advantageous for itself—since it has no further needs—but what is advantageous for that with which it deals?

THRASYMACHUS: Apparently so.

SOCRATES: Now surely, Thrasymachus, the various crafts rule over and are stronger than that with which they deal?

*He gave in at this point as well, very reluctantly.*

SOCRATES: So no kind of knowledge considers or enjoins what is advantageous for itself, but what is advantageous for the weaker, which is subject to it.

*He finally agreed to this too, although he tried to fight it. When he had agreed, however, I said:*

Surely then, no doctor, to the extent that he is a doctor, considers or enjoins what is advantageous for himself, but what is advantageous for his patient? For we agreed that a doctor, in the precise sense, is a ruler of bodies, not a moneymaker. Isn't that what we agreed?

THRASYMACHUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: So a ship's captain, in the precise sense, is a ruler of sailors, not a sailor?

THRASYMACHUS: That is what we agreed.

SOCRATES: Doesn't it follow that a ship's captain and ruler won't consider and enjoin what is advantageous for a captain, but what is advantageous for a sailor and his subject?

*He reluctantly agreed.*

SOCRATES: So then, Thrasymachus, no one in any position of rule, to the extent that he is a ruler, considers or enjoins what is advantageous for himself, but what is advantageous for his subject—that on which he practices his craft. It is to his subject and what is advantageous and proper for it that he looks, and everything he says and does, he says and does for it.

*When we reached this point in the argument and it was clear to all that his account of justice had turned into its opposite, instead of answering, Thrasymachus said:*

Tell me, Socrates, do you still have a wet nurse?

HERE:

SOCRATES: What is that? Shouldn't you be giving answers rather than asking such things?

THRASYMACHUS: Because she is letting you run around sniveling and doesn't wipe your nose when you need it, since it is her fault that you do not know the difference between sheep and shepherds.

SOCRATES: What exactly is it I do not know? 10

THRASYMACHUS: You think that shepherds and cowherds consider what is b
good for their sheep and cattle, and fatten them and take care of them with some aim in mind other than what is good for their master and themselves. Moreover, you believe that rulers in cities—true rulers, that is—think about their subjects in a different way than one does about sheep, and that 5
what they consider night and day is something other than what is advantageous for themselves. You are so far from understanding justice and what is c
just, and injustice and what is unjust, that you do not realize that justice is really the good of another, what is advantageous for the stronger and the ruler, and harmful to the one who obeys and serves. Injustice is the opposite, it rules those simpleminded—for that is what they really are—just people, and the ones it rules do what is advantageous for the other who is stronger; and they make the one they serve happy, but they do not make themselves the least bit happy. 5

You must consider it as follows, Socrates, or you will be the most naïve d
of all: a just man must always get less than does an unjust one. First, in their contracts with one another, when a just man is partner to an unjust, you will never find, when the partnership ends, that the just one gets 5
more than the unjust, but less. Second, in matters relating to the city, when taxes are to be paid, a just man pays more on an equal amount of property, an unjust one less; but when the city is giving out refunds, a just man gets nothing while an unjust one makes a large profit. Finally, when each of them holds political office, a just person—even if he is not penal- e
ized in other ways—finds that his private affairs deteriorate more because he has to neglect them, that he gains no advantage from the public purse because of his justice, and that he is hated by his relatives and acquaintances because he is unwilling to do them an unjust favor. The opposite is 5
true of an unjust man in every respect. I mean, of course, the person I described before: the man of great power who does better[21] than everyone else. He is the one you should consider if you want to figure out how 344a
much more advantageous it is for the individual to be unjust than just. You will understand this most easily if you turn your thoughts to injustice of the most complete sort, the sort that makes those who do injustice happiest, and those who suffer it—those who are unwilling to do injustice— 5
most wretched. The sort I mean is tyranny, because it uses both covert means and force to appropriate the property of others—whether it is sacred or secular, public or private—not little by little, but all at once. If

[21] See Glossary of Terms s.v. do better.

b someone commits a part of this sort of injustice and gets caught, he is punished and greatly reproached—temple robbers,[22] kidnappers, housebreakers, robbers, and thieves are what these partly unjust people are called when they commit those harms. When someone appropriates the 5 possessions of the citizens, on the other hand, and then kidnaps and enslaves the possessors as well, instead of these shameful names he is called c happy and blessed: not only by the citizens themselves, but even by all who learn that he has committed the whole of injustice. For it is not the fear of doing injustice, but of suffering it, that elicits the reproaches of those who revile injustice.

5 So you see, Socrates, injustice, if it is on a large enough scale, is stronger, freer, and more masterful than justice. And, as I said from the beginning, justice is what is advantageous for the stronger, while injustice is profitable and advantageous for oneself.

d *Having, like a bath attendant, emptied this great flood of words into our ears all at once, Thrasymachus was thinking of leaving. But those present wouldn't let him. They made him stay and give an account of what he had said. And I* 5 *myself was particularly insistent:*

## THRASYMACHUS' SPEECH

You are marvelous, Thrasymachus, after hurling such a speech at us, you surely cannot be thinking of leaving before you have adequately instructed us—or learned yourself—whether you are right or not. Or do you think it e is a trivial matter you are trying to determine, and not rather a way of life—the one that would make living life that way most profitable for each of us?

THRASYMACHUS: Do you mean that I do not think it is a serious matter?

5 SOCRATES: Either that, or you care nothing for us and so are not worried about whether we will live better or worse lives because of our ignorance of what you claim to know. No, be a good fellow and show some willingness to teach us—you won't do badly for yourself if you help a group as 345a large as ours. For my own part, I will tell you that I am not persuaded. I do not believe that injustice is more profitable than justice, not even if you should give it full scope to do what it wants. Suppose, my good fellow, that 5 there *is* an unjust person, and suppose he *does* have the power to do injustice, whether by covert means or open warfare; nonetheless, he does not persuade me that injustice is more profitable than justice. Perhaps someone b here besides myself feels the same as I do. So, blessed though you are, you are going to have to fully persuade us that we are wrong to value justice more highly than injustice in deliberating.

[22] The temples served as public treasuries, so that a temple robber is the equivalent of a present-day bank robber.

# *Book 2*

T HERE:

SOCRATES' NARRATION CONTINUES: *When I had said this, I*
357a *thought I had done with the discussion. But it all turned out to be only a prelude, as it were. You see, Glaucon, who is always very courageous in everything, refused on this occasion, too, to accept Thrasymachus' capitulation. Instead, he said:*

Do you want to *seem* to have persuaded us, Socrates, that it is better in
5 every way to be just rather than unjust, or do you want to *really* persuade us
b of this?

SOCRATES: I want to really persuade you, if I can.

GLAUCON: Well, then, you certainly are not doing what you want. Tell
5 me, do you think there is a sort of good we welcome, not because we desire its consequences, but because we welcome it for its own sake—enjoying, for example, and all the harmless pleasures from which nothing results afterward beyond enjoying having them?

SOCRATES: Certainly, I think there is such a thing.

10 GLAUCON: And is there a sort of good we love for its own sake, and also
c for the sake of its consequences—knowing, for example, and seeing, and being healthy? For we welcome such things, I imagine, on both counts.

SOCRATES: Yes.

GLAUCON: And do you also recognize a third kind of good, such as physi-
5 cal training, medical treatment when sick, medicine itself, or ways of making money generally? We would say that these are burdensome but beneficial to us, and we would not choose them for their own sake, but for
d the sake of their rewards and other consequences.

SOCRATES: Yes, certainly, there is also this third kind. But what of it?

GLAUCON: In which of them do you place justice?

358a SOCRATES: I myself put it in the finest one—the one that anyone who is going to be blessed with happiness must love both because of itself and because of its consequences.

GLAUCON: That is not what the masses think. On the contrary, they think it is of the burdensome kind: the one that must be practiced for the sake of the rewards and the popularity that are the consequences of a good reputa-
5 tion, but that is to be avoided as intrinsically burdensome.

SOCRATES: I know that is the general view. Thrasymachus has been faulting justice and praising injustice on these grounds for some time. But it seems that I am a slow learner.

GLAUCON: Come on, then, listen to what I have to say as well, and see whether you still have that problem. You see, I think Thrasymachus gave up b
before he had to, as if he were a snake you had charmed. Yet, to my way of thinking, there was still no demonstration on either side. For I want to hear what justice and injustice are, and what power each has when it is just by itself in the soul. I want to leave out of account the rewards and the consequences of each of them. 5

So, if you agree, I will renew the argument of Thrasymachus. First, I will state what sort of thing people consider justice to be, and what its origins are. Second, I will argue that all who practice it do so unwillingly, as something necessary, not as something good. Third, I will argue that they have good reason to act as they do. For the life of the unjust person is, they say, much better than that of the just one. c 5

It isn't, Socrates, that I believe any of that myself. I am perplexed, indeed, and my ears are deafened listening to Thrasymachus and countless others. But I have yet to hear anyone defend justice in the way I want, as being better than injustice. I want to hear it praised *on its own,* and I think d
that I am most likely to learn this from you. That is why I am going to speak at length in praise of the unjust life: by doing so, I will be showing you the way I want to hear you praising justice and denouncing injustice. 5
But see whether you want me to do what I am saying or not.

SOCRATES: I want it most of all. Indeed, what subject could a person with any sense enjoy talking and hearing about more often?

GLAUCON: Excellent sentiments. Now, listen to what I said I was going to discuss first—what justice is like and what its origins are. People say, you e
see, that to do injustice is naturally good and to suffer injustice bad. But the badness of suffering it far exceeds the goodness of doing it. Hence, those who have done and suffered injustice and who have tasted both—the ones 5
who lack the power to do it and avoid suffering it—decide that it is profitable to come to an agreement with each other neither to do injustice nor 359a
to suffer it. As a result, they begin to make laws and covenants; and what the law commands, they call lawful and just. That, they say, is the origin and very being[1] of justice. It is in between the best and the worst. The best 5
is to do injustice without paying the penalty; the worst is to suffer it without being able to take revenge. Justice is in the middle between these two extremes. People love it, not because it is a good thing, but because they are too weak to do injustice with impunity. Someone who has the power to do b

[1] See Glossary of Terms s.v. being.

it, however—someone who is a real man—would not make an agreement with anyone, neither to do injustice nor to suffer it. For him, that would be insanity. That is the nature of justice, according to the argument, Socrates, and those are its natural origins.

We can see most clearly that those who practice it do so unwillingly, because they lack the power to do injustice, if we imagine the following thought-experiment. Suppose we grant to the just and the unjust person the freedom to do whatever they like. We can then follow both of them and see where their appetites would lead. And we will catch the just person red-handed, traveling the same road as the unjust one. The reason for this is the desire to do better[2] than others. This is what every natural being naturally pursues as good. But by law and force, it is made to deviate from this path and honor equality.

They would especially have the freedom I am talking about if they had the power that the ancestor of Gyges of Lydia is said to have possessed.[3] The story goes that he was a shepherd in the service of the ruler of Lydia. There was a violent thunderstorm, and an earthquake broke open the ground and created a chasm at the place where he was tending his sheep. Seeing this, he was filled with amazement and went down into it. And there, in addition to many other amazing things of which we are told stories, he saw a hollow, bronze horse. There were windowlike openings in it and, peeping in, he saw a corpse, which seemed to be of more than human size, wearing nothing but a gold ring on its finger. He took off the ring and came out of the chasm. He wore the ring at the usual monthly meeting of shepherds that reported to the king on the state of the flocks. And as he was sitting among the others, he happened to turn the setting of the ring toward himself, toward the inside of his hand. When he did this, he became invisible to those sitting near him, and they went on talking as if he had gone. He was amazed at this and, fingering the ring, he turned the setting outward again and became visible. So, he experimented with the ring to test whether it indeed had this power—and it did. If he turned the setting inward, he became invisible; if he turned it outward, he became visible again. As soon as he realized this, he arranged to become one of the messengers sent to report to the king. On arriving there, he seduced the king's wife, attacked the king with her help, killed him, and in this way took over the kingdom.

Let's suppose, then, that there were two such rings, one worn by the just person, the other by the unjust. Now no one, it seems, would be so incorruptible that he would stay on the path of justice, or bring himself to keep away from other people's possessions and not touch them, when he could take whatever he wanted from the marketplace with impunity, go

[2] See Glossary of Terms s.v. do better.

[3] At 612b4, the ring is assigned to Gyges himself, not his ancestor.

into people's houses and have sex with anyone he wished, kill or release from prison anyone he wished, and do all the other things that would make him like a god among humans. And in so behaving, he would do no differently than the unjust person, but both would pursue the same course. c

This, some would say, is strong evidence that no one is just willingly, but only when compelled. No one believes justice to be a good thing when it is kept private, since whenever either person thinks he can do injustice with impunity, he does it. Indeed, all men believe that injustice is far more profitable to themselves than is justice. And what they believe is true, so the exponent of this argument will say. For someone who did not want to do injustice, given this sort of opportunity, and who did not touch other people's property, would be thought most wretched and most foolish by everyone aware of the situation. Though, of course, they would praise him in public, deceiving each other for fear of suffering injustice. So much for my second topic. d

As for decision itself about the life of the two we are discussing, if we contrast the extremes of justice and injustice, we shall be able to make the decision correctly; but if we don't, we won't. What, then, is the contrast I have in mind? It is this: we will subtract nothing from the injustice of the unjust person, and nothing from the justice of the just one. On the contrary, we will take each to be perfect in his own pursuit. First, then, let the unjust person act like a clever craftsman. An eminent ship's captain or doctor, for example, knows the difference between what his craft can and cannot do. He attempts the first but lets the second go by. And if he happens to slip, he can put things right. In the same way, if he is to be completely unjust, let the unjust person correctly attempt unjust acts and remain undetected. The one who is caught should be thought inept. For the extreme of injustice is to be believed to be just without actually being so. And our completely unjust person must be given complete injustice—nothing must be subtracted from it. We must allow that, while doing the greatest injustice, he has nonetheless provided himself with the greatest reputation for justice. If he does happen to slip up, he must be able to put it right, either through his ability to speak persuasively if any of his unjust activities are discovered, or to use force if force is needed, because he is courageous and strong and has provided himself with wealth and friends. e 361a b

Having hypothesized such a person, let's now put the just man next to him in our argument—someone who is simple and noble and who, as Aeschylus says, does not want to be believed to be good, but to be so.[4] We must take away his reputation. For a reputation for justice would bring him honor and rewards, so that it would not be clear whether he is being just c

[4] In *Seven against Thebes* 592–4, it is said of Amphiaraus that "he did not wish to be believed to be the best but to be it." The passage continues with the words Glaucon quotes below at 362a–b.

for the sake of justice, or for the sake of those honors and rewards. We must strip him of everything except justice, and make his situation the opposite of the unjust person's. Though he does no injustice, he must have the greatest reputation for it, so that he may be tested with regard to justice by seeing whether or not he can withstand a bad reputation and its consequences. Let him stay like that, unchanged, until he is dead—just, but all his life believed to be unjust. In this way, both will reach the extremes, the one of justice and the other of injustice, and we will be able to judge which of them is happier.

SOCRATES: Whew! My dear Glaucon, how vigorously you have scoured each of the men in our competition, just as you would a pair of statues for an art competition.

GLAUCON: I am doing the best I can. Since the two are as I have described, in any case, it should not be difficult to complete the account of the sort of life that awaits each of them, but it must be done. And if what I say sounds crude, Socrates, remember that it is not *I* who speak, but those who praise injustice at the expense of justice. They will say that the just person in such circumstances will be whipped, stretched on a rack, chained, blinded with a red-hot iron, and, at the end, when he has suffered every sort of bad thing, he will be impaled, and will realize then that one should not want to be just, but to be believed to be just. Indeed, Aeschylus' words are far more correctly applied to the unjust man. For people will say that it is really the unjust person who does not want to be believed to be unjust, but actually to be so, because he bases his practice on the truth about things and does not allow reputation to regulate his life. He is the one who "harvests a deep furrow in his mind, where wise counsels propagate." First, he rules his city because of his reputation for justice. Next, he marries into any family he wishes, gives his children in marriage to anyone he wishes, has contracts and partnerships with anyone he wants, and, besides benefiting himself in all these ways, he profits because he has no scruples about doing injustice. In any contest, public or private, he is the winner and does better than his enemies. And by doing better than them, he becomes wealthy, benefits his friends, and harms his enemies. He makes adequate sacrifices to the gods and sets up magnificent offerings to them, and takes much better care of the gods—and, indeed, of the human beings he favors—than the just person. So he may reasonably expect that the gods, in turn, will love him more than the just person. That is why they say, Socrates, that gods and humans provide a better life for the unjust person than for the just one.

*When Glaucon had said this, I had it in mind to respond, but his brother Adeimantus intervened:*

You surely do not think that the argument has been adequately stated?