seem.

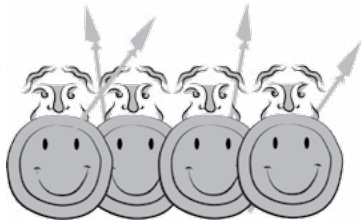
Then, at the end of it all, the just man has turned out to be a sort of thief. This is a lesson you likely learned from Homer. He had a soft
B spot for Autolycus, the maternal grandfather of Odysseus, about whom he said:

> He exceeded all men in theft and lies.

So you, Homer and Simonides all agree that justice is an art of theft, practiced to help friends and harm foes — that was what you were saying?

No, certainly not — though now I don't know what I did mean.

Nonetheless, I still say justice is helping friends and harming enemies.



By 'friends' do we mean those who appear to each man to be worthy, or rather those who actually are, even if they don't seem to be? And I would ask the same concerning enemies. C

Probably people become friends with those they think are good, and grow to hate the ones they judge evil.

Yes, but don't people often make mistakes about this, so that many of those they believe are good aren't, and vice versa?

People do make mistakes.

Then in their eyes those who are good will be enemies and those who are evil will be friends?

Certainly.

In that case these people will be right to do good to evil people and evil to good ones? D

It would seem so.

But the good are just, and the sort who would not do wrong?

True.

Then according to your argument it is right to harm those who do no wrong?

No, Socrates, this result is wrong.

Then I suppose we are right to harm the unjust, and aid the just?

I think it comes out better that way.

But note what follows, Polemarchus. For all those who are mistaken in their judgments about men it will be right to harm their friends, for E

they are wicked, and aid their enemies, who are actually good. But in affirming this we say the opposite of what we said Simonides meant.

That certainly is the result, he said. Let's make a correction. We probably haven't defined the words 'friend' and 'enemy' properly.

How did we define them, Polemarchus? I asked.

We said that someone who seems good is a friend.

How are we going to fix the problem?

335 We should say instead that he is a friend who doesn't merely seem, but truly is, good. One who only seems good, but isn't, only seems a friend, but isn't. The same goes for enemies.

You would argue that the good are our friends, the bad our enemies?

Yes.

So you suggest that we add something to our previous definition of the good man. Just now we said that it is just to do good to our friends and evil to our enemies. Now we should add this: it is just to do good to our friends when they are good and evil to our enemies when they are evil?

B Yes indeed, he said, that seems very well put.

Then again, should the just man really injure anyone at all?

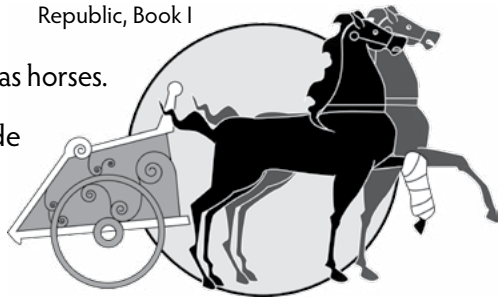
Certainly he should. He should injure those who are both wicked and his enemies.

When horses are injured, are they thereby improved or made worse?

They become worse.

Worse, that is, with respect to those virtues that make horses into good horses — not, say, with respect to those virtues that make dogs into good dogs.

The horses are made worse as horses.



And injured dogs are made worse with respect to their canine virtue, not their equine virtue?

Of course.

And about men, my dear friend, won't we have to say that when injured they are made worse with respect to their distinctly human excellence or virtue? C

Certainly.

But justice — isn't that the special virtue of humans?

That too must be granted.

Then men who are harmed, my dear friend, must we not grant that they are necessarily made unjust?

It seems likely.

But can the musician, by performing music, make men unmusical?

Impossible.

Or the rider by riding make bad riders?

Not at all.

Then can the just by justice make men unjust? In general, can good men make evil ones by means of virtue? D

Assuredly not.

For I don't think it's the characteristic function of heat to make things cold; rather, the opposite of heat has that function.

Yes.

Nor does dryness, but rather its opposite, make things wet.

That's quite right.

Nor then is it the characteristic function of the good to do harm, but that of its opposite?

It seems so.

And the just man is a good man?

Certainly.

Then to injure someone, whether a friend or anyone else at all, is not the act of a just man, Polemarchus, but an unjust man — his very opposite?

I think what you've said is the absolute truth, Socrates.

E Then if someone says justice consists in paying debts, and means by that, that the just man owes a debt of harm to his enemies and one of aid to his friends, then he was no truly wise man who said it. For it cannot be true, if, as has been shown, it is never right to harm anyone.

I concede it, said Polemarchus.

In which case you and I are prepared to fight side by side against any who attributes such a saying to Simonides or Bias or Pittacus, or any other wise man or prophet?

I am quite ready to fight by your side, he said.

336 Shall I tell you who I think came up with this saying that justice is to aid one's friends and harm one's enemies?

Who?

I believe it was Periander or Perdiccas or Xerxes or Ismenias the Theban, or some other rich and mighty man, who was pleased to regard himself as having great power.

What you say is very true, he said.

Yes, I said. But if this definition of justice also breaks down, what other can be offered?

MANY TIMES IN the course of this discussion Thrasymachus had tried to jump in and interrupt the argument but had been prevented by the rest of those present, who wanted to hear things out. Now, when I had just said this and Polemarchus and I had paused, he could contain himself no longer. Gathering himself up, he hurled himself upon us like a wild beast bent on tearing and devouring us. Polemarchus and I were quite panic-stricken at the sight of him. B

He roared out to the whole lot of us: What utter nonsense have you been spouting, Socrates? And why do the both of you prize idiots give way to what the other says? If you really want to know what justice is, Socrates, you should not **only** ask questions, and then win the competition by refuting what anyone answers. After all, you know it's easier to win when you ask than when you answer. Now **you** answer the question yourself, and say what **you** think justice is. And I won't have any of this justice is what ought to be, or the beneficial, or the profitable, or the advantageous, but express clearly and precisely whatever you say, for I'm not going to accept anything of that sort from you. C D

I was near panic at hearing this outburst, and I could hardly look at him. In fact, I think that if I had not just then looked at him before he looked at me, I would have been struck dumb. But as it was, when he began to be exasperated by the argument, I looked at him first, so that I was able to reply. E

Thrasymachus, I said, with just a slight hitch in my voice, don't be so critical of us. Polemarchus and I may be guilty of making mistakes in our argument, but you should know we weren't doing it on purpose.

If we were looking for a piece of gold, you wouldn't say that we were giving way to each other, and thereby destroying our chances of finding it. Why, then, when we are seeking justice — a thing more precious than much gold — do you assert that we are stupidly giving in to each other and not doing our utmost to get at the truth? You know it isn't so, my good friend; it's just that we aren't capable. And since that is the way of it, people like you — who are so terri-
337 bly clever — should pity us instead of being angry.

How like you, Socrates! he replied, with a bitter laugh. Hercules knows there's no mistaking your usual irony! I knew it — didn't I just say it? — that whatever he was asked he would refuse to answer. He falls back on irony. And he'll do anything rather than answer a straight question put to him.

You are a sophist, Thrasymachus, I replied, so I think you can appreci-
B ate how, if someone asks a man to say what numbers make up twelve, and while he asks adds, Don't, my good man, say that twelve is twice six, or three times four, or six times two, or four times three, for I won't accept any nonsense like that from you — I think it must be clear to you that no one could answer the question when put that way. But what if he said to you: Thrasymachus, what do you mean? Am I not supposed to give any of those answers you forbid? What if one of them is the right answer, you uncanny man? Am I supposed to lie and say something other than
C the truth? Is this what you want? — How would you answer?

The way you talk, you would think the two cases had something in common.

Nothing prevents it, I replied. But even if they don't, but it appears to the one being questioned that they do, shouldn't he speak his mind whether we forbid him or not?

I expect then, he said, that you are going to make one of the forbidden answers?

I wouldn't be too astonished if I did — if upon reflection I think any of them is any good.

But what if **I** give you an answer about justice, he said — one different from and better than any of these? What penalty should you have to pay then? D

What else, I said, than the penalty ignorant people always pay to the wise? The proper penalty is learning the answer from one who knows it, and this is what I think I deserve to suffer.

You are so naive, he said. In addition to the penalty of learning, you'll have to pay money.

I will pay when I have some money, I replied.

It's all right, Socrates, said Glaucon. If it is money you are worried about, Thrasymachus, we will all chip in to pay for Socrates' schooling.

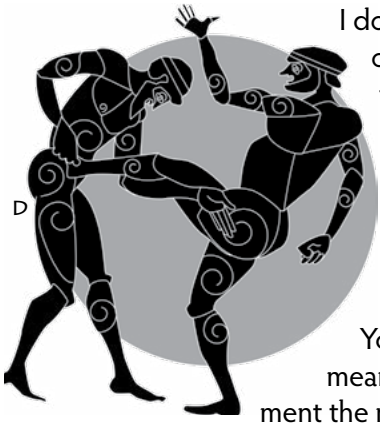
Oh yes of course, he replied, and then Socrates will do as he always does — he'll refuse to answer, and when someone else answers, he'll shred his argument. E

But, my good friend, I said, how can anyone answer a question who doesn't know the answer, and says he doesn't know the answer; who, even if he knew a little something by way of answer, has in any case been all but forbidden to say what he thinks by a rather formidable man? No, you should talk instead, as you say you know the answer, 338
and have something to say. So don't think of doing anything else, but be gracious enough to answer me, and don't selfishly keep silent, but speak up for the edification of Glaucon here, and everyone else.

As I was saying this, Glaucon and the rest of the company joined in my request and Thrasymachus, as anyone could see, was really eager to speak, because he thought he had an excellent answer, and would soon be standing tall in our eyes. For a while longer he held out, pretending to insist on my answering, but in the end he agreed to begin. Behold, he said, the wisdom of Socrates. He refuses B
to teach, and goes about learning from others, to whom he never pays so much as a thank you.

That I learn from others, I replied, is quite true, Thrasymachus, but that I am ungrateful, I deny. I have no money, and therefore pay in praise, which is all I have to give. You will soon find out how ready I am to praise a good speaker,
C for I expect you will answer well.

Listen up, then, he said. I declare that justice is nothing but the advantage of the stronger. And now why don't you all praise me? Oh, but wait. Of course you won't.



Let me first make sure I understand, I replied, for now I don't at all. Justice, you say, is the advantage of the stronger. But what, Thrasymachus, is this supposed to mean? You cannot mean to say that because Polydamas the wrestler is stronger than we are, and because
D eating beef makes his body strong, that this diet is therefore both suitable and just for all of us who are weaker than he?

You are disgusting, Socrates, you take my meaning that way, so that you can do my argument the most harm.

Not at all, my good sir, I said, but try to express yourself more clearly.

Well, he said, perhaps you have heard about how forms of government differ from place to place: there are tyrannies, and democracies, and aristocracies?

Yes, of course.

And isn't this the thing that has power in each state: the ruling party?

Certainly.

E And each government establishes laws with an eye to its own advantage — the democracy making democratic laws and the tyranny tyrannical ones, and so forth. And these laws, which are made by

them for their advantage, are the justice that they hand down to their subjects. And whoever breaks these laws is punished as an unjust lawbreaker. And that, my good man, is what I mean when I say that in all states there is the same principle of justice: namely, the 339
advantage of the established government. And as the government must be supposed to have power, the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn is that everywhere you go there is but one principle of justice: namely, the advantage of the stronger.

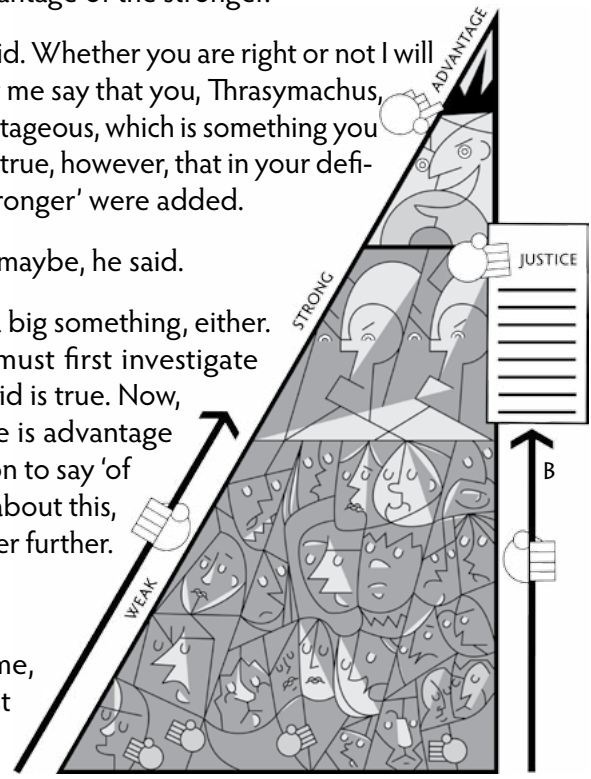
Now I understand you, I said. Whether you are right or not I will try to discover. But first let me say that you, Thrasymachus, say that justice is the advantageous, which is something you forbade me to answer. It is true, however, that in your definition the words 'of the stronger' were added.

A little something added, maybe, he said.

It is not yet clear that it is a big something, either. What is clear is that we must first investigate whether what you have said is true. Now, we both agree that justice is advantage of some sort, but you go on to say 'of the stronger.' I'm not sure about this, and must therefore consider further.

Consider away, he said.

So I will, I said. First tell me, do you admit that it is just for subjects to obey their rulers?

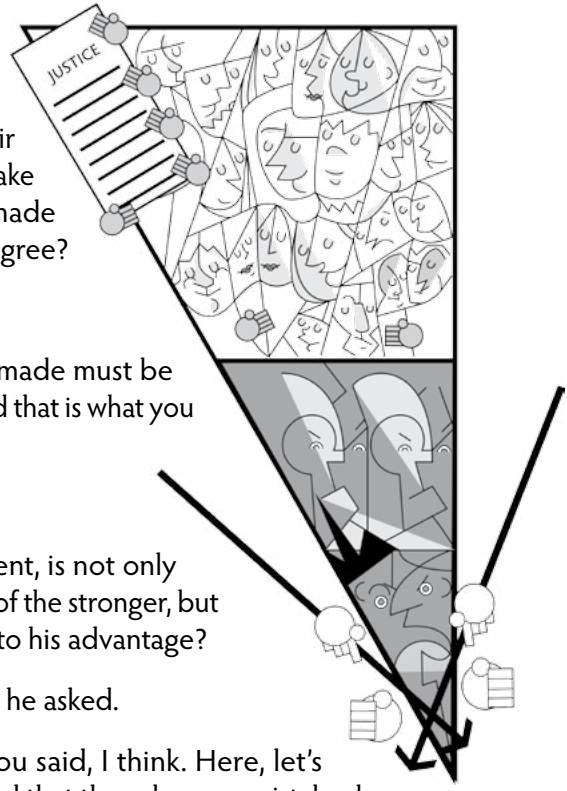


I do. C

But are the rulers of each of these states absolutely infallible, or do they sometimes make mistakes?

Obviously, he replied, they sometimes make mistakes.

Then in making their laws they may sometimes make them the right way, sometimes the wrong way?



I agree.

When they make them rightly, they make them to their own advantage; when they make a mistake, the laws are not made to their advantage. Do you agree?

Yes.

Anyway, the laws which are made must be obeyed by the subjects — and that is what you call justice?

No doubt about it.

D Then justice, by your argument, is not only obedience to the advantage of the stronger, but also the reverse, what is not to his advantage?

What are you talking about? he asked.

I am only repeating what you said, I think. Here, let's consider: haven't we admitted that the rulers can mistakenly betray their own advantage by making the commands they do, and also that for those who are ruled to obey these commands is justice? Didn't you say as much?

Yes.

E Then you have to think that it is just to do what is to the disadvantage of those who rule and are stronger, whenever the rulers unintentionally command things which are bad for them. For if, as you say, it is just to perform those very things which the rulers command, in that case — O, wisest of men — is there any escape from the conclusion that it is just to do the opposite of what you say? For the weaker
340 are commanded to do what is to the disadvantage of the stronger?

Yes, by Zeus, this is clear as day, Socrates! said Polemarchus.

Yes, said Cleitophon, breaking in, if anyone asked **you** to be a witness.

Who needs a witness? said Polemarchus. Thrasymachus plainly admitted rulers may sometimes make commands not to their advantage, and that for subjects to obey these commands is justice.

But, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus said that for subjects to do what was commanded of them by their rulers is just.

Yes, Cleitophon, but he also said justice is the interest of the stronger; and, while holding both these positions, he admitted as well B
that the stronger may command the weaker, who are his subjects, to do things that are not to his advantage. It follows that justice is just as much the injury as the interest of the stronger.

But, said Cleitophon, when he said 'the advantage of the stronger', he meant what the stronger thought to be his advantage — this was what the weaker had to do. His position is that this is justice.

That isn't what he said, Polemarchus retorted. C

Never mind that, Polemarchus, I replied. If he now says this is how it is, let us accept his statement.

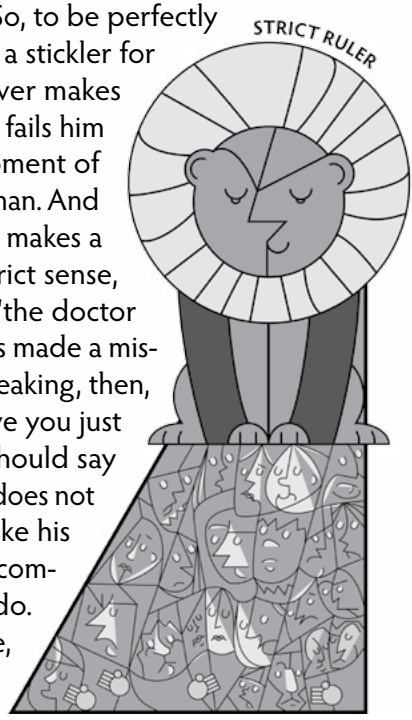
Tell me, Thrasymachus, is this what you meant to say justice was? What the stronger thought to be his advantage, whether it really is or not? Shall we say this is what you mean?

Absolutely not, he said. Do you think I would call someone who makes a mistake 'the stronger' at just the moment when he makes some mistake?

Yes, I said, my distinct impression was that this was exactly what you did when you admitted that the ruler was not infallible but might D
sometimes make mistakes.

You argue like a slanderous witness in court, Socrates. For example, do you call someone who is mistaken about the sick 'a doctor' just in virtue of the fact that he is mistaken? Or do you say that he who makes mistakes in math is a mathematician when he is making the mistake, and precisely because he is mistaken? We do say 'the doctor has made a mistake' or 'the mathematician has made a

mistake' or 'the grammarian has made a mistake', but this is just a
E loose way of talking. For I think none of them, insofar as he is what we call him, ever makes a mistake. So, to be perfectly strict about it — since you are such a stickler for strictness — no skilled craftsman ever makes a mistake. It is when his knowledge fails him that he goes astray, and in that moment of failure he is not really a skilled craftsman. And so, no craftsman, wise man, or ruler makes a mistake while he is a ruler in the strict sense, though people do commonly say, 'the doctor has made a mistake' or 'the ruler has made a mistake'. It is in this common way of speaking, then, that you must take the answer I gave you just now. To be perfectly precise we should say
341 that the ruler, insofar as he is a ruler, does not make mistakes, and does not mistake his own advantage when he lays down commands, and this the subject must do. Therefore — as I said in the first place, and now I say it again — justice is the advantage of the stronger.



All right then, Thrasymachus. But do I really seem to you to argue like someone committing perjury in court?

That's for sure, he replied.

So you must think I put these questions to you with the intent of personally libeling you in the argument?

I don't think it, I know it. But it's not going to get you anywhere:
B you can't harm me by stealth, and you will never beat me by sheer force of argument.

I wouldn't dream of trying, my dear man! But in order to prevent this sort of thing from happening again, please define in what sense you speak of 'the ruler' and 'stronger'. Do you mean the so-called ruler or the ruler in the precise sense, whom you were just telling

us about? For whose advantage, as being the stronger, will it be just for the inferior to act?

I mean the ruler in the strictest of all senses, he said. And now, go ahead, smear my argument, make your false accusations! I'm not asking you to play nice. You're just not up to the job! C

Do you think, I said, that I am crazy enough to shave a lion in his den, or spread libels about Thrasymachus?

Why, he said, you tried it just now, you feeble fellow.

Enough of these pleasantries, I said. Just tell me this: what does the physician do, in the strict sense you articulated just now? Does he heal the sick, or does he make money? And remember, I am now speaking of the true physician.

He heals the sick, he replied.

And the ship's pilot — I mean, the true pilot — is he a captain of sailors or a mere sailor?

A captain of sailors. D

I don't think we have to take into account the fact that he sails about in a ship, nor the fact that he is called a sailor. He's not called a pilot because of his sailing, but because of his craft and his authority over the sailors.

That's exactly right, he said.

Now, I said, for each of these cases, isn't there something that is advantageous?

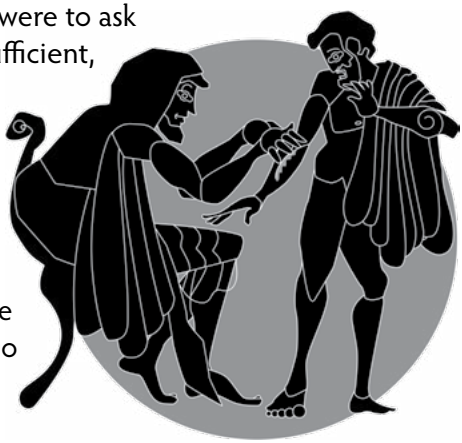
Certainly.

Towards which the craft, I said, is directed; it seeks to secure and furnish this advantage to them?

Yes, that's the point.

And is there any advantage for each of the crafts aside from its becoming as perfect as possible?

E What are you talking about?



It's like this, I said. Suppose you were to ask me whether the body is self-sufficient, or whether it has needs. I would reply: The body has all kinds of needs. This is why the art of medicine was invented, because the body can fall ill and lacks the capacity to heal itself. The art was constructed to this end, to provide these advantages to the body. Do you think I would be right in saying this, I asked, or not?

342 Quite right, he replied.

But how about this? Does the art of medicine get sick itself? Or can any other art be in need of some virtue or quality — as the eye can need sight, and the ear hearing, so that they require some art to seek out and provide this advantage to them? Can there be any fault in the art itself, so that each art requires some further art to seek out what is advantageous to it, and another art must be found for the second one, and so on to infinity? Or does each art
B look out for its own advantage? Or does each art in fact need neither itself nor another art to seek out a remedy for any defect? For no art has either any defect or error in itself, nor is it the business of any art to seek what is advantageous to anything other than the art's subject. For isn't every true art pure and faultless, so long as it is precisely and entirely itself? Consider that we are speaking in your precise sense. Is it so, or not?

It appears to be so, he said.

Then medicine does not serve the interests of medicine, but the interests of the body? C

True, he said.

And the point of the art of caring for horses is not to care for itself, just to care for horses, nor does any other art look after itself — since it doesn't need anything — but rather that thing of which it is the art?

So it seems he said.

But surely, Thrasymachus, the arts are the rulers of, and stronger than, their subjects?

He conceded this point with great reluctance.

Then, I said, no craft considers or commands the advantage of the ruler or superior, only that of the subject it rules and the inferior? D

He eventually was brought to admit this too, though he tried to contest it.

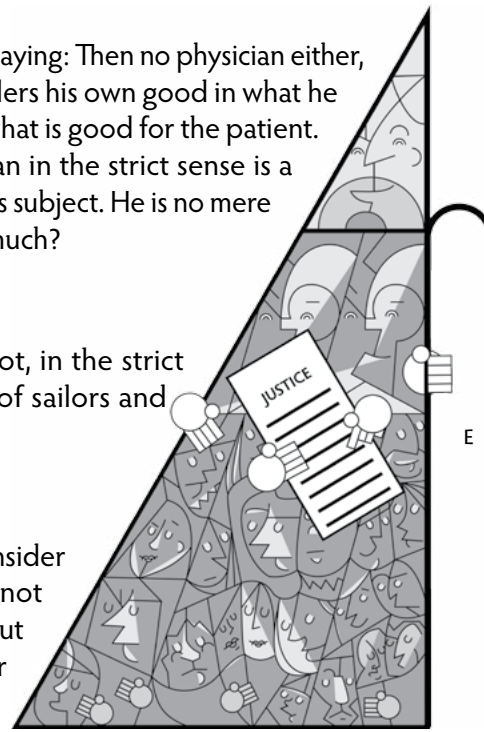
Once he had agreed I continued, saying: Then no physician either, insofar as he is a physician, considers his own good in what he prescribes. He considers rather what is good for the patient. For you agreed that the physician in the strict sense is a ruler having the human body as his subject. He is no mere money maker. You granted this much?

He agreed.

The same goes for the ship's pilot, in the strict sense of the term; he is a ruler of sailors and not a mere sailor? E

That was admitted.

And such a pilot and ruler will consider situations and issue commands, not for his own private advantage, but rather the advantage of the sailor under his command?



He gave a reluctant yes.

So then, Thrasymachus, there is no one in any ruling position, insofar as he is a true ruler, who seeks out and gives commands for things that are to his own advantage. He always commands what is in the best interest of those he rules, or the subject-matter of his art. He looks to that, and on what is advantageous and suitable to that alone, in all that he says and does.

343 When we had gotten to this point in the argument, and everyone saw that the definition of justice had been completely upset, Thrasymachus, instead of replying, asked: Tell me, Socrates, have you got a nanny?

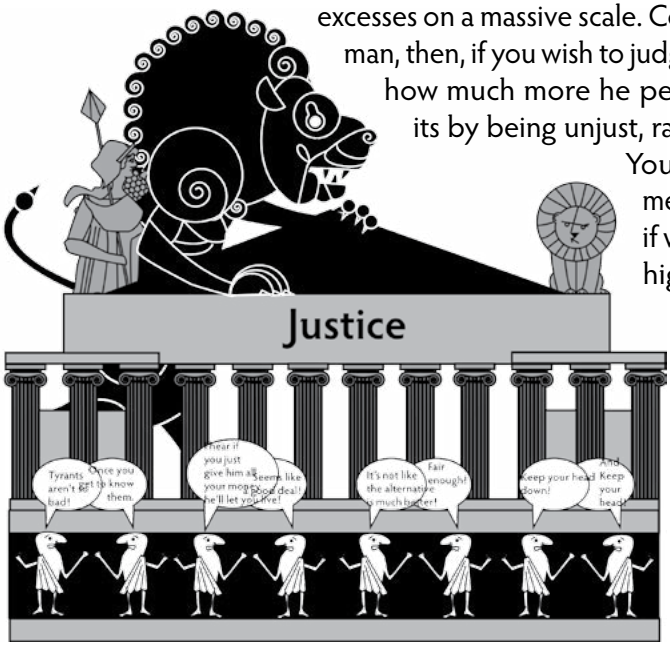
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I said. You really ought to be answering my questions, not posing new ones.

Because she lets you go around sniveling and never wipes your snotty nose. She has not even taught you to tell the difference between the shepherd and the sheep.

What makes you say that? I replied.

B Because you imagine that the shepherds or cowherds are considering the good of the sheep and cattle, and that when they fatten and tend them they are looking out for anything other than their own self-interest or that of their masters. And in particular you imagine that the rulers of states, I mean those who truly rule, think any differently about their subjects than a man about his flock, and that they are looking out for anything but their own interests,
C day and night. Oh, no, and you are **so** far off the mark in your ideas of the just and unjust that you don't even realize that justice and the just are literally this: another's advantage — the advantage of the ruler and the stronger, and a source of harm for the subject or servant. And injustice is the opposite. Injustice lords it over those

who are both simple, in every sense of the word, and just. They, being subjects, do what is to the advantage of the stronger man. They serve him D
and minister to his pleasure, which is very far from being their own. You must look at the matter, my extraordinarily simple-minded friend, in the following way: the just man is always a loser compared to the unjust man. First, he loses when it comes to private contracts: when a just man has an unjust partner, and the partnership is at an end, you will find that the unjust man walks away with more and the just man gets less. Second, in dealings with the state: when it's time to pay taxes, the just man pays more and the unjust man less on estates of equal value. Likewise, when there is anything to be gotten the one gains nothing, E
the other much. Look also at what happens when it comes to serving in public office: apart from any other loss, the just man can count on his personal affairs suffering from his neglect, while he, because of his justice, makes no profit from the state. To make matters still worse, he is hated by his friends and associates because he refuses to help them bend and break the law. But the tables are turned in the case of the unjust man. I am speaking, as I have been from the very start, of the man with the power to commit 344
excesses on a massive scale. Consider such a man, then, if you wish to judge for yourself how much more he personally profits by being unjust, rather than just. You'll see what I mean most easily if we turn to that highest form of injustice —



the case in which the criminal is the happiest man on earth, and his victims, and those who refuse to commit crimes are the most miserable. In a word, I speak of tyranny, when, by force or fraud, property is stolen from its owners not little by little but wholesale. Everything goes into one bag: sacred things as well as profane — private
B and public. Were someone to commit these acts on a petty scale and fail to get away with it, he would be severely punished and regarded with the worst kind of contempt. Those who commit such partial forms of injustice are called temple robbers, kidnappers, burglars, con-men and thieves. But if men will go to the additional trouble of relieving their victims of their freedom as well as their property — enslaving the citizens — why, then, far from being called these insulting names they are deemed happy and blessed, not only
C by their fellow-citizens, but by all who hear that they have ascended to the very pinnacle of perfect injustice. For it is not the fear of **doing** wrong, but of **being a victim** of it, that calls forth people's denunciations of injustice. Thus, Socrates, injustice, committed on a grand scale, is a stronger, freer, more masterful thing than justice, and — as I declared from the very start — justice is the advantage of the stronger, whereas injustice is a man's own profit and interest.

D Thrasymachus, when he was done pouring out this veritable bathtub of words down the drains of our ears, obviously had a mind to get up and leave. But the whole lot of us would not let him. We insisted he should remain and defend his position. And I asked him with particular urgency: Thrasymachus, I said to him, you excellent man; after hurling such a suggestive argument at us, you can't intend to run off without staying either to teach us properly or learn yourself whether it is true or not. Do you think that what you are trying to
E define is such a trifling matter: the whole life path that would make life most worth living for each of us?

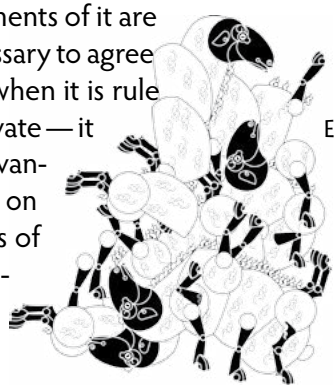
You think I don't see the importance of this question?

You appear not to, I replied, or else you do not care for any of us, Thrasymachus. It's the same to you whether we live better or worse, on account of not knowing what you say you know. So please, friend,

do not hide the light of your wisdom under a bushel. It will not be 345
a bad investment for you to do so many of us a good turn. For my
own part, I openly declare that I am not convinced, and that I do
not believe injustice to be more profitable than justice, even if we
allow it free play and do not hamper its desires. Let us assume then,
my good man, there is an unjust man, let him be capable of com-
mitting injustice by fraud or force. All the same I am not convinced
injustice is advantageous. There may be another among us who B
feels the same way, so that I am not the only one. Persuade us then,
you excellent gentleman, really persuade us that we are wrong in
preferring justice to injustice.

And how am I to persuade you, he said, if you are not already convinced by what I have just said. What more can I do for you? Would you have me cram the proof down your throat, right into your very souls?

Zeus forbid! I said. Don't do that. But first, stand by your original arguments, or, if you change your mind, change it openly, and don't try to deceive us. As it is now, Thrasymachus, if you will only recall C
what was previously said, you must see that although you began by defining the true physician in an exact sense, you did not observe similar exactness when speaking of the shepherd. Instead, you think that the shepherd, insofar as he is a shepherd, tends the sheep, not with a view to the good of the sheep, but like a diner or gourmet, with a view to the pleasures of eating mutton; or, again, with a view to selling in the market, like a trader, not a shepherd. Yet surely the D
art of the shepherd is concerned only with how to provide the best for those sheep over which he is set, since the perfection of his art is already ensured whenever all the requirements of it are satisfied. It's just as I thought we found it necessary to agree a little while ago about every form of rule: when it is rule in the precise sense — whether public or private — it E
doesn't consider anything other than the advantage of the subjects or the ones cared for. You, on the other hand, seem to think that the rulers of states — that is to say, the true rulers — actually like being in positions of authority.



I don't think it, by Zeus. I know it!

What about this, Thrasymachus, I said. Don't you know men never volunteer for other offices, but instead ask for pay? This implies the benefits of ruling are not going to go to them, but to the ones they
346 rule? Let me ask you a question: Don't we say that each of the various arts is distinct from the others in virtue of some distinct power or function? And, my dear exalted friend, do say what you really think, that we may make a little progress.

Yes, that's what makes them distinct, he replied.

And each art gives us a particular good and not merely a general one — medicine, for example, gives us health; navigation, safety at sea, and so on with the other arts?

Yes, he said.

And doesn't the art of getting paid have the special function of mak-
B ing us money? Would you say that the art of medicine and that of navigation are the same? Or, if you want to define things with your usual precision, if the navigator becomes healthy because sailing on the sea is good for him, would you call his craft medicine rather than navigation on that account?

Certainly not.

You won't say either that, just because a man happens to be in good health on payday, that therefore getting paid is medicine?

I should say not.

C Nor would you say that medicine is the art of getting paid, just because a man takes fees when he heals someone?

Certainly not.

And we have admitted, I said, that each art aims at some particular benefit peculiar to it?

Granted.

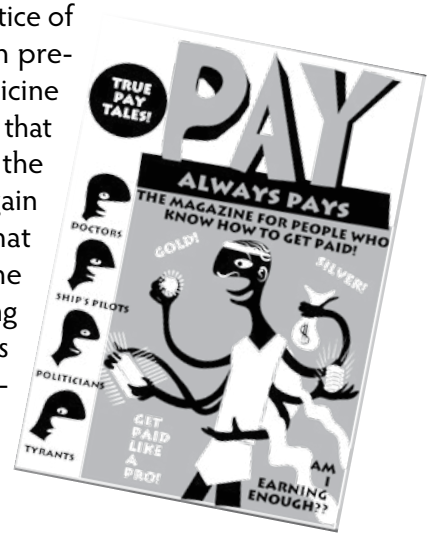
Then whatever common benefit all craftsmen enjoy must clearly result from their joint practice of some one thing common to them?

Probably, he replied.

And when the craftsman is benefited by making money this is due to some application of the fine art of getting paid?

He agreed reluctantly to this.

Then the benefit of getting paid money doesn't come to the various craftsmen by the practice of their various crafts. If we consider it with precision, we'll see that while the art of medicine produces health, it's the art of getting paid that produces the doctor's wages. And while the art of building produces buildings, it's again the accompanying art of getting paid that brings in the fees, and likewise with all the other arts. And so the various crafts are doing their particular work, benefiting the subjects over which they rule. But would the craftsman himself receive any benefit from his art if money weren't added into the mix? D



It doesn't seem like it, he said.

Doesn't he even provide a benefit when he works for nothing? E

I think he does.

Then, Thrasymachus, it's clear now that no craft or form of rule provides what is beneficial to itself. It is all just as we said earlier: they prepare and command what is in the interests of their subjects, and the strong rulers attend to the good of these weaker ones, not their own good. And this is why, my dear Thrasymachus — as I was just now saying — no one volunteers to govern, because no one likes to take up the weary task of straightening out other people's problems. Instead he asks to be paid for it, because the man who 347
is going to practice his craft well, never does or orders what is best

for himself, when he issues orders in accordance with his art, but always what is best for his subjects. For this reason, it seems, potential rulers must be paid in one of three sorts of coinage: money, or honor, or punishment for refusing.

What are you saying, Socrates? said Glaucon. I understand the first two modes of payment, but what the punishment is I don't quite see, or how a punishment can even be a payment.

B You mean that you don't understand the nature of this payment for the sake of which the best men take up the reins of power, when they consent to do so? Of course you know that ambition and greed are held to be, and indeed are, disgraceful?

I do, he said.

This, I said, is why good men are not willing to rule for the sake of money or honor. They don't wish to be seen openly demanding payment for service in government, as that would earn them the name of hired hand; nor do they wish to earn the name of thief, by
C dipping their hand in the public till. Not being ambitious, they do not care about honor. As a result of all this, a yoke of compulsion and penalty must be laid upon their necks, if they are to consent to rule. And this, I imagine, is the reason why willingly seeking office, when one might have waited to be compelled, has been deemed dishonorable. But the essence of the punishment is that he who refuses to rule is liable to end up being ruled by one worse than himself. The way I look at it, fear of this bad result makes the good take office, whenever they do, and then they approach it, not as something good or in the expectation of enjoying themselves, but as a necessary evil since they are unable to foist off the chore of ruling on anyone as good or better than themselves. Indeed, if there
D were a city entirely peopled by good men, we might well find men would contend as eagerly to avoid public office as they do here to obtain it. In that place it would become quite clear that the nature of the true ruler is not to look after his own interests, but rather those of his subjects. And everyone who knew this would choose rather to receive a benefit from another, instead of being put to
E the trouble of conferring them all around. So I am about as far as

it is possible to be from agreeing with Thrasymachus that justice is the interest of the stronger.

But let's take this matter up again later. This fresh claim appears to me to be a far more serious one, when Thrasymachus says that the life of the unjust man is more advantageous than that of the just man. And which one, Glaucon, do you prefer? Which statement seems truer to you?

For my part, I certainly think the life of the just man is more advantageous, he answered.

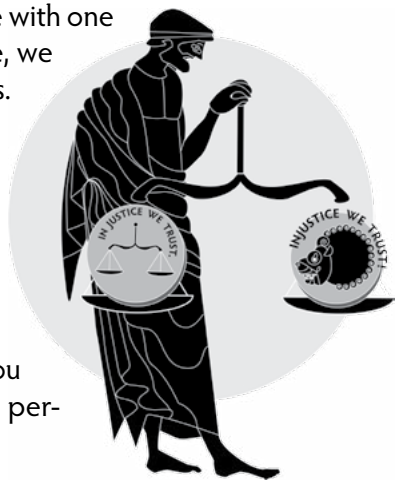
You did hear, though, all those wonderful things the unjust man has, 348
as Thrasymachus set out for us just now?

Yes, I heard, he replied, but he hasn't persuaded me.

Then shall we try to persuade him, if we can find a way, that what he says isn't true?

We certainly ought to try, he replied.

If, I said, we set against his speech a speech of our own, enumerating in turn the advantages of being just, and then he responds, and we respond to that, in the end we would have to count up and measure the goods in each of our speeches, and for that we would need B
judges to make the distinctions. On the other hand, if we do as we have been doing, and simply agree with one another when a good point has been made, we can be both judges and advocates ourselves.



That's certainly right, he said.

Which method do you prefer? I asked.

The one you propose.

Well, then, Thrasymachus, I said, suppose we begin at the beginning and you answer me. You say perfect injustice is more profitable than perfect justice?

C Yes, I say it, and I have given you my reasons.

And what is your view about these two items in question? Would you call one of them virtue and the other vice?

Certainly.

I suppose that you would call justice 'virtue' and injustice 'vice'?

That's **ever so likely**, you perfect innocent, seeing that I affirm injustice to be profitable and justice unprofitable.

What else then would you say instead?

The very opposite, he replied.

What! You call justice vice?

No, I think I would call it lofty naivete.

Then would you call injustice malignity?

D No, I think it would be better to label it prudent counsel.

And do unjust men appear to you to be wise and good?

Yes, he said, at least those who have the power to be overwhelmingly unjust, and therefore have the power to bring whole city-states and tribes of men to their knees, because **you** probably think I've been advocating a line-up of pickpockets. It is true that even this sort of thing has its profitable side, as long as you don't get caught,
E but petty thievery isn't worth discussion in comparison to what I just talked about.

I don't think I actually have missed your point, Thrasymachus, I replied, but still I am quite amazed at the thought that you class injustice with wisdom and virtue, and justice with the opposite.

Certainly I do class them in this way.

Now that's a more difficult assertion, my good friend, I said. At any rate, it's hard to know what to say. For if you were to claim that injustice is more profitable, while granting that it is a shameful vice,

a position some others do take, an answer might be given to you on the basis of conventional moral notions. But by now I can see perfectly well that you will just go on to say that injustice is strong and honorable; to the unjust you will attribute all the qualities that 349
we used to attribute to the just, since you don't hesitate to place injustice with wisdom and virtue.

You have foreseen most infallibly, he replied.

Well, I said, I shouldn't flinch from following the argument to its conclusion, as long as I believe that you are actually speaking your mind. For I don't think, Thrasymachus, that you are having us on, but rather you are telling us your real opinions concerning the truth.

I may be serious or not, but what difference does it make to you? Why don't you refute the argument?

No difference at all, I said, but will you be so extremely good as to B
answer just one more question? Does the just man try to overreach or gain any advantage over the just?

Far from it. If he did that he would not be the simple, unassuming creature he is.

And would he try to overreach or outdo justice?

He would not.

How would he regard any attempt to gain an advantage over the unjust man? Would he consider that just or would it be unjust?

He would think it just, he said, but he wouldn't be able to overreach him in this way.

That's not what I asked you, I said. My question is whether the just C
man, while refusing to have more than another just man, would wish and claim to have more than the unjust has?

Yes, that's how it is, he replied.

And what of the unjust — does he claim to overreach and outdo the just man and the practice of justice?

Of course, he said, since he wants to get the most for himself out of every situation.

Therefore, won't the unjust man also overreach and outdo another unjust man and the practice of injustice, since he strives to have more than everyone?

True.

We may put the matter this way, I said. The just man does not seek to get the better of those like himself, but does seek to get the better of those unlike him, whereas the unjust man wants to get the
D better of those both like and unlike himself?

You've got it, he said.

But the unjust man is wise and good, and the just man is neither of these?

Right again, he said.

And isn't it also true that the unjust man is like the wise and good and the just man unlike them?

Of course, he said. He who is of a certain nature is like others who are also of that nature; he who is not, is not.

Excellent. Then each of them, I said, is like his like?

What else do you think? he replied.

E Very good, Thrasymachus, I said. Now you would admit that one man is a musician and another not?

Yes, I would.

And who is wise and who foolish, when it comes to music?

Clearly the musician is wise and the unmusical one is foolish.

And he is good with respect to the things he knows well, and bad with respect to things of which he is ignorant?

Yes.

And you would say the same sort of thing of the physician?

The same.

And do you think, my excellent friend, that a musician tuning his lyre would want or claim to exceed or go beyond a fellow musician, when it comes to tightening and loosening the strings just so?

I do not think that he would.

But he would claim to exceed the non-musician?

Necessarily.

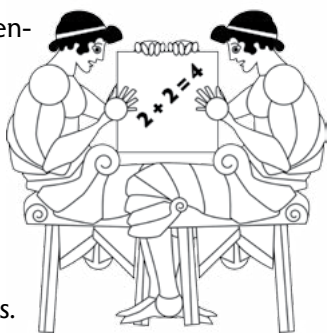
And what would you say of the physician? In prescribing food and drink would he wish to go beyond another physician or beyond the practice of medicine? 350

He would not.

But he would wish to outdo the non-physician?

Yes.

What about knowledge and ignorance in general? See whether you think any man who has knowledge would wish to choose to say or do something other than or more than another man who has knowledge. Would he not rather do the same as his like in the same case?



I suppose it must be so, he said, in such cases.

B But what of the ignorant man? Wouldn't he want to outdo both the wise man and his fellow fool alike?

Maybe so.

And he who knows is wise?

I say yes.

And he who is wise is good?

I'll agree.

Then the wise and good man will not desire to get the better of his like, but of his unlike and opposite?

I suppose so.

Whereas the bad and ignorant will desire to get the better of both?

Yes.

But we said, didn't we, Thrasymachus, that the unjust man tries to get the better of both his like and unlike? Didn't you say this?

Yes, I did, he replied.

C But the just man will not want to get the better of his like but only his unlike?

Yes.

Then the just man is like the wise and good, and the unjust man like the evil and ignorant?

That seems to follow.

And each of them is like his like, and is of the same sort as that which he resembles?

Yes, we agreed to that.

Then the just man has turned out to be wise and good and the unjust man evil and ignorant.

Thrasymachus made all these admissions, not readily, as I repeat them, but with foot-dragging and reluctance, and he was sweating like mad, since it was summertime. Then I saw something I had never seen before: Thrasymachus blushing. But when we agreed that justice was virtue and wisdom, and injustice vice and ignorance, I said: Good. Let's take this as an established point. But we were also saying that injustice is something strong, don't you remember, Thrasymachus? D

Yes, I remember, he said, but I am not at all satisfied with what you are saying, and I've got plenty to say about it. If, however, I were to answer, I know perfectly well that you'd accuse me of ranting. Therefore either let me have my say, or if you would rather ask the questions, do so, and I will answer 'very good,' and nod yes and no, just as one does when old wives are telling their interminable tales. E

I don't at all want you to go against your own beliefs.

Very well — just to please you — since you will not let me speak. What else would you have me do?

Nothing, by Zeus, I said, and if you are so disposed, I will now ask and you shall answer.

Ask away, then.

Then I will repeat the question I asked before, in order that our examination of the respective natures of justice and injustice may be advanced in a rigorous manner. The claim was made, I think, that injustice is stronger and more powerful than justice. But now, if justice is wisdom and virtue, it will easily, I imagine, be shown to be stronger than injustice, since injustice is ignorance. No one could fail to recognize that now. But I want to examine the matter, Thrasymachus, in a different way, one which is not so simple: you would not deny that a state may be unjust and may be unjustly attempting to enslave other states, or may have already enslaved them, and may be holding many of them in subjection? 351 B

Certainly, he replied. I would add only that this is what the best state will particularly do, the state which has gone the furthest towards perfect injustice.

I know, I said, that this was your position. But I am considering this further point: will the state which has gotten the better of another state in this way have or exercise this power without justice, or will it necessarily combine the power with justice?

C If, he said, what you were saying just now is right, and justice is wisdom, then only with justice; but if I am right, then with injustice.

I am delighted, Thrasymachus, to see you not only nodding yes and no, but making answers which are quite excellent.

I am trying to please you, he replied.

You are too kind, I said. Would you have the good grace also to inform me whether you think that a state, or an army, or a band of robbers and thieves, or any other gang of criminal conspirators could accomplish anything if they wronged one another?

D No indeed, he said, they could not.

But if they didn't wrong one another, wouldn't they be more likely to?

Certainly.

And this is because factions, Thrasymachus, are the results of injustice and hatred and infighting, whereas justice gives rise to harmony and friendship. Isn't that so?

Let it be so, he said, so that I won't disagree with you.

How good of you, my noble friend! I said. But tell me this: if it is the nature of injustice to arouse hatred wherever it is, whether it springs up among slaves or among free men, will it not make them

hate one another and set them at odds and make them incapable of coordinated action? E

It certainly will.

What about this: if injustice is found in two people only, won't they quarrel and fight, and be enemies to one another and to just men?

They will, he said.

And suppose, you uncanny fellow, that injustice lurks in the heart of a single person. Will it lose its power to cause animosity, or retain it?

Let us assume the power would remain.

Then isn't the power which injustice exercises of such a nature that wherever it takes up residence, whether in a city, a family, an army, or any other group at all, that thing is first rendered incapable of 352
coordinated action because it is torn apart by factions and disagreements. In the second place, doesn't it become its own enemy, as well as an enemy of its polar opposite, the just? Isn't that how it is?

Yes, certainly.

Then won't injustice be up to these same old tricks when it takes root in a single individual? In the first place, it will render him incapable of action because he is torn by warring desires and is not of one mind about anything. In the second place it will make him his own worst enemy, and an enemy of the just. Isn't that so?

Yes.

But, my friend, I said, surely the gods too are just? B

Have it that they are.

But if so, the unjust will be the enemies of the gods, Thrasymachus, and the just will be their friends?

Enjoy this rich banquet of words, I certainly won't stop you from gorging yourself. I wouldn't want to upset your fans here by objecting.

Well then, keep answering as you have been, and heap up my plate with the full menu. For we have already shown that the just are clearly wiser and better and abler than the unjust, and that the unjust are incapable of common action.

C But in addition to this, if we ever say that men who are unjust have accomplished some common undertaking, our statement won't be altogether true. If they had been perfectly evil, they could not have restrained themselves from attacking one another. Clearly there must have been some remnant of justice in them that prevented them from attacking one another at the same time as their victims, and it was in virtue of this that they accomplished whatever they did. They were only half-bad in the way they went about their evil venture, I expect, for

D those who are utter villains, and overwhelmingly unjust, can't do a thing. That, I believe, is the plain truth of the matter, not what you said before. But now we have to consider whether the just have a better life than the unjust and are happier, which was the further question we proposed to examine. They already appear to, I think, given what we've said so far. But all the same we must analyze the question better. For this is no ordinary topic we are discussing: the right way to live.

Proceed with our inquiry, he said.

E So I will. Tell me, wouldn't you say that a horse has a specific function?

I should.

And would you define the use or function of a horse — or of anything — as that which could not be done, or not as well, by means of any other thing?

I don't follow you.

It's like this: can you see with anything other than your eyes?

Certainly not.

Or hear, except with your ears?

Not at all.

These then may truly be said to be the functions of these organs?

They may.

But you can cut off a vine-branch with a dagger or with a carving- 353
knife — with any number of tools, in fact?

Of course.

And yet nothing works quite as well as a pruning-hook made for this purpose, am I right?

True.

So we must assume, then, that this is the function of a pruning-hook?

We must.

Now then, I imagine, you will understand the meaning of my earlier question better — whether the function of anything would be that which either it alone can do, or that which it does better than anything else?

I see what you mean, he said, and I agree that this is what some- B
thing's function is.

Good. And don't you think that each thing to which a function has been assigned also has some virtue? Let's take it from the top. We say that eyes have a function?

Yes

And isn't there some virtue in eyes?

Yes.

And the ear, too, has its function and its virtue?

Yes, a virtue also.

And what about all the other things, isn't it the same for them?

The same.

Pay attention now. Could the eyes possibly perform their function
C if they were lacking in the virtue that is peculiar to eyes — if they had some defect instead?

How could they? he asked. For I assume you mean blindness instead of sight.

Whatever their virtue may be. But you are getting a bit ahead of the game. I am only asking whether the things perform their functions well by means of their peculiar virtues, and fail to do so through some defect?

I'll grant you this much is true.

Then the ears, too, cannot perform their function when deprived of their peculiar virtue?

Certainly.

D And the same argument will apply to all the other things?

I agree.

Well, then consider this next: doesn't the soul have a function nothing else can perform? For example, to oversee and command and deliberate and the like? Aren't these the proper functions of the soul, and can they rightly be assigned to any other thing?

To no other thing.

And what about life? Shall we say that's a function of the soul too?

Most assuredly, he said.

And don't we also say that the soul has a virtue?

We do say so. E

And can the soul, Thrasymachus, perform its particular function well if deprived of its peculiar virtue, or is this impossible?

It is impossible.

Then a bad soul must necessarily govern and manage things badly, and the good soul will do all these sorts of things well?

Yes, necessarily.

And we have admitted that justice is the virtue of the soul, and injustice its defect?

We did admit that.

Then the just soul and the just man will live well, and the unjust man will live badly?

So it appears, he said, according to **your** argument.

But he who lives well is blessed and happy, and he who lives badly 354
is the opposite of happy?

Absolutely.

Then the just is happy, and the unjust wretched?

So be it.

But surely it doesn't pay to be miserable, but to be happy.

Of course not.

Then, my blessed Thrasymachus, injustice can never be more profitable than justice.

Let this, Socrates, he said, be your feast at the festival of Bendis.

A feast for which I have you to thank, Thrasymachus, now that you have grown mild-mannered and stopped being so hard on me. All
B the same, I have not been wined and dined to my satisfaction; but that was my fault, not yours. Just as gluttons snatch at every dish that is handed along, and taste it before they have properly enjoyed the one before, so I, before actually finding the first object of our investigation — what justice **is** — let that inquiry drop, and turned away to consider something **about** justice, namely whether it is vice and ignorance or wisdom and virtue. And when the further question burst in on us, about whether injustice is more profitable than justice, I could not refrain from moving on to that. And the result of the discussion right now is that I know nothing at all.
For if I don't know what justice is, I am hardly likely to know whether it is or is not a virtue, nor can I say whether the just man is happy or unhappy.