



Republic

— BOOK IX —

“Then,” said I, “what remains to be considered is the tyrannical man himself, how he develops from the democratic man and what he is like then, and whether his manner of life is wretched or blessed.” 571 a

“Yes,” said he, “this fellow remains to be considered.”

“I feel that something is still missing,” said I. “Do you know what it is?”

“What?”

“I do not think we have adequately distinguished the kind and number of the various desires. Indeed, if we do not remedy this deficiency, the search we are engaged in will lack clarity.”

“Would not this still be a good time to do so?” said he. 571 b

“Yes, certainly. And consider what I wish to see in these desires. It is as follows. Among the unnecessary pleasures and desires, some I believe are lawless. Although these are probably innate in everyone, they can nevertheless, when restrained by the laws and by the better desires accompanied by reason, be eliminated completely in some cases, or a few weak ones may be left. But in other cases those that remain may be stronger and more numerous.” 571 c

“Can you say,” said he, “what these desires are?”

“Those,” said I, “that are aroused whenever the rational, gentle part of the soul, the part that rules the other part, is in slumber, and the brutish and wild part, gorged on food or wine, springs to life, refusing to sleep, and sets out to indulge its bad habits. You know that in a situation like this, it dares to do anything at all, as if it had been released from and was rid of all shame and understanding. Indeed, it does not shrink, or so it imagines, from intercourse with mother or with anything else at all, man or god or beast. It murders anyone at all and eats any meat at all, without restraint, and in short there is no deed, be it mindless or shameless, that it leaves undone.” 571 d

“Very true,” said he.

“And yet I think when someone keeps himself healthy and of sound mind, and goes to sleep having aroused the rational part of himself, and feasted it on beautiful words and considerations, he attains concord with himself. He ensures that his appetitive part is neither in want nor fully satisfied so that it may be lulled to sleep and not be a source of trouble to the best part of him by being pleased or in pain, but will allow that part, just by itself, to reflect on its own and aspire to perceive what it does not know of the past, the present or the future.” 571 e

“He calms the spirited part too in the same way, and he will not go to sleep with a troubled heart after being angry with someone. Rather, having quietened the other two parts and activated the third, the one in which understanding resides, he then takes his rest. You know that under such circumstances he is most likely to apprehend the truth, and the visions that appear in his dreams are then least likely to be lawless.” 572 a

“That is it,” said he, “entirely so.” 572 b

“Well, all of this has led us to say more than we needed to, but what we want to recognise is this:

that there is, in fact, some fearsome, savage and lawless form of desires present in each of us, even in some people who seem to be extremely moderate, and this becomes evident when we are asleep. So, think about whether I am making any sense and whether you agree.”

“Yes, I agree.”

572 c “Well, remember the democratic man, and what we said he was like. He presumably became like this by being brought up from his earliest years by a miserly father who only had respect for those desires that make money and had no respect for the unnecessary ones that exist for the sake of amusement and ostentation. Is this so?”

“Yes.”

572 d “But once he associates with cleverer men who are full of the desires we have just described, he rushes in the direction of total excess, adopts the behaviour of those new-found friends, and hates the miserliness of his father. But because he is by nature better than his corruptors, he is drawn in both directions and finally takes up a middle position in between the two tendencies. Managing – so he believes anyway – to enjoy each of them in due measure, he lives a life that is neither devoid of freedom nor utterly lawless. He has been transformed from an oligarchical man into a democratic one.”

“Yes,” said he, “this was, and remains, our view of such a person.”

“Then, assume once again,” said I, “that a man like this has already grown older, and has a young son who has, in turn, been brought up in the habits of his father.”

“I am assuming this.”

572 e “Assume too that the same things that happened to his father also happen to the son. He is drawn to utter lawlessness, which is called total freedom by those who are leading him. His father and other relatives assist those middle desires, while his corruptors, in turn, help the other desires. And when these clever beguilers and tyrant-makers lose hope of controlling the young man by any other means, they contrive to engender a passion in him, as a protector of the idle desires that are 573 a keen to spend so freely. And the passion in such people is a huge, winged drone. Or do you think it is something else?”

“No, I do not think it is anything else,” said he.

573 b “Now, when the other desires are buzzing about the drone, full of incense, perfume, garlands and wine, and all the pleasures that are usually let loose at such gatherings, they feed the drone and make it grow, and engender in it the sting of desire. Then this protector of the soul, with madness as its bodyguard, goes into a frenzy, and if it detects any opinions or desires within itself that are accounted worthy, or still have any shame, it kills them off and pushes them out of itself until it has been cleansed of sound-mindedness and is full of madness brought in from outside.”

“That,” said he, “is a comprehensive description of the origin of the tyrannical man.”

“Is this not why Eros has traditionally been called a tyrant?” said I.

“Quite likely,” said he.

573 c “And, my friend,” said I, “does not a man who is drunk have a certain tyrannical frame of mind?”
“He has.”

573 d “And, indeed, someone who is mad or deranged endeavours to exercise authority, not only over men but over gods too, and he imagines that he can do so.”

“Very much so,” said he.

“And this, dear fellow, is exactly how a man becomes tyrannical,” said I. “It happens when, by nature or by his pursuits, or both, he has become drunken, passionate and maniacal.”

“Entirely so.”

“That, it seems, is how the man originates and that is what he is like. But how then does he live?”

573 d “You tell me!” said he, as people say when they are having fun.

“I shall,” said I. “Indeed, I believe that after this they indulge in feasting, carousing, revelry and

womanising, and all sorts of things associated with people whose entire soul is governed by an indwelling tyrannical passion.”

“Inevitably,” said he.

“Now, do not desires, many and fearsome, spring up alongside this one, every day and every night, making many demands?”

“Many indeed.”

“So, any sources of income are quickly spent.”

“Of course.”

“And after this comes borrowing and the erosion of his estate.”

573 e

“Indeed.”

“And when all this fails him, must not there be an outcry from that crowd of intense desires that have made their nest there? Must not the men themselves be goaded on, so to speak, by the stings of the other desires, and especially by the master-passion itself which leads all the others as if they were its bodyguards? Will they not look about in a frenzy to see who has something that can be taken away by deception or by force?”

“Very much so,” said he.

574 a

“So, he needs to plunder from every quarter, or else be gripped by enormous travails and pains.”

“He must.”

“Now, just as the newer pleasures in him got the better of the old ones and took away all they possessed, so too would not the man himself also, in spite of his youth, feel that he deserves to have more than his father and mother, and to take away and appropriate the family’s wealth, once he had spent his own portion?”

“Yes, indeed,” said he.

“And if they would not turn it over to him, would he not initially attempt to steal from his parents and deceive them?”

574 b

“Absolutely.”

“And if he were unable to do this, would he then seize what he could by force?”

“I think so,” said he.

“And then, my friend, if that elderly man or woman resisted him and put up a fight, would he be careful and spare them from any tyrannical behaviour?”

“No,” said he, “I am not at all confident about the fate of the parents of a man like this.”

“But, by Zeus, Adimantus, do you think he would rain down blows upon his aged friend, the friend he needs, his own mother, all because of a new-found girlfriend, a companion he does not need? Would he strike his elderly father, a man in decline, a much-needed and most ancient friend, all because of a newfound boyfriend in his prime whom he does not really need? And would he let his parents be slaves of these new friends if he were to bring them all into the same household?”

574 c

“Yes, he would, by Zeus,” said he.

“How very blessed it seems to be,” said I, “to bring forth a tyrannical son.”

“Entirely so,” said he.

“But what happens to such a person when the resources of his father and mother fail him, while the swarm of pleasures within him is already growing in size? Will he not initially turn his hand to house-breaking or steal the robe of someone who is out late at night, and then go on to plunder a temple? And in all these exploits, the opinions he held of old since childhood about what is noble and what is shameful, opinions that are accounted just, will be subject to those opinions, newly released from slavery, that constitute the bodyguards of the ruling passion and rule alongside it. These were released previously only in dreams during sleep, when he was still subject to the laws and to his father, because he was under democratic rule within. But now that he is under the tyranny of passion, the sort of person he occasionally became whilst dreaming is the sort of person he has

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575 a now become, constantly, whilst awake. He will not refrain from any vile murder; there is nothing he will not eat, no action he will not perform. Passion lives within him as a tyrant, in total anarchy and lawlessness, since it is itself the sole ruler, and like a tyrant in a city it will lead anyone in whom it resides to utter recklessness. From this it feeds itself and the rabble that surrounds it, some of which come in from outside from bad company, some of which come from within because the very same tendencies, his own tendencies in this case, have been established and set free. Is this not the life that a man like this leads?"

"That is it, indeed," said he.

575 b "And," said I, "if people of this sort are few in number while the rest of the population of the city is sound-minded, they leave and act as bodyguards for some other tyrant, or serve as paid mercenaries in time of war. But if they arise in time of peace when things are quiet, they stay in the city and do a lot of bad deeds on a small scale."

"What sort of deeds?"

"Theft, for instance, house-breaking, picking pockets, stealing people's clothes, robbing from temples and kidnapping. And sometimes, if they are accomplished speakers, they become informers, give false evidence and take bribes."

"Yes," said he, "small-scale bad deeds indeed, provided such people are few in number."

575 c "Yes," said I, "what is small is small relative to what is large, and none of these evils 'come nigh at all', as they say, to a tyrant in terms of the corruption and degeneracy of a city. For when such people grow large in number in the city, along with the others who follow their lead, and they realise how numerous they are, these are the ones who, with assistance from the unthinking general populace, bring forth that tyrant, the particular person who has the greatest and most extensive tyrant within his own soul."

575 d "Yes, quite likely," said he, "since he would be the most tyrannical of them all."

"That is what happens if the people yield willingly, but if the city will not submit to him, then he acts as he did towards his own father and mother. He will punish his fatherland in the same way that he punished them, if he can, by bringing in his newfound companions, and he will hold and maintain his beloved ancient fatherland – or motherland, as the Cretans say – in slavery to them.

575 e And this would be the culmination of such a man's desire."

"It would," said he, "entirely so."

"Well, then," said I, "how do these people behave as private citizens, even before they have authority? In the first place, will they not spend their time with people who flatter them when they are together, or who are prepared to do anything to serve them? Or if they want something from someone else, will they not debase themselves and try any device, as if they were friends, but turn into strangers once their mission is accomplished?"

576 a "Yes, very much so."

"And so they live their entire lives without ever being friends to anyone, but always either someone's master or someone else's slave. But the tyrannical nature never gets a taste of true freedom or true friendship."

"Entirely so."

"Well then, would we be right to refer to such people as unfaithful?"

"Of course."

576 b "And unjust too, to the greatest extent possible, if we were indeed correct in agreeing what we agreed previously about the sort of thing justice is."

"Well, we were right about that at any rate," said he.

"To sum up, then," said I, "let us say this about the most evil person: he would presumably, even when awake, be like the sort of person we described in dreams."

"Yes, certainly."

“And he comes into existence when someone who is by nature utterly tyrannical, has sole authority, and the longer he lives the life of a tyrant, the more like this he becomes.”

“He must,” said Glaucon, taking up the argument.

“So, is it the case,” said I, “that whoever proves to be most evil will also prove to be most wretched? 576 c
And is it the case that whoever is a tyrant to the greatest degree for the most time, has in truth been most miserable for the most time? But popular opinion on this is quite varied.”

“Well, the situation must be as you describe it,” said he.

“And does not the tyrannical man correspond to the tyrannically governed city in likeness,” I said, “and the democratic man to the democratically governed city, and similarly for the others?”

“Of course.”

“Now, as city corresponds to city in excellence and happiness, does one man correspond to another 576 d
man in this respect too?”

“Of course.”

“Now, in terms of excellence, how does the city governed by a tyrant correspond to the first one we described, the one governed by a king?”

“It is the complete opposite,” said he. “Indeed, one is the most excellent of all and the other is the worst.”

“I shall not ask,” said I, “which you are referring to since it is quite obvious. But would your decision be the same in relation to happiness and wretchedness, or would it be different? And let us not be dazzled by looking at the tyrant in person or a few people in his inner circle; we need to look at the whole city by going into it, delving into every corner and seeing what is there. Then 576 e
and only then may we express our opinion.”

“You are right to challenge me,” said he. “Indeed, it is obvious to everyone that no city is more wretched than one that is governed by a tyrant, and none is more happy than one that is governed by a king.”

“Well,” said I, “what if I were to issue the very same challenges in relation to individual men? 577 a
Would I be right to suggest that the only person who has the right to decide these issues is someone who is able to use his mind to go deep into the character of a man and see clearly, without being dazzled by the pretence of the tyrannical types, like a child who looks only from the outside, someone who is well able to see through the pretence that tyrants put on for the world at large? Now, what if I were to presume that we should all listen to that person, the one who is able to make this decision and who has lived alongside a tyrant and has witnessed his dealings with his household and how he behaves towards the various members of his family where he is best seen, stripped of 577 b
theatrical trappings, and who has also seen him amidst the perils of public life? Since this person has seen so much, should we call upon him to report where the tyrant stands relative to the others, in terms of happiness and wretchedness?”

“You would,” said he, “be absolutely right to suggest this.”

“Would you like us,” said I, “to pretend to be people who are able to make this decision, and who have already met up with tyrants, so that we may have someone to answer the questions we asked?”

“Certainly.”

“Come on, then,” said I, “and consider the following. Remembering the similarity between the city and the individual man, consider them carefully, each in turn, and describe the characteristics of each.” 577 c

“What sort of characteristics?” he asked.

“Firstly,” said I, “to speak of the city, will you say that the one governed by a tyrant is free or enslaved?”

“Enslaved,” said he, “to the greatest extent possible.”

“And yet you see masters and free men there.”

“Yes,” said he, “I see this, and it is a small detail, but the whole population, so to speak, in that city, and the very best part, is dishonourably and miserably enslaved.”

577 d “Now, said I, “if the individual is like the city, must not the same state of affairs prevail within him, and must not his soul be full of slavishness and restriction, the very best parts being enslaved, while a small part, the worst and the maddest, is their master?”

“It must be so,” said he.

“In that case, will you maintain that a soul of this sort is enslaved or free?”

“Enslaved, I presume.”

“Furthermore, does not the enslaved, tyrannically governed city do what it wishes to do to the least possible extent?”

“Yes, the very least.”

577 e “So, the tyrannically governed soul, too, will do what it wishes to do to the least possible extent, speaking of the soul as a whole, and, being continually impelled by the gadfly of desire, it will be full of confusion and regret.”

“Inevitably.”

“And must the tyrannically governed city be wealthy or poor?”

“Poor.”

578 a “So the tyrannical soul too must always be in need and dissatisfied.”

“It must,” said he.

“And what about this? Must not a city like this and a person like this be full of fear?”

“That is quite inevitable.”

“And do you think you will find more wailing, groaning, lamentation and suffering in any other city than you find in this one?”

“Not at all.”

“And do you think this sort of thing is more prevalent in any other individual than it is in this tyrant, mad with desires and passions?”

“How could I?” he said.

578 b “Now, I imagine you decided that this city, at any rate, is the most wretched of cities in view of all these considerations and others like them.”

“Was I not right to do so?” he asked.

“Very much so,” said I. “But what do you say, in turn, about the tyrannical individual in the light of these same considerations?”

“That he is,” said he, “the most wretched by far, more so than any of the others.”

“That,” said I, “is not quite correct.”

“How so?” he asked.

“This fellow,” said I, “is not yet the most wretched I imagine.”

“Then who is?”

“Someone who will surely seem to you to be more wretched than this fellow.”

“Who?”

578 c “Someone,” said I, “with a tyrannical nature who does not live out his life as a private citizen, but by an unfortunate accident gets the opportunity to become an actual tyrant.”

“I reckon,” said he, “from what has already been said, that this is true.”

“Yes,” said I, “but we should not merely think about matters of this sort. We should consider them very carefully, using an argument like this, since our enquiry is concerned with the most important issue of all – living a good life or a bad one.”

“Quite right,” said he.

578 d “Now, consider if what I am saying makes any sense. For I think this needs to be considered with the following examples in mind.”

“What examples?”

“The example of any of the private citizens in the city who are wealthy and own lots of slaves, for they have this in common with tyrants: they rule over many people, although they differ in that the tyrant rules over a greater number.”

“They differ in this way, indeed.”

“And you know, do you not, that these people do not live in fear and they are not terrified of their own household slaves?”

“Yes, for what would they be afraid of?”

“Nothing,” said I. “But do you recognise the reason why?”

“Yes, because the entire city is there to assist every single private citizen.”

“That is right,” said I. “But what if some god were to take one man who owned fifty slaves or even more, lift him and his wife and children out of the city and set him down in an isolated place, along with his other property and his household slaves, where none of his fellow free men would be in a position to come to his aid? Can you imagine his fear, and how afraid he would be that he, his children and his wife might be done away with by his own slaves?” 578 e

“I think he would be in total fear,” said he.

“Would he not be compelled, at that stage, to ingratiate himself with some of those slaves, make lots of promises, and even set them free when there was no need to, and he himself would thus turn out to be the flatterer of his own servants.” 579 a

“He would have to do that,” said he, “just to survive.”

“And what if the god,” said I, “were to settle other people around him, lots of neighbours who would not put up with it if someone were to claim the right to enslave anyone else, and would inflict the most severe punishments on someone who acts like this, if they could catch him?”

“I think,” said he, “that he would be in even more difficulty, in every respect, being watched from all sides by nothing but enemies.”

“So, is it not the case that the tyrant is bound fast in a prison house like this, since his nature is as we have described it, filled with a huge variety of fears and passions? Although his soul is full of craving, he is the one person in the city who finds it impossible to travel abroad or to see anything that other free men love to see. Skulking inside his own house most of the time, does he not live like a woman, envying the other citizens if any of them ever travel abroad or see anything good?” 579 b

“Yes, entirely so,” said he.

“So, does not the man who is ill-governed within, the tyrannical man whom you deemed most wretched, reap an even greater harvest of such evils once he forsakes his private life and is compelled by some chance event to become a tyrant, and attempts to rule others when he cannot even control himself? It is as if someone with a sick body that cannot control itself was compelled to live his life not in quiet privacy, but in constant competition and physical combat.” 579 c

“Very true, Socrates,” said he, “it is exactly like that.”

“Now, dear Glaucon,” said I, “is this not an entirely wretched predicament, and does not the actual tyrant live an even harsher life than the person whose life you decided was harshest?”

“Definitely,” said he.

“So, the truth of the matter, even if someone thinks otherwise, is that the real tyrant is actually a slave to fawning and servitude on a huge scale, and a flatterer of the most vile people of all. Since none of his desires are satisfied, he turns out to be most needy in most respects, and in truth, poor, once someone knows how to look at a soul as a whole. He is full of fear too throughout his entire life, beset with convulsions and pains, if he does indeed resemble the disposition of the city he rules over. And he does resemble this, does he not?” 579 e

“Very much so,” said he.

“And in addition to all this, should we not also ascribe what we spoke of earlier to this man? Must 580 a

he not be envious, unfaithful, unjust, friendless and impious, a host and nurturer of every evil? And must he not become even more like this than he previously was because he is a ruler, and for all these reasons be most unhappy in himself and make people around him unhappy too?"

"No one," said he, "with any intelligence will argue against you."

580 b "Come on now," said I, "act like the overall judge in a competition and announce who, in your opinion, comes first in terms of happiness, who comes second, and so on for the other five in turn, the kingly person, the timocratic, the oligarchic, the democratic and the tyrannical. Decide!"

"The decision is an easy one," said he. "I judge them as if I were judging theatrical choruses, and I rank them in terms of excellence and evil, happiness and its opposite, in the very order in which they made their entrance."

580 c "Shall we hire a herald then?" I asked. "Or shall I myself proclaim that the son of Ariston has decided that the best and most just person is also the happiest, and this is the most kingly person who exercises kingly rule over himself, and that the worst and most unjust person is also the most wretched, and he, for his part, turns out to be the most tyrannical person who tyrannises to the greatest possible extent over himself, and over the city too?"

"Consider it done," said he.

"And should I declare, in addition," said I, "that this is the case whether their dispositions are noticed by all men and gods, or not?"

"Add that declaration," said he.

"So be it," said I, "and this would be one of our proofs. But take a look at a second one and see if you think it amounts to anything."

580 d "What is it?"

"Since the city," said I, "is divided into three parts, and the soul of each individual is threefold in like manner, this I believe will afford another proof."

"In what way?"

"As follows. It seems to me that there are three kinds of pleasures corresponding to the three parts of the soul, one pleasure being particular to each part, and that the same goes for desires and for ways of ruling the soul."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

580 e "There is, according to us, one part with which a person learns, and another with which he becomes spirited. We were unable to provide a particular name for the third since it is complex, so we named it after its largest and strongest aspect. We called it the appetitive part, due to the intensity of its appetite for food, drink and sex, and everything associated with these. We called it money-loving 581 a too, because such appetites are satisfied mainly through money."

"And we were right to do so," said he.

"Well then, if we were to say that the pleasure and love belonging to this part was for profit, would that best summarise the argument so that we could be confident that we are referring to this part of the soul correctly when we refer to it as money-loving or profit-loving?"

"So it seems to me anyway," said he.

581 b "What about this? Do we not maintain that the spirited part is always wholly intent upon power, victory and fame?"

"Very much so."

"Now, if we were to refer to it as ambitious and in love with honour, would that seem right?"

"Right indeed."

"But, of course, it is obvious to everyone that the part by which we learn is always intent upon knowing the truth as it is, and, of the three parts, this one is least interested in money and reputation."

"The least by far."

"Would it be appropriate then for us to refer to it as having a love of learning and of wisdom?"

“Yes, of course.”

“Is it not the case,” said I, “that this part rules the soul of some people while one of the other two rules the souls of others, as the case may be?” 581 c

“Quite so,” said he.

“For these reasons, then, we say that the principal kinds of human being are also three in number: the kind that loves wisdom, the kind that loves winning and the kind that loves profit.”

“Exactly.”

“And are there not three forms of pleasure, one underlying each of these?”

“Entirely so.”

“Now you do realise, do you not,” said I, “that if you decided to ask three people of this sort, each in turn, which of these lives is most pleasant, each would praise his own way of life the most? Will not the money-maker maintain that unless he makes some money from them, the pleasures of attaining honour or learning are worthless in comparison with the pleasure of making profit?” 581 d

“True,” said he.

“What about the kind that loves honour?” I asked. “Will he not regard the pleasure that comes from money as vulgar, and the pleasure that comes from learning, for its part, as insubstantial nonsense unless the learning confers some honour?”

“That is his position,” said he.

“And how,” said I, “do we think the lover of wisdom will regard the other pleasures in comparison with knowing the truth as it is and being continually involved in something like this while he is learning? Will not the other pleasures be far removed from this pleasure, and will he not refer to them as necessary, in a literal sense, because he would have no need for any of them unless necessity was involved?” 581 e

“This needs to be well understood,” said he.

“Now,” said I, “when there is dispute over the pleasures of each kind and over the life itself, not only over which life is more noble or more shameful, which is worse and which is better, but over which life is actually more pleasant and least painful, how are we to know which of them is really speaking the truth?” 582 a

“I just cannot say,” he replied.

“Well, consider it in this way. What should things be judged by if they are going to be properly judged? Is it not by experience, intelligence and argument, or could anyone have a better criterion than these?”

“How could they?” said he.

“Then consider this. Of the three men, who among them has most experience of all the pleasures we mentioned? Does the lover of profit, by understanding truth itself and what it is like, seem to you to have more experience of the pleasure of knowledge than the lover of wisdom has of the pleasure that comes from making a profit?” 582 b

“There is a big difference,” said he. “Indeed the lover of wisdom, of necessity, tastes the other pleasures from his earliest childhood. But there is no necessity that the lover of profit tastes the pleasure of learning the nature of things that are, and how sweet that pleasure is, or that he have any experience of this, and even if he is eager to do so, it is not easy.”

“There is a big difference, then,” said I, “between the lover of wisdom and the lover of profit in their experience of both of these pleasures.”

“Big, indeed.” 582 c

“And how does he compare to the lover of honour? Does the lover of wisdom have less experience of the pleasure of attaining honour than the profit lover has of the pleasure of the intellect?”

“No,” said he, “honour accrues to them all once they achieve whatever they are each intent upon. Indeed, the wealthy are honoured by lots of people, and so too are the courageous

and the wise. So they all have experience of the kind of pleasure that comes from attaining honour. But it is impossible for anyone except the lover of wisdom to have tasted the kind of pleasure that comes from beholding what is.”

582 d “So, in terms of experience,” said I, “he is a better judge than any of the others.”

“Much better.”

“And, indeed, he alone will have gained his experience in the company of intelligence.”

“Indeed.”

“Then again, the instrument that is needed in order to judge is not the instrument of the profit lover, or of the lover of honour, but of the lover of wisdom.”

“What is it?”

“I think we said that it is necessary to judge by means of arguments. Is this so?”

“Yes.”

“And arguments are the instrument of the philosopher most of all.”

“They must be.”

582 e “Now, if whatever is to be judged were best judged by wealth and profit, then the things that the profit lover praised and censured would necessarily be the truest of all, would they not?”

“Much the truest.”

“And if they were judged by honour, victory and courage, would not whatever is praised by the ambitious lover of honour be truest?”

“Obviously.”

“But since they must be judged by experience, intelligence and argument, what follows?”

“It must be the case,” said he, “that whatever the lover of wisdom and argument praises is the truest.”

583 a “So, of the three pleasures, would the one that belongs to the part of the soul we learn with be most pleasant, and would the life of the person in whom this part rules be the most pleasant life of the three?”

“How could it be otherwise?” said he. “The man of intelligence is the one who has complete authority to praise his own life.”

“And what life comes second and what pleasure comes second, according to the judge?” I asked.

“It is obviously the pleasure of the military type who loves honour since this is closer to the lover of wisdom than the pleasure of the lover of profit.”

“Then it seems that the pleasure of the lover of profit comes last.”

“Indeed,” said he.

583 b “These would constitute two arguments in succession, and two victories for the just over the unjust. Let the third, in Olympic fashion, be dedicated to the Saviour, Olympian Zeus. Consider this carefully. The pleasure of the others, apart from the pleasure of the man of intelligence, is not completely true, nor is it pure; it is a mere shadow-drawing, as it seems to me I have heard from one of the wise. And, indeed, this next overthrow of the unjust would be the greatest and most decisive of all.”

“Very decisive. But what do you mean?”

583 c “I will discover this,” said I, “if you answer questions while I carry out an enquiry.”

“Ask your questions then,” said he.

“Then tell me,” said I, “do we not maintain that pain is the opposite of pleasure?”

“Very much so.”

“And do we not also say that being neither in pleasure nor in pain is possible?”

“It is indeed.”

“Would you describe this as a middle state, between these two, a respite of the soul from both?”

“Quite so.”

“Now,” said I, “do you recall the utterances of sick people and what they say when they are ill?”

“What sort of utterances?”

“That nothing is actually more pleasant than being healthy, but they were unaware, prior to their illness, just how pleasant it is.” 583 d

“I remember,” said he.

“And do you not hear people who are gripped by some huge pain saying that nothing is more pleasant than cessation of pain?”

“I do hear that.”

“And I believe in lots of other situations like this, you notice that people in pain, rather than praising enjoyment, praise absence of pain and respite from this sort of thing as the greatest pleasure.”

“Yes,” said he, “this respite is probably pleasant and enjoyable then.”

“And,” said I, “when someone’s enjoyment comes to an end, respite from the pleasure will be a source of pain.” 583 e

“Probably,” said he.

“So respite, which we said just now is in between pleasure and pain, will on occasion be both.”

“So it seems.”

“But is it possible for something that is neither to become both?”

“I do not think so.”

“And, indeed, the pleasure that arises in the soul, and the pain too, are both movements of some sort, are they not?”

“Yes.”

“And did not whatever is neither painful nor pleasant turn out just now to be a repose between these two?” 584 a

“So it did.”

“Now, how could it be right to think that not being in pain is pleasure, and absence of enjoyment is pain?”

“It could not be.”

“So this is not the case,” said I, “but it appears so. Respite, on occasion, appears pleasant in comparison with pain, and painful in comparison with pleasure, but there is nothing sound in any of these appearances in relation to the truth about pleasure. They are, rather, a sort of enchantment.”

“Well,” said he, “that is what the argument is indicating.”

“Then,” said I, “look at the pleasures that do not originate in pains, so that you do not come to believe, in the present case, that this is the natural state of affairs, that pleasure is indeed the cessation of pain, and pain the cessation of pleasure.” 584 b

“Where shall I look,” said he, “and what sort of pleasures do you mean?”

“Well,” said I, “although there are many other examples, I would like you to pay particular attention to the pleasures associated with smells. For these suddenly become extraordinarily intense, without any preceding pain, and when they cease they leave no pain at all behind.”

“Very true,” said he.

“So, let us not believe that being quit of pain is pure pleasure, or that being quit of pleasure is pain.” 584 c

“Let us not.”

“And yet,” said I, “the greatest and most numerous of the so-called pleasures that extend through the body as far as the soul, are of this form. They are mere releases from pain.”

“They are, indeed.”

“And does not the same hold for the anticipatory pleasures and pains that arise from our expectations of these?”

“The same, indeed.”

“Now,” said I, “do you know what qualities they have, and what they most resemble?” 584 d

“What?” he asked.

“Do you think,” said I, “that in nature there is an up, a down and a middle?”

“I do.”

“Now, do you think that someone being carried from below towards the middle would think he is being carried upwards? Could he think otherwise? And once he is standing in the middle, looking back to where he had been carried from, would he not presume without question that he is above, never having seen the truly above?”

“By Zeus,” said he, “I really do not think a person in such a position could think otherwise.”

584 e “And if he were carried back again,” said I, “would he think he was being carried down, and would that be true?”

“How could it not be?”

“And would not all this happen because he has no experience of what is truly above, in the middle, and below?”

“Obviously.”

“And would you be at all surprised if people who, in like manner, have no experience of the truth about many other matters, hold unsound opinions? Might they hold a view of pleasure and pain, and the intermediate state according to which, when they move in the direction of pain, they think they really and truly are in pain? But on the other hand, when they move from pain to the intermediate state, might they be convinced that they are approaching fulfilment and pleasure, and be deceived by comparing an absence of pain to pain, without any experience of pleasure, as if they were comparing black to grey with no experience of white?”

585 a

“By Zeus,” said he, “I would not be surprised. No, I would be much more surprised if this did not happen.”

585 b

“Well, think about this,” said I. “Are not hunger and thirst and the like a sort of deficiency in the state of the body?”

“Indeed.”

“And are not ignorance and stupidity, in turn, a deficiency in the state of the soul?”

“Very much so.”

“And would not anyone who gets nourishment or who acquires intelligence be filled up?”

“Of course.”

“And does the true filling up involve being filled with what is less real or more real?”

“With what is more real, of course.”

“And which of the kinds do you think partakes more of pure being? Is it the kind that includes food, drink, relish and every kind of nourishment, or the form that includes true opinion, knowledge, intelligence and, in short, all excellence? You need to decide the following question. Does that which holds to the unchanging, to the immortal and to truth, and is like this itself and originates in something like this, seem more real to you than what holds to the ever-changing and the mortal, and is like this itself and originates in this sort of thing?”

585 c

“Whatever holds to that which is unchanging,” said he, “far exceeds the other.”

“Now, does the being of the unchanging partake any more of being than of knowledge?”

“Not at all.”

“Or of truth?”

“Not of truth either.”

“And what partakes less of truth, also partakes less of being, does it not?”

“Necessarily.”

585 d

“So, in general, do not the kinds that are concerned with the care of the body partake less of truth and being than those that are concerned with the care of the soul?”

“Much less.”

“And do you not think the same holds for the body itself, in comparison with the soul?”

“I do indeed.”

“So, is not that which is filled with what is more real, and is itself more real, actually filled to a greater extent than something filled with what is less real, and is itself less real?”

“It must be.”

“In that case, if being filled with what naturally belongs to us is pleasure, then that which is filled more with things that really are, would make us enjoy true pleasure more really and more truly. 585 e But that which shares in things that are less real would be filled less truly and less certainly, and would share in a pleasure that is less trustworthy and less true.”

“This must be so,” said he.

“So, those with no experience of wisdom or excellence, who are constantly involved in feasting 586 a and the like, are, it seems, moving downwards and then back to the middle again, and they spend their lives wandering like this. They have never transcended this and turned their gaze to what is truly above, nor have they ever yet been borne there, nor have they really been filled with what is or tasted pleasure that is certain and true.

“Rather, like cattle with a constant downward gaze and their heads bowed towards the ground to their tables, they gorge themselves, feeding then mating, and out of sheer greed for all 586 b this, they kick and butt one another with horns and hooves of iron. They slaughter one another with weapons of war because their desire is insatiable, since they are not filling the real part of themselves with things that are, nor are they even filling the part that can contain these.”

“Socrates,” said Glaucon, “you are describing most people’s lives in an utterly prophetic manner.”

“Now, is it not inevitable that they live among pleasures that are mixed with pains, mere images and shadow-drawings of true pleasure, taking their colour from being placed alongside one another 586 c so that they each appear quite intense, and engender raging passions of their own in senseless people who fight over them, just as the heroes at Troy, according to Stesichorus, fought over the image of Helen, in ignorance of the truth?”¹

“Yes,” said he, “something like this is quite inevitable.”

“What about this? Must not similar considerations apply to the spirited part whenever someone satisfies this, either through envy because he loves honour, or through violence because he is ambitious, or through spirit because he is bad tempered? Is he not then pursuing the satisfaction of hon- 586 d our, victory and spirit, in the absence of calculation and reason and intelligence?”

“This sort of thing,” said he, “is inevitable too, in that case.”

“Well, then,” said I, “may we be so bold as to say that in the case of the ambitious, profit-loving part, there are a number of desires that adhere to knowledge and reason, and which pursue their pleasures in the company of these, only adopting those pleasures that intelligence approves of? Will not these desires adopt the truest pleasures they can attain to, because they are following truth 586 e itself and pleasures that belong to themselves, if indeed what is best for each is what most belongs to each?”

“Yes, what most belongs to each indeed.”

“So, when the entire soul follows the lead of the part that loves wisdom, without being rebellious, and each part as a result performs its own function in every respect and is just, then above all does each part reap a rich harvest of pleasures that are its own, the very best pleasures and the very 587 a truest of which it is capable?”

¹ Stesichorus was a lyric poet who was reputed to have been blinded for writing unflatteringly about Helen of Troy, and regained his sight after writing an encomium to Helen (the *Palinode*). In Stesichorus’ *Palinode*, the combatants in the Trojan war actually went to battle over a phantom of Helen, while the real Helen went to Egypt.

“Yes, precisely.”

“But when any of the other parts is in control, it is unable as a result to discover its own pleasure, and it compels the others to pursue an untrue pleasure that is alien to them.”

“Quite so,” said he.

“And would not the parts that stand furthest from philosophy and reason be most inclined to bring this about?”

“Yes, they would be most inclined by far.”

“And whatever stands furthest from reason is furthest from law and from order?”

“Of course.”

587 b “And did not the passionate and tyrannical desires prove to be the ones that stood at the furthest remove?”

“Yes, they stood at the furthest remove by far.”

“And the kingly and orderly desires stood closest?”

“Yes.”

“Then I suppose the tyrant will stand furthest away from those pleasures that are true and are his own, while the king will stand closest.”

“That is necessary.”

“Then,” said I, “the tyrant will live the least pleasant life while the king will live the most pleasant one.”

“This must be so.”

“Now,” said I, “do you know how much less pleasantly the tyrant lives in comparison with a king?”

“I would if you told me,” said he.

587 c “There are, it seems, three pleasures – one that is genuine, two that are fake. The tyrant has gone beyond the fake pleasures into another realm. Fleeing from law and from reason, he lives with a bodyguard of slavish pleasures, and it is not at all easy to say how much worse off he is, except perhaps in the following way.”

“How?” he asked.

587 d “The tyrant, I believe, was at a third remove from the oligarchic type, and the democratic man was in between them.”

“Yes.”

“And if what we said previously is true, will he not live with an image of pleasure that is at a third remove, in terms of truth, from the oligarch’s pleasure?”

“Quite so.”

“And yet the oligarchic type is, again, at a third remove from the kingly type if we designate the aristocratic and kingly types as the same.”

“A third, indeed.”

“So,” said I, “the tyrant stands three times three in number removed from true pleasure.”

“So it appears.”

“In that case,” said I, “the image of pleasure that the tyrant has, numerically in terms of length, would, it seems, be a square.”

“Precisely.”

“And by squaring and cubing, it is obvious what the extent of the interval becomes.”

“Of course,” said he, “to a mathematician anyway.”

587 e “And if someone does this the other way around and tries to say how far the king stands from the tyrant in terms of the truth of their pleasure, he will find, on completing the calculation, that the king lives 729 times more pleasantly, while the tyrant lives more wretchedly by the very same interval.”

588 a “You have,” said he, “poured forth a massive stream of calculation of the difference between these two men, the just and the unjust, in relation to pleasure and pain.”

“Yes, and it is also a true number, appropriate to their lives,” said I, “if days and nights, months and years are indeed appropriate to them.”

“But of course they are appropriate,” said he.

“Now, if the good and just man wins out over the bad, unjust man to this extent in terms of pleasure, will he not win out to an enormously greater extent in the refinement of his life and in terms of beauty and excellence?”

“Enormously indeed, by Zeus,” said he.

“So be it then,” said I. “Since we have come to this point in the argument, let us go back to the initial statements that got us here. It was said, I believe, that acting unjustly is beneficial to the completely unjust man, provided he has a reputation for being just. Is this not what was said?” 588 b

“It was, indeed.”

“Then,” said I, “let us discuss this now, with its proponent, since we have come to agreement on the power that acting unjustly and doing what is just each possesses.”

“How?” said he.

“By fashioning an image of the soul in words, so that the person proposing this may see for himself what he is talking about.”

“What sort of image?” he asked.

“An image,” said I, “like one of those creatures that are referred to in myths of old – Chimaera, Scylla, Cerberus, and certain others that are spoken of, in which many forms have grown together and become one.” 588 c

“Yes, so they say,” said he.

“Then fashion a single form, the form of a complex, many-headed beast that has heads of wild and tame beasts all in a circle and is able to change all these and make them grow out of itself.”

“That is a task for an ingenious craftsman,” said he. “Nevertheless, since it is easier to fashion speech than wax or the like, let it be fashioned like this.” 588 d

“Then fashion one other form, the form of a lion, and then the form of a man, and let the first be the largest by far, and the second, second largest.”

“These are easier to fashion,” said he. “It is done.”

“Then join these three together into one so that, still being three, they somehow grow together.”

“They have been joined,” said he.

“Now fashion an image of one of them round about them all, on the outside, an image of a human being, so that to anyone who is unable to see what is inside and only sees the external shell, it appears to be one creature, a human being.” 588 e

“The surrounding shell has been fashioned,” said he.

“Then let us say to whoever maintains that acting unjustly is beneficial to this human being, and doing what is just is not advantageous, that he is really claiming that it is beneficial to the person to feed the complex beast well, and make it strong, and the lion too, and its entourage, while he starves his human part and makes it so weak that it is dragged wherever either of the other two may lead it. And it leaves them to themselves to bite, fight with and devour one another rather than getting them accustomed to one another or turning them into friends.” 589 a

“Absolutely,” said he, “that is just what someone who praises unjust action would be advocating.”

“Then again, would not someone who says that what is just is beneficial be maintaining that it is necessary to do and to say whatever puts the inner human being most in control of the person, whatever ensures that the human part will attend to the many-headed beast, like a husbandman, by nurturing and taming the gentle elements while preventing the wild ones from growing, making an ally of the lion nature, and caring in common for them all, and making them friends to one another and to itself? Is that not how it will nurture them?” 589 b

“Yes, that again is exactly what someone who praises justice asserts.”

589 c “So, someone who praises justice would be speaking the truth in every respect, while someone who praises what is unjust would be speaking falsehoods. Indeed, from the perspective of pleasure or reputation, or the benefit it confers, whoever praises justice is speaking the truth, while someone who criticises it is unsound in his criticism and does not even know what he is criticising.”

“Does not know at all, in my view,” said he.

589 d “Well, since he is not falling into error deliberately, let us persuade him gently by asking him, ‘Good man, would we not say that whatever is regarded as noble or as disgraceful has come to be so for reasons such as these: whatever is noble makes the savage part of our nature subject to the human part, or perhaps to the divine part, and whatever is disgraceful makes the gentle part a slave to the wild part?’ Will he agree, or not?”

“He will, if he listens to me,” said he.

589 e “Now, based on this argument,” said I, “is there anyone who benefits from acquiring gold unjustly if, in getting the gold, he enslaves the very best part of himself to the most base part at the same time? Or, if in the process of getting gold he enslaved his own son or daughter to wild and evil
590 a men, that would not benefit him no matter how much money he might get for this. But if he enslaves the most divine part of himself to the most godless and corrupt part, and shows no mercy, is he not wretched as a result, and is he not accepting a gift of gold in return for much more terrible ruination than Eriphyle experienced when she took a necklace in return for the soul of her husband?”²

“Much more terrible indeed,” said Glaucon, “for I will answer your question on his behalf.”

“Do you not also think that is why unrestrained behaviour has long been criticised? Is it not because such behaviour lets loose that horror, that huge multiform beast, beyond the proper measure?”

“Of course,” said he.

590 b “And wilfulness and discontent are censured, are they not, whenever they cause the lion-like, snake-like part to increase and intensify beyond all proportion?”

“Very much so.”

“And luxury and softness are censured too, are they not, for loosening and relaxing this same aspect, when they induce cowardice in it?”

“Indeed.”

“Are not flattery and servitude censured when someone puts this same spirited aspect in subjection to the unruly beast and degrades the lion, all for the sake of money, to fulfil the beast’s insatiable desires, getting it accustomed from its earliest years to being more of an ape than a lion?”

“Indeed so,” said he.

590 c “And why do you think lowly manual labour is subject to reproach? Or is it simply because it is associated with someone whose very best part is, by nature, weak, so that he is unable to rule the beasts within himself, fosters them instead, and is unable to understand anything else except how to flatter them?”

“So it seems,” said he.

590 d “Now, so that such a person may be ruled by something similar to what rules the best person, are we to say that he should be a slave of that best person who is ruled by the divine element, and we should not adopt Thrasymachus’ view that a slave should be ruled to his own detriment? Do we not think it best that everyone be subject to divine wisdom, preferably residing within himself or else established externally, so that we may all be as much alike as possible, and friends too, because we are all governed by the same thing?”

“And rightly so,” said he.

590 e “And the law, being the ally of everyone in the city, makes it clear that it also intends something of this sort. This is also the purpose of the authority we exercise over children, not allowing them
591 a to be free until we have established a system within them, like the system of government in our

city, and, by caring for their best part with the best part in us, we install guardians and rulers in them similar to our own, and then proceed to set our children free.”

“Yes, that is clear,” said he.

“In which case, Glaucon, how, and based upon what argument, can we maintain that acting unjustly or without restraint or doing something shameful is of benefit to anyone when he will actually be a worse person as a result, despite having a bit more money and power?”

“We cannot maintain this at all,” said he.

“And is acting unjustly, escaping detection and avoiding punishment beneficial in any way? Or does not someone who escapes detection become even more degenerate, while in the case of someone who does not escape and is punished, his brutish part is made calm and gentle and his gentle part is set free. His entire soul is restored to its very best state and attains a more honourable condition because it has acquired sound-mindedness and justice, accompanied by understanding. Indeed, to the extent that soul is more honourable than body, soul attains a more honourable condition than a body that has acquired strength and beauty along with health.” 591 b

“Entirely so,” said he.

“Now, will not any intelligent person live his life with all his resources directed to this end, respecting, first and foremost, the branches of learning that will make his soul like this and showing no respect for any others?” 591 c

“Of course,” said he.

“Then,” said I, “he does not give over the condition of his body, or its nurture, to brutish, irrational pleasure, and turn his life in that direction, nor does he look to its health or attach importance to being strong or healthy or beautiful unless he is going to become sound-minded as a result. Rather, he is always to be found attuning the harmony of his body for the sake of the concord of his soul.” 591 d

“Yes, entirely so,” said he, “if he is going to be a musician, in truth.”

“And,” said I, “will he not also bring this order and concord to his acquisition of wealth? He will not increase the sheer size of his fortune beyond all bounds, and his troubles too, because he is in the thrall of popular views on what he should be grateful for.”

“No, I do not think he would,” said he.

“Rather,” said I, “he will add to or expend his wealth while looking to and guarding the city within himself to the best of his ability. He steers his course in this way in case anything might disturb the elements within him through excess or deficiency of wealth.” 591 e

“Yes, exactly,” said he.

“And when it comes to honours, looking to the same principle, he will willingly partake of and taste those that, in his view, will make him better, but he will flee from private or public honours that undo the proper order.” 592 a

“In that case,” said he, “if this is his concern, he will not wish to engage in civic affairs.”

“By the dog, he will,” said I, “in the city within himself, very much so, but probably not in his own fatherland, unless some divine good fortune intervenes.”

“I understand,” said he, “you are referring to the city we have now described and are founding, the one that is laid out in words, since I do not think it exists anywhere on earth.”

“But perhaps a pattern is laid up in heaven,” said I, “for anyone who wishes to behold it and to found himself based on what he sees. And it makes no difference whether it exists somewhere or will ever exist, for he would engage in the affairs of that city alone and of no other.” 592 b

“Quite likely,” said he.

² Eriphyle accepted a necklace from Polynices, and in exchange persuaded her husband Amphiarus to join the expedition of ‘Seven Against Thebes’, which led to his death. Eriphyle was ultimately murdered by her son Alcmaeon.