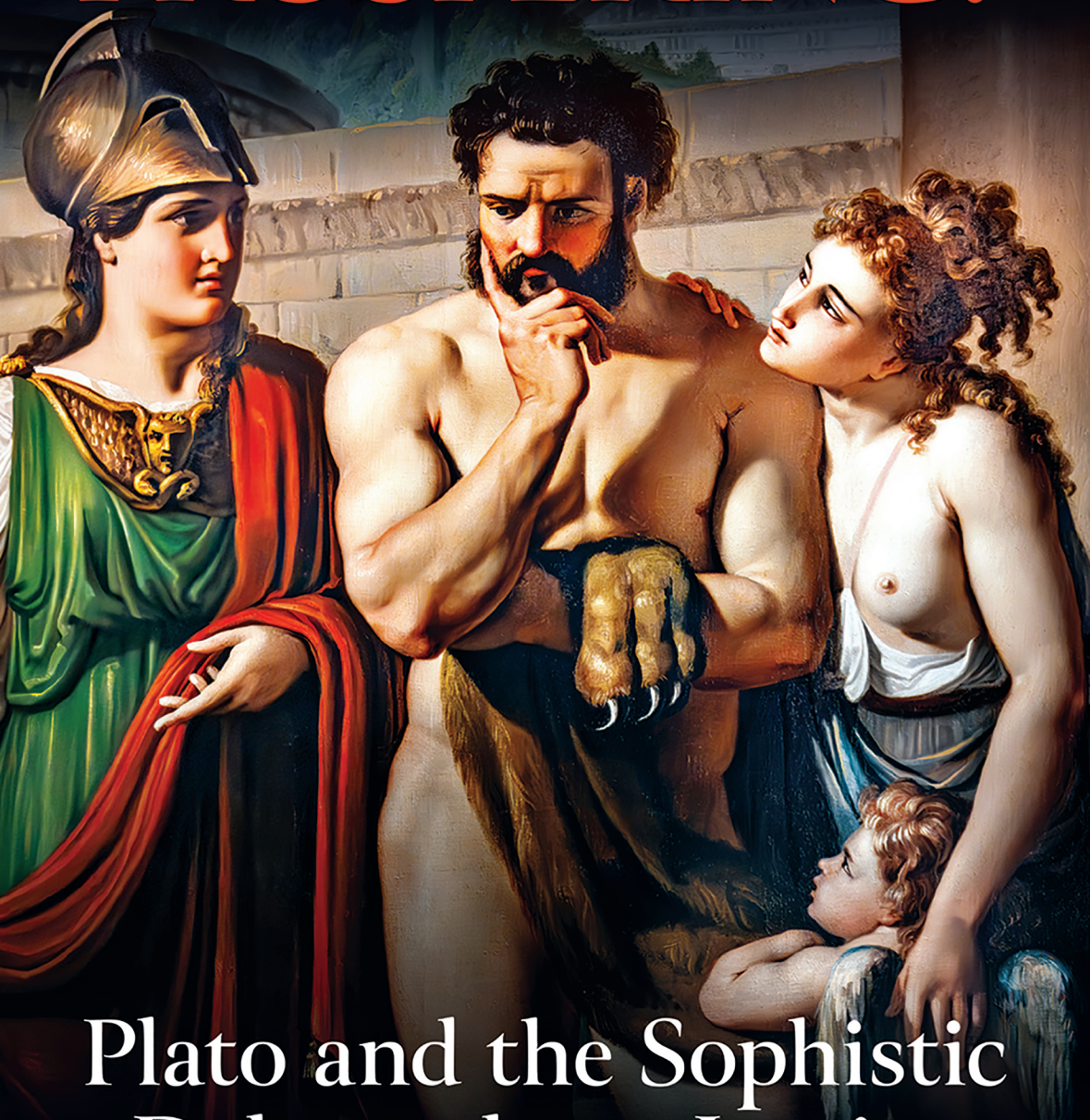
JUST PROSPERING?



Plato and the Sophistic Debate about Justice

MERRICK ANDERSON

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Published for THE BRITISH ACADEMY
by OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Typeset by Newgen Publishing UK
Printed in Great Britain by CMP, Dorset

ISBN 978-0-19-726766-0 (hardback)
ISBN 978-0-19-892257-5 (ebook)
ISBN 978-0-19-892256-8 (UPDF)
ISBN 978-0-19-892258-2 (online)

μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος καὶ τρηχὺς τὸ πρῶτον

To all those who help along the way.

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Acknowledgements

The central idea of this book was developed during my graduate studies at Princeton University the better part of a decade ago. The book began to take form when I wrote my dissertation, and it was completed during my Postdoctoral Fellowship at University College London. Over the course of writing *Just Prospering? Plato and the Sophistic Debate about Justice* I have benefited tremendously from the help, advice and time of many friends and academics in different countries.

I would like to thank my many teachers who were directly involved in my education and this project. Rachel Barney at the University of Toronto first inspired in me a love of the sophists and Plato. This book would not exist without her. Hendrik Lorenz, my primary advisor at Princeton, guided me through the process of writing a Ph.D. dissertation during our long meetings in his office. Even while serving as the Director of Graduate Studies, Hendrik was generous with his time and always incisive with his advice. For different reasons, I owe just as much to Alexander Nehamas. Both in seminars and during our meetings, Alexander trusted me to pursue my own insights and encouraged me to develop their results. I would not have had the confidence to do the research I did without his trust and encouragement. I am grateful also to Melissa Lane, who, though as busy as anyone at Princeton could possibly be, still managed to help me with my first publication and was especially sensitive to my emotional well-being when I lost my mother in the midst of writing my dissertation. I am also grateful to Benjamin Morison, who showed me what it is to be a good teacher and offered invaluable comments on my dissertation chapters and papers. In addition to my formal advisors, Brad Inwood, Jennifer Whiting, Clifford Orwin, André Laks and Christian Wildberg all helped me grow early in my education. I am indebted to each one of them.

I benefited in different ways from my peers and mentors at University College London and the London ancient philosophy scene. Fiona Leigh helped me find a home in London and was always fiercely supportive of my work and independent research. Fiona, Elena Cagnoli Fiecconi, Raphael Woolf and Shaul Tor all read drafts of various papers. Partway through my time in London I won a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship. The British Academy not only provided much-needed financial support for me to live in London and study the manuscripts of

the texts I was writing about. They also connected me with Ursula Coope, who, though I did not know her at the time, very generously read a draft of the entire book and offered helpful comments and advice. Thanks also to Joe Sibley, who read the whole manuscript and offered invaluable editorial help. More people than I can remember came to talks on various parts of the book and offered helpful comments and criticisms. Thank you to all the audience members who asked tough questions and alerted me to any errors or mistakes in my work. Despite all the help I have received while writing this manuscript, it is far from perfect. Any errors or uncritical interpretations that persist are due to my own shortcomings.

This book also would never have been finished were it not for the friends and family who supported me while I was writing it. Thank you so much to all the graduate students at Princeton who made my time there enjoyable and comforted me when I felt down. Thank you to the students in the Classical Philosophy programme: Yena, Emily, Ian, Daniel, Gabe, Claudia, Simon, Tom, Erik and Christen, who all pressed me to develop and clarify my views. Thank you to all my friends back home, especially Giorgio and Claire, who showed me love and remained in close contact during my ten-year absence from Canada. Thank you to my family as well. Your constant nagging about not seeing me reminded me that I will always be loved and that there is more to life than just writing academic papers. A special thank you to Masako, not only for her support and encouragement, but also for the hours she put in editing and polishing early versions of this work.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my mother, Iris Turcott, who died while I was writing the dissertation that formed the basis of this book. I inherited from her my drive to learn the truth and to be right about things. Although we often fought and disagreed, she pushed me to be better and was always very proud of me—probably too proud. I'm sorry that she did not live long enough to visit me at Princeton or to see me graduate or start my career. It would have meant the world to her.

Introduction

Midway through Book I of Plato's *Republic*, the character Socrates attempts to placate a rather animated Thrasymachus: 'After making such a speech do you have it in mind to leave before teaching us sufficiently or learning whether things are as you say or otherwise? Or do you think it is some insignificant matter to try to determine the whole course of living by which each of us would lead a most profitable life?' (344d6–e3).[1] With this one question, Socrates introduces a number of the central themes of the dialogue. In the first place, and notwithstanding his own personal commitments, he appears to concede that it is an open question whether the best and most satisfying life that a human being can lead is a life of justice or injustice. He is encouraging all those listening to wonder—or, at the very least, he is recognising that they will wonder—whether they would do better for themselves if they helped others or harmed them. But Socrates is also emphasising the paramount importance of finding an answer to his question. Because everyone wishes to live the best life they can, Socrates believes that every intelligent individual should be very interested in learning about justice, injustice and the respective roles they play (if any) in the best possible human life. It becomes a practical imperative for everyone, as well as the central project of the dialogue that follows, to deliberate about the just and the unjust ways of life.

Despite what one sometimes reads in books on moral philosophy, the project of Plato's *Republic* is not entirely original.[2] Serious and sustained consideration

[1] Plato's Greek comes from the relevant Oxford Classical Text throughout (Plato (2003 edn) for *Republic*). Throughout the book I have standardised the Greek scripts used by the relevant texts I quote from. Translations throughout are my own unless otherwise indicated.

[2] Bernard Williams opens *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (1985, 1) by claiming that 'Socrates' question' about how one should live in *Republic* opens 'one of the first books written about this topic'. Williams does a fine job of analysing Socrates' question and, in particular, of distinguishing the ethical from the peculiarly (and uniquely modern) moral force of this question. That is to say, Williams correctly points out that Socrates is asking about how it would be best and rational for an individual to lead their life rather than what obligations or duties they have to others. Nevertheless, Williams is wrong if he means to suggest that previous authors and texts had not been preoccupied with the questions of how to live the best life or whether one should be just.

about the value of justice was endemic to early Greek reflection about humanity and our place in the world. For almost as far back as we can observe, given our literary evidence, the writers and thinkers that we now call Greek wrestled with the question of whether morally upstanding behaviour improves the life of the moral agent, or whether it somehow makes that life worse. Some of these writers and thinkers were staunch advocates of the value of justice because they believed in gods who intervened in the world to reward just people and punish unjust people. Others were offended and confused by the example of their contemporaries who, though evidently unjust and immoral, at least appeared to be content and satisfied with their lives. And still others came to the dangerous conclusion—no doubt partly on the basis of their observations of how people behaved but also partly out of dissatisfaction with the early defenders of justice—that they would live a better life if they were selectively and intelligently unjust rather than scrupulously just. Yet though these figures disagreed about the utility of justice, they were all united in recognising the importance of investigating what it means to live a good human life and of questioning the place of justice and injustice in that life.

The investigations these writers and thinkers engaged in were not always as crisp, clean or systematic as what one finds in the texts of Plato and Aristotle, the two towering philosophical figures of Classical Greece. But they could at times be highly insightful, and they constitute the crucial background to Plato's own moral philosophy, especially as it is developed in *Republic*. Indeed, in this book I shall try to show that this most famous of philosophical works must be understood as a contribution to a long tradition of thinking about the value of justice. Central to my argument will be an analysis of a debate about justice that raged among a group of 5th-century BCE thinkers we now call 'the sophists', an unfortunate moniker because it incorrectly suggests that they were more interested in fallacious arguments than serious philosophical reflection.[3] In truth the sophists were a disparate set of intellectuals and teachers who were at the forefront of the 5th-century enlightenment and who made significant contributions to early epistemology, theory of language, math, rhetoric, as well as ethics and politics.[4] There is no hard and fast rule about how to define what it was to be a sophist, but their ranks include at least Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, Hippias, Antiphon, Thrasymachus, Critias and some other authors who wrote important texts but whose names are now lost to us. In Part I of this book I examine the sophists'

[3] Unless otherwise noted, all centuries mentioned throughout the book are BCE.

[4] Mercifully, enough has now been published on the sophists that it should no longer be necessary to begin a book about them by defending their intellectual bona fides. Those interested in such defences can consult any number of existing treatments of the sophists and their thought. These treatments routinely push back against the bad reputation the sophists have inherited by highlighting how their thought continues earlier intellectual traditions or by emphasising the various contributions they made to Greek philosophy. See, for example, Guthrie (1971), Kerferd (1981), Wallace (1998), Broadie (2003), Gibert (2003), Barney (2006b), Bonazzi (2019) and Billings and Moore (2023).

contributions to ethics and politics by reconstructing what they had to say about justice, virtue and the best human life. In Part II, I argue that the sophistic debate about justice exerted a great deal of influence on Plato and that we cannot fully understand his *Republic* without attending to that earlier debate.

Why Prospering?

Before going any further it will be helpful to address two preliminary points that are liable to cause some confusion or consternation. The debate about justice as I shall go on to reconstruct it revolves around the relationship between justice (δίκη/δικαιοσύνη) and human prospering (εὐδαιμονία). Although, as we shall see later on, there was some room for disagreement about the precise meaning and analysis of these terms, they were nevertheless very familiar in the Classical period. Almost everyone would have known that δίκη/δικαιοσύνη was the social virtue par excellence. The virtue had a very wide scope and was of the utmost importance to the Greeks. It was one of the things without which cities or states simply could not exist. To be just (δίκαιος) was to follow the rules and regulations—most often, the laws—that structured society and, additionally, to treat others with the respect and fairness that they deserved. It was to act in ways that merited moral approval from one's fellow citizens, or at least that avoided any moral reprobation or condemnation. To be unjust (ἄδικος) was to risk suffering the worst sanctions that a city or community might impose. εὐδαιμονία, on the other hand, was the best thing a human being could aim for in practice. To live a prosperous (εὐδαίμων) life was to lead a life that anyone should be satisfied and, indeed, thrilled to live. It was to live a successful life, whatever exactly that meant.

Given what has been said so far, the reader might wonder why the Greeks seem to have been so concerned about the relationship between justice and prospering. This is especially likely to be the case if the reader has studied contemporary moral philosophy, for philosophers now approach morality somewhat differently than the Greeks of old. Two salient and sweeping differences should be mentioned here. Firstly, contemporary philosophers are more interested in figuring out what justice is and what, exactly, it demands of us than the Greeks of the Classical period were. Contemporary authors spend a great deal of time trying to determine what our specific obligations or duties are in specific situations; or, alternatively, what the right thing to do is in those situations. As we shall see, ancient authors were not uninterested in these questions. They did investigate the nature of justice and what it demanded of us. But they also took it for granted that most people would be able to identify what the just and unjust thing to do would be in most circumstances. As a result, they spent relatively little time investigating what the individual ought to do in specific situations. One question they were preoccupied with,

however—and here we come to the second difference between contemporary and ancient approaches to moral philosophy—was whether it was prudent and profitable to be just. No ancient author seriously doubted that justice and just behaviour were good for others and society at large. But they also wanted to know whether it would benefit the just individual as well. This particular question does not animate philosophers today nearly as much. Most assume that following the demands of morality and being just often requires us to make sacrifices, or at the very least refrain from doing things that promote our selfish interests. But they mostly do not think that this fact gives us any less reason to be moral or do the right thing.

Not so for the ancient authors. As Arthur Adkins (1960, 67) once memorably claimed, '[t]he Greeks in general were too hard-headed to be just if it were not visibly advantageous to do so'. This is not quite right. We will see below that there was a genuine wish among many Greeks that justice be vindicated and proven to be ultimately advantageous, even when it sometimes appeared disadvantageous in practice. We will also work to uncover the tremendous philosophical ingenuity that went into showing that the virtuous life was as good as if not better than the vicious life. Nevertheless, there is a sizeable kernel of truth in Adkins' remark. For it certainly was the case that if justice were shown to be positively harmful to the just agent, and if injustice were shown to be positively beneficial to the unjust agent, this would have dealt a devastating blow to morality in the eyes of many ancient authors. That is to say, for these authors this would have constituted a sufficient reason to reject the demands of justice. For many contemporary moral philosophers this only goes to show that there was something fundamentally wrong or misguided about the type of project in which the ancient Greeks were engaged. It shows that they were not really doing *moral* philosophy.[5] Scholars of ancient philosophy have, in response to such charges, attempted to show that the Greeks really were doing moral philosophy, albeit moral philosophy done in a different and possibly even better way.[6] I do not wish to wade into the controversial waters of what it means to do moral philosophy correctly here. My purpose is, rather, to lay out what the Greeks actually said and thought about the important topic of justice (something which in any case needs to be done before we can fairly endorse or reject their approach to morality). These remarks are simply meant

[5] A version of this criticism was famously made by Prichard (1912) in his essay 'Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?'. His criticisms were further developed in his 1928 inaugural lecture 'Duty and Interest' (reprinted in Prichard (2002)).

[6] See, in particular, the helpful discussion in Brown (2007). Brown discusses many different responses ancient scholars have made to Prichard. She ends up judiciously accepting some of these responses but also conceding that Prichard's main claim has some merit to it. See also White (2003), whom Brown draws upon, and who offers a lengthier discussion of many of the relevant issues. For the idea that ancient moral philosophy may in certain respects be better off than contemporary moral philosophy, see the introduction in Annas (1993b).

to highlight that the ancient authors were doing something different than what academics typically do today as well as to forestall any misunderstandings that might arise from this fact.

There is, however, one upshot of the somewhat idiosyncratic way the Greeks thought about justice: it allows us to characterise and distinguish their views using somewhat unfamiliar but nevertheless instructive categories. Just as we now distinguish moral realists from anti-realists or naturalists from non-naturalists,[7] I will suggest below that the thinkers discussed in this book can be helpfully divided into those who (somehow) held the view that it is, all things considered, profitable and prudent to lead a life of justice and those who held the view that it is profitable and prudent to be selectively unjust and lead a life of calculated injustice instead.[8] I will label the former type of theorist a 'Friend of Justice', or simply a 'Friend' for short. The latter type of theorist I will call a 'Moral Cynic', or a 'Cynic' for short. (My use of the term Cynic should not be confused with the anti-conventionalist group of figures associated with Diogenes the Cynic.) We will put these categories to good use in a moment. But first I must briefly address the second preliminary point.

But Why 'Prospering'?

This second point strays into technical territory, and it may safely be skipped by those who are not concerned with the difficulties of translating philosophical Greek into intelligible English. But for those who are familiar with Greek and who have been exposed to English translations of ancient moral philosophy, you are likely to have noticed that I have been translating the noun 'εὐδαιμονία' with the word 'prospering' and the adjective 'εὐδαίμων' with 'prosperous'. This is a deliberate choice on my part, but it is decidedly non-standard practice. The majority of recent translators render 'εὐδαιμονία' as 'happiness' and 'εὐδαίμων' as 'happy'. I feel, therefore, that some discussion and justification of my choice to translate these terms as 'prospering' and 'prosperous' is warranted.

I begin by noting that, notwithstanding standard translation practices, it is well known that the English words 'happiness' and 'happy' do not accurately capture

[7] These metaethical categories can be applied to some ancient authors. On this, see Barney (1998).

[8] As we shall see below, there are differences in how the various figures within these two groups defended their commitments. The first Friend of Justice, Hesiod, thought that the gods rewarded just acts and punished violations of injustice. For him, a single act of injustice might be enough to ruin a life. Later Friends do not appeal to divine intervention. As a result, they have to tell a more complicated story about how justice is, all things considered, better for us than injustice. And they each tell this story in slightly different ways. What unites all the Friends is that they are committed to the just life being better than the unjust life. They thus offer similar advice about how the intelligent individual should live if they want to prosper. A similar dynamic holds for the Moral Cynics. They, too, have slightly different explanations for the value of vice and injustice.

the nuances of the Greek words 'εὐδαιμονία' and 'εὐδαίμων', especially as they are used in 4th-century philosophical texts.[9] Perhaps the greatest shortcoming of English vocabulary is that our words are often used—as εὐδαιμονία and εὐδαίμων were not—to describe a transitory feeling. One can be happy one moment but sad and unhappy the next. Likewise, it makes perfect sense to say that though someone is sad today, they will be happy tomorrow. None of this is true of εὐδαιμονία. One cannot fail to be εὐδαίμων at one moment only to become it a moment later when a favourite sports team scores a goal at the last minute to eke out a victory. The tradition is clear about this, and Aristotle makes the point explicitly in a famous passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. He explains that just as one swallow cannot make a spring, so one day cannot make for εὐδαιμονία; εὐδαιμονία is, rather, an accomplishment that characterises a complete life (1098a18–20). Here, then, is one clear way in which the English words 'happiness' and 'happy' fall short. They fail to capture the fact that εὐδαιμονία is something that characterises a whole life, or at least a large part of that life. Another related way in which these English words fail is that they are typically used to describe a subjective feeling which implies little about the objective quality of that life. When schoolchildren around the world clap while singing, 'If you're happy and you know it clap your hands/if you're happy and you know it and you really want to show it/if you're happy and you know it clap your hands', they are not taking a stand about the objective value of their lives relative to others. They simply clap to indicate that they feel pleased. And the fact that they feel this way is thought to be sufficient to show that they are (at least at that moment) happy.[10] Even those who resist this idea and insist that a person cannot find true happiness without actually accomplishing their life's goals will typically concede that each individual may set their own goals. That is to say, even these people will admit that the standards by which I measure my own happiness are my own. I do not have to satisfy any external, objective standards to be happy. But once again, this is not quite true of εὐδαιμονία. So far as we can tell from Aristotle, Plato and the earlier authors, an individual must meet certain objective standards in addition to being subjectively pleased in order to be counted as εὐδαίμων.[11] That is because εὐδαιμονία is the highest *human* good, and to achieve it one needs to succeed in one's role as a human being, not merely in one's role as an individual.

[9] Most of the discussion around εὐδαιμονία has occurred in connection with Aristotle's ethics. I draw freely from this literature as most of the points made about Aristotle's use of the term hold for earlier authors. I have especially profited from reading Cooper (1975, 89–90) and Kraut (1979).

[10] Aristotle denies that children can properly be called εὐδαίμων at all. He says that we only call children εὐδαίμων in the expectation that their whole life will be a success (1100a1–4). Of course, today we all call children happy. This is done without issue and need not express anything about the future.

[11] Admittedly, several contemporary authors accept that one's life must meet certain objective measures to be properly called happy. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these authors have often been influenced by Plato or Aristotle. See, for one famous example, Foot (2001, 81–98).

As I mentioned above, these problems are already well known. There is, however, a third reason to avoid using 'happiness' and 'happy' as translations of 'εὐδαιμονία' and 'εὐδαίμων', which I do not think has been widely appreciated in the past. That is: another Greek word is closer in sense and meaning to our word happiness. That word is εὐθυμίη. We will see in Chapter 3 that Democritus uses this word to refer to a subjective psychological condition characterised by a justifiably confident disposition and a robust, pleasant attitude about one's place in the world. It is a joyful and cheerful condition. Moreover, Democritus also clearly believes that the amount of εὐθυμίη we experience can and will vary from moment to moment depending on what happens to us and how we react (DK68 B191). Whether he places strict and general standards about achieving εὐθυμίη is, admittedly, difficult to tell from his fragments. But it is by no means obvious that he does not. And he explicitly claims the best thing for a human being is to live life experiencing as much εὐθυμίη as possible and as little of its opposite as possible (B189). Given these facts and others to be discussed later, this term seems closer in meaning to our happiness than εὐδαιμονία.

These three reasons explain why I reject 'happiness' and 'happy' as translations of 'εὐδαιμονία' and 'εὐδαίμων'. But why have I chosen prospering and prosperous when other alternatives—such as flourishing and well-being—have been suggested in the past?[12] Three considerations suggest to me that prospering and prosperous are the most apt translations available. The first is that these terms do a fine job of conveying the sense that εὐδαιμονία is something that characterises a whole life. We do not normally say such and such a person flitters in and out of prospering from one moment to the next. To prosper is to achieve something significant, and it is an achievement that takes time. Similarly—and secondly—when we say that someone prospers or is prospering we typically imply that they are succeeding by using their natural gifts and talents for some useful or higher purpose. The term, therefore, can convey the idea that there are standards outside of our mere preferences that must be met in order to achieve εὐδαιμονία. These first two considerations apply to flourishing and perhaps also well-being. But the third and principal consideration for choosing prospering is unique to that term. In English this word carries a strong connotation of material wealth or riches. This is important because, as the present study will highlight, when Plato wrote about εὐδαιμονία and the εὐδαίμων person, he was employing terms that had long histories. These words featured prominently in early Greek debates about justice, and in studying those debates we learn that they carried with them certain connotations. One of the most prominent connotations was that of wealth or an abundance of external goods. Many early Greeks believed that wealth was a fundamental part of the successful and good life. Indeed, in one striking passage

[12] Cooper (1975, 89–90) suggests 'flourishing'; Ross (1959, 186–8) suggests 'well-being'.

from Herodotus 'the εὐδαίμονες' are contrasted with poor people, highlighting the very clear perceived link between εὐδαιμονία and wealth (1.133.1). Of course, Plato and the later philosophical tradition came to resist the idea that wealth was especially important to living a εὐδαίμων life. But in trying to show that the best human life was not necessarily the one blessed with external goods, Plato and this tradition had to struggle against the pre-theoretical convictions of their contemporaries. They were, as we might say, fighting an uphill battle. By choosing to translate 'εὐδαιμονία' and 'εὐδαίμων' with 'prospering' and 'prosperous' we capture the pre-philosophical connotations of the Greek words and remind ourselves that there was a war being fought not just around justice and injustice, but also around what it meant to live the best life.[13]

The Plan Going Forward

This book falls into two distinct but related parts. Part I evaluates the extant texts of the 5th-century sophists concerned with justice and virtue. I endeavour to restrict myself as much as possible to 5th-century, pre-Platonic sources in reconstructing these authors' views. This practice is—perhaps surprisingly—not typical for books on the sophists, which often help themselves to Plato's later testimony. However, because I ultimately aim to show that the sophists influenced Plato's philosophy, it would be tendentious in the extreme for me to draw on his philosophical works in reconstructing their thinking. And, in any case, we have enough material to paint a very interesting picture of Greek moral and political philosophy in the closing decades of the 5th century without Plato. The picture that I hope to paint is one of an especially lively debate that occurred among the sophistic authors. On the one side, we have the Moral Cynics, who challenged the traditional ideas about morality and came to believe that injustice was better for the individual concerned to prosper than justice. On the other, we have the Friends of Justice, who attempted to respond to the Cynics and used new arguments to defend the traditional view that justice is better for us than injustice. In spirit, if not in details, this puts me in the tradition of Jacqueline de Romilly, whose *The Great Sophists in Periclean Athens* divides the sophists up into goodies and baddies.[14]

[13] There are, of course, downsides to adopting the translation 'prospering' and 'prosperous' and rejecting the standard translations of 'happiness' and 'happy'. The principal weakness is that the former pair of English words is not common. One rarely hears a person claim that another is prospering. This is not true of the Greek words εὐδαιμονία and εὐδαίμων, which were used frequently by philosophers and (as far as we can tell) by regular folk too. While there is no denying this is problematic for my proposal, I do not think it is an insurmountable problem. We will be using these terms so frequently that no reader will doubt how common they were for the Greeks.

[14] At one point, Romilly (1992, 176) suggests: '[T]here were two kinds of Sophist: to put it simply, the good ones and the bad ones, on the one hand those determined to reconstruct a new kind of justice for which man himself was the measure, on the other the purely destructive critics who took delight

Part I is intended to be an interesting contribution to existing scholarship in its own right. By carefully analysing the texts of the sophists, I aim to show that they developed arguments and ideas about justice and prospering that were significant to the history of moral and political philosophy. I also hope to show that there was a genuine debate among these authors by highlighting the ways in which their texts appear to be responding to one another. However, Part I also lays the groundwork for Part II, which transitions to Plato. The second half of the book argues that Plato was very much aware of the sophistic debate about justice and, more than that, he consciously engaged with it. In particular, I argue that Plato clearly diagnosed an important shortcoming of the 5th-century Friends of Justice and that he structured the central argument of his *Republic* in the light of his diagnosis of how their arguments failed. It will be necessary to have the findings of Part I at hand to argue for this. Ultimately, I hope to convince the reader that Plato was himself a Friend of Justice and that his *Republic* represents the most significant contribution to the debate about justice from the ancient period. We shall see that part of the philosophical genius of this work lies in the innovative strategy Plato develops for defending justice's value. But to truly appreciate the power and innovation of the dialogue's argument, we must first understand his *Republic* as a contribution to a long philosophical tradition of addressing justice and its value.

Reading Plato's *Republic* in the light of the 5th-century background will also shed new light on this most seminal of philosophical works and lead us to question existing scholarly interpretations. Perhaps most importantly, the final two chapters of this book will argue that a dominant interpretation of the famous division of goods and the argument that follows, according to which Socrates is to praise justice as both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable, is not quite right. Attention to the historical background allows us to appreciate that the real contrast Plato intends to draw is between the value justice possesses all on its own, independently of the goods that the just individual receives on account of being recognised as just, and the value it possesses in virtue of the good things that come to be through being recognised as just. Unlike what many commentators think, then, we shall find that Plato's *Republic* is not the first text to draw the familiar contrast between intrinsic and instrumental value. The relevant contrast is, rather, an ethically salient manifestation of the fundamental Platonic distinction between something's *being*—that is to say, its true reality—and its mere *appearance*. Our

in underlining its weaknesses. According to this hypothesis, the "good" Sophists would be headed by Protagoras, the oldest of them, the most moderate, the closest to Socrates. After him, attitudes became increasingly critical.' The picture I paint in Part I nevertheless differs from Romilly's because I do not believe we can say much about what Protagoras thought with any degree of certainty. I am, therefore, less confident than Romilly that sophistic thinking about justice began and evolved in the manner she suggests. Additionally, I am more inclined to think of the naughty sophists' critiques of justice as genuinely prescriptive and action-guiding. Romilly seems to me to leave the group I call the Moral Cynics with mostly bark and very little bite.

dialogue aims to show that we should not be primarily concerned with the benefits that we get from appearing to be just to others. It wants to prove that possessing the actual thing—justice itself—contributes to the prosperous and successful human life, even if this is never recognised and responded to by any other agent.

Chapter 1 begins with a close reading of didactic poetry to lay some important historical groundwork. I analyse the relevant sections of Hesiod's *Works and Days* in order to articulate the five theses of what I call the 'Traditional View of Justice', according to which being just is profitable and prudent because the gods reward just behaviour and punish unjust behaviour. I then briefly survey two historical developments that resulted in some tension for the Traditional View and set the stage for the 5th-century sophistic challenge to justice—namely, the growing influence of Hesiod's work on Greek culture and a growing religious scepticism among the intellectual elite.

Chapter 2 turns to the sophists and a 5th-century challenge to the Traditional View of Justice. The focus is on two sophistic texts, the 'Sisyphus Fragment' of unknown authorship and fragment B44 from Antiphon's *On Truth*. The authors of these texts—the Moral Cynics—denied Hesiod's belief that the gods could be counted on to support justice and, as a result, almost systematically objected to the five theses of the Traditional View. I show how their secular and naturalistic assumptions led them to reject the value of justice and instead conclude that an individual concerned to prosper would do better to be selectively unjust. With the interventionist gods out of the picture, these sophists realised that other people were the only agents around to punish violations of injustice. They therefore encouraged a calculated and secret sort of injustice that could win for the individual money, power and pleasure, which are naturally good for human beings, without any subsequent punishment. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of two non-sophistic texts that attest to the broad impact the Moral Cynics' challenge had on Greek thought.

Chapter 3 turns to the second half of this sophistic debate. I offer a selective analysis of the 'Anonymous Iamblichi', Prodicus' 'Choice of Heracles', and the ethical and political fragments of Democritus, which aims to do three things. Firstly, it shows that the authors of these texts—the Friends of Justice—were consciously responding to Cynical ideas and thus understood themselves to be contributing to a debate about the value of justice. This plausibly explains why, as I next show, they do not rely on the existence of interventionist gods. In contrast to the earliest defenders of justice, these Friends accept the secular assumptions of the Cynics and still argue that justice is more profitable than injustice. Their innovative arguments fall into two broad strategies. The first denies that the goods of money, power and pleasure purportedly won through unjust behaviour make significant contributions to our prospering. Instead, a different set of goods is posited as important for our prospering. The second strategy attempts to show that the proper functioning of society, upon which everyone, including the unjust

individual, depends, requires that all citizens be just. These arguments represent a significant development in Greek philosophy, for in them prospering becomes an explicit object of critical analysis for the first time. Finally, because the 5th-century Friends object to the Cynics and argue that justice is more profitable than injustice, I show that they should be seen as advancing a modernised version of the Traditional View of Justice.

Part II transitions to the 4th century and Plato. Chapter 4 begins by summing up the results of the 5th-century debate and highlighting its philosophical significance. Despite offering very impressive responses to the Cynics, the Friends failed to prove that justice is more profitable and prudent than injustice. Yet the antagonistic character of the debate resulted in significant theoretical advances in our understanding of human prospering, which are briefly surveyed. I next argue that Plato was keenly aware of this debate. Not only was he interested in the sophists and what they had to say about moral philosophy in general, but also two dialogues in particular include arguments very much like those made by the Moral Cynics and Friends of Justice. *Gorgias* features a pair of interlocutors who believe that injustice is more profitable and prudent than justice, one of whom also advocates an extreme sort of hedonism reminiscent of certain Cynics. *Protagoras* includes a sophist who offers a defence of justice so close to the one found earlier in the 'Anonymous Iamblichi' that they must be two iterations of the same argument. Demonstrating Plato's awareness of the 5th-century debate sets the stage for the argument in the rest of the book.

Chapter 5 offers a close reading of the first two books of *Republic* to argue that they draw from the debate about justice discussed in Part I. Socrates' interlocutors in these books contend that one should not be just and claim that it better serves one's self-interest to be unjust instead. I analyse the principal arguments used by these interlocutors and show that most of them have substantive and methodological similarities to those made by the Moral Cynics. One argument used by Socrates' opponents is, however, genuinely new and not anticipated by any text from the 5th century. I nevertheless show that this argument was informed by the debate as well. Plato uses this argument to identify and highlight a weakness in past defences made by the Friends of Justice. Whereas they had assumed that only genuine justice and virtue can win the agent a reputation for justice and virtue, Plato has his interlocutors argue that an intelligent, unjust agent can win the good reputation earlier highlighted as the great reward of justice by past moralists. I end the chapter by arguing that Plato's identification of this fatal weakness in past defences of justice pointed the way towards a better and more satisfying defence of justice. This new defence promised to respond to the Moral Cynics and finally vindicate the central claims of the Traditional View of Justice.

Chapter 6 argues that the central argument of *Republic* is designed to demonstrate the value of justice in a way that avoids the problems faced by the 5th-century

Friends of Justice. My focus is on Glaucon's division of goods as well as the subsequent challenge that gives rise to and structures the central argument of the dialogue. Scholars often claim that Glaucon's distinction between the value something possesses 'because of itself' (δι᾽ αὑτό) and the value it possesses 'because of the things that arise from it' (διὰ τὰ γιγνόμενα ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ) is (at least roughly) equivalent to the contemporary distinction between something's intrinsic and instrumental value. This is incorrect. I argue that the distinction between the value something possesses 'because of itself' and the value it possesses 'because of the things that arise from it' in fact distinguishes between one type of value that depends on something's intrinsic features as well as the inevitable effects it produces by its nature and another type of value, which is realised only when that thing is recognised and responded to by other agents. The significance of this distinction becomes clear against the historical background discussed earlier in the book. When Plato has Socrates demonstrate that justice is valuable 'because of itself' in the remainder of *Republic*, he is not having Socrates show that justice is intrinsically valuable. Instead, he is having Socrates argue that justice will contribute to the prospering of the just individual even if it is never recognised. That is to say, he is having Socrates argue that justice will contribute to the prospering of the just individual for reasons other than those problematically adduced by the 5th-century moralists. Plato consciously advances upon the project of the sophists and offers a new and better defence of the Traditional View of Justice.

After demonstrating that the central argument of *Republic* is structured in such a way as to avoid the problems faced by past Friends, Chapter 7 argues that two specific interventions Socrates makes later in the dialogue are informed by earlier sophistic defences of justice. I first evaluate Socrates' response to Glaucon and his speculative historical narrative about justice's origins. By offering a similarly speculative account of the development of justice—and, in particular, by stepping back further in time to a point before humans gathered together—Socrates was adopting a sophistic style of discourse and employing a particular philosophical strategy developed by one earlier Friend of Justice. Next I turn to the choice of lives that Socrates uses in Book IX to establish that justice is more profitable than injustice. By tracing this argument back through Glaucon to the earlier sophists, I suggest that Plato here was adopting an argumentative method prominent among the earlier defenders of justice. This gives us further reason to conclude that Plato understood himself to be a Friend in the tradition of those who defended the Traditional View of Justice.

Part I

The 5th-Century Debate about Justice

1

The Traditional View of Justice

The focus in Part I of this book is a sophistic debate about justice that emerged in the second half of the 5th century. As we shall see, the central question animating this debate was: is it beneficial for an individual to behave justly or does it profit them to practise injustice instead? The debate did not, however, emerge in a vacuum. In order to properly understand our 5th-century debate we must go back several centuries to the early didactic poetry of Hesiod. Thus, in what follows I present a close reading of one of his poems that articulates the Traditional View of Justice, which holds that being just is profitable and prudent. Beginning near the beginning of extant Greek literature is important because the authors discussed in the following chapters react to the early poetic tradition and develop their own views about justice in part by engaging with this tradition. The current chapter ends with a discussion of two historical developments that set the stage for the 5th-century challenge to justice: the growing influence of the Traditional View on Greek culture at large and the growing religious scepticism among the intellectual elite.

The Works and Days (WD)

We begin with Hesiod, one of the two foundational poets of ancient Greece, who is normally thought to have lived and worked in Boeotia sometime in the 8th or 7th century.[1] Though Hesiod is most well known for his *Theogony*, it is the *Works and Days* that lays much of the foundation for the 5th-century discussions of justice and the central debate about its value.[2] Unlike its more famous counterpart, the

[1] There is a great deal of uncertainty concerning the details of Hesiod's life and biography. For a helpful overview of what we do know, see Kõiv (2011).

[2] I use the name Hesiod to refer to the author of the *Theogony* and WD. I will not take a stand on the question of whether one or more authors composed these poems, whether they were compiled from diverse oral traditions or whether they were assembled in some other way entirely. I do, however, assume that each poem is a complete work offering a thoughtful treatment of its subject matter. For a recent discussion of the so-called Hesiod Question, see Koning (2018, 17–30).

name of which attests to its singular subject matter, WD discusses a disorienting number of topics—including justice, the appropriate days and times for chores, and the horrors of sailing on the open seas. It also exhibits a complex—confusing, even—structure.[3] Ostensibly the whole poem is a speech Hesiod makes to his brother, Perses, with whom he has some legal disagreement and to whom he hopes to offer important life lessons, though at times the authorial voice stops admonishing Perses and instead appears to address certain unnamed kings. Yet it is clear that these fraternal lessons are meant to be useful for a very wide audience. It is for this reason that the work is often categorised as a didactic poem or as a piece of wisdom literature—something meant to be instructive to all readers (or listeners, as the original audience of the poem was likely to have been).[4] Attention to this instructive purpose provides crucial insight into the underlying unity and structure of the work and allows one to appreciate it as the important piece of Western literature that it is, though this will not be discussed here.[5] Our discussion will be selective and will focus on the sections of the poem that directly address the topic of justice.

Two preliminary points need to be made before we begin. The first is terminological. The word Hesiod uses for justice, δίκη, has at least two distinct senses that are important to distinguish.[6] Sometimes the word has a moral sense and is used to describe lawful activity and the fair treatment of others. This is particularly true when it is used in the singular to personify an idea or agent, at which times it represents the principles that govern appropriate behaviour and recommends such behaviour.[7] At other times, however, the word refers to specific features of a legal system, such as the result of an arbitration or settlement process. In these cases, it is most often descriptive and lacks any clear prescriptive force. A failure to distinguish between these two senses has led some commentators to deny that δίκη has any moral force in WD. Michael Gagarin (1973, 81), for example, has argued that δίκη in Hesiod 'may mean "law," in the sense of a process for the peaceful settlement of disputes', but further insists that

[3] Thus, West (Hesiod, 1978 edn, 41): 'To anyone who expects an orderly and systematic progression of ideas, it is liable to appear a bewildering text … [T]aken as a whole, the variety of contents is so great that it is hardly possible to describe the subject of the poem in a single phrase.'

[4] For a recent treatment of the poem that is attentive to its didactic purpose, see Canevaro (2015).

[5] Chapter 2 of Strauss (2003, 31–48) does a good job of bringing out the poem's underlying unity.

[6] Other people posit more than two senses. An interesting scholiast identifies four: '[Hesiod] uses δίκη in four ways: sometimes in the sense of the incarnate goddess, sometimes in the sense of the just, sometimes in the sense of verdict, and sometimes in the sense of punishment' (Σ Op. 279a; cf. the discussion in Vergados (2020, 172–5)). I am wary of saying that Hesiod uses δίκη in the sense of 'the just' (ἐπὶ τοῦ δικαίου). But I accept that there are moral and non-moral uses of the word, and I am happy to concede that there may be more than the two senses I distinguish above.

[7] Consider these exhortations made to Perses: 'ὦ Πέρση, σὺ δ᾽ ἄκουε δίκης' (213) and 'ὦ Πέρση, σὺ δὲ ταῦτα μετὰ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσι καί νυ δίκης ἐπάκουε, βίης δ᾽ ἐπιλήθεο πάμπαν' (274–5).

'*dikê* does not apply to actions outside of this narrow area of law and does not have any general moral sense'. There are many reasons to be unsatisfied with this view and insist that while some uses of the term are legal and descriptive, others are moral and prescriptive.[8] But it bears reminding that I am not here primarily concerned with WD itself. The purpose of this section is to lay the groundwork for a discussion of later Greek authors and their treatments of justice. And it is absolutely clear that later authors took Hesiod's statements about δίκη to be statements about justice and, therefore, to be applicable to their own moral projects.[9] Thus even if Gagarin were correct and the term was not moral in WD, it would still be important to study Hesiod's claims about δίκη to understand the later debate about justice.

The second thing to note is that the following discussion is intended only to explicate the central claims about justice found within WD. I do not mean to maintain that this was the first text to make these claims or suggest that Hesiod was himself a moral philosopher who made serious contributions to Greek philosophising about the nature of justice or its value for human beings. It is possible that what we find in WD is an expression—admittedly, an admirably forceful and artistic one—of beliefs that were common in the 8th or 7th century. Given that these same beliefs remain prominent well into the 4th century, albeit partly due to Hesiod's influence, it seems likely to me that they were present in the collective Greek consciousness well before our bard ever sang for the first time. It is still important to attend to the details of WD, however, for it became an authoritative account of justice and was certainly responded to by later authors. For this reason, I shall talk about WD as canonising—rather than inventing—the Traditional View of Justice.

[8] Gagarin's argument about the meaning of δίκη is unconvincing. He concedes that the adjective δίκαιος often means 'proper behaviour' in some moral sense but argues from etymological evidence and parallel uses in Homer that the noun cannot: '[T]he meaning is not extended to include any sense of justice or morality or punishment for improper behaviour in general' (88). But Gagarin's sharp distinction between the moral adjective and the non-moral noun cannot be maintained. Readers should consider WD 334, where Zeus, acting in his role as guarantor of δίκη, is said to punish those who practise unjust works (ἔργων ἀδίκων). Here the meaning of the noun and adjective more or less coincide. Additionally, Gagarin himself notices that δίκη is essentially opposed to ὕβρις in the work but fails to see that ὕβρις is a normative term and is freely contrasted with the adjective δίκαιος (e.g. 190–1). Finally, it is worth noting that the major commentaries produced after Gagarin's article have assumed or argued that δίκη means justice and is, accordingly, a moral term; see, for example, West (Hesiod, 1978 edn) and Most (Hesiod, 2010 edn). Therefore, I cannot accept Gagarin's position (reasserted in his 1974 article) that δίκη only means law or legal settlement in WD.

[9] Plato quotes WD 232–4 at *Rep.* 363b6–c3, apparently to show that the poets do not praise justice itself but only the rewards that arise from it. Note that although Plato's is clearly a work of moral philosophy, he can without hesitation quote a passage from Hesiod as relevant to his discussion of justice. He saw WD as addressing moral questions. For more information, see Koning (2009) on the well-established tradition of later authors quoting Hesiod for their own projects.

With these preliminaries out of the way, let us turn to a brief discussion of the proem of our poem, which provides a succinct statement of some of the central themes of the work (1–10):

> Muses, from Pieria, glorifying in songs:
> Come here, tell in hymns of your father Zeus,
> Thanks to whom mortal men (ἄνδρες)[10] are unfamed or renowned alike
> And named and unnamed by the will of great Zeus.
> For easily he strengthens, and easily he crushes the strong,
> Easily he diminishes the conspicuous and increases the inconspicuous,
> And easily he straightens the crooked and withers the proud—
> High-thundering Zeus, who dwells in the highest mansions.
> Give ear to me, watching and listening, and straighten verdicts with
> Justice, you! As for me, let me speak truths to Perses.[11]

In the *Theogony* we learn that Hesiod was visited by the muses when he was a humble farmer and that they gave him the power to sing about what has happened in the past and what will happen in the future (*Th.* 22–34). By invoking these celestial songstresses at the beginning of WD, Hesiod is invoking their power once again. Accordingly, the reader is to understand that the contents of the poem enjoy some sort of divine backing and are therefore true and authoritative.[12]

The proem also introduces us to the most significant figure of the work, Zeus.[13] The first thing mentioned is the god's superlative strength and his dominion over humanity. It is by the will of Zeus that we acquire renown or remain unknown, 'for easily he strengthens, and easily he crushes the strong' (5). The focus in lines three through six is the strength of Zeus and our helplessness in the face of his power. The audience has not yet been told how the god exercises his overwhelming might, but the next line provides this information. Zeus is said to straighten the 'crooked' (σκολιόν) and wither the 'proud' (ἀγήνορα), two objectionable characteristics.[14] The proem thus hints that Zeus is basically good and fair. Next, Hesiod demands that he be attended to and that crooked verdicts be straightened with justice. These lines are best understood as Hesiod pleading with Zeus to correct the affairs of the world and

[10] Throughout the book, I prefer gender-neutral pronouns or expressions in both my writing and my translations. Thus when a Greek text does not use an unambiguously gendered term, such as ἄνδρες, I avoid gendered language. However, in cases where such terms appear, or when referring to ancient authors, almost all of whom were male, I employ appropriately gendered language.

[11] For Hesiod I follow the Greek text in Solmsen's Oxford Classical Text (Hesiod, 1988 edn). Translations follow Most (Hesiod, 2010 edn) but are sometimes modified by my hand.

[12] Some deny that Hesiod is invoking the authority of the muses here; see, for example, Clay (2003, 76–8) and Haubold (2009, 15–16 and 29–30). These views have been rightly objected to by Tor (2017, 95–7).

[13] Thus, Havelock (1978, 209): 'The entire *Works and Days* can be viewed as a "Zeus-poem," insofar as it continually presents the lives and deeds of mankind as taking place under his superintendence …'.

[14] σκολιόν is used to describe the deceitful words used to harm people at WD 194. ἀγήνορα is used twice in Book I of the *Odyssey* to describe the suitors (1.106 and 144); compare Clay (2003, 77).

to order everything in accordance with justice.[15] And they raise one of the text's most important themes: the pressing need for human affairs to be ordered and governed by justice. Finally, we learn that Hesiod is going to proclaim useful truths. These truths are nothing other than the content of the poem itself, which is here cast as divinely inspired advice for Perses. That being said, it is clear that the advice in the poem is perfectly general and is meant to be applicable to anyone who cares about prospering. WD ends: 'Prosperous (εὐδαίμων) and blessed is the one who knows all these things and does their work without giving offense to the immortals, discerning the messages of the birds, and avoiding trespasses' (826–9).[16] The poem counts as divinely inspired advice for Perses because it is divinely inspired advice for everybody.

The opening lines of the work, then, reassure the reader of the power and fairness of Zeus as well as the importance of justice for humanity. They further reveal the author's intention to offer advice on how one might live best and gesture towards the veracity of this advice by invoking the muses. Many topics are addressed in the work, but I will focus on justice and, in particular, on five central theses advanced about the virtue. According to WD:

1 the gods (or Zeus) gave justice to humanity;
2 the gods reward those who are just and punish those who are unjust;
3 justice is beneficial to the just individual;
4 the rewards the just receive are External Goods;
5 it is, all things considered, prudent for the individual to be just.

I shall call these the five theses of the Traditional View of Justice.[17]

Let us start with the first thesis. In a particularly important passage, we are told about the origin of justice and learn that it is a dividing line between humanity and the other animals (274–80):

> Oh Perses, do lay these things in your heart and
> Give heed to justice. Put violence entirely out of your mind.
> For this is the law that Kronos' son has established
> For human beings: that fish and beasts and winged birds
> May eat one another, since there is no justice among them,
> But to humans he has given justice, which is best by far.

Our author tells Perses to attend to justice and forget about violence. He then justifies this advice with the further claim that Zeus has established a law for humankind

[15] See Most (Hesiod, 2010 edn, 87) and West (Hesiod, 1978 edn, 141), who calls κλῦθι a 'solemn imperative' to the gods.
[16] This is one of the first uses of εὐδαίμων in extant Greek literature. Already in Hesiod it identifies a person who lives the successful life. The end of the poem thus promises a good life to the reader who follows its recommendations. This puts Hesiod in contact with the later Greek philosophical tradition, in which the noun εὐδαιμονία becomes the standard term for the highest human good.
[17] I do not claim that these are the five most important theses of the entire work, merely that they are the most important for the nature of δίκη and its role in the life of the prosperous individual.

prescribing justice. Unfortunately, identifying the exact content of this law is not easy because it is unclear if the claims about the other animals are meant to be part of the law laid down by Zeus.[18] Furthermore, the precise relationship between this law and justice as Hesiod understands it is also unclear. Zeus is said to have given justice to humans (279) and also to have established a law enjoining them to be just (276). This suggests there may be a two-stage process lying behind the text presented above: first, human beings are given justice or otherwise informed about it by Kronos' son, and then we are ordered to live by it. But whatever the exact nature of the relationship between justice and this law, the fact that Zeus uses law in this context is significant. It suggests that law is the means or instrument through which justice exercises authority over humanity, and it foreshadows the very tight—indeed, almost tautological—connection between the laws and justice found in later authors.

In any case, even if some of the details of the passage remain slightly unclear, Hesiod's general point is clear enough. Zeus bestowed justice as a divine gift on human beings and legislated that we follow it. This is a decisive statement that justice comes from the gods, and it is sufficient to establish the first thesis of the Traditional View: the gods gave justice to humanity. But this passage also tells us something important about Hesiod's understanding of what it means to be a human and, in particular, what distinguishes us from the rest of the animals. Contrasting our justice with the animals' lack of it is evidently meant to indicate something unique and important about humans.[19] It is, I suggest, Hesiod's way of indicating that justice is a universal and timeless element of humanity's repertoire. It does not follow from this that, according to Hesiod, every person will be just at all times. We will see shortly that Hesiod is only too aware that people can be and often are unjust. His idea seems to be that humans always have the potential to be just. Unlike animals who can do nothing but attack and eat one another, it is always possible for us to rise above such behaviour. Moreover, his point must be that justice is in some way natural, appropriate or *right* for the sort of creatures we are. This surely follows from the fact that the father of all gods prescribed justice to us. We might say that, according to Hesiod, our species is *Homo Iustus*.[20]

[18] It is tempting to read the claims about animals as a contrast case highlighting what humans may not do under Zeus' law. That is to say, they might be intended to illustrate the horrors of predation and cannibalisation and to steer people away from these behaviours. If so, then they give some minimal description of what justice demands we avoid and may not be part of the law itself.

[19] Like many other features of the Traditional View, this thought becomes ingrained in later Greek thinking. There is significant evidence Classical Greeks believed that laws and justice distinguished humans from animals. Thus, Dover (1994, 74) tells us: 'The difference between humans and animals lay, in the Greek view, not only in the obvious superiority of human reasoning', but also in the fact that humans formed 'communities operating under laws for the restraint of aggression'. He translates Dem. 25.20 as evidence. 'If laws were abolished and each individual were given the power to do what he liked, not only does our communal organisation vanish but our very life would be in no way different from that of animals.'

[20] See West (Hesiod, 1978 edn, 226); see also Barney (2006b, 86–7), who connects Hesiod's remarks at 274–80 with the sophists. I highlight continuities between Hesiod and the sophists in later chapters.

In addition to indicating that justice is somehow natural and appropriate for human beings, the above passage also makes the important point that it is beneficial for us. What Hesiod means by claiming that justice is 'best by far' is that humans will live a better life if and when they collectively and individually follow justice. This life is better than the alternative for at least two reasons. Firstly, when humans follow justice, they are freed from the cycle of violence in which animals, who are forced to hunt and eat one another, are trapped. Though this is not commented upon explicitly in the passage above, Perses and those listening are presumably meant to find the example of wild fish, beasts and winged birds sufficient to make this point. Who could prosper if they had to constantly fend off neighbours with cannibalistic intentions? But Hesiod also gives another reason, more heavily emphasised in WD, as to why justice is ultimately profitable for us.

We transition here to the second thesis—the claim that the gods reward the just and punish the unjust. The lines immediately following the last passage make this point plainly (280–5):

> For if someone who recognises just things is willing to speak
> Them out publicly—to them far-seeing Zeus gives fortune.
> But whoever wilfully swears a false oath and lies with testimony,
> They are incurably hurt at the same time as they harm justice.[21]
> In posterity their family is left more obscure, whereas the
> Family of the man who keeps his oath is better in posterity.

Zeus and the other gods give wealth and prizes to those who support justice; they harm those who harm justice. The second thesis plainly explains why it is that justice is so valuable to humans.

The divine rewards of justice are the most prominent considerations Hesiod offers for thinking that individuals ought to be just. In an earlier section of the text, Hesiod spends a full twenty-three lines comparing and contrasting the rewards conferred on just cities and individuals with the punishments meted out to their unjust counterparts (225–47). These lines function as an argument in favour of justice's value by highlighting how much better and more conducive to prospering it is to live in a just city than an unjust city. I call this sort of argument an Evaluative Comparison and Contrast. Aside from wealth and the longevity of one's family tree, Hesiod mentions peace in one's community (228–9); freedom from famine and the need for seafaring (230–1 and 236–7); and an abundance

[21] The claim that the one who violates the dictates of justice is 'incurably hurt at the same time' sounds similar to claims made by Socrates in many of Plato's dialogues (e.g. *Gorg.* 479c8–9). Another passage in WD makes the even more Socratic-looking claim that the person who does wrong harms themself most of all (265–6). Some have found it surprising that pre-Platonic authors could voice such sentiments, but I hope to show in what follows that this is not all that surprising. As a Friend of Justice, Plato is heir to a long tradition of thinkers that traces its roots back to the Traditional View of Justice canonised in WD.

of resources from the earth, including oak trees that bear acorns, bees that make honey, sheep that produce wool and wives who bear children resembling their parents (232–5).[22] A corresponding set of bad things are assigned to cities and their inhabitants that are violent and unjust (238–47). It is clear from the context that these rewards are expected to benefit the lives of those who enjoy them (recall that Hesiod ends his poem by announcing that whoever follows his advice will be εὐδαίμων), whereas the punishments are expected to lead to misery. The divine rewards of justice are, then, presented as recommending in favour of just behaviour and the divine punishments as cautioning against unjust behaviour. This is enough to establish the third thesis. Justice is beneficial for the just agent because the gods reward justice and punish injustice.

Two further points are worth making about this list of rewards and punishments. Firstly, in presenting the bad things that result from violence and injustice, Hesiod warns his readers about the possibility of collateral damage: 'But to those who care only for vicious violence and cruel deeds, far-seeing Zeus, Kronus' son, marks out justice. Often a whole city suffers because of a bad man who errs and devises wicked deeds' (238–41). This is a surprising statement placed prominently at the beginning of the punishments incurred by unjust people and *poleis*. For although WD is elsewhere at pains to make the point that those who are just will be rewarded while those who are unjust will be punished, this would seem to allow for the possibility that blameless people suffer because of the wicked actions of their neighbour. It is difficult to know what to make of this. Does Hesiod think that the whole city is complicit in the violence and wicked deeds of a single person? This would make sense if the bad person were the ruler of the city. Perhaps the citizens deserve some blame for the way their city operates. Or does Hesiod consider mass suffering necessary to duly punish an extremely unjust individual? It is not clear. What is clear is that the possibility of suffering because of the bad behaviour of another provides an incentive for every citizen to ensure that everyone else respects the demands of justice and acts appropriately.[23]

More importantly for our purposes, we should note the character of the goods with which the gods reward just behaviour. The most prominent elements of Hesiod's list are natural resources, which are probably best described as sources of wealth: tall trees that provide acorns and honey (232–3) and sheep that give wool (234). Like other sources of wealth, these resources are instrumentally

[22] The fact that children resemble their parents presumably indicates that they are legitimate offspring of mothers faithful to their husbands. The allusion to faithful wives as one of the rewards of justice serves as an unfortunate reminder of the thoroughly male-centric view of WD, and it hints at its author's sexism, which is more fully on display in passages discussing Pandora (WD 42–105 and *Th.* 534–601). For a helpful discussion of the sexes in WD, see Canevaro (2013).

[23] Thus, Clay (2003, 41): 'The point of this rhetorical ploy is to suggest to Perses that not only must he behave justly, but that he has a positive stake in the righteousness of the kings as well as of the commoners.'

valuable insofar as they help individuals satisfy their needs and wants as well as enable them to pursue their less immediate goals. Though the prominence of these goods suggests that material wealth is the most significant reward of justice, other goods are also mentioned. Faithful and fertile wives are hinted at in this list (235) and a good reputation is mentioned earlier (3–4). Such goods also seem to be at least partly instrumentally valuable. Children, for example, often provide for their parents once they grow old. But this surely does not exhaust the sort of value Hesiod believed these goods possess. It seems very likely that reputation was thought of as an important part of the good life itself and not merely as a means to pursue other goals. Nevertheless, I suggest that all these rewards of justice are External Goods (though this is not a term Hesiod himself uses).

It should be obvious why acorns, sheep and wealth count as External Goods. These goods are literally external to us. But I claim that this term is also appropriate for the other sorts of rewards mentioned by Hesiod, such as reputation. This is for at least two reasons. Firstly, their existence depends primarily on sources and agents other than the person who enjoys them. My reputation derives from other people who hold me in high or low esteem, and this esteem may be fair or unfair, merited or unmerited.[24] And secondly, Hesiod's goods have no immediate and inevitable effect on the soul or psychological experiences of those who acquire them. Gaining a good reputation might provide me with some satisfaction *if* I have some antecedent appreciation for such a reputation, but this is by no means immediate or inevitable. If any satisfaction follows, it will follow because of contingent features, which may differ from person to person.[25] This is not to deny that there are important differences among the External Goods. On the contrary, I argue in the following chapters that the distinction between what I call Crude and Refined External Goods becomes very important in the 5th-century debate. Nevertheless, all the goods mentioned by Hesiod seem importantly different from the goods of the soul plausibly introduced by Democritus and later championed by figures such as Plato and Aristotle. It will be crucial to bear this point in mind as we trace the development of the debate about the value of justice.

Noting the character of the goods we find in WD is important both because it establishes the fourth thesis of the Traditional View and because it gives us some insight into the prosperous life as Hesiod conceived of it. Indeed, we can trace the

[24] As Aristotle pointedly notes at *Nic. Eth.* 1095b22–8. Plato will make a great deal about the fact that bad people can win a good reputation in *Republic*, as we shall see in Chapters 5 and 6.

[25] I do not mean for these two conditions to be definitional of External Goods. They are only meant to make clear why Hesiod's rewards of justice are External Goods. Certain things—say, pride at one's high social position—may be harder to classify as either External Goods or goods of the soul. We will see later in the book that the debate about justice's value ultimately forced participants to start to think more critically and consciously about why and in virtue of what certain things possessed value. This led to increasingly clearer positions vis-à-vis different goods, how they might be classified and their respective value. Though things are not so clear in Hesiod, I think we can still reasonably claim the rewards of justice mentioned in WD are External Goods.

outlines of such a life by attending to the gifts he claims the gods bestow upon just individuals and cities. Judging from what we find in WD, it appears that the prosperous life would have been characterised by—or at least would have prominently featured—a generally pleasant existence which, although demanding physical labour and toil, includes safety, security and the use of deservedly earned wealth as well as the leisure to enjoy it. Furthermore, the successful and good life as depicted by Hesiod also includes the respect of one's peers, especially one's family, and a long lineage of progeny who will continue to honour the memory of their ancestors once they have died. This was presumably a rather conventional picture of the successful life in Hesiod's Boeotia. From our perspective, it is simplistic and leaves much to be desired. It neglects the goods of intellectual and artistic achievement almost entirely, and it presupposes a troubling account of the relationship between husbands and wives. More significantly for our purposes, it is completely unclear what Hesiod considers the good-making feature of this life to be. Is it the pleasantness of existence, the appropriateness of one's social esteem or some pluralistic mixture of goods? These philosophical questions strain the interpretive limits of the poem, and I cannot find any clear answers to them. It seems likely to me that (for reasons that will be discussed later) Hesiod never asked himself these questions and would not have known how to answer them were they posed to him. Luckily, the picture of prospering found in WD is separable from the Traditional View of Justice. The later Friends of Justice will accept the central tenets of this view while embracing their own distinctive accounts of prospering. What remains constant is that humans are thought to receive the things that contribute to the prosperous life—whatever that is taken to be—in large part because of their just behaviour.

I conclude my discussion of WD by turning to the fifth thesis of the Traditional View and the ultimate profitability and prudence of justice. This is the most important thesis insofar as it answers the crucial action-guiding question of how humans should orient themselves towards justice if they wish to live the best life. Hesiod's all-things-considered answer is that it is best for people to follow justice *but only if doing so results in more good things and fewer bad things than the alternative*. This is a very important qualification and one that is stressed in the poem itself (270–3):

> Right now I would not want to be just in dealings with people, neither
> I myself nor a son of mine, since it is bad for a man to be just if the
> More unjust man will get a greater justice. But I do not anticipate
> That the counsellor Zeus will let things end up this way.[26]

[26] This is a difficult passage to faithfully render into English. The last sentence is particularly challenging. Havelock's literal translation (1978, 209) conveys the meaning of the Greek more accurately than Most's, though the result is barely intelligible English: 'however, these (things) not yet do I anticipate Zeus the counselor to accomplish'. Despite the difficulties associated with the translation, the meaning is relatively clear. When push comes to shove, Zeus will not let the more unjust person get the better of the just person.

The word for 'bad' here (κακὸν) indicates harm. Hesiod is, therefore, suggesting that it is harmful to be just (δίκαιον) if the more unjust individual (ἀδικώτερος) gets the greater 'justice' (μείζω δίκην), which in this context must mean a larger settlement or reward.[27] The playful and paradoxical construction of this sentence emphasises the importance of its message: in a world where the unjust do better than the just, we would not want those that we care about to be just. Of course, as we learn in the next lines, Hesiod does not think that things are likely to remain unfair and inhospitable to the just among us. He is confident that the gods will intervene to ensure that those who deserve it, such as himself, are duly rewarded for their upstanding behaviour, whereas others are rightly punished for their injustice.[28] The gods themselves stand as guarantors of the profitability of justice and the just life. It is for this reason that Hesiod can affirm the all-things-considered prudence of justice. We can now see how all the advice given to Perses is ultimately vindicated and the fifth thesis of the Traditional View of Justice is established.

Nevertheless, the first line of the passage remains very important. It amounts to a concession that it would be imprudent to be just if this was an unprofitable way to live. This serves to highlight that the profitability of justice is the decisive consideration recommending that the individual be just in Hesiod's view. WD, therefore, instructs us to be just because this will lead to our prospering. Recall the final words of the poem: 'Prosperous and blessed is the one who knows all these things and does their work without giving offense to the immortals, discerning the messages of the birds, and avoiding trespasses' (826–9). The possibility that injustice might win the better settlement was only ever meant to be a theoretical or fleeting possibility because it is assumed that the gods will strike down those who are unjust. Yet the concession Hesiod makes at 270–2 would turn out to be the seed of his own destruction. For later sophists would argue that, at least for the intelligent few, successful injustice does win a better settlement than justice. And if that was a genuine possibility, even Hesiod would have to agree that such a life would be advisable.

Transition to the 5th Century

Before proceeding to discuss the sophists, we must take note of two important developments that occurred in the centuries following the composition of WD. The first is that Hesiod became a very important figure in Greek culture. His poems achieved canonical status, especially regarding matters of political and social

[27] For those keeping track, this is one instance where δίκη is not used in a moral sense.
[28] In addition to WD 270–3, see 197–201 and Nelson's (1997, 238) commentary thereof: 'Similarly, the myth of the Five Ages, which begins as the story of how men and gods spring from the same origin (108), ends as another proof that it is impossible for mankind to get away with injustice …'.

organisation, and they exerted a huge influence on later thought. One significant consequence of Hesiod's fame was that the core tenets of the Traditional View became integrated, or in any case further entrenched, into conventional thought about morality. Virtually every educated Greek would have been familiar with the five theses discussed above, and many would have internalised them through their education. The second fact is that critical speculation about the gods started to take off among the intellectual elite in the 6th century. By the time the sophists entered the scene in the 5th century, this speculation had given rise to a situation where some questioned the existence of interventionist gods or were even outright atheists. These two facts resulted in some tension for the Traditional View. On the one hand, the prestige that Hesiod enjoyed made his account a very powerful one among the Greek population at large; on the other, the new scepticism about the gods made it impossible for some people to trust in the interventionist gods who formed the theological underpinnings of Hesiod's worldview.

To appreciate the influence of Hesiod on later Hellenic culture one must recall that poetry occupied an extremely important position in Classical Greece. Homer and Hesiod pervaded the culture and their influence extended from formal education to the most mundane features of everyday life. They were recognised as authorities on a truly shocking number of topics. As we learn from a famous passage in Herodotus, the two were foundational in matters to do with religion: 'They are the makers of a theogony for the Greeks, and they gave to the gods their several epithets, and they divided their honours and arts' (2.53.1–2). But as Plato later noted, the poets' teaching covered the greatest human concerns as well. They were thought to 'know all the crafts, all human affairs as they relate to virtue and vice, and indeed the gods' (*Rep.* 598d9–e2; cf. Xen. B10). Because of their perceived expertise in these areas, much of a Greek's education would have been based on their poetry. These works were thought to be especially valuable for teaching appropriate behaviour, as the noble characters they depicted served as moral models for the youth. Plato's Protagoras tells us that children are forced to 'read the works of good poets and are forced to learn them by heart … so that the child zealously imitates and yearns to become like [the good people of old]' (*Prt.* 325e4–326a4; cf. his own practice announced at 338e–339a). Aristotle confirms that Sophocles depicted people 'as they ought to be' and therefore as suitable models for emulation (*Poet.* 1460b33; cf. Aristoph. *Frogs* 1007–10). Xenophon attests to the pervasive belief that poetry had the ability to inculcate virtue in the young (*Sym.* 3.5). There is little doubt that Hesiod, second only to Homer,[29] and his poetry exerted a huge influence on Greek culture and education.

Yet, as recent scholarship has shown, Hesiod was almost certainly more influential than Homer with respect to the soft social and political virtues, such as

[29] Though Herac. B57 suggests Hesiod may have been even more important than Homer.

justice and temperance. This was due to the perception that his poems contained suitable advice for the peacetime administration of cities. We get a clear demonstration of this perception in *The Contest of Homer and Hesiod*. This short text of 4th-century provenance depicts the two poets competing with one another in Chalcis at the funeral games of one Amphidamus.[30] Though the audience was mesmerised by Homer's skill and preferred his poetry to his competitor's, the king awards first prize to Hesiod (205–14). The decision was based on the king's concern to promote justice and his judgement that Hesiod's poetry does this better than Homer's.[31] But while the king was looking ahead at the influence that Hesiod was likely to have on his citizens, the author of *The Contest* was almost certainly looking back on the influence Hesiod had already had. For this 4th-century author would have known that a number of important political thinkers were influenced by Hesiod and, in particular, that Solon was.[32] The linguistic and substantive similarities between Solon's treatment of δίκη in his *Eunomia* and Hesiod's poem are far too striking to be denied, and it is all but certain that the great Athenian reformer was drawing on WD when he wrote his treatise on political justice in the 6th century.[33] Hesiod's ideas and images were picked up by the tragedians in the following century as well.[34] And, as we shall see presently, they found expression in histories and rhetoric too. The cumulative effect of this influence was, as Hugo Koning notes, that Hesiod was 'reborn as an authority on polis-bound justice' in the Classical period (2010, 175).

Due in part to this renewed authority, the average citizen of the late 5th and early 4th centuries would have internalised much of the Traditional View of Justice. The Greeks of that period continued to believe that the city's laws, or at any rate the most important of these laws, were given to them by the gods.[35] Coupled with this belief was a conviction that the laws could be enforced through divine rewards and punishments. Several texts attest to the fact that the gods, though perhaps far off in the heavens, could see and hear what humans got up to in the

[30] The *Certamen*, as it is sometimes called, is preserved by one 14th-century CE manuscript and was discovered by Nietzsche in 1870. Later scholarship has shown that Nietzsche correctly attributed it to Alcidamas' *Museum*, thus confirming the text's 4th-century origin. On this, see Uden (2010).

[31] Graziosi (2001, 70–1).

[32] For a helpful recent discussion of Solon's relationship to *Works and Days*, see Almeida (2018).

[33] Thus, Lloyd-Jones (1971, 44) notes: '[T]here is no point in trying to distinguish a Hesiodic Dike … and a Solonian Dike.' Others have questioned whether the relationship between the two authors is so simple, but, notably, the scholarly debate is not about whether Solon was influenced by Hesiod. The only live question is whether Solon was thoroughly Hesiodic or whether Hesiod's influence was less than total. On this question, and for a helpful analysis of the similarities between the two, see Irwin (2005, 155–98).

[34] See Sommerstein (2018, 279–94). Of the three great tragedians, Aeschylus seems to have been most influenced by Hesiod's ideas about justice; on this, see Solmsen (1949, esp. 178–224).

[35] See Xen. *Mem*. 4.4.19–21 for an argument that the unwritten laws must have been given by god. For examples of laws being ascribed to the gods, see Antiph. 1.3, Dem. 23.70 and *ibid*. 23.81. A nuanced and recent treatment of the Greek gods' role in lawgiving can be found in Willey (2016, 176–204).

earthly realm.[36] Given certain natural assumptions, it followed that the gods might intervene when they witnessed things of which they approved or disapproved. In Plato's *Republic*, for example, Adeimantus quotes a number of poetic passages, including WD 232–4, to illustrate the conventional advice that one should be seen to be just in order to reap rewards both from other people and from the gods (362e6–363e4; cf. Isoc. 8.33 and 15.282). Thucydides and Xenophon both attest to the common belief that the gods intervene to support the just in their battles against the unjust.[37] Moreover, an abundance of material attests to the widespread conviction that the gods were especially apt to punish those who practised injustice. 'Justice is already nearby, and although not seen she sees and knows whom she needs to punish', reads a line from Euripides that appears to be alluding to Hesiod's WD.[38] Elsewhere we are told rather bluntly that none who offend the gods and their laws can hope to escape unscathed.[39] Divine punishment was obviously a real fear for many Greeks, who believed that they could suffer greatly as a result of any unjust behaviour.

This very brief survey suggests that the core tenets of Hesiod's WD were widely accepted in Classical Greece. But at least one guiding assumption of his was questioned by later intellectuals. We know that in the two or three centuries following Hesiod's poems, some of the intellectual elite became unable to trust in the existence of helpfully interventionist gods, and still others may well have become outright atheists. Already at the end of the 6th century Xenophanes had firmly rejected the conception of the gods found in the poets on moral grounds: 'Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods all things that are censured and blamed among humans: thieving, adultering, and deceiving one another' (DK21 B11; cf. B12). No true gods, we are to understand, would succumb to these human vices. This moral criticism obviously raised the question of why anyone would trust the traditional gods to distribute rewards and punishments fairly and reliably. We do not know how Xenophanes would have answered this question, but we can say that he appeared to waver between believing there to be only one god—totally unhuman and probably unconcerned with humanity—and advancing the sceptical view that we cannot know about the god(s) at all.[40] Running alongside these moral critiques were new scientific developments that made many functions of the gods

[36] Eur. *Ba.* 393–4 and Lyk. *Leokr.* 93–6.
[37] Thuc. 5.104 and Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.77; compare Eur. fr. 584.
[38] Eur. fr. 225. This should be compared with WD 256–62, where we are told that justice (here, too, personified) watches for wicked humans who harm her and need to be punished.
[39] Soph. *Oed. Col.* 278–81.
[40] DK21 B23 is our evidence that Xenophanes may have thought there was only one god: 'There is one god (θεός), greatest among gods (θεοῖσι) and humans, in no way similar in form to humans nor in thought.' Though the interpretation of this fragment is controversial, it appears to flirt with a view we might now call monotheism. The evidence that Xenophanes harboured serious epistemic doubts about our access to the god(s) comes from B34: 'No man has seen the clear truth, nor will there be anyone who knows about the gods or everything about which I speak …'.

redundant. Traditionally, the gods had been invoked to explain the generation and organisation of the universe. But presocratic philosophers were producing increasingly sophisticated physical and cosmological theories to explain natural phenomena without relying on the gods. These theories culminated with the atomists of the 5th century, whose naturalistic worldview left little room for divine causation or intervention.[41] One authority has even claimed that we should 'think of atomism as the first truly godless world view in the Greek tradition'.[42]

The one-two punch of moral criticism and scientific enlightenment contributed to an intellectual environment in which sceptical views about religion and the gods thrived. Interestingly, these views seem to have come in two broad types (roughly) corresponding to the two positions found in Xenophanes' fragments. On the one hand, some 5th-century thinkers advanced the sceptical view that humans cannot know about the gods.[43] The most notable advocate of this position was Protagoras, who apparently opened his work *On the Gods* with the famous lines: 'About the gods I am not able to know, neither that they exist nor that they do not exist, nor what sort of form they take' (DK80 B4).[44] On the other hand, some thinkers allowed that gods may exist while denying that they cared much about what we get up to. Thrasymachus is reported to have said, 'the gods do not see human affairs. For they have not noticed the greatest of the goods for humans, justice' (DK85 B8). Finally, we should note the real possibility that some intellectuals became outright atheists. We know that Prodicus offered a genealogical account of the belief in the Olympian gods according to which early humans deified the features of nature and other people who conferred great benefits upon humanity (DK84 B5).[45] Those who became revered as gods were originally mortals in Prodicus' view, which suggests that he offered an explanation of how people came to believe in the gods

[41] For a discussion of this scientific development, its impact on thinking about the gods and the atomists' place in it, see Broadie (1999, esp. 220–3); compare Whitmarsh (2015, 52–73).

[42] Charles Kahn (1997, 254); compare the fuller picture presented in Sedley (2007, 1–8 and 133–9). The evidence about the atomists and their views on religion is complicated, not least because Democritus discusses the gods in his extant fragments. But it is worth pointing out that some of these Democritean fragments criticise conventional beliefs about the gods rather than present Democritus' own ideas. Others may invoke the gods in a misleading way; thus, Gregory (2013, 195): 'That Democritus referred to the divine is entirely unproblematic as it is clear he is referring to the good and the intellectual rather than to any god.' For a contrasting picture, see Taylor (Leucippus and Democritus, 1999 edn, 211–16).

[43] Expressions of ignorance about the gods were not new in the 5th century. Claiming that the gods were unknowable was a familiar trope in earlier literature, though these claims often came from texts that also made confident statements about the gods, for example, Od. 23.81–2; Pind. fr. 61 M; Aesch. *Ag.* 160–6; Eur. *Hel.* 711–12, 1137–43; *Or.* 418; and Isoc. 1.50. We can perhaps see the rigorous scepticism of the 5th century as a systematic development of this earlier trope.

[44] A later Epicurean tradition claimed that Protagoras was not merely agnostic but a complete atheist. Gábor Bolonyai (2007, 247–69) has shown that this is unlikely to be true; compare Whitmarsh (2015, 87–96). Bonazzi (2019, 114–15) also links the thought in Protagoras B4 back to Xenophanes.

[45] Our information about Prodicus' account of the Greeks' belief in the gods comes mainly from Philodemus' *On Piety*. Diels and Kranz (1951) does not contain all the relevant testimonia and context. The evidence has been collected and translated in Prodicus (2011 edn) and is discussed in Chapter 3.

that implicitly denied their existence.[46] We also have reason to believe there was a uniquely Athenian strain of 5th-century atheism from parts of Plato's *Laws* (885e7–886e2).[47]

Unsurprisingly, this growing religious scepticism did not sit comfortably with the increasing influence of the ideas found in Hesiod. Recall that the interventionist gods are crucial to the worldview articulated in WD: not only is Zeus credited with the creation of justice in the poem, but also the promise of divine reward and punishment is the ultimate recommendation in favour of the life of justice. The tight relationship between justice and prospering begins to unravel without the gods to hold it together. So it was that at the very same time that the Traditional View of Justice was becoming more deeply entrenched in Greek culture, its theological underpinnings were being exposed as fraudulent by members of the intellectual elite. This created an increasingly unstable environment. Conventional morality had been built upon a fabular foundation that might collapse at any moment. Sadly, we cannot be sure who first realised the devastating and far-reaching consequences that this new religious scepticism would have for traditional ideas about justice and the question of how self-interested individuals ought to behave. But we are lucky enough to possess substantial parts of two 5th-century sophistic texts—the 'Sisyphus Fragment' and fragment B44 from Antiphon's *On Truth*—that actively explore these consequences. These texts bring naturalistic assumptions and new methods of investigation to bear on the questions Hesiod had earlier asked about justice and its role in human prospering. Like their poetic predecessor, the authors of these texts accepted that intelligent individuals should pursue prospering. But unlike Hesiod, they ultimately rejected the central theses of the Traditional View of Justice with near systematic precision. They came to the conclusion that the intelligent practice of injustice promotes the individual's prospering more than the scrupulous practice of justice.

[46] Although the point is somewhat controversial, Mayhew (Prodicus, 2011 edn), Bett (2013) and Whitmarsh (2015, 83–5) conclude that the balance of evidence supports the attribution of atheism to Prodicus.

[47] Though *Laws* was written relatively late in the 4th century, recent scholarship suggests that the theory referred to in Book X originated and thrived in the 5th century. See Sedley (2013, 347).

2

The 5th-Century Challenge to Justice

In the 5th century a very important challenge to the Traditional View of Justice and conventional moral beliefs was posed by a number of sophists. The present chapter lays out the theoretical core of this challenge by introducing and analysing two important sophistic texts, the 'Sisyphus Fragment' of unknown authorship and fragment B44 from Antiphon's *On Truth*. The authors of these texts—the Moral Cynics—harboured a deep scepticism about the interventionist gods and denied that they could be counted on to support justice. One consequence of this denial was that it raised the possibility that human beings might get more goods and make a greater contribution to their own prospering through unjust rather than just behaviour. This possibility led the Cynics to object to the rosy picture of justice and human prospering presented in the Traditional View. Through a detailed analysis of these texts, I show how naturalistic assumptions led their sophistic authors to reject the superior value of justice and instead conclude that an individual concerned to prosper would do better to practise intelligent injustice instead. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of two non-sophistic texts that attest both to the broad impact that the Cynics' challenge had on Greek culture and to the urgent need for a response to which their dangerous views gave rise.

'Sisyphus Fragment' (SF)

The so-called 'Sisyphus Fragment'[1] is a forty-two-line fragment in verse of unknown authorship from the second half of the 5th century, possibly originating from a Satyr play.[2] The text describes the origin of religious belief by outlining

[1] Sisyphus is named neither in the fragment nor by the source that preserves it. However, the 2nd-century doxographer Aetius quotes some lines of SF and tells us that Sisyphus spoke them in the original play, if indeed our fragment was once part of a play (Plac. 1.7.2 = (Plut.) Mor. 880e–f).

[2] Ancient sources offer conflicting information about the origin of our text. According to Sextus Empiricus, the only source to quote the fragment fully (*adv. Math.* 9.54 and *Pyrrh.* 3.218), Critias is the author. But Aetius (1.7.2) claims Euripides wrote the piece. Scholars continue to debate the question

a three-stage historical development that freed humankind from a frightful and disorderly natural condition. In the first stage, humans (ἄνθρωποι, somehow acting as a group) instituted laws in an attempt to establish order by preventing those beholden to them from wronging one another. This, however, could not prevent all acts of wrongdoing because people continued to break the laws and do wrong in secret. In the second stage of this historical development, the belief in an omnipresent deity is manufactured and perpetuated in order to curtail secret wrongdoing. This leads to a third stage, in which humanity's unfortunate natural condition is finally overcome. Remarkably, the belief in god is explicitly said to have been produced by a 'false account'. Given that nothing else in the text indicates that gods might really exist, SF appears to be openly and unapologetically atheistic. And with this godlessness comes the implicit but nevertheless palpable suggestion that injustice may profit the individual.

The text starts by offering a brief description of our original, brutish condition (DK88 B25.1–4):

> There was a time when the life of humans was
> Disordered—both beastly and the servant of
> Strength.[3] Back then there was no prize for the good
> Nor again punishment forthcoming for the wicked.[4]

Next, it reports humankind's first attempt to escape the wild struggle for existence (5–8):

> And thereafter it seems to me that people set up
> Laws as punishers, so that Δίκη would be tyrant
> … and would have ὕβρις as a slave.
> And they were punished if someone did wrong.

These opening lines are reminiscent of WD and should, I think, be understood as a corrective to a number of specific views advanced in that poem. Let us begin by noting that these lines evince an understanding of justice that is similar to the one put forward by Hesiod, which, as we saw above, required not only following the laws but also treating others fairly as well (WD 213–24, 256–64 and 274–80). In SF the tight connection between justice and lawful behaviour is manifest

of authorship. Dana Sutton (1981) argues that Critias is the author, whereas Albrecht Dihle (1977) has put forth an influential argument in favour of Euripides. For a summary of this debate, see Davies (1989) and Collard (2007, 55–68). The scholarly state of affairs changed with David Sedley's (2013) 'The Atheist Underground'. This paper argues that SF was probably written and circulated anonymously, only to be erroneously attributed to Euripides or Critias centuries after the fact, presumably because both authors had a reputation for sophistic or irreligious thinking. I believe Sedley's argument has much to say for it, but the question of authorship is not particularly important for our purposes and can remain officially unanswered here.

[3] These lines bear a striking resemblance to the discussion of humanity's original condition in Diod. Sic. 1.8. See also Eur. *Suppl.* 201 and Isoc. 3.6–7.

[4] The Greek of SF is from Diels and Kranz (1951). Translations are my own.

from the fact that the laws are said to have been set up so that justice will rule (5–6). But because the tyranny of justice is also supposed to free humanity from a condition in which there are no prizes for the good (3–4), the rule of justice also apparently demands rewards for those who deserve them. Its scope, then, extends beyond the relatively narrow realm of written laws and into the sphere of fairness and appropriateness. Recall also that in Hesiod δίκη is opposed above all else to ὕβρις, a term encompassing violence, sexual deviancy and the sort of behaviour characteristic of beasts (WD 190–2, 213–18 and 238–9). The opening lines of SF reveal that ὕβρις is the essential contrast case to justice in our text as well (6). This, too, suggests a connection with Hesiod, as, indeed, does the image of δίκη holding ὕβρις as her slave. Indeed, this evocative picture is so strikingly reminiscent of WD that several scholars have regarded it as a direct allusion to that text.[5]

Yet though our text seems to be in broad agreement with WD about the substantive characteristics of δίκη, it takes a very different attitude towards human nature, history and the origins of justice. Particularly telling for our purposes is that life in the pre-law state of SF is said to be disordered (ἄτακτος), beastly (θηριώδης) and later to be governed by force (βίᾳ, 10). This reads as a rather perverse echo of a central Hesiodic passage discussed earlier, in which humans are contrasted with the beasts (θηρσί) that lack justice and may, therefore, use force and violence against one another (βίης; WD 274–80). As I argued above, in this passage Zeus establishes a sharp divide between the human and the animal kingdoms, thereby marking the two out as naturally distinct. The opening of the SF emphatically rejects any suggestion of fundamental dissimilarity. Instead, it appears to posit a deep similarity between us and the animals insofar as it insists that humanity's natural condition was literally a beastly one. This raises the question of why humans, unlike animals, are now able to follow justice. The answer we get is that our own ingenuity allowed us to institute justice so that we could overcome our original condition. In notably sharp contrast to Hesiod's account, no gods are required to explain how humanity came to be ruled by justice in SF.

Sadly, however, the momentous creation of laws was not enough to solve humanity's woes (9–15):

> Then, since the laws kept them from openly
> Accomplishing their crimes by force but people
> Continued to accomplish them in secret—it was at this
> Point, it seems to me … that some clever and wise man
> Invented the fear of the gods for mortals so that there
> Would be some fearful prospect for the bad people
> Even if they did or said or thought something in secret.

[5] The commentary on SF in Gagarin and Woodruff (1995, 261 n.265) draws a comparison to WD.

The institution of laws marks the beginning of the second historical stage. People stopped committing crimes openly to avoid being punished. But they did not quit their bad behaviour altogether. Rather, their illicit activities were driven into hiding, as it were, and people began practising injustice in secret. Such a state of affairs represented an improvement on the earlier condition, but evidently only a limited one. Things were still bad enough at this point in time that an orderly social life was impossible. Enter some clever and wise man (NB not humankind as a collective, but an individual) who invented and promulgated a belief in, as well as the fear of, an all-seeing god as a means to address the new social problem of secret injustice.

How did this fear work in practice? The mention of 'fearful prospects' in line 14 indicates that belief in the gods functioned to prevent secret injustice by convincing people that even if their crimes (or thoughts) went unnoticed, they would still be punished as consistently as if they were committed in public.[6] Belief in the gods thereby plays a similar role to laws, which also function by issuing credible threats of punishment (6), albeit threats credible only when the violations of the laws are detectable by other people. In any case, SF suggests that the gods' functional purpose is to extend the threat of punishment, hitherto restricted to the public domain, into all spheres of human life, however private.[7] And this suggestion is later confirmed when we are told that the wise man who invented belief in the gods extinguished lawlessness with laws (τοῖς νόμοις, 40). Because this wise man did not invent the laws, the point of our text must be that his invention made the laws more effective and enabled them to do what they were always designed to do.

It is worth emphasising how truly remarkable this idea is. Our text is boldly and unambiguously suggesting that the sort of religious commitments presumably held by the majority of Greeks were consciously manufactured at some point in the past to amplify the deterrent force of the laws onto a cosmic scale. And though our author does not stop to say this explicitly, he must have understood this to be a targeted repudiation of the Traditional View. It was not the gods who created justice and who issued laws to humankind. On the contrary, it was the human invention of the laws and justice that ultimately gave rise to the need for us to believe in the gods. This is a very clever inversion of the traditional picture

[6] That the text specifically mentions thinking is curious. Why was it necessary for the fictionalised gods to police the thoughts of people as well as their actions? Two possibilities suggest themselves. The first is that the text may be presupposing that wicked thoughts can constitute an injustice. Perhaps the thought 'my friend should die painfully' was sufficiently objectionable to be impermissible on its own. Though this is a tantalising possibility, I am inclined to favour the second possibility, that policing thoughts was a means of policing actions. On the assumption that thoughts often lead to actions, the wise man may have hoped to prevent unjust actions by preventing problematic thoughts.

[7] The sequence λάθρᾳ … ἐξευρεῖν, ὅπως … κἂν λάθρᾳ (11–15) further suggests the purpose of the wise man's invention was to extend the deterrent force of law into the hidden aspects of our lives.

presented in the poetic tradition. And there is good reason to believe that Hesiod was SF's main target. For the description of the god we get in our fragment appears to echo the description of Zeus in WD.[8] Our text is, therefore, not-so-subtly hinting that the sort of gods described by Hesiod and presupposed by the Traditional View of Justice are in truth nothing more than human-made tools meant to augment the force of the human-made laws.

The first fifteen lines of SF thus present an ingenious and naturalistic reinterpretation of traditional material. Readers are informed that humans are not nearly as different from the animals as Hesiod's poem had suggested and that any differences that do exist need not be due to the gods. History and human innovation can perfectly well explain how people, in contrast to the other animals, managed to make laws and come to be ruled by justice. Human innovation can also explain how and why humans came to believe in the gods, even though they do not actually exist. SF strikes the gods from the heights of Mt Olympus and recasts them as fictionalised tools to make humanity's legislative practices more effective. It follows that SF emphatically rejects the first thesis of the Traditional View of Justice. Humans—and not any of the gods—thought up and established justice. For obvious reasons, our text must also reject the second thesis as well. Since the belief in interventionist gods is a political fiction, there is no literal sense in which humans receive divine rewards or punishments for their good or bad behaviour. Yet though justice is not beneficial because the gods reward it, it may nevertheless remain beneficial. I argue below that the evidence suggests that although our author ultimately regards the life of intelligent injustice as more profitable and prudent than the life of justice, there is one important respect in which justice is indeed beneficial for the just agent. To make this clear and to determine SF's attitude to the remaining theses of the Traditional View, we turn to the overall message of our text.

Until recently, scholars typically held that SF was a subversive text endorsing a sort of irreligious hedonism. Charles Kahn gave voice to this view when he

[8] Compare SF 17–21:

> ὡς ἔστι δαίμων ἀφθίτῳ θάλλων βίῳ,
> νόῳ τ' ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων, φρονῶν τ' ἄγαν
> προσέχων τε ταῦτα, καὶ φύσιν θείαν φορῶν,
> ὃς πᾶν τὸ λεχθὲν ἐν βροτοῖς ἀκούσεται,
> <τὸ> δρώμενον δὲ πᾶν ἰδεῖν δυνήσεται.

with WD 267–9:

> πάντα ἰδὼν Διὸς ὀφθαλμὸς καὶ πάντα νοήσας
> καί νυ τάδ' αἴ κ' ἐθέλῃσ' ἐπιδέρκεται, οὐδέ ἑλήθει
> οἵην δὴ καὶ τήνδε δίκην πόλις ἐντὸς ἐέργει.

Both texts emphasise the respective deities' concern with discerning wrongdoing as well as the fact that the god can perceive everything. These similarities are very unlikely to be coincidental, as has been noted by other authors as well. For more on this, see Whitmarsh (2014, 118–20).

said that the text contains 'the most extreme expression of this atmosphere of moral cynicism, documented in the Antiphon fragments and caricatured in the *Clouds*' (1997, 259). On this interpretation, SF's rediscovery of godlessness is the gateway drug to dangerous, unjust and self-serving behaviour. Once the divine punishments that people were raised to believe in are exposed as fictions, the thought goes, very little remains to prevent anyone from ruthlessly pursuing their own advantage. To be sure, the laws still exist and threaten punishment for unjust behaviour. But we are invited to think of the laws as hurdles to our satisfaction, to be surmounted or swept aside whenever possible. Several newer treatments of our text have, however, attempted to save it from this sort of interpretation. Patrick O'Sullivan (2012) and Klaus Hoffmann (1997, 274–88), for example, stress the important function played by both the laws and the belief in the gods in SF. They note that the clever and wise man's invention was successful: the fragment calls his words 'the sweetest of lessons' (25) and its penultimate line explains that he 'extinguished lawlessness (ἀνομία) with laws' (40). This marks the culmination of humanity's earliest attempts to escape the natural condition into which they were born. Should we really understand our text as endorsing injustice if the whole point of the historical development outlined within it is to overcome injustice? Additionally, these scholars note that our text calls the inventor of the fear of gods 'clever and wise', which sounds like praise. We are, therefore, invited to understand his false account not as pernicious perjury but as fanciful fibbing, which, like Plato's noble lie, ultimately makes society better.[9] On this reading, SF endorses the rule of law and supports the fictional account of the gods that makes an orderly life possible for everyone.

Both of these interpretations get something right. Recent authors are correct to point out that SF recognises the importance of the laws and religious belief both for society at large and, by implication, for every individual who profits from their society. However, proponents of the first interpretation are right to maintain that—all that notwithstanding—the text offers more than a little hint that some people will, and perhaps even should, pursue their self-interest through calculated injustice. To see how, let us return to the beastly natural condition with which the fragment begins. Our ancestors desired to escape this condition because they believed that their lives would be better in an ordered society governed by laws. That is to say, they were motivated to bring about the rule of justice because they saw that it would promote their individual and collective self-interest. Yet our text indicates that many people, despite working hard to institute the laws, nevertheless broke those very laws in secret once they had been instituted (9–11). Why? The answer must be that our ancestors wanted to live in a peaceful and orderly society but also wanted to be able to steal from, assault or otherwise take

[9] The connection between SF and the noble lie has been explored by Jon Hesk (2000, 179–88).

advantage of their fellow citizens. That is to say, they wanted to live in a world where others were just and left them alone, but where they could get the better of others through secret injustice.[10] Unfortunately, this was not a realistic prospect. One cannot pilfer another's cake and expect to eat it in peace, too. Either a critical mass of people started to practise secret injustice immediately after the introduction of the laws or only a few did at first and then others, upon realising what was going on, joined in the fun later. Either way, enough wrongdoing continued to be perpetrated in this second historical stage to make a peaceful and orderly life impossible. Before lawlessness could be overcome and order established in the final historical stage, people needed to be convinced that all injustice—whether open or hidden—would inevitably be punished and would, therefore, prove detrimental to their self-interest (40–1).

But how much wrongdoing was perpetrated after the introduction of laws that the skies needed to come alive with gods? That the solution to the problem of secret injustice was the manufacture of divinity itself suggests that the situation must have been dire. Gods are not created to resolve minor inconveniences. Moreover, our text confirms that a considerable amount of injustice was being practised after the introduction of the laws when it later refers to the condition of society in the second historical stage as one of ἀνομία (37–40). ἀνομία is a term that typically indicates a condition of serious and pervasive social problems.[11] Thus things remained bad even after the laws were introduced.

But if this is right, then SF quietly leaves open plenty of conceptual space between the failure of the laws in its second historical stage and their eventual triumph in the third. In particular, it leaves open the possibility of an intermediate condition in which a modest amount of injustice is perpetrated without it being the case that society is plunged into dreadful ἀνομία. Of course, the wrongdoing would have to be localised to a smaller segment of the population than it was in the second historical stage. It would presumably also have to remain hidden. But still, nothing in the text speaks against this possibility. A small intellectual elite—those few who discovered (or, perhaps, learned from SF) the truth about the gods—would be the ideal population to practise this sort of selective injustice. They would understand that although there are no divine punishments for unjust

[10] This makes the SF look like an important precursor to Glaucon's contractarian account of justice in *Republic* (358e–359b). According to Glaucon, the laws were originally instituted so that people could escape a condition of mutual aggression. We will explore more connections between these texts in Part II. For now it is worth noting that the contractarian flavour of both accounts suggests that people were after External Goods when they broke the laws. It's not a tranquil soul but wealth that is stolen in secret. So, perhaps SF accepts the fourth thesis of the Traditional View, although this must remain a speculative suggestion.

[11] The use of ἀνομία in the 'Anonymous Iamblichi' is a case in point and will be discussed in the next chapter. But consider Thucydides 2.53.1, where the plague is said to have brought more ἀνομία into Athens. The description that follows is a horrifying tale of a city plunging into chaos. See Orrù (1985) for a thorough overview of the uses of ἀνομία in Greek texts of this period.

behaviour, this truth should not be promulgated. To spread it would be to let too many in on the secret and invite the sort of chaos that everyone wishes to avoid. So long as they protected this secret, however, our text allows that they might be able to engage in calculated, secret injustice while their fellow citizens dutifully treated them (and others) justly out of fear of the gods.

I admit that this line of thought goes beyond the text of SF. The fragment nowhere says that a select few can or should practise injustice. Nonetheless, it should be obvious by now that the text seems to allow that an intelligent agent might practise injustice profitably—that is to say, without getting punished in turn. Two further considerations suggest that our author would have endorsed such injustice as genuinely valuable. The first and most compelling consideration is simply that the text itself testifies to the fact that humans have a natural desire to get the better of their peers. This, after all, is exactly what our ancestors were trying to do when, once laws were first established, they started to practise injustice in secret. They wanted to take from others without having anything taken from them. By revealing that there are no real gods our author is, in effect, thrusting the audience of SF back into a historical stage where there were no credible threats curtailing people's secret injustice. At a bare minimum, our author had to expect that those who understood his message would be tempted to act like our ancestors in the second historical stage and secretly break the laws. And to whatever degree he endorsed the natural desire to get the better of one's peers, he would have to see intelligent unjust behaviour as profitable and prudent.

A second and related consideration comes into view when we notice that recent research has connected the SF directly to a pernicious strand of Athenian atheism. Referring to Plato's analysis of this atheistic movement in Book X of his *Laws*, David Sedley has noted (2013, 336): 'Plato did have certain written texts in mind, since he refers to the sources as being both in prose and verse. It is a safe assumption that the Sisyphus fragment or a longer text—perhaps even an entire play—containing it, was one of the verse texts.' Sedley goes on to argue that the core of the atheists' cosmology and legal theory presented in Book X finds clear expression in SF. Establishing this connection is illuminating for many reasons, but especially because Plato is explicit about the sort of life the atheists of that movement advocated. We are told they claim that 'whatever one wins through force' is justified and that the natural life is 'truly to rule over others, not to be a slave to others in accordance with the law' (*Leg.* 890a2–3 and 8–9). Of course, Plato is presenting the atheists in a particularly unflattering light in his *Laws*. But even allowing for some hyperbole or distortion on Plato's part, this is telling testimony. Assuming it is correct to connect SF with this atheist movement, we have independent evidence in favour of an interpretation of SF as endorsing, where desirable, the practice of injustice. It is certainly not hard to see how the intellectual elite described in the last two paragraphs might be thought to rule over those who are slaves to the laws.

This is, moreover, what one would expect from a text that is so obviously critical of the religious assumptions of WD. The debunking of religion and divine retribution in SF seems perfectly poised to pave the way for successful, profitable injustice. It is, then, only to be expected that the critical attitude our author held towards Hesiod would lead him to reject the fifth thesis of the Traditional View of Justice. And so he does. SF does not, however, reject everything in Hesiod. True, there is clearly no place in SF for real gods of any kind and, as a result, our text emphatically rejects the first and second thesis of the Traditional View. But SF's attitude towards the third thesis is complicated. Our author does not claim that self-interested individuals have no reason to value justice. On the contrary, he plainly recognises that justice is beneficial to the extent that it secures a safe and functional society for all and, by implication, for the individual too. This is hardly the sort of ringing endorsement of justice found in WD. But it certainly counts as a qualified agreement that justice benefits the just individual. Still, as I have tried to argue above, this qualified agreement masks a profound point of disagreement about what sort of behaviour is best for an individual and most likely to lead to their prospering. For SF implies that savvy people would do better to reject the life of justice and instead practise a sort of calculated and hidden injustice. This is just another way of saying that our text rejects the fifth and final thesis of the Traditional View of Justice. All things being considered, injustice is more valuable for the intelligent individual than justice.

On Truth (OT)

On Truth is a philosophical work written by the sophist Antiphon sometime in the late 5th century.[12] Though the vast majority of this work was lost for the better part of two millennia, one long fragment, now called B44 after its position in Diels and Kranz, was identified early in the 20th century CE when a group of manuscripts known as the Oxyrhynchus Papyri was discovered in Egypt. The fragment is quite lacunal and sadly broken into three chunks, the relationship between which is not totally clear. But we are still very fortunate that it was

[12] It is unclear whether the author of OT was the famous Athenian politician named Antiphon. The debate over whether the sophist and the oligarchic politician were the same person or two different people began in antiquity and has become vigorous in contemporary scholarship. Gerard Pendrick is the champion of the separatist camp, which holds that the sophist was a different Antiphon than the famous orator and politician. Beyond his excellent edition of the fragments (Antiphon, 2002 edn), see his (1987) and (2005). For an articulation of the opposing unitarian position, see Gagarin (1990) and (2002); see also Avery (1982). Paul Woodruff's (2004) review of the Pendrick–Gagarin debate helpfully summarises things and notes (correctly, in my opinion) that the evidence we have, while far from decisive, slightly favours the unitarian position. Yet because my discussion is mostly limited to one fragment, which is agreed by all to be the work of the sophist, I shall remain officially agnostic on the question of Antiphon's identity.

recovered, for the remains of OT contain the most sober-minded and sophisticated attack on justice contained in any extant 5th-century text. They are, therefore, hugely significant. In the fragment Antiphon argues, first, that following justice is often harmful to human nature and contrary to our self-interest and, second, that in addition to being harmful justice is—at least as it was conventionally understood—theoretically unstable. In the course of making these two criticisms, Antiphon states explicitly that the selective and intelligent practice of injustice is more beneficial for the individual than the scrupulous practice of justice. By openly endorsing the profitability and prudence of injustice, OT flatly rejects the fifth thesis of the Traditional View of Justice and, as we shall see, poses a full-frontal attack on it.

The text of the most important chunk of the fragment, 44(a), becomes legible at a point where Antiphon offers a statement about the nature of justice (DK87 B44 1.6–11):

> … Justice, then, is to not transgress the laws
> of the city in which one is a citizen.[13]

Antiphon characterises justice as not transgressing the laws and customs (νόμιμα) of one's own city, an understanding of justice that was common in the late 5th and early 4th centuries.[14] Its prominence and popularity presumably made it an attractive object of criticism.[15] But the core of this understanding of justice extends back far beyond the 5th century. Here it is important to note that 'νόμιμα' not only refers to laws in the sense of written legal statutes but also includes the norms and conventions that govern appropriate or correct behaviour more generally.[16] The target of Antiphon's criticism is, in other words, an understanding of justice that demands that we both follow the written laws and treat one another appropriately as well. It is, therefore, similar in substance to the understanding of justice found earlier in WD and SF.[17]

[13] I follow the Greek in Antiphon (2002 edn). Translations are my own, though given the difficulty of the Greek they have been informed by Pendrick's reconstruction and accompanying translation.

[14] At *Mem.* 4.4.12 Xenophon's Socrates claims that 'the lawful (τὸ νόμιμον) is just (δίκαιον)'. At 4.4.13 he explains that whoever transgresses (παραβαίνων) the laws of their city is unlawful (ἄνομος), and whoever is unlawful is unjust (ἄδικος). The one who obeys the laws is just (δίκαιος). The verbal parallels to the account of justice presented by Antiphon are striking, though there is some question about whether τό νόμιμον included for Xenophon, as it does for Antiphon, social norms as well as written laws. A detailed survey of texts conducted by Martin Ostwald (1986, 94–108) suggests that it should. Morrison (1995, 329–31), however, has argued that it cannot.

[15] Bonazzi (2019, 87).

[16] Later in 44(a) Antiphon mentions treating one's parents well as a requirement of the νόμιμα. This was not a strict legal requirement but a long-established custom or convention dictating how children should behave towards their progenitors. Other norms would have been included in the νόμιμα as well. Thus, Ostwald (1990, 297) claims that Antiphon's use of the word 'shows that all social, religious, and behavioural norms (and not merely the statutes) are being considered'.

[17] Why, then, does Antiphon use the word 'δικαιοσύνη' when Hesiod and the author of SF use 'δίκη'? It is not entirely clear. One thing that can be said is that δίκη is the older term, not replaced by δικαιοσύνη until the 5th century. This explains the presence of δίκη in Hesiod, but it raises the question of why

The remainder of 44(a) makes the case for thinking that justice does not serve the intelligent individual's self-interest. Antiphon's first complaint is that νόμμα often force us to do things that are contrary to our nature and, therefore, contrary to our well-being. His second complaint is that the νόμμα also fail to protect us from the harm and injury we might receive from others. In short, justice demands that we frequently forgo the pursuit of our own self-interest for the sake of others, yet it is unable to stop others from harming us in the pursuit of their own naked self-interest.

To understand why following the laws, norms and conventions (hereafter just 'laws') can be detrimental to our interests, we must note the fundamental distinction Antiphon draws between nature (φύσις) and law or convention (νόμος). He insists that our nature as human beings, including what profits us and leads to our prospering, is both fixed and inescapable, while the laws and other social institutions are creations of convention and neither fixed nor necessary (1.23–2.1):

> For while the things of the laws are imposed, the things of nature are necessary; and while the things of the laws are agreed upon but not born, the things of nature are born but not agreed upon.

Underlying this fundamental distinction is Antiphon's presumption of a past contract made among human beings to establish laws. In his pioneering paper 'The Origins of Social Contract Theory', Charles Kahn evaluates the evidence for early Greek theories concerning the origin of society and, in particular, humanity's heroic attempt to escape a disorderly state of nature through a mutual contract. Because the above text says laws were 'agreed upon but not born', Kahn finds this particularly strong evidence attesting to the existence of such an account in the 5th century.[18] The upshot is that unlike our nature, which is fixed, unchanging and has existed for as long as human beings have, laws came into being at some point in the past, changed and are in no way fixed. Empirical support for this idea is presented in another chunk of the fragment, 44(b) 2.1–6, where we seem to be informed that although everyone shares the same physical make-up, different cultures have radically different laws.[19] Antiphon shows himself to be very much

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the author of SF uses this same term in his much later work. Some evidence suggests that δίκη would have registered as poetic or mythical. One vivid example of this comes from Plato's *Protagoras*. In the mythical section of his 'Great Speech' Protagoras speaks of the virtues δίκη and αἰδώς (322c2); yet just a few lines later, once Protagoras has transitioned out of his myth, he calls those same virtues δικαιοσύνη and σωφροσύνη (323a1; cf. Aris. *Eud. Eth.* 1234a21–3). SF may use the older term because it is part of a play and, therefore, in the poetic genre.

[18] See Kahn (1981, 94 and 95 n.3); see also Hoffmann (1997, 188): 'Dieser Bezeichnung der νόμμα als bloße Vereinbarung scheint die sog. ‚Vertragstheorie' zugrunde zu liegen …'

[19] This section of the fragment is in a very poor condition, and it is hard to say with any degree of certainty what Antiphon's point is. However, the most convincing reconstruction of the text (on this, see Hoffmann (1997, 240–2)) suggests that the above interpretation is broadly correct.

aware of the Herodotean insight that there is a certain amount of contingency to the laws that one is born into. Had Antiphon been born in a different place, he would have been raised with different laws; and had he been born at an early enough time, there likely would not have been any laws at all.

The reader may perhaps realise that Antiphon is here presupposing a view about the origin and development of the laws that is similar to the historical account outlined in the opening lines of SF.[20] It seems to have been a shared assumption of the 5th-century Cynics (and, as we shall see in the next chapter, other sophists as well) that a satisfying historical and naturalistic explanation could be given for the existence and development of laws and justice. 'Once upon a time, a group of our ancestors came together and created laws in order to regulate the behaviour of the people living in the earliest human communities …' became preferable to 'From time immemorable we have had laws that were given to us by Zeus …'. And as it was for SF, Antiphon's preference for the naturalistic and historical explanation is obviously important for assessing his attitude towards the Traditional View of Justice. Because justice is, according to Antiphon, not transgressing the laws of one's city, it follows that justice can come into being only with the creation of laws.[21] And because laws are human inventions, justice is too. OT thus rejects the first thesis of the Traditional View. It was not Zeus who gave law and justice to humanity but humans themselves.

Unlike SF, however, which had much to say in favour of the laws, OT expresses many reservations about humanity's self-legislated νόμιμα. Antiphon freely admits that he is pursuing his investigation because he finds most laws hostile to human nature (2.23–30):

> This investigation is for the sake of all this: that many of the things just according to the law are hostile to nature. [22]

Antiphon proceeds immediately to mention the many areas of our lives that are governed by these laws: rules have been established as to what the eyes should see, what the ears should hear, what the tongue should say, what the hands should

[20] Kahn (1981, 97) recognises that the theory in SF is similar to the one presupposed by the passage quoted above, and he suggests that it (presumably like OT) hearkens back to an already established theory. The SF's 'account of the state of nature and the origin of the civil laws is brief … I suggest that in this respect the author is not innovating but making use of an earlier account of how "human beings first established laws", an account similar to that which Glaucon refers to in *Republic* II.'

[21] Again, this is paralleled in Glaucon's account in *Republic* II: 'Thereupon, of course, they began to establish laws and treaties among themselves, and they named the command of the law lawful and just. And this indeed is the origin and essence of justice' (*Rep.* 359a2–5).

[22] The majority of commentators agree that the nature in this passage refers to human nature. Kerferd (1957) was the first to argue for this position. He was followed by Furley (1981), who felt Kerferd's argument had not been sufficiently appreciated. I agree that human nature is meant here.

do, where the feet should go and even what the mind should desire.[23] But what these rules order us to do is no more natural than what they prohibit us from doing (2.30–3.18). They therefore constitute restraints on the free expression of our nature (4.1–6). As a corollary to these claims, Antiphon draws his reader's attention to a much more shocking fact: the laws often prevent us from doing what is pleasurable and sometimes even require that we suffer. We are told in no uncertain terms that among the things demanded by the laws, 'one would find many hostile to nature. And in them is more pain when less is possible; less pleasure when more is possible; and suffering, when it is possible not to suffer' (5.17–24).[24]

At this point in 44(a) Antiphon takes himself to have shown that the laws often restrain the free exercise of our nature, demand that we take less pleasurable courses of actions than we otherwise might, and even demand that we positively incur pain and suffering. These disturbing facts are meant to support the conclusion that scrupulously following the laws and being just is not the best way to promote one's prospering. At the end of B44(a), however, Antiphon appears to anticipate a natural objection to this train of thought and the conclusion to which it leads. Someone might reasonably point out that the laws' demands are universal. Every citizen is required to refrain from pursuing their own selfish goals at least some of the time, and every citizen will on occasion need to make sacrifices for the common good. Though it may at times be legitimately frustrating to play by the rules, the objection continues, it is ultimately prudent to do so because the laws protect everyone from the selfishness of others as well as provide other benefits to all.

Antiphon will have none of this well-intentioned objection.[25] He thinks it is perfectly obvious that the laws cannot be trusted to ensure that anyone plays

[23] It is unclear what Antiphon is referring to with his final example of rules concerning what one should desire, but it is tempting to connect it with the suggestion in SF that not only action but also thought needs to be policed (15). Perhaps Antiphon and SF are hinting at an established understanding that one can prevent bad behaviour by legislating against certain desires.

[24] Antiphon assumes throughout B44 that pleasure is naturally good for us and pain naturally bad. Should we infer from this that he is a hedonist? Some commentators have thought so, for example Nill (1985, 106 n.29). But nothing in our fragment indicates that pleasure is *the* good for Antiphon. If anything, the mention of both pain and suffering in this passage suggests that the two are not equivalent, that both are bad and, therefore, that neither is *the* bad. If this is true, then pleasure should not be *the* good. Other fragments also suggest a more pluralistic attitude. In B49 and B54, honours, prizes, wealth and other External Goods are named as valuable. Of course, a hedonist can value such things insofar as they facilitate pleasure. But I am aware of no evidence that Antiphon took the important theoretical step of distinguishing one ultimate source of value from derivative value. Given this, I prefer to avoid superimposing any heavy-duty philosophical structure onto Antiphon and to take him at his word when he indicates that wealth and honour are goods. If this is right, then he accepts some External Goods as genuinely valuable.

[25] For a similar interpretation of the following passage, see Bonazzi (2019, 85–6).

by the rules. To think they can is to naïvely misunderstand the laws and human society (5.25–6.9):

> So if the laws provided some protection for those submitting to these kinds of things,[26] and provided some loss for those who do not submit but resist, then to obey the laws would not be unprofitable. But now justice which derives from the law appears to be incapable of coming to the aid of those who submit to these kinds of things.

Antiphon's point seems to be that the laws are totally impotent to stop anything on their own. Of course, the fear of punishments legislated by the laws may, as in SF, stop some criminal behaviour. But, as Antiphon goes on to point out, there are ways for those who violate the laws to escape punishment. People can commit crimes in secret, and even when caught or accused, there is no guarantee they will be formally convicted or penalised. Those with honeyed tongues might be able to sweet-talk their way out of their bitter deserts, for example (6.19–7.13).[27] And even if wrongdoers are eventually punished for their crimes, this does not change the fact that they caused harm in the first place (6.9–18). The laws are of little help to me if they punish my murderer after I am already six feet underground. It is, therefore, foolish to trust that the laws will prevent the bad behaviour of others or adequately punish those who are unjust.

By anticipating and responding to those who might wish to defend the laws, Antiphon buttresses his earlier argument and presents further considerations against their utility. Taken together, the considerations of 44(a) are supposed to show how thoroughly problematic the νόμιμα are from the perspective of the self-interested individual. And because justice is nothing other than not violating the laws of one's city, we are being informed that justice is not especially valuable for us. The position of OT is thus more extreme than the one we found earlier in SF, for in that text justice was at least highlighted as a very useful principle for

[26] 'τ]οῖς τοιαῦτα προ<σ->ϊ]ξμένοις' and 'τοῖς προσιεμ[ένοις τὰ τοιαῦτα' must refer to those people who submit to either the νόμιμα or—what comes to much the same thing—the restraints imposed by the νόμιμα. Thus Pendrick (Antiphon, 2002 edn, 344) in his commentary: 'Most likely it means accept or submit to the laws'; compare Nill (1985, 63): 'Antiphon's argument, then, requires that "such things" refer to *nomos*-imposed restraints …'

[27] Though the text becomes very difficult to reconstruct at this point, which comes at the end of 44(a), it seems to be discussing an individual using persuasive speech in court to avoid the punishment that they deserve. In a reconstruction and translation of Antiphon's fragments, Graham (2010, 2:814–15) reconstructs the relevant sections thusly: '[F]or the victim must persuade those who will exact punishment that he suffered wrong, and he petitions to be able to get justice. But it remains to the perpetrator to deny these things. [The persuasiveness of defending] is [worse for the defender,] above all insofar as the persuasiveness of accusing is [better] for the accuser, both for the victim and for the perpetrator. For victory comes by words and …' Antiphon's point may be that someone who practises injustice can avoid due punishment either by defending themself in court or, even more perniciously, by bringing formal charges against someone innocent of them, who then faces the difficult task of trying to defend themself in a court of law.

regulating human interaction. This is not obviously so for Antiphon, who has very little to say in favour of justice at all.[28] Given all this, a dispassionate reader of B44 should conclude that Antiphon largely rejected the third thesis of the Traditional View of Justice. Justice is not particularly useful for the individual.

It is clear that he rejected the fifth thesis as well (1.12–23):

> Thus, a person would make use of justice most beneficially for themselves if they considered the laws as great when in the presence of witnesses and the things of nature [as great] when bereft of witnesses.

Antiphon is explicit in this passage about how an individual would most beneficially 'use'—that is to say, orient themselves towards—justice. It is not, all things considered, prudent to be just. Instead, one should consider the laws as great in public but the demands of nature, which are often incompatible with legal demands, in private. What Antiphon means by considering something as 'great' is that one should attach greater importance to that thing in one's deliberations about what to do.[29] As we shall see below, this means that there may well be some circumstances in which it is advisable to follow the laws even when there are no witnesses around. Nevertheless, this passage clearly suggests that it is often more profitable to break the laws than to follow them.

Strictly speaking, of course, Antiphon here does not explicitly recommend an unjust course of action over a just one. He does not literally say the intelligent individual should ignore the laws when they are alone. He only says that doing so is generally beneficial. Jonathan Barnes (1996, 407) has argued that it would be wrong to see Antiphon as prescribing any sort of behaviour instead of merely expressing a theoretical truth: OT was written 'as a statement of fact and not as a suggestion for action'.[30] In fairness to Barnes, Antiphon is making a statement of fact in the above passage. But in fairness to Antiphon, he should not have had to use prescriptive vocabulary to get his very obvious point across. It seems to me rather churlish to insist that Antiphon should have had to explicitly state that he

[28] Some scholars have claimed to have found a 'superior' natural justice behind Antiphon's criticism of the conventional conception of justice introduced at the beginning of B44(a); see, for example, Moulton (1972, 348–9) and Saunders (1978, 231). Naturally, these scholars also think that Antiphon endorses the superior conception of justice they find in his work. But there is no solid textual evidence whatsoever that Antiphon contemplated—let alone accepted—a conception of justice other than the one he presents and criticises. The arguments of Moulton and Saunders have been ably criticised by Hoffmann (1997, 230–4).

[29] Here I follow Riesbeck (2011, 271): 'To "consider great" does not mean simply "to observe" or "to obey." It means, rather, to attach a greater precedence …'

[30] This claim is expanded upon later in his book: 'Perhaps [Antiphon] offered his observations with no practical recommendation in mind: his book, after all, is *On Truth*: it was not primarily a practical tract' (1996, 408). The reason I object to Barnes' reading will soon become clear. For the moment, I will simply note that there is no compelling reason to think that Antiphon gave his treatise the name we now know it by; on this, see Pendrick (Antiphon, 2002 edn, 32–3). So its title gives no obvious insight into what the author intended to argue for in the work.

endorses the practice of injustice after insisting that, and explaining why, breaking the laws is beneficial. The whole investigation of B44(a) is oriented towards the practical question of what benefits or harms us, and such investigations do not lend themselves to detached, descriptive conclusions. The reader should consider again Hesiod's concluding 'statement of fact': 'prosperous and blessed is the one who knows all these things …'. Are we really to believe that this is merely theoretical and is not meant to have any direct practical implications?

If we needed more convincing that Antiphon's lessons are intended to inform behaviour, we find it in the following lines (2.3–10):

> When a person transgresses the laws, then, they are free from shame and punishment if they escape the notice of those who agreed on them; but if not, then they are not.

Note that a literal interpretation of this passage entails that an individual will be free from all punishment and shame if their injustice escapes the notice of those who have agreed on the laws, which must mean their fellow citizens. No other punishments are mentioned in B44 aside from legal punishments. I take this to be decisive textual evidence that Antiphon rejected the possibility of divine punishment for unjust behaviour and, by implication, the possibility of divine reward as well. What we have here, then, is an explicit rejection of the second thesis of the Traditional View.

Now recall that in WD the threat of divine punishment is what recommends against the practice of injustice; similarly, SF took it for granted that many people would freely commit crimes and harm others if they were not stayed by the threat of legal or cosmic retribution. Early Greek ethical thinkers tended to assume that individuals would pursue their own material self-interest if they could do so without suffering any harm in turn. There is no reason to think OT was any different in this respect. Thus when Antiphon argues that following the laws is frequently harmful to us and, in addition, claims that those of us who break the laws will be free from punishment and shame if they cleverly commit their crimes in secret, he is inviting us to consider secretly breaking the laws. He trusts, in other words, that we will hear the call to action that Barnes has missed.

This is enough to conclude that Antiphon rejected the fifth thesis of the Traditional View. On his view, behaving justly is frequently harmful to one's interest and the prudent way to live one's life is to selectively and intelligently violate the νόμιμα of one's *polis*—or to be selectively and intelligently unjust. This view sounds radical, and it surely was. But it bears reminding that Antiphon says only that one should *consider* the things of nature as great in private. Moreover, OT never claims that following the laws is always hostile to our nature or detrimental to our prospering. It claims only that most (τὰ πολλὰ) of the laws are. Presumably, Antiphon would not encourage anyone to violate the few sanguine

νόμιμα, even if they could do so without getting caught. Finally, it is worth recalling that the reason to avoid breaking the laws in public is that one will incur painful punishments or shame when one's violation is recognised. But sometimes private wrongdoing is later discovered through forensic investigations or confessions. In such cases the wrongdoing is typically punished in just the same way as if it occurred in public. Antiphon's point is not that we should break the laws of our city as much as possible but that—as a general principle—we should think about what will ultimately be in our interest, where this is understood in terms of what is beneficial to our nature.[31] For most of us, this may well mean that we should carefully follow the laws whenever we are in public and even some of the time we are alone.

To conclude our discussion of 44(a), consider again 5.25–6.9. In this passage Antiphon concedes that it would be profitable to follow the laws—and, therefore, be just—if the laws were able to protect their citizens and if those who broke the laws suffered some loss. It is worth noting that this concession is almost a mirror image of the concession Hesiod makes near the end of his own discussion of δίκη. Recall that at WD 270–3 Hesiod admits it would be better to practise injustice if doing so resulted in more good things and fewer bad things than injustice. Of course, because the pious poet thinks the gods will intervene to set things straight, he does not believe that injustice could ever reliably result in more good things than justice. But, as I argued above, Hesiod's concession is important because it shows that profit and prospering should guide our behaviour.

Antiphon agrees about what should guide our behaviour, but he rejects almost everything else in WD. OT clearly rejects the first and second theses of the Traditional View of Justice. The gods do not give justice to humans nor do they punish unjust behaviour or reward just behaviour. In truth, humans created laws for themselves, and only they are around to enforce them. But, sadly, the laws that were made in the past are not particularly beneficial to our nature nor are they enforced in a way that effectively protects citizens from the mistreatment of others. They don't even effectively punish violators after they have committed their crimes. Justice could perhaps be beneficial if the laws were effective at punishing those who cause suffering and came to the aid of those who suffer. But Antiphon seems about as confident of that happening as Hesiod was in Zeus abandoning humanity. Antiphon's argument in OT thus sets the Hesiodic view on its head and advances the opposite position. Justice could be valuable for humans if it actually protected them and punished violators, but it does not and cannot. Intelligent injustice is far more prudent.

[31] Interestingly, this leaves open the possibility that it may be prudent at times to break the laws and suffer the consequences because the crime is profitable enough to offset the expected punishment. Antiphon does not develop this possibility in the text that we have, but he should at least have recognised it as a live (if unlikely) possibility.

A lack of space prevents me from discussing the final chunk of the fragment, 44(c), in detail, but in it Antiphon advances the remarkable idea that justice is not only harmful but also theoretically unstable.[32] He argues for this by offering several case studies that highlight two νόμιμα and then by interrogating what these νόμιμα demand of citizens in particular situations. In a rather Socratic-looking argument, Antiphon presents three examples in which two apparently genuine principles of justice demand of an agent that they both φ and ~φ at the same time.[33] Assuming that no tolerable account of justice will contain laws that demand contradictory behaviour of the same person at the same time, Antiphon says of each of these pairs of principles: 'it is necessary that either one of them be just, or that both be unjust' (2.22–5). But in all three of the examples both are *ex hypothesi* genuine principles of justice. The reader is left perplexed and lost. Absolutely no help is given within the fragment for resolving the contradiction in which these local demands of justice result. Antiphon's point seems to be that the whole system of justice is internally inconsistent.[34]

The argument in 44(c) should be understood as the theoretical sidekick to the prudential argument of 44(a). In 44(a) we learn that scrupulously following justice and obeying the νόμιμα of one's city is not prudent. It is often harmful to our true interests and should not be countenanced by the rational deliberator. In 44(c) we are told that, in addition, justice is internally incoherent and collapses from its own contradictions. At the end of Antiphon's fragments the reader is left with the distinct impression that justice is a bad bargain: sold at too dear a price and thoroughly broken. The intelligent individual ought to reject it and pursue calculated, intelligent injustice instead.

Two Corroborating Texts

In this section, I discuss two other texts that attest to the existence, power and influence of the sophistic challenge to justice. Though the authors of these texts are not themselves sophists, their works include characters who express radical yet familiar criticisms of conventional morality and who are, through either subtle hints or explicit suggestions, associated with the sophists. Several of the arguments put into these characters' mouths appear to draw on or parody specific features of the Moral Cynics' attack on the Traditional View of Justice. Attending to these arguments and their context is important for at least three reasons. Firstly, they

[32] My interpretation of 44(c)'s upshot is similar to Hoffman's (1997, 215–16).
[33] On the elenchic character of the argument, see Barney (2006b, 83–4).
[34] Though this is never said in the text, this inconsistency is presumably to be explained by the laws' origins. Established over a stretch of time by different groups of people with unconnected agendas, there is no reason to expect that all laws will harmonise with one another or form a consistent whole. It is likely for this reason that 44(c) ends with a hint that the incoherent demands of justice are ubiquitous, potentially manifesting themselves in every aspect of the legal system.

provide us with fresh new insight into how and why some 5th-century sophists endorsed the life of injustice as (in one form or another) more profitable and prudent than the life of justice, thereby augmenting the investigation in the central sections of this chapter. Attending to these texts will also reveal just how impactful the Cynics' challenge really was. As we shall see, their ideas became sufficiently mainstream to find their way into one of the most disturbing passages of history and one of the most brilliant comedies from the Classical period. And finally, by looking through the eyes of Aristophanes and Thucydides, we shall get a non-sophistic perspective on how the ideas in SF or OT were thought to operate in practice as well as the sort of nefarious purposes for which they might have been deployed. Examining these other texts will, therefore, help us appreciate how dangerous the Cynics' ideas were thought to be and why it was so important for others to respond to them.

Aristophanes' *Clouds*

The first text to be considered is our comedy, Aristophanes' *Clouds*. About two-thirds of the way through the play, two personified λόγοι come on stage and engage in a verbal battle over the appropriate way to educate youths and, more generally, the appropriate way to live. The first λόγος advocates a traditional education and endorses a noble if outdated caricature of an aristocratic lifestyle. The other is said to offer new and exciting, albeit corrupting, arguments on the same topics. We will turn to some of these arguments in a moment, but first a note about the identities of these λόγοι. While conversing with one another, they call themselves the stronger argument (ὁ κρείττων λόγος) and the weaker argument (ὁ ἥττων λόγος, *Cl.* 893, 990 and 1038). Their reputation, however, very much precedes them, and before they come on stage they are referred to by different names. Strepsiades, the miserly father who sends his son to be instructed by the λόγοι, apparently knows of the weaker argument as the unjust argument (τὸν ἄδικον τοῦτον λόγον, 116).[35] Given the lessons this λόγος goes on to teach Strepsiades' son, Pheidippides, this appellation is fitting, for its arguments very much do encourage injustice. This is presumably why scholiasts have long preferred to refer to the weaker argument as the unjust argument and its counterpart as the just argument.[36] Following Dover's magisterial edition of the text (1989, lvii), I shall refer to the two as the 'Right Argument' and the 'Wrong Argument'. But the reader should bear in mind that the Wrong Argument is associated with injustice and an unjust way of life.

One must also note that the Wrong Argument ultimately triumphs in the verbal battle and becomes the primary educator of Pheidippides. Aristophanes

[35] See also 657 and 885, where the expressions τὸν ἀδικώτατον λόγον and τὸν ἄδικον are used.
[36] See Dover (Aristophanes, 1989 edn, lvii–lxvi) for a discussion of scholiastic tradition and, more generally, on the names and functions of the two λόγοι.

thus literally makes the weaker (and unjust) argument stronger, thereby marking the whole contest as highly sophistic.[37] Sophistic influence can be seen from the form of the dramatised confrontation as well. Offering contrasting arguments on one topic or question—particularly one of ethical moment—was a common practice among the sophists.[38] There are particularly strong formal similarities to Prodicus' speech 'The Choice of Heracles', in which personifications of virtue and vice argue with one another about what sort of education Heracles ought to receive and how he ought to live.[39] It therefore comes as no surprise when Socrates explicitly suggests that the Wrong Argument possesses the sophist's skill by reassuring Strepsiades that his son will become a clever sophist after studying with it (1111). We may conclude that Aristophanes' presentation of the Wrong Argument was written with the sophists in mind. Of course, this does not mean that Aristophanes attempted to faithfully represent the arguments of a particular sophist. The Wrong Argument is ridiculous and grotesquely hilarious. It would be unreasonable to think it faithfully represented the arguments of any historical figure. Yet Aristophanes was surely parodying genuine sophistic doctrines and positions. And by evaluating his text we may extract information about the Cynics' arguments.

I will mention just a few arguments made by the Wrong Argument and its eventual student, Pheidippides. Near the outset of the confrontation between the two λόγοι, the Right Argument boasts that it will speak honourably about good and just things and with this strategy triumph over its opponent. To this, the Wrong Argument replies that relying on justice would be a huge mistake, 'for I say that justice in no way exists' (902). In response to the indignant protests of its more decent counterpart, the Wrong Argument elaborates by way of a short argument (904–6):

> If Justice exists, how, then, was Zeus not destroyed after binding his own father?[40]

[37] 'Making the weaker argument stronger' was a charge often levelled against the sophists, and Protagoras in particular (Aris. *Rhet.* 1402a23). Some have gone so far as to suggest that the Wrong Argument represents or satirises Protagoras alone, for example Newiger (1957, 138–9). This surely goes too far. There is no reason to think that the morally problematic arguments put forward by the Wrong Argument would have been associated with the elder sophist. Protagoras is elsewhere depicted as advancing a mostly decent view about justice and human prospering. Probably the presence of Protagorean terminology and imagery in *Clouds* is to be explained by the simple fact that Protagoras was the first and most famous of the sophists.

[38] The most obvious example of this comes from the 'Dissoi Logoi' (DK90 B1). This text opens with three successive contrasting arguments on whether the good and the bad are the same or not, on whether the fine and the shameful are the same or not, and on whether the just or the unjust are the same or not. For a discussion of this text and its structure, see Wolfsdorf (2020).

[39] This text is discussed in Chapter 3. The similarities between it and *Clouds* have led some to suggest that Prodicus was a major influence on Aristophanes; see, for example, Cole (1991, 77). Although there is no denying certain similarities, I don't think Prodicus can be the primary influence behind the Wrong and the Right Arguments. Prodicus was too great a defender of justice to inspire the immoralist sentiments voiced by the Wrong Argument. A nuanced treatment of the relationship between *Clouds* and 'The Choice of Heracles' was given by Papageorgiou (2004).

[40] Aristophanes' Greek is from Dover's edition of *Clouds* (Aristophanes, 1989 edn). Translations are my own.

Although much of the reasoning is here left implicit, we are in a position to unpack the Wrong Argument's train of thought. It is assuming a traditional conception of justice and the gods—who, as we have seen, were thought to punish injustice—in order to expose that very conception as problematic. The Wrong Argument's question evidently presumes that severe violations of justice are supposed to be punished. It then draws on the well-known story of Zeus overthrowing and imprisoning his father in Tartarus.[41] To attack and imprison one's father was highly objectionable in ancient Greece, and it would have counted as hugely problematic.[42] But Zeus is never punished for his violation—on the contrary, he later becomes the de facto ruler of the gods. The conspicuous absence of any punishment for his unjust violation is supposed to show that the Right Argument's presumptions about justice do not correspond to anything that really exists in nature. Presumably, the fact that Zeus committed an injustice is supposed to be additionally problematic for the Right Argument and its convictions. For, as we saw in WD, Zeus is supposed to be the ultimate guarantor of justice. But why would we trust him to uphold justice if he himself violates it?

Much like SF and OT, the Wrong Argument sees that once the gods are out of the picture, the only credible deterrents against unjust behaviour are the laws and one's fellow citizens. Yet it also recognises that the laws are far from perfect and can be circumvented in several ways, including through crafty argumentation. It is for this reason that the λόγος boasts that if Pheidippides learns how to argue effectively he will be able to illicitly pursue his self-interest with impunity. In what reads as a sort of exaggerated caricature of the closing lines of 44(a), the Wrong Argument encourages Pheidippides to follow the necessities of nature (τὰς τῆς φύσεως ἀνάγκας, 1075) and recognise nothing—however extreme—as shameful, even if his pursuits should lead him to unjust behaviour.[43] There will always be a cunning means of escape. For example, if a husband should discover Pheidippides in bed with his wife, he is advised to defend himself by noting that not even Zeus can control his lust around women. How, then, can a mere mortal!? Those with quick wits and sophistic arguments need not fear suffering on account of their crimes (1075–82).

Finally, we note that the speech promotes gross hedonistic and egoistic behaviour (1071–4):

> Consider, oh lad, all the things that go into being temperate and how many pleasures you will give up: boys, women, drinking games, delicacies, boozing, and laughing. And yet what good is life to you, if you are robbed of these things?

[41] See *Th.* 617–819 for the story of Zeus and the triumph over Chronos; compare Aesch. *PB.* 201–44.
[42] Antiphon clearly implies that the νόμιμα require one to respect and venerate one's parents, even if they have treated one poorly in the past at 44(a) 5.4–8; compare Plat. *Euthyph.* 3e8–4b2.
[43] Νόμιζε μηδὲν αἰσχρόν, 1078. This imperative goes beyond Antiphon's remark at 44(a) 2.3–10 that an unjust individual can avoid punishment and shame, but it is easy to see how Antiphon might also agree with the Wrong Argument. For one might think that if an individual experiences shame only if and when they are caught, then no act itself, all on its own, properly merits shame.

The Wrong Argument thus offers a rather succinct, if exaggerated, challenge to the Traditional View of Justice. It casts doubt both over whether the gods gave justice to humans and over whether the gods will punish us for our unjust behaviour. This comes close to rejecting the first and second theses of the Traditional View. Moreover, to the extent that it exists, justice is presented by the Wrong Argument as an obstacle to the satisfaction of our true natural desires. And at least for those who can cleverly argue their way out of trouble, the more prudent way to live one's life is to take advantage of others by unjust means. For the prosperous life is the life spent luxuriating in sex, drink and delicacies, and the best way to get these things is through unjust behaviour. This, in turn, looks like a rejection of the third and fifth theses of the Traditional View. The only possible point of agreement with WD is the unjust λόγος' assumption that pleasures and External Goods are truly valuable and important for human prospering. But even here, the tenor of the goods highlighted differs considerably. Hesiod praises hard work, a simplistic enjoyment of wealth and a fine reputation. The prosperous life according to the Wrong Argument seems instead to consist in lascivious luxury and the enjoyment of base pleasures.

Two arguments later made by Pheidippides must be mentioned here. After the student develops his own argumentative acumen, he, full of bravado from the new sophistic thinking, dares to strike his father for ridiculing Euripides. Strepsiades rebukes his son by invoking the law that prohibits children from assaulting their parents. We then get a very interesting two-part response (1421–4):

> Was it not a man—just like you and me—who was
> the first to establish the law, and by his speaking
> persuade our ancestors? Is it, then, any less permissible
> for me in turn to establish a new law for sons in the
> future, that they return their father's beatings?

This is not likely to impress anyone as a response to a father's well-intentioned attempt to discipline his child. But Pheidippides' questions point towards a rather sophisticated philosophical insight. Recall that, according to Hesiod in WD, Zeus himself gave laws to human beings. Believing that the laws derived (either in part or in their entirety) from the father of the gods no doubt had the effect of bestowing a certain dignity and authority onto these laws, not least because it implies that all people are everywhere permanently subject to them. Pheidippides should be understood as attempting to strip the laws of their sham dignity and authority by pointing out that the regulations governing human behaviour were in fact created by some person or persons in the past. This attempt raises the question of what normative force such laws have and why they should not be replaced at a later time by someone else—perhaps even by someone like you or me.

Pheidippides then concludes his defence of father-flogging as follows (1427–9):

> Consider how the roosters and these other animals
> repay their fathers: and yet in what way do they differ
> from us, except of course that they don't write laws?

Here the son provocatively offers an example from the animal kingdom and uses it as a potential model to inform human behaviour. Roosters attack their fathers, so why shouldn't we?[44] This question would have flabbergasted Hesiod. In WD, he takes it for granted that humans are importantly distinct from animals and that we are better off for it. Recall that the lack of justice and the presence of violence among the animals was presented as highly pernicious—indeed, it was the feature of their lives that we should be most anxious to eliminate. Pheidippides questions this. He puts pressure on the idea that humans are ethically distinct from animals and should avoid beast-like behaviour for that reason. By citing roosters and other animals as a model for human behaviour, he, like SF, narrows the gap that Hesiod placed between us and the animals.

Again, I am not suggesting that any 5th-century sophist ever used these particular arguments to justify the maltreatment of their father (though some past scholars have linked the argument at 1427–9 very closely to Antiphon's *On Truth*).[45] I hope it is clear by now that the actual sophists had far more serious concerns than this. We must assume, instead, that Aristophanes is parodying arguments he thought were particularly pernicious and—by putting them into the mouth of Pheidippides, a childish and outrageous horse-lover—running them through a dramatic *reductio ad absurdum*. Nevertheless, a nuanced interpretation of these arguments reveals some notable ways in which they resonate with the texts discussed earlier in the chapter and, I think, offer insight into the method of argumentation used by the Cynics. Firstly, note that both Antiphon and the author of SF assume that humans made the laws that we all follow. This challenges the idea that the laws have some divine authority or dignity, and it raises the question of whether they are normatively absolute or can be broken or changed. Some such line of thought lies in the background of the first part of Pheidippides' challenge to his father. By asking why the laws shouldn't be broken or remade, he cleverly shifts the burden of responsibility to the defenders of justice and challenges them to demonstrate and justify the authority of the laws. This is an eminently reasonable challenge if one assumes that the laws are merely one among many human creations (and, as we shall see in the next chapter, it was a challenge to which at least one defender of justice felt compelled to rise).

[44] Compare Aristoph. *Birds* 757–9 and 1349–52, where birds are also said to attack their parents.
[45] See Bonazzi (2006, 112–15), who believes that Antiphon may have been a significant influence behind the Wrong Argument and Pheidippides. This has been questioned by Betegh (2016).

Secondly, when removed from the ridiculous context in which Aristophanes has placed them, these arguments—and particularly the second, with its appeal to animal behaviour—exhibit a rather ingenious philosophical strategy. Witness that after Pheidippides highlights the humble status of the laws in the first of the two passages, he then appeals to the behaviour of animals to provide some empirical evidence that it may be appropriate for humans to do what convention now prohibits. In conjunction with one another, these two moves are philosophically powerful. For how else does one intelligently respond to someone who says 'god has established these ethical norms and they must be followed' than by first pointing out that, in fact, it was not god but humans who created those norms sometime in the past, and then by appealing to some natural model in order to argue that those norms are anyhow not appropriate for the sort of creatures that we are? These kinds of considerations remain powerful in combatting prejudiced beliefs, even today.[46] My own suspicion is that Pheidippides' appeal to the animal world was inspired by genuine sophistic attempts to offer empirical evidence about what humans are naturally like, free from the education and customs with which they were inundated in Classical Greece.

Thucydides' *History*

The final text we must address is the famous Melian Dialogue. In one of the more captivating pieces of Classical literature, Thucydides dramatises an encounter between the leaders of the small island-*polis* of Melos and a group of envoys who represent Athens, the imperial maritime power that intends to make Melos part of its empire. Athens' conquest of Melos was a real historical event occurring in 416/415, but the dialogue reproduced in Thucydides' *History* may have been a largely fictionalised creation. Thucydides would not have been present for any of the discussions on Melos, and he may not have written his version of the dialogue until the war ended in 404, or even later, when any detailed memory of the events in question would have been long lost.[47]

The dialogue found in our text begins with the Melians objecting to the overwhelming military force that the Athenians have brought to their doorstep.

[46] Many people have recently objected to the religious or natural law position that homosexuality is unnatural and therefore wrong by appealing to the empirical fact that most animal species have members that practise homosexual and non-procreative sex; see, for example, Bagemihl (1999). In response to dogmatic claims that human homosexuality is unnatural, the appeal to other animal species is powerful and persuasive. The sophists were the first thinkers to seriously look at the way animals behave in order to raise important challenges to (what they saw as) the prevailing prejudices of ethical thought. Earlier figures did at times discuss the animals (e.g. Xen. DK21 B15 and Herac. DK22 B61), but these discussions were not generally used to criticise prevalent ethical ideas.

[47] For a discussion of the date of composition, see Macleod (1974, 397–8).

They politely hint that the army's advanced preparations suggest that the envoys will not be receptive to considerations of justice which, the Melians believe, demand that they be left alone. The envoys respond that they have not journeyed to Melos to talk justice: they will only discuss what is expedient for both cities and how Melos might save itself from complete destruction (5.86–7). Though the Melians agree to set aside high-minded considerations about morality and focus on what is advantageous for both cities, they nevertheless go on to argue that it is not in Athens' self-interest to be unjust. To this argument the Athenians respond with shocking honesty. The discussion that follows includes, among other things, a debate about whether it is profitable for a city to be just. Notably, the whole discussion takes place in private, a fact remarkable enough that Thucydides feels the need to comment on it. The Melian leaders were worried that if the envoys spoke before the entire city, the citizens might be swayed by the envoys' seductive and unrefuted arguments (ἐπαγωγὰ καὶ ἀνέλεγκτα, 5.85.1). The mention of seductive arguments is, I think, a hint that the envoys are expected to argue like a sophist and make the morally weaker argument the stronger one.[48]

Once the rules of conversational engagement have been established, the envoys tell the Melians they must choose between submitting to Athens' yoke and being annihilated. The Melians initially reject both options as unjust and ask to be left alone. They have done nothing to harm the Athenians and do not deserve either misfortune.[49] All the same, they are informed that remaining neutral is not an option: their only choice is to live as tributary subjects of Athens or to die as their enemies. The Melians then claim that it is actually in the Athenians' interest to respect the demands of justice. They point out that when the Athenian empire falls, as it must eventually, justice may be the only thing to save them from the vengeance of those they now threaten (5.90). When this and other argumentative Hail Marys fail, the Melians resort to claiming that the gods may punish Athens in battle: 'We trust we shall have no less fortune from the gods, because we stand as god-fearing people (ὅσιοι) against unjust people (οὐ δικαίους), and that what we lack in power will be made up by the allegiance of the Spartans, who are bound, if

[48] It is hard to be certain about the Melians' motivation for discussing matters in private. In his influential commentary, Hornblower (2008, 3:230) suggests that the oligarchic leaders of Melos fear the Athenians' democratic credentials will appeal to their disenfranchised population. This suggestion is attractive and may well be partly correct. But it does not adequately explain the mention of arguments going *unrefuted*. If the worry is simply partisan loyalty, the question of arguments being refuted or unrefuted would be superfluous. I am therefore inclined to think that part of the leaders' apprehension is due to their expectation that the envoys will make arguments of the sort that were often associated with the sophists. In any case, the arguments they encounter are reminiscent of the sophists, a fact noted by previous scholars; see, for example, Winton (2000, 113–14).

[49] The Melians seem to be in the right when they claim they do not deserve Athens' aggression. On this, see Woodruff (2002, 201–2), who argues that 'do not wage aggressive war' was 'one of the two principal requirements of virtue that is thought to be universal' in Thucydides' *History*.

only for shame, to come to the aid of their kindred' (5.104).[50] To this, the Athenians offer a surprisingly candid response (5.105.2):

> We believe of the gods and we know of humans that at all times they, by a natural necessity, rule[51] wherever they can.[52]

'Words to make the blood of any Greek run cold', Francis Cornford remarked long ago (1907, 182). The envoys' position is truly shocking. Not only do they reject the idea that gods might intervene to defend the Melians, but they also appear to maintain that it is not even in Athens' own power to refrain from unjust conquest. A necessity of nature forces the Athenians' power-hungry hands towards rule, just as it may well force the gods' too, who would, therefore, condone any mortal's unjust plans to rule over others. Note that—as was true for Antiphon and the Wrong Argument—the necessities of nature are here presented as essentially at odds with justice. But whereas Antiphon had suggested that it causes some harm to our nature to follow justice, the Athenians go further in holding that there is no realistic possibility of betraying nature to act justly. Justice, as the envoys elsewhere tell us, is something that can only exist between equals. In all other relationships, the strong will do what they want and the weak will suffer what they must.[53]

The Athenians later provide a plausible reason why nature is opposed to justice and prevents any city or person from being just in similar circumstances: 'Benefit is found with security, but to practise justice and honour comes with danger' (5.107.1). Nature compels us to forgo just behaviour because it is not ultimately beneficial—that is to say, not in our self-interest. The prudent course is to strive for security, which, at least in the case of Athens (and, one gets the feeling from the envoys' presentation, in many other cases as well), means unjustly subduing as many cities as possible. The envoys therefore flatly reject the fifth thesis of the Traditional View of Justice and staunchly champion the prudence of injustice. Of course, the Melian Dialogue is a dialogue, and there are two sides to the discussion.

[50] Thucydides' Greek is from Jones and Powell's Oxford Classical Text (Thucydides, 1938 edn). Translations follow Strassler (Thucydides, 1996 edn) with some alterations.

[51] Rule need not mean dominate brutally. As Lane (2023) has argued, in Classical Greek the noun ἀρχή often refers to political office and the infinitive ἄρχειν can refer to discharging the responsibilities of office. It is important to bear this in mind, for the Athenians do wish to rule the Melians by having them become tributary subjects. Nevertheless, it would be going too far to deny that we are meant to feel the threat of domination and brutality here. The envoys are quick to hint that they may do with the Melians anything that predators do with their captured prey (5.89.1).

[52] Compare Brasidas' speech at 4.126, which suggests the Spartans should rule because they are stronger.

[53] Compare 5.89.1. Thucydides may have expected this to remind his readers of his fable about the hawk and the nightingale from WD. In the fable a hawk takes a nightingale by force and says to the crying bird: 'Silly bird, why are you crying out? One far superior to you is holding you', and later, 'Stupid is the one who would wish to contend against those stronger than them' (206–10). In Hesiod the fable is intended, at least in part, to illustrate how animals lacking justice act towards one another. If readers are expected to remember this fable, then the Athenians are doing exactly what in WD they should not. They are acting like animals and stepping outside their humanity.

But the naïve trust that the leaders of Melos place in traditional ideas about gods and their allies does little to help them. Thucydides ends Book 5 with the almost appallingly matter-of-fact statement that, after putting up a mostly futile resistance, 'the Melians surrendered at discretion to the Athenians, who put to death all the grown men whom they took, and sold the women and children for slaves' (5.116.3–4). No god or Spartan came to their aid.

Unlike Aristophanes' *Clouds*, the sophists are not mentioned in these passages. It is not for nothing, however, that one recent authority concludes his discussion of the Melian Dialogue by noting that Thucydides was 'a writer deeply influenced by the sophists'.[54] We have already observed that the envoys were thought to have seductive arguments at their disposal, a skill associated with the sophists. More telling than this is the sharp distinction they draw between the demands of nature and the precepts of justice. This is a hallmark of the Cynics' challenge to justice, and it could almost have been taken directly from OT. It is also worth mentioning that Thucydides is said to have studied with both Gorgias and Antiphon and was certainly familiar with sophistic thought.[55] This has led some to claim that the form and literary presentation of the Melian Dialogue were influenced by the sophists' practice.[56] If the considerations adduced here are correct, the substance of the Melian Dialogue was influenced by the thought of the sophists as well.[57]

Though much could be said in the way of analysing *Clouds* and Thucydides' *History*, I will limit myself to the observation that in both texts the characters making Cynic-style arguments are depicted as emphatically rejecting traditional ideas about the gods. Fewer than twenty short lines into the discussion between the Right and Wrong Arguments, the latter responds to the former's pious suggestion that justice resides with the gods by pointing out that Zeus himself shunned justice and by further implying that the gods are at best unconcerned with humanity's attitude towards justice (904–6; cf. 818–19). And crucially, it is only because the gods do not punish violations of justice that the unjust λόγος can advise Pheidippides to act unjustly in the pursuit of a grossly hedonistic life. Similarly, the Athenian envoys respond to the Melians' naïve hope that the justice-loving gods will come to their aid by explaining that the gods are subject to the same natural necessity to rule as humans and do not, therefore, begrudge us our unjust conquests. These views about the gods are a significant part of the envoys' presentation, and Thucydides leaves little doubt that they play a decisive role in explaining the arguments and behaviour that follow (5.112–13). It is, therefore,

[54] Bonazzi (2019, 123).
[55] See Philostr. VS 1.9.3 and Suda α.2745.
[56] Hudson-Williams (1950) argues for a sophistic influence on the form and presentations of the Melian dialogue in particular; see also Bonazzi (2019, 123).
[57] Of course, none of this shows that Thucydides himself accepted the ideas voiced by the Athenian envoys. Extracting Thucydides' considered views from his text is hard and a matter of significant scholarly controversy. For one excellent treatment, however, see Orwin (1994, 109–17).

clear that Aristophanes and Thucydides associate the dangerous arguments of the Wrong Argument and the Athenian envoys with a rejection of the traditional, interventionist gods. To the extent that we can trust that these characters express sophistic ideas—and, at least on several big-picture issues, I have suggested that we can—they help to confirm the interpretation of the Cynics' texts offered above. For those texts explore what radical consequences the rejection of traditional, interventionist gods have for the value of justice and its contribution to human prospering.

Final Thoughts

Other texts could be mentioned, but enough has been said to confirm that there was a distinctive sophistic challenge to conventional morality in the 5th century which began, at least in part, with a rejection of the traditional gods but extended to a rejection of the central theses of the Traditional View of Justice. The authors of this challenge accepted Hesiod's presumption that individuals should be concerned with their own prospering, but they argued that in a world without interventionist gods injustice often promotes the intelligent individual's prospering more than justice. By posing their challenge through an engagement with traditional ideas and views, the Cynics were able to expose real weaknesses in conventional ideas about justice. And they evidently struck a nerve. One of the most telling facts about their challenge is just how much opposition it elicited. Many people who learned about the Cynics' radical ideas regarded them with apprehension and recognised the growing need to respond to them. Yet while some may have been content to do this by mocking their arguments, as Aristophanes did, and while others may have fallen back onto their pious faith in the interventionist gods, such as the Melian leaders, still others took a more direct approach. Indeed, another group of sophists felt compelled to respond to the Cynics by arguing on similarly secular and naturalistic grounds that justice and virtue contribute to human prospering more than injustice and vice. They offered a defence of justice and its value.

	Hesiod's *Works and Days*	**'Sisyphus Fragment'**	**Antiphon's *On Truth*, B44**	***Clouds* and *History***
1. The gods (Zeus) gave justice to humanity	**Agree:** 274–80	**Disagree:** 5–8	**Disagree:** 1.23–2.1; and see discussion on pp. 41–2	**Disagree:** *Cl.* 904–6
2. The gods reward those who are just and punish those who are unjust	**Agree:** 280–5	**Disagree:** 9–15	**Disagree:** 2.3–10	**Disagree:** *Cl.* 904–6 and *Thuc.* 5.105.2
3. Justice is beneficial to the just agent	**Agree:** 225–47	**Qualifiedly Agree:** 37–40; and see discussion on pp. 35–7	**Disagree:** By omission; see discussion on pp. 42–5	**Disagree:** *Thuc.* 5.107.1
4. The rewards the just receive are (primarily) External Goods	**Agree:** 225–47	**Possibly Agree:** See n.10	**Possibly Agree:** See n.24	**Agree:** *Cl.* 1071–4
5. It is, all things considered, prudent for the individual to be just	**Agree:** 270–3	**Disagree:** see discussion on pp. 37–9	**Disagree:** 1.12–23; and see discussion on pp. 45–7	**Disagree:** *Cl.* 1075–82

Table 2.1 Summary: The Challenge to Justice

3

The 5th-Century Defence of Justice

We have now considered the Traditional View of Justice, as canonised by Hesiod in WD, and a challenge posed to it in the 5th century by several sophistic authors. These Moral Cynics rejected the religious assumptions that provided the foundation of Hesiod's worldview as well as his account of the origin of justice and argued instead that justice and the laws have a perfectly immanent human origin. By systematically and sober-mindedly thinking through the consequences of their new naturalistic worldview and its implications for human prospering, these sophists arrived at several dangerous conclusions about the value of justice. At least for the capable few, they thought, the select and intelligent practice of injustice was more profitable and prudent than the scrupulous practice of justice. The previous chapter ended by highlighting the impact that this challenge had on Greek thought and by calling attention to the perceived need to respond to it.

Though the Cynics may not have known it at the time, the shocking results of their investigations would substantially shape discussions about justice for the better part of a century to come. Our evidence suggests that many people were goaded into engaging with the Cynics and responding to their arguments in a far more direct way than Aristophanes and Thucydides. Moreover, not everyone did so by appealing to the interventionist gods that the Cynics had eschewed. Indeed, several important attempts to show that justice was better for humans—including the capable few—were made using the same naturalistic assumptions found in SF or OT. Whether this was because other intellectuals in the late 5th century had become convinced that the traditional gods were irrelevant to moral questions or because they wished to defend justice in a way that the Cynics and their adherents would be forced to contend with is, at least in some cases, something we will likely never know. But we can say that a number of sophistic authors argued directly against Cynical ideas and tried to establish that justice is more profitable for the individual than injustice. These authors—the Friends of Justice—make up the second half of the first philosophical debate about the value of justice from ancient Greece. It is to these authors that we must now turn.

In what follows I offer a selective analysis of the 'Anonymous Iamblichi', Prodicus' 'Choice of Heracles' and the ethical and political fragments of Democritus. In discussing the texts of the Friends of Justice, I aim to do three things in particular. Because these texts are generally less well studied than those discussed in Chapter 2, I will first highlight and explicate the arguments and ideas in them that bear on the question of justice and its value. No attempt is made to cover the entire contents of these texts (which, especially in the case of Democritus, would take us too far afield), but pain is taken to reconstruct the relevant arguments and to situate them in their intellectual context. To help identify this intellectual context I will, second, show that the Friends were consciously responding to several Cynical views or ideas in their extant texts. That is to say, I will try to show that the authors discussed in this chapter understood themselves as contributing to a genuine debate about justice and not simply stating their own views in isolation. Finally, I will relate each of the texts back to the Traditional View of Justice. We shall see that insofar as the 5th-century Friends of Justice objected to the Cynics and argued that justice is more prudent and profitable than injustice, they represent a sort of return to the view considered in Chapter 1. However, because they make no use of the interventionist gods in their arguments, they are best seen as advancing a modernised and secular version of the Traditional View.

'Anonymous Iamblichi' (AI)

'Anonymous Iamblichi' is a short and wonderful, if understudied,[1] text which, as Friedrich Blass first identified in 1889, is quoted extensively by Iamblichus in the twentieth chapter of his *Protrepticus*.[2] Little is known about Iamblichus' life beyond the fact that he was a Neoplatonist philosopher who probably studied with Porphyry and who founded his own school in Apamea (modern-day Syria), where he worked in the late 3rd or early 4th century CE. Sadly, even less is known about the author of the text that concerns us here. The Neoplatonist does not so much

[1] I am only aware of five insightful peer-reviewed articles offering sustained discussions of AI and its significance published before 2019. They are Cole (1961), Romilly (1980), Lacore (1997, 2012) and Hoffmann (1999). In general, these papers do a fine job of drawing connections between AI and other roughly contemporaneous works. However, they mostly lack sustained analyses of the arguments within the text and fail to critically engage with its moral and political ideas, though Hoffmann's article and his later chapter on AI (1997, 290–333) are important exceptions to this rule. I tried to address this lack by offering a discussion of what I took to be one of the text's central arguments in Anderson (2019). Portions of this and the chapter's next section develop upon ideas first presented in that paper. More recently, Horky (2020, 2021) have appeared in print.

[2] Blass (1889) is a curious piece of scholarship. It was presented orally at a birthday celebration for Emperor William II of Prussia. Blass' original delineation of seven fragments was largely accepted (albeit with small differences in labelling) by Diels and Kranz and was preserved in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (1951).

as identify their name—hence the customary title of our text. Yet because our text makes much of the hallmark distinction between νομός and φύσις and evinces a preoccupation with the looming figure of 'the tyrant', it is almost certain that our text was written near the end of the 5th century. The author was also intimately familiar with the sophistic movement. Indeed, this has seemed so obvious that over the past 130 years there has been a race among pre-eminent scholars of the ancient world to pin the authorship of this text on virtually every known sophist. Critias, Hippias, Protagoras, Antisthenes, Democritus and even Antiphon have all had their adherents in the past, though most scholars today would either plead ignorance or make the modest suggestion that the author is an otherwise unknown figure.[3] Because it is unlikely that any conjecture will ever establish itself sufficiently to win widespread approval, I make no assumptions about whom Iamblichus was quoting.

The fact that Iamblichus quoted AI in his *Protrepticus* is, however, worthy of note.[4] Standardly, a protreptic text—that is, an exhortation to philosophy—operates by arguing that the practice of philosophy contributes to the prospering life in one way or another.[5] That Iamblichus could so easily include AI in his *Protrepticus* suggests that at least one of its primary objectives was to offer advice about the prudent way for humans to live.[6] Particularly notable for our purposes is that the author very explicitly objects to the Cynical idea that it is profitable to break the laws and practise injustice in the pursuit of one's own selfish ends, or to pursue πλεονεξία.[7] Our text rejects injustice and recommends justice and virtue instead. Two broad arguments are presented to demonstrate the value of justice and virtue. Firstly, AI argues that only through virtuous behaviour can an individual hope to achieve the sort of good reputation that produces an immortal

[3] For a comprehensive evaluation of past attempts to identify the author of AI, see Hoffmann (1997, 321–33). His discussion ends with the sobering yet plausible conclusion: 'Diese zahlreichen Bezüge erweise den [AI] als selbständigen Sophisten, dessen genaue Identität ohne weiter Funde im Dunkeln bleiben muß' (332). However, see the recent discussion in Sørensen (2021).

[4] For a helpful discussion of AI's place in Iamblichus' *Protrepticus*, see Horky (2020, 264–8).

[5] Doug Hutchinson and Monte Johnson have done much in recent years to advance our understanding of ancient protreptic—most notably by attempting to authenticate and reconstruct Aristotle's *Protrepticus*; on this, see Hutchinson and Johnson (2005). For a more schematic overview of ancient protreptic, see Hutchinson and Johnson (2018, 118–27). Originally, it seems that a protreptic speech was any that urged a deliberative body towards one course of action or another (Aris. *Rhet.* 1358b8–10). So far as we can tell, protreptic works were rarely about philosophy before the middle of the 4th century. Shortly thereafter, however, sufficient attention was paid to the increasingly established discipline of philosophy that texts and speeches began to advise students towards or away from the practice of philosophy. A new literary genre was born, and a 'protreptic work' came to mean one that defends and endorses the practice of philosophy.

[6] Thus, Dillon and Gergel (2003, 310), in their commentary on AI, say '[t]he topic appears to be, broadly speaking, "How to Succeed in Life"'.

[7] 'πλεονεξία' is a difficult word to translate. Literally, it means 'having more' or 'getting more', and below it is frequently translated by some such expression. But very often it is used pejoratively to describe the unfair acquisition of more than one deserves; on this, see Balot (2001, 3–5).

repute, which, it is assumed, makes one's life successful. I call this argument Immortal Repute. And secondly, AI argues that humans are the sort of creatures that require a properly functioning community if they are to live prosperously and, moreover, that such a community cannot exist unless its citizens follow the laws and respect justice. I call this argument Political Animals. Together, these two arguments make for a highly innovative response to the Cynics and present a powerful case for justice's value.

Let us begin with Political Animals. After several introductory fragments that discuss how to become successful at a given pursuit as well as how to win a good reputation, our text addresses the question of how best to use one's accomplishments once they have been attained. Readers are encouraged to use their abilities for good and lawful purposes, both because this will help ward off the envy of their peers and because it is how one becomes 'completely good' (ἀγαθός τελέως, P.97.22/DK89 B1 3.2).[8] After some further discussion, the author introduces and objects to a different suggestion as to how we might use our talents (P.100.5–9/B1 6.1):

> Furthermore, one must not rush towards having more
> nor believe that power aiming at having more is virtue,
> while obeying the laws is cowardice. For this very
> thought is most wicked, and from it comes everything
> opposed to the good things: both vice (κακία) and harm (βλάβη).

The first three lines of this passage introduce an intellectual position, which will be fleshed out more fully in what follows, according to which obeying the laws is cowardice and striving for unjustly having more (assumed here to be in the service of one's selfish interests) is virtuous. The complete thought here objected to holds that the power aiming at πλεονεξία is good because such a power secures more good things—and, in particular, money (see P.97.17/B1 3.1)—than a just and apparently cowardly obedience to the laws. In response, AI denounces this sort of thinking and claims that it leads to both vice and harm (βλάβη). The mention of harm in addition to vice is important, for it confirms that AI's objection to the pursuit of πλεονεξία is, as we might say, both moral and prudential. Such a pursuit is not only bad, it is also bad *for* the individual.

In the following sections, our author develops Political Animals to respond to this harmful idea. I quote the theoretical core of the argument in its entirety here (P.100.9–17/B1 6.1):

> For if humans were born unable to live as individuals
> but—yielding to necessity—joined together, and if
> their whole way of life as well as mechanisms for
> that life was discovered by them, and if humans are

[8] Iamblichus' Greek comes from Iamblicus (2003). Translations are my own.

> not able to be with one another and pass their lives in lawlessness (for this would be a greater punishment than living an isolated way of life)—well then, because of these necessities law and justice rule as kings among people, and they could have in no way been set aside. For these are firmly fixed [in us] by nature.[9]

The content of this passage is very rich and deserves to be studied carefully. The majority of the passage is one long conditional sentence with a four-part protasis and a two-part apodosis. The construction is meant to motivate the inference—familiar enough from modern evolutionary biology and psychology—that because of what human beings are like and because of what they encountered in a past environment, certain things hold for their present lives. Like much recent evolutionary biology, AI does not offer independent evidence that its historical claims are true.[10] Yet because our author refers to the postulates introduced in the four protases as 'necessities' and then confidently infers that justice and law rule among humans, he presumably believes the conditional claims presented in the early part of this passage are true and support the conclusion.[11]

Let us now turn to the substance of this passage and unpack the historical narrative presupposed by it. At some point early in human history, it seems, our ancestors lived as isolated individuals. Although our text does not state this explicitly, it can be inferred from the first two lines: we are told that humans were born naturally unable to live alone before learning that they yielded to necessity (presumably, the necessity of escaping the hardships of solitary life) and joined together (NB the aorist 'συνῆλθον', P.100.10) with others. Thus, our inability to thrive in isolation is what drove our ancestors into large groups in the past. Understandably, the transition from struggling as isolated individuals to living in social groups was a radical one: the text suggests that this transition resulted in a totally new way of life (πᾶσα δὲ ἡ ζωὴ, P.100.11–12) and necessitated the development of new technologies to support this way of life (τὰ τεχνήματα πρὸς ταύτην, P.100.12). We are not given any information about what

[9] Εἰ γὰρ ἔφυσαν μὲν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀδύνατοι καθ' ἕνα ζῆν, συνῆλθον δὲ πρὸς ἀλλήλους τῇ ἀνάγκῃ εἴκοντες, πᾶσα δὲ ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῖς εὕρηται καὶ τὰ τεχνήματα πρὸς αὐτήν, σὺν ἀλλήλοις δὲ εἶναι αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀνομίᾳ. Διαιτᾶσθαι οὐχ οἷόν τε (μείζω γὰρ αὐτοῖς ζημίαν οὕτω γίγνεσθαι ἐκείνης τῆς κατὰ ἕνα διαίτης), διὰ ταύτας τοίνυν τὰς ἀνάγκας τόν τε νόμον καὶ τὸ δίκαιον ἐμβασιλεύειν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ οὐδαμῇ μεταστῆναι ἂν αὐτά· φύσει γὰρ ἰσχυρὰ ἐνδεδέσθαι ταῦτα.

[10] One of the common criticisms of evolutionary theories is that they cannot provide historical evidence for the claims they make about past environments; see, for example, Laland and Brown (2011). Interestingly, the broad historical narrative presupposed by AI and other ancient texts—especially Protagoras' myth in *Protagoras*, which is discussed in Chapter 4—is surprisingly close to what one finds in sophisticated discussions about the development of human morality by evolutionary psychologists today. Consider, for example, the influential discussion in Tomasello (2016).

[11] Thus, according to Cole (1961, 135), AI appeals 'to the history of man's social development to support [its] contentions'.

these might have been, but one imagines that many tools must have been invented for navigating the hitherto unknown demands of social interaction and cooperative activity. Probably we are to imagine that these early humans developed writing techniques so that rules could be promulgated and preserved as well as the crafts necessary to build a public infrastructure. In any case, our text implies that this new way of life was better for our ancestors than living alone so long as it remained lawful and regulated.

This sort of historical narrative is broadly akin to the one presented by SF and discussed in the previous chapter. It purports to explain how human beings removed themselves from an early, inhospitable condition and thereby improved their lot. But the considerations adduced here apparently license the decidedly anti-Cynical conclusion that law and justice rule over humanity and that this rule is fixed into our very nature. It is important to gain clarity about what this means and why the author believes this inference is justified. As I understand the argument, we must supply the assumption that humans have a natural drive to live and, wherever possible, to live well. Coupled with the fact that we are not the sort of creatures that do well when isolated in the wilderness, this explains why early humans gathered into groups and developed techniques to make their new sort of life successful. But—and this is crucial for the argument—living with other people is neither possible nor profitable in a condition of lawlessness. Why this should be so is unfortunately not specified in the passage: all we are told is that living with others in a lawless condition is worse for humans than living alone. But this is enough for the argument. Because living in a condition of lawlessness is worse for humans than living alone, our author can trust that the same natural tendency that impelled early humans to join with one another would also lead them away from the disastrous state of lawlessness if they ever found themselves in it.

It follows that there is a natural tendency for humans not only to live in groups but also to live in cooperative and regulated groups. The conclusion of the argument—that law and justice rule among humans—can be derived if one makes the further assumption that being governed by law and justice is necessary to escape the lawlessness that all people must naturally flee. Given that our text emphatically affirms the conclusion, we must attribute some such assumption to the author. One can perhaps explain why he did not feel the need to defend or articulate this assumption by noting that the Greek word used here for lawlessness, 'ἀνομία', is derived from 'ἄνομος', which literally means 'without law'.[12] From an etymological and no doubt common-place perspective, the rule of law and justice definitively preclude lawlessness. Furthermore, later sections of the text strongly imply that lawfulness, the condition opposed to lawlessness, is nothing

[12] Orrù (1985, 6–9).

other than the rule of law and justice.[13] Thus, it may have simply seemed obvious to our author that law and justice are the antidotes to lawlessness.[14] Whatever the exact reason for making this assumption, however, once made the argument can conclude that the rule of law and justice is both natural and beneficial for human beings. The statement that law and justice are fixed in us by nature should, I think, be understood as a reminder that it is our ineliminable natural desires that, together with facts about the sort of creatures we are, push us into a stable community governed by laws and justice.

There can be little doubt that this passage contains a highly innovative argument purporting to show that it is profitable and natural for human beings to live in a society regulated by laws and justice. By using the same historical style of investigation employed by the Cynics, the text responds to the Antiphontic contention that the laws are conventional restraints on the free exercise of our faculties and are, therefore, hostile to our nature and its ends. AI ingeniously presents the laws as one of the *sine qua non*s of a stable and peaceful society, which is itself something that no one can reasonably do without. It thereby reconceives of the laws as necessary for the successful life that every person naturally desires and, therefore, as themselves profoundly natural. Moreover, the historical account AI offers is—and was surely intended to be—much more compelling than the account offered by the Cynics. The reader will recall that the account presented in SF and likely presupposed in OT began with a beastly situation in which humans were harming one another. That is to say, it began at a time in which humans were *already* social and provided no explanations or even indications as to why humans first came together or remained in society. Yet absent such an explanation, an objector might reasonably demur, how could a Cynic be so confident that they understood the true motivations of early humans and their interactions with one another? The account offered in AI takes an extra step back in time to explain how it was that humans came together and began interacting with one another. This gives AI's account more explanatory power and makes it a far more compelling historical narrative than its competitors.[15]

We can now see the beginning of an attractive objection to the claim that the power aiming at having more is virtue and good for the individual. Our author

[13] At P.104.1–6/B1 7.13–14 a lack of law and justice is identified as the cause of tyrants ruling in a city. This is presented as one of the evils that arise from *anomia* in a discussion that is meant to contrast the effects of ἀνομία with the effects of the opposite condition, which is identified as εὐνομία. We are thus led to believe that a lack of law and justice is the opposite of εὐνομία and, therefore, that εὐνομία is nothing other than the rule of law and justice.

[14] If I am correct about the author's reasoning here, then he has made a small error. That is because the considerations just adduced can only show that the rule of law and justice is sufficient for overcoming lawlessness. It cannot show that law and justice are necessary for overcoming lawlessness. But this is what the argument needs to derive its strong conclusion.

[15] Later philosophers regarded as more satisfactory accounts of early history that did not presuppose a social existence but explained why early humans entered into social concourse. See Plat. *Prt.* 320c–322d, *Rep.* 368e–372c, *Leg.* 676a–681d, Aris. *Pol.* 1252a–b and Lucr. 925–1104.

can fairly claim to have shown the foundational importance of law and justice for everyone and, moreover, to have identified the disastrous harm of lawlessness. That being said, Political Animals has several limitations. For one thing, though it may be able to show that it is natural for humans to follow laws, it cannot establish that any particular set of laws or social organisation is correct. The considerations about history and human nature only show that people need a society governed by rules and regulations. Nothing in the above passage suggests that one set of laws is more natural or beneficial than another. So long as the laws produce a society in which people might achieve prospering, I cannot see how AI could have any theoretical basis to object.[16] For a similar reason, the considerations adduced above would have a hard time proving that any particular law is natural and profitable for humans. With perhaps certain extreme exceptions, it can only show the necessity of a whole system of laws and would, therefore, be largely impotent to respond to the questions Pheidippides asks about the particular law proscribing striking one's parents. But more significantly for present purposes, this argument faces the significant limitation that it cannot definitively show that justice will invariably be more profitable for the individual agent than injustice. True enough, it suggests that were society to collapse into a condition of lawlessness because of injustice, this would be terrible. But it does not show that any individual violation of justice will lead to lawlessness and, therefore, that any individual violation of injustice will harm the unjust individual in the pursuit of having more.

Our author may have recognised this shortcoming because the text goes on to offer two addenda to Political Animals. The first comes immediately after in Fragment 6 (P.100.18–101.4/B1 6.2–4):

> If someone were born having such a nature from birth—
> invulnerable of skin, free from disease and suffering,
> superhuman and adamantine in both body and soul—
> one might perhaps think the power aiming at having more
> would befit such a person (for such a person can
> remain unpunished without submitting to the law), but
> they would not think correctly. For if, *per impossibile,*
> there were such a person, they would be saved if they allied
> themselves with the laws and justice, fortified them, and
> used their strength for them as well as what serves them.
> Otherwise, they would not endure. For due to their
> lawfulness all people would seem to have a settled hostility
> to such a nature, and either by skill or power the crowd
> would prove themselves superior and overcome such a man.

[16] I thus reject the perennial interpretation of AI (most recently advanced by Horky (2020)) that AI is a defence of democracy. The theoretical basis of AI's political theory floats free of any particular set of laws, and it is a mistake to pigeonhole the author into defending one sort of political organisation or πολιτεία.

It is in this passage that one can most clearly detect the traces of another thinker's argument intruding into AI. At least two considerations make this clear. Firstly, P.100.9–17/B1 6.1 and this continuation of it break the train of thought presented in our text. Far from following from the preceding arguments, these passages read more like interjections that the author anticipated his readers might make. Secondly, it is very unlikely that the thought experiment featuring this adamantine 'supervillain' was first developed in AI. Why would a Friend of Justice introduce a wild and admittedly impossible example of profitable injustice if no one had ever thought of or mentioned it before? It is surely more likely that some Cynic had advanced the idea of a superior human being who could and should profit from injustice and AI is here responding to them. In further support of this, consider that both Glaucon in *Republic* and Callicles in *Gorgias* also theorise a strongman who violates the precepts of conventional justice in their desire to have more (*Rep.* 359b and 359c–360b; *Grg.* 483e–484c). One suspects Plato also would not have put such an example into the mouths of his greatest critics of morality if it was first introduced and promulgated by a Friend. So we must conclude that some earlier Cynic came up with this thought experiment, or in any case one very similar to it, in order to argue for the unjust life devoted to pursuing πλεονεξία and then, afterward, the author of AI felt the need to respond to this argument.[17]

In any case, AI's response to this thought experiment is to note that not even a person of superhuman strength could practise injustice and avoid suffering punishment. If they were to refuse to submit to the laws, everyone else would stand opposed and bring a fierce reckoning down upon them. *A fortiori*, neither can any regular person practise injustice since they would be stopped and brought to ruin far more easily than the adamantine villain of superhuman strength.

This looks as if it is designed to plug the theoretical gap left over from P.100.9–18/B1 6.1 insofar as it claims that the unjust agent will suffer direct punishment for their injustice in addition to the possible indirect harms of a lawless condition. This is a much more pressing problem for the person striving after having more and might be a strong prudential reason to avoid injustice. Sadly, even if

[17] But who was responsible for the original thought experiment? Rachel Barney has suggested to me that it must have been the historical inspiration for Plato's Callicles. Though this suggestion is an attractive one, we sadly don't know who this might be; on this, see Dodds (Plato, 1959 edn, 12–15). It is therefore worth considering who might have first used a thought experiment featuring the adamantine individual. It is unlikely to have been Antiphon because he stresses the physical similarities and basic equality among humans. For a similar reason, we should rule out the author of SF. Though that text may suggest that certain people are more intellectually able than others, there is no hint that some people are so physically superior to others that they can break the laws in public and get away with it. A more likely candidate would be whoever is being satirised in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. At times the Wrong Argument talks as though some people can break the laws and practise injustice openly and remain unscathed. Similar thoughts are found in the speech made by the envoys in Thucydides' Melian Dialogue. Thus it may be that some lost argument or idea inspired the Wrong Argument of *Clouds*, Thucydides' Melians and this passage in AI.

successful, this new consideration only establishes that visible or otherwise recognisable acts of injustice are harmful. Citizens must first recognise the adamantine villain's crimes before they can organise and make war against him. This intervention cannot show that secret injustice will lead to punishment and harm. Nevertheless, this addendum is not totally ineffective. For one thing, some of the passages discussed in the previous chapter suggested that individuals should recklessly and publicly flout the laws in their society. And for another thing, the threat of an entire population bearing down on a criminal might have been sufficiently terrifying to persuade some people it was imprudent to commit any injustice and risk the possibility that it might be discovered and punished.

One further addendum strengthens the overall impact of Political Animals. The text goes on to explain that lawfulness is the best, and lawlessness the worst, condition for society and the individuals within it.[18] Our author lists the benefits that accrue to lawful and just societies: we are told that trust arises from lawfulness and that, because of this trust, a great deal of money is circulated in society, which is particularly advantageous to the poor (P.101.17–22/B1 7.1); in a lawful society the downtrodden are helped by the more fortunate (P.101.23–9/B1 7.2); people needn't attend to public problems and can instead focus on their personal affairs (P.102.4–7/B1 7.4); and finally, everyone can go to bed without anxiety and with high hopes for the next day (P.102.8–17/B1 7.5). In a lawless and unjust society, the opposite is the case. Citizens are unable to focus on their private affairs and must waste their time on public problems (P.102.26–103.3/B1 7.8); good fortune is never safe and those who are downtrodden receive no help (P.103.4–7/B1 7.9); society is torn apart by war (P.103.8–13/B1 7.10); and finally, the citizens go to bed with anxious thoughts and fears (P.103.14–19/B1 7.11). These considerations are meant to further support the idea that justice pays insofar as the just share in the benefits of a lawful society, and that injustice harms insofar as those who are unjust share in the tribulations of a lawless society.

It is worth noting that this list bears a striking similarity to Hesiod's enumeration of the rewards and punishments that Zeus bestows upon just and unjust cities (WD 225–47). Indeed, a number of the rewards and punishments named in WD appear on AI's list, and the overall tone and import of the two passages is much the same.[19] This is notable for at least two reasons. Firstly, it indicates that AI accepts a broadly traditional picture of the External Goods, though, as we shall see when we turn to Immortal Repute, reputation looms larger in AI than it did in Hesiod's poem. But secondly, it highlights the extent to which AI is offering a response to the Cynics that draws on and to a certain extent rehabilitates the

[18] In introducing the final section, Iamblichus states that one should consider why lawfulness is best for society as well as for each individual (ἄριστον εἴη καὶ κοινῇ καὶ ἰδίᾳ, P.101.10–15).

[19] Peace and wealth are presented as goods that result from just and lawful behaviour in both texts, and war with external enemies is presented as a predictable result of unjust and lawless behaviour.

Traditional View of Justice. This is not to deny that there are important differences between the benefits that AI ascribes to lawfulness in this list and the rewards of justice earlier mentioned in WD. There are. Most notably, the gods are completely absent from AI's list and, indeed, from the whole text. AI's 'rewards' and 'punishments' for lawfulness and lawlessness are not explained by divine intervention but by relying on (rather sophisticated) economic insights about the circulation of money or psychological insights about the beneficial consequences of trust in one's community.[20] What we find in this text is a thoroughly enlightened, secular way of explaining the value of justice and how it produces External Goods for all.

AI's second argument, Immortal Repute, makes the case not for the life of justice but for the more demanding life of virtue, which requires not only respect for the laws and the fair treatment of others but also supererogatory action. As noted above, the early sections of the text offer advice about how to master practical skills and go on to explain how to gain a good reputation with this mastery. It turns out that avoiding the envy of others and winning their adoration is a tricky task because people generally resent those who are recognised as superior to them in any way. Because people are especially apt to bear grudges against those who win great success in a short amount of time, AI instructs its readers to train diligently from a young age (P.96.1–15/B1 2.1–3). They must also use their accomplishments for good and noble ends, since others are much less likely to resent those who use their talents to benefit everyone than those who use them for their own self-aggrandisement. The best way to obtain a good reputation is, in fact, by using one's skills to win complete virtue. We are told (P.97.25–8/B1 3.3):

> We must also consider what word or deed would enable one desiring complete virtue to be most excellent. They would be such if they were as useful to as many people as possible.

To win complete virtue one must become as useful to as many people as possible. We can here start to appreciate the difference between virtue and mere justice. Recall that in Political Animals the author contends that justice is natural to humans and strongly implies that most people in societies are basically just (if they were not, they would not work together to overcome the adamantine supervillain, P.100.24–101.4/B1 6.3–4). Winning complete virtue, however, is not something that most people can ever hope to do. True enough, one cultivates virtue by becoming a servant 'to the laws and to justice, for this is what establishes and holds together both people and cities' (P.98.9–11/B1 3.6). Virtue is, therefore,

[20] As Dillon and Gergel (2003, 404 n.17) correctly note, the author of AI understands that it is the rate of circulation rather than the absolute volume of money that produces wealth. This economic insight is used to explain why there is more money available for everyone when citizens have enough trust to spend freely and lend even a limited amount of money than when the citizens have more money but refuse to spend it.

in some sense on a continuum with the natural human disposition towards just and lawful behaviour. But only outstanding contributions to the laws and justice can render someone completely virtuous. It is a distinction reserved for exceptional individuals who help a great number of people in a significant way.[21]

In any case, our text advises those concerned to win a good reputation to cultivate complete virtue. The author assumes that the desire for such a reputation will be a strong motivational pull for people, and indeed he appears to applaud this all-too-human motivation.[22] It is perhaps no surprise, then, that the author cleverly appeals to this motivation in stating the core of the text's second argument, Immortal Repute. I quote the core of the argument in full (P.99.22–7/B1 5.2):

> But since what happens in a prolonged life is old age—
> quite an evil for humans—and not immortality, it is indeed
> a great stupidity and a perversion due to wicked arguments
> and desires to do all one can for this life at the cost of
> infamy and not leave behind instead of this mortal thing
> something immortal, an eternal and ever-living good repute.

It would be a great stupidity, our text announces, to follow wicked arguments and prolong our life in infamy rather than to win immortal praise and an enduring reputation.[23] Notably, AI simply assumes that an immortal good name is more profitable and therefore better for us than the pursuit of wicked desires which might lead one to infamy. No consideration is provided in support of this assumption. Given the assumption, however, our author can produce a neat argument in favour of the virtuous life. For if the only way an individual can win the sort of recognition that produces an eternally good name is by being as beneficial to as many people as possible, then the individual concerned to prosper has compelling prudential reason to pursue complete virtue.

[21] This means that we should not understand 'ὁ πλείστοις ὠφέλιμος ὤν' simply as a claim about the number of people the virtuous agent benefits. If all the citizens are benefited through the laws and justice, then any contribution to them would, at least in a way, be useful to every citizen. Suppose I am a hardworking and diligent employee of the Athenian Council. Suppose further that on several occasions I go beyond my duties and happily work overtime because I believe the courts are a useful, indeed fundamental, institution for my fellow citizens and their well-being. No doubt this is an admirable thing to do, but it would seem ridiculous to say this is the behaviour of a completely virtuous individual, even though I may be doing more than justice requires (no law says I must work overtime) and I am helping every citizen in Athens. Complete virtue can, on AI's account, secure one's immortal good name. Sadly, my extra administrative work is not the stuff of eternal repute. Who aside from my family will remember it after I am gone? We must assume that our author means to highlight individuals who not only benefit all the citizens but who also do so in truly remarkable and memorable ways, like the lawgiver Lycurgus or Heracles, the saviour of cities.

[22] 'Whoever is a truly good man, he does not chase after reputation by an alien adornment laid around him but by his own virtue' (P.99.13–15/B1 4.6). The truly good individual is said to hunt for a good reputation.

[23] The mention of wicked arguments and desires suggests, once again, that our author has an opponent's view in mind. We can thus understand this second argument as another response to some sort of objectionable Cynical suggestion about how we ought to live.

Two things should be said about this argument. Firstly, it must be admitted that in the above passage our author simply presupposes that no one will win a reputation for virtue unless they do, in fact, behave virtuously and are beneficial to a great number of their contemporaries. This might strike some people as naïve or as an obvious mistake. But if it is a mistake, then our author comes by it honestly. For he accepts what I call the Bob Marley Principle: 'You can fool some people sometimes, but you can't fool all the people all the time.'[24] According to the bleak picture of human psychology outlined early in the text, people's default reaction to the success of others is annoyance. They believe that any praise credited to another's ledger is debited from their own. Readers are told in no uncertain terms that for others to give you the honour you deserve they must be forced ὑπό τῆς ἀνάγκης αὐτῆς—and still they will do so unwillingly (P.96.11–15/B1 2.3)! People are so inherently suspicious of their peers that absent the force of necessity itself they will continue to believe that another is hunting for a good reputation through fraud or embellishment (P.96.15–19/B1 2.4).[25] For better or for worse, our author appears to be fully convinced that no one who is less than completely virtuous will ever be recognised as completely virtuous by others.

Secondly, it is worth noting that one can detect under the surface of this argument a new complexity to the debate about justice. In contrast to WD, where justice is rewarded with all the goods required for human prospering, the 5th-century sophists were starting to grapple with the fact that the External Goods did not always come as a package deal. Immortal Repute encourages its readers to give up the Cynical pursuit of money and wicked pleasures and pursue instead a good reputation and posthumous fame. This sort of encouragement evidently implies the belief that one sort of behaviour is likely to lead to what I shall call the 'Refined External Goods' of reputation and honour, whereas a different sort of behaviour is more likely to lead to what I shall call the 'Crude External Goods' of wealth and the other means to satisfy one's base desires. And while the author of AI obviously regarded the Refined External Goods as more valuable and recommended the sort of behaviour that was likely to result in them for that reason, it should also be clear that this value judgement is contestable. Even those who agreed with the author of AI about which sort of behaviour is likely to result in these goods might reasonably disagree about whether these goods are of central importance for human prospering. This gives

[24] One might also call this the Abraham Lincoln Principle. He reportedly said '[y]ou can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time'.

[25] It must be admitted that this claim sits a little uneasily with the ending of the text. As we saw above, AI later argues that a lawful and just society produces trust among the citizens. One wonders how this trust is produced in such innately resentful creatures.

rise to what I shall call the 'Problem of the Plurality of the Goods'. In a world bereft of an all-seeing Zeus to reliably reward justice and punish injustice, just and unjust behaviour may well result in different External Goods. This adds a degree of complexity to the question of whether justice or injustice is more profitable. I return to this problem in the next section and then, more fully, in the next chapter.

Despite the limitations of Political Animals and Immortal Repute, AI is an extremely inventive and impressive early defence of conventional morality, and it deserves to be recognised as a significant work of 5th-century moral and political philosophy. In direct response to the Cynical claim that the power aiming at having more is virtuous and beneficial for humans, a host of considerations are raised to show that law and justice are both natural and beneficial to human beings. By employing the same secular and historical kind of analysis earlier used by the Moral Cynics, Political Animals argues that because humans are the sort of creatures that naturally strive to live and to live well, laws and justice are natural to us. Immortal Repute advises individuals to give up the unjust pursuit of 'wicked arguments and desires' and instead turn towards the path of justice and virtue. This is the profitable and prudent thing to do because only complete virtue results in the sort of everlasting good name which, our text assumes, makes a great contribution to our prospering. These two arguments make a strong case for the profitability and prudence of justice without claiming that the gods created justice or will punish violations of it. There can be no doubt that AI presents justice as beneficial, as resulting in important External Goods and as the most prudent way to live one's life. By largely endorsing the third, fourth and fifth theses of the Traditional View of Justice without appealing to the interventionist gods, AI presents us with an important modernised and secular defence of this view.

'Choice of Heracles' (CH)

We are lucky to know more about Prodicus than we do about the author of AI. Born in Ceos during the first half of the 5th century, he became a famous intellectual during the second half and died early in the 4th century. He is best known for his trademark ability to draw subtle distinctions between nearly synonymous words, yet, much like most of the other sophists, Prodicus made contributions to many different fields, including anthropology, religion and ethics. The contribution that concerns us here is 'Choice of Heracles'. The main evidence we have for the sophist's famous speech about Heracles is preserved in the second book of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, which was composed early in the 4th century and is not itself a sophistic text. Nonetheless, in this work Xenophon's Socrates claims to

present Prodicus' speech as an exhortation to his interlocutor, Aristippus. Socrates begins, 'The wise man Prodicus in his work on Heracles, which he presented to very many people, gave an account about virtue, speaking—as far as I recall—like this' (*Mem.* 2.1.21/DK84 B2.21).[26] He ends by saying, 'Thusly Prodicus described the education of Heracles by Virtue, although he dressed his thoughts with still more splendid words than I have now done' (2.1.34/B2.34). The speech is thus presented as authentically Prodicean. This permits us to treat Xenophon's version of the speech as evidence about, at the very least, the philosophical content of the original.[27]

The speech begins with an adolescent Heracles retiring to a place of peace to consider what sort of life he should lead. He has a vision in which two tall, beautiful women approach him. The first eagerly rushes up to him and advocates a life of hedonistic indulgence made possible by the unjust treatment of others; the second calmly suggests a life of virtue that requires working hard for the benefit of others. In the process of exhorting Heracles towards their preferred way of life, the two women argue with one another. The speech thus offers a dramatised verbal contest over the question of whether a gifted individual ought to live an unjust and vicious life or a just and virtuous life, not totally unlike what we saw earlier in the Melian Dialogue and the contest between the Right and Wrong Arguments.[28] Ultimately, CH suggests that the virtuous life is better for the individual because only it can provide the prospering secured by an immortal reputation—that is to say, the speech advances its own version of Immortal Repute. But the version found in CH is more radical than the one in AI, and it deserves to be studied apart from it.

The first woman begins her sales pitch in the following way (2.1.23/B2.23):

> Oh Heracles, I see you are wondering to which sort of path you should turn your life. If you follow me as your friend, I will lead you down the sweetest and easiest path. No pleasure will go untasted and you will spend your life experiencing no hardships.

[26] Xenophon's Greek comes from *Xénophon Mémorables* (2013). Translations are my own.

[27] Scholars continue to question how closely the wording used by Xenophon's Socrates reflects the original sophistic composition. Sansone (2004, 126) argues that 'Xenophon seems to have preserved a very close approximation of the actual words of Prodicus' display-piece. Consequently, this passage should be taken much more seriously than it has been in the past as evidence for the thought and methods of the Cean sophist.' Although Sansone's argument was challenged by Gray (2006) and Dorion (2008), it remains the best study on this topic and its findings have been qualifiedly endorsed by other commentators; see, for example, Mayhew (Prodicus, 2011 edn, 201–6) and Bett (2020, 198–200). That being said, most of what I say in what follows does not depend on Xenophon having preserved the precise wording of the original speech.

[28] It is remarkable how closely CH mirrors the ἀγών between the Right and Wrong Arguments in *Clouds*. In both texts we have personified figures present arguments in favour of the way of life that they (literally, by name) represent; in both texts one figure praises a largely traditional life of justice whereas the other praises an immoral life of hedonistic indulgence; and in both texts these figures are said to educate their potential pupil.

In what follows this woman highlights, in particular, the Crude External Goods of food, drink and young boys as reasons to follow her path (2.1.24–5/B2.24–5).[29] Moreover, she promises Heracles a life of ease: he will never have to work hard or concern himself with political affairs to luxuriate in pleasure. Others will toil, and he will take from them.[30]

Once her initial presentation is complete, Heracles asks this champion of lazy indulgence her name. She replies, 'My friends call me Prospering, but those who hate me play with terms and name me Vice' (2.1.26/B2.26). The remainder of the text reveals that Vice, as she is most properly called, is tempting Heracles down a path that is both ethically bankrupt and deeply harmful to his own enlightened self-interest. Yet CH allows Vice to make a prima facie appealing case in favour of her own life and even to call herself 'Prospering'. This is a notable feature of our text which suggests that Prodicus recognised there was something genuinely attractive about the unjust way of life. The fact that his Vice is able to argue as persuasively as she does and pique Heracles' interest attests to the fact that Prodicus realised that the Crude External Goods promised by Vice have some real value. Though they may not be as valuable as the immortal fame and honour that Virtue offers Heracles, CH does not deny that money, sex and power are genuinely good.

I will have more to say about this when I discuss the Problem of the Plurality of Goods in the next chapter. For the moment, consider the following tirade Virtue delivers to Vice (2.1.31/B2.31):

> Immortal though you are, you've been cast out from the
> gods and dishonoured by good human beings. Of the sweetest
> sound of all—praise of oneself—you're unhearing; and of
> the sweetest sight of all, unseeing. For you've never yet seen
> a fine deed of your own. Who would trust anything you
> say? Who would assist you if you require anything?
> Who in their right mind would dare keep company with you?

According to Virtue, Vice is so far gone that she cannot appreciate what is most pleasurable in life: seeing one's own fine deeds and hearing praise of oneself. The clear implication is that Vice's concern for the base pleasures has corrupted her

[29] The list resembles the list of benefits the Wrong Argument gives in *Clouds*, which also stresses sex, drinking and indulging in somatic pleasures (1068–82).

[30] 2.1.25/B2.25: 'οὐ φόβος μή σε ἀγάγω ἐπὶ τὸ πονοῦντα καὶ ταλαιπωροῦντα τῷ σώματι καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ ταῦτα πορίζεσθαι, ἀλλ' οἷς ἂν οἱ ἄλλοι ἐργάζωνται, τούτοις σὺ χρήσῃ, οὐδενὸς ἀπεχόμενος ὅθεν ἂν δυνατὸν ᾖ τι κερδᾶναι. Πανταχόθεν γὰρ ὠφελεῖσθαι τοῖς ἐμοὶ συνοῦσιν ἐξουσίαν ἐγὼ παρέχω.' The use of ὠφελεῖσθαι here is interesting. Vice says that Heracles will be benefited by those around him. Later, Virtue will say that Heracles must benefit (ὠφελητέον, 2.1.28/B2.28) his city. This is the same word AI uses when it informs the reader who hopes to be completely virtuous that they must benefit as many people as possible. It appears to be a trope that the virtuous person helps others, whereas the vicious person selfishly and unfairly helps themself to the hard work of others.

and left her unable to appreciate what is truly valuable or truly pleasurable. The string of rhetorical questions with which Virtue ends her tirade further implies that Vice has no place in decent society. The message to Heracles is that those who follow Vice's way of life risk rendering themselves untrustworthy and unfit for friendship.

Of course, this line of thought is as much an argument in favour of the just and virtuous life as it is an argument against the unjust and vicious way of life.[31] To make oneself a welcome member of decent society, to enjoy the benefits thereof, and to hear oneself being praised, one ought to follow the path of virtue. Surprisingly, Prodicus is open about how difficult and challenging the virtuous life may be. Virtue tells Heracles—and, by implication, the audience of CH as well—both that he will have to forgo many of the pleasures associated with Vice and also that he will have to labour for the benefit of others if he is to live the life of virtue. She explains: 'For of the things that are really good and noble, the gods give none to people without labour and care' (2.1.28/B2.28). If Heracles wishes to be loved by his friends, he must aid them (εὐεργετητέον); if he wishes to be honoured by his city, he must help it (ὠφελητέον); and if he wishes all of Greece to admire his virtue, he must try to do good (εὖ ποιεῖν) for all of Greece. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*.

Yet what an individual can hope to win through this hard work is of the greatest value. Virtue ends by eulogising those who follow her and promising Heracles a stunning reward (2.1.33/B2.33):

> Because of me they are dear to the gods, loved by their friends,
> and honoured by their fatherland. And indeed when they come
> to their fated end, they do not lie dishonoured and forgotten, but
> they blossom through memory and are sung about for all time.
> Oh Heracles, child of good parents, if you cultivate yourself
> as I have described, you may win the most blessed prospering.

Those who pursue justice and virtue can look back on their life with pride, enjoy old age and rejoice in the love they get from others. Most importantly, though, once the virtuous individual dies, they are not forgotten or slandered but remembered and honoured for all time. Virtue's advice to Heracles is, then, to travel the path of justice and virtue so that he may experience a blessed prospering via an immortal reputation. Note that this is not just the end of Virtue's speech; it is also the end of Prodicus' whole presentation. The climax of Virtue's lesson to Heracles thus coincides with the climax of Prodicus' lesson to his audience. This strongly suggests that Prodicus endorses Virtue's account of prospering. So too

[31] It is worth calling attention to the similarity between what Virtue says here and what AI claims in its final section. There, in AI, lawlessness and unjust behaviour are said to produce a society in which trust among citizens is impossible and in which citizens do not help one another (P.101.22–9/B1 7.2). Here, it is implied that the vicious face a similar calamity. They are untrustworthy, do not receive help when they need it and are even denied the pleasures of good company.

does Prodicus' use of the figure of Heracles. For as every member of his audience would have known, Heracles completed twelve great labours, rendered Hellas safe and became one of the great benefactors of Greece.[32] And because of his benefaction, he—true to Virtue's words—continues to be remembered and praised to this very day. He is ever-living proof of Virtue's promise that those who follow her way of life can win undying fame.[33]

Let us pause here to note how deeply CH resonates with the second argument discussed in AI. There we are told that an individual can achieve an immortal good name if they develop complete virtue, reject the wicked arguments and pleasures that result in dishonour and benefit as many people as possible. Here, Virtue tells Heracles that he will be sung about and praised for all time if he follows her way of life and puts in the hard work required to benefit others. She also counsels Heracles to reject the wicked arguments of Vice and to spurn the pleasures she promises.

However, Prodicus' version of Immortal Repute is both more interesting and more radical than the version found in AI. To see why, consider an objection to my interpretation. The objection takes its cue from the fact that in CH Virtue refers to the traditional gods a number of times. Virtue tells Heracles that nothing good is given to humans from the gods without hard work and care (2.1.28/B2.28); she says that Vice has been cast out of the immortals (2.1.31/B2.31); and she twice says that those who follow her way of life are dear to the gods (2.1.32–3/B2.32–3). This is all surprising, for we have independent evidence that Prodicus gave a genealogical account of the belief in the gods which was likely atheistic, and even if it did not deny the existence of any gods it left no room for the traditional Greek gods mentioned in CH. The objection, then, is that Virtue cannot be articulating Prodicus' own account of prospering because they hold importantly different beliefs: Virtue frequently refers to interventionist gods, whose existence Prodicus denied.

[32] Ael. *VH.* 5.3.

[33] Here I depart from a recent and influential interpretation of CH offered by Robert Mayhew. Mayhew argues that Prodicus does not endorse the virtuous way of life as preferable to the vicious way of life. Instead, CH apparently offers a genuine choice between Virtue and Vice. According to Mayhew (Prodicus, 2011 edn, 205), Prodicus holds the view that 'there are no objective moral truths and/or moral absolutes, by reference to which it can be said that everyone ought to pursue a life of Virtue. Prodicus makes a case for the life of Virtue and the life of Vice.'

It strikes me as a serious interpretive error to find a concern for the concept of objective or absolute moral truth in our text. This is the concern of modern moral philosophers, not of those in the 5th century. But even if we grant for the sake of argument that Prodicus entertained the possibility that there were objective moral truths only to reject them, it would not follow that the paths of Virtue and Vice are equally worthy of choice. In CH Prodicus is posing the question 'what way of life would make me or any other individual most prosperous?' And although Mayhew is correct to note that Prodicus sees some value in the life championed by Vice, CH nevertheless represents the virtuous life as far more valuable and prudent than the life of vice. That is precisely why Socrates believes that rehearsing Prodicus' speech will lead his friend towards a moral, virtuous way of life and that he will be better off because of it; see, in particular, *Mem.* 2.1.16–20.

Though I agree that Prodicus could not have literally believed in the statements his Virtue makes about the gods, it is a mistake to infer from this that he did not endorse Virtue's account of human prospering and the means thereto. First of all, we must bear in mind that CH was written as a display speech couched in the form of a mythological parable. Parables do not normally function by presenting stories that are literally true. Instead, they use stock characters and familiar tropes in order to convey an important moral lesson. The audience of CH was not to understand, I take it, that Heracles literally sat himself down at a rock and was visited by two apparitions who engaged in a philosophic debate over what life he should live. Was this a real event or was it imagined? It doesn't really matter.[34] Since Prodicus obviously did not expect his speech's allegorical framework to be understood literally, he could have endorsed the essentials of Virtue's account while nonetheless rejecting the mystical and religious details of her speech, which, in any case, are not essential to her position. This would have been convenient, I suspect, since this speech was intended for the general public, the vast majority of whom believed in the existence of the gods.[35]

Secondly—and more importantly—5th-century intellectuals had to be careful about advertising their heretical religious commitments. According to David Sedley's important article on SF and Greek atheism, artists and philosophers were likely more cautious in presenting their views about the gods than previous scholars have assumed.[36] Whether one understands Prodicus as a complete atheist or simply as a radical revisionist, he certainly would have needed to exercise caution to avoid inviting the charges of impiety that his predecessors Anaxagoras and Protagoras are reported to have faced for publicising their beliefs about the gods.[37] It would have been dangerous for him to openly state that the gods did not exist and he must have welcomed the opportunity to pay lip service to the traditional gods in his mythological parable.

So Prodicus could have easily endorsed the central argument of CH without literally believing in the gods mentioned in it. This is important for our purposes because it shows that Prodicus' defence of the just and virtuous life did not depend on interventionist gods. Like AI, what we find in CH is a largely secular defence of a morally upstanding life as superior to the unjust and lawless life. However, it is likely that Prodicus wanted the intelligent members of his audience to wonder

[34] Indeed, the very language of the text emphasises the hypothetical nature of the story. The speech says that two women 'appeared' using the Greek φαίνομαι with a supplementary infinitive. This construction expresses doubt about whether what appears is in fact true. See Smyth (1984, §2143).

[35] Bett (2020, 208) offers a similar account of the place of the gods in CH.

[36] Sedley (2013, 335–8).

[37] It is difficult to know if the reports about these charges are accurate and, even if they are, whether concerns about impiety were the motivation behind the accusations against Anaxagoras and Protagoras. For the classic discussion of freedom of speech in Greece, see Dover (1976). Yet in whatever way one ultimately interprets our evidence, it is fair to infer that voicing radical statements could have landed early intellectuals in uncomfortable circumstances that were best avoided.

about the place of the gods in CH, for in thinking about this one quickly sees that CH's veneer of piety is compatible with a deeper, more subversive and more tantalising interpretation.

To the best of our knowledge, Prodicus maintained that the Greeks came to believe in the gods after their ancestors deified the useful features of their environment and then those individuals who bestowed great services on humankind. Robert Mayhew summarises Prodicus' account as follows:

1 Primitive people came to regard certain aspects of nature—'the nourishing and useful' (τά τρέφοντα καὶ ὠφελοῦντα)—as gods; for example, the sun, the moon, rivers and springs, trees from which they gathered fruit, or vegetation generally.
2 Primitive people also came to regard certain *people* (and their discoveries) as gods—those who first discovered what is nourishing and otherwise useful.[38]

It is the second stage that concerns us here. The woman who first discovered agriculture was called Demeter and was prayed to so that our ancestors could continue to enjoy the fruits of the field; the first man to successfully make wine was called Dionysus and had festivals named in his honour, presumably to encourage the production and consumption of further vintages. Although the details of how this is supposed to have happened are not at all clear, this must have occurred a number of times over an extended period in the past. And at some point humanity eventually forgot the true origins of their belief and the standard catalogue of gods came into existence.

What is particularly striking about Prodicus' anthropological account of the development of religion is how well it fits with the view developed in CH. This, I believe, is no coincidence. Prodicus wrote CH to contain two different yet compatible and reinforcing interpretations of his text—one superficial and easily understood, the other more profound and accessible only to the clever. Consider the superficial interpretation first. Those in the audience who had no knowledge

[38] Quoted from Mayhew (Prodicus, 2011 edn, 180–1), who is developing on Albert Henrichs' groundbreaking work on the Prodicean sections of Philodemus' *On Piety* (see Henrichs (1974, 1975)). Although a full treatment of the evidence regarding Prodicus' fascinating theory about the origin of religious belief is beyond the scope of this book, one important fragment of *On Piety* is sufficiently important that it deserves to be quoted here (PHerc. 1428, Col. 3.2–13, Henrichs (1975, 116)):

> τὰ τρέφοντα καὶ ὠφελοῦντα θεοὺς
> νενομίσθαι καὶ τετειμῆσθ[αι] πρῶτον ὑπὸ
> [Προ]δίκου γεγραμμένα, μ[ε]τὰ δὲ ταῦτα τοὺ[ς εὑρ]όντας
> ἢ τροφὰς ἢ [σ]κέπας ἢ τὰς ἄλλας τέ[χ]νας
> ὡς Δ̣ήμητρα κ̣αὶ Δι[όνυσον] καὶ το[ὺς Διοσκούρ]ου̣[ς …
>
> The nourishing and beneficial things, as Prodicus wrote, first were considered and honoured as gods, and after this those who discovered either nourishment or shelter or the crafts as Demeter and Dionysus and the Discuri …

of Prodicus' other works or philosophical ideas could understand Virtue to be maintaining that, upon their death, virtuous individuals might be remembered, sung about by their descendants and—perhaps, if they were exceptional—by their city as well. Any audience member who accepted that winning this sort of loving memory would contribute to the prosperous life and accepted that practising virtue was the only reasonable strategy for winning this sort of memory would thereby incur a strong prudential consideration in favour of the just and virtuous life. Now consider the deeper interpretation. The few clever members of Prodicus' audience who knew something about his anthropology might detect a different promise made by Virtue. They might hear Virtue whispering between the lines that an individual could truly become revered as a god after their death. For if Prodicus was right and the Olympic gods were once mortal individuals, it should in principle be possible for another individual to become revered as a god in the future. They would presumably have to be spectacularly virtuous and just, but the stage was set for anyone to manufacture their own apotheosis by attaining the undying esteem of posterity.[39]

I suspect that some readers may find this 'deeper' interpretation of CH far-fetched. But consider that if Prodicus ever hoped to indicate in a public speech that an exceptionally virtuous individual could become revered as a god in the future, he could never have said so in so many words. This is not only because he would have risked being punished for voicing a heretical suggestion. It is also because the Greeks who revered the gods thought they genuinely existed—and thought they existed *qua* immortal and living gods, not *qua* dead and gone benefactors. If Prodicus were to convince all the Greeks that his genealogical account was correct, he would at the same time destroy their belief in the gods and the possibility of anyone being revered as a god in the future.

Additionally, one should consider again Prodicus' choice of Heracles for this speech. As I have already noted, Heracles would seem to be a fitting figure insofar as anyone listening to CH would have known that he followed a virtuous way of life and achieved immortal fame because of it. But Heracles is also a fitting figure for someone wishing to hint that the gods are deified projections of mortal women

[39] Another way to express the difference between the two interpretations of CH would be to adopt the vocabulary of 'exclusive' and 'inclusive' immortality developed by Currie (2005). According to Currie, someone achieves exclusive immortality by becoming an object of memory and continual renown after their death. Inclusive immortality is a richer conception of immortality combining all the features of exclusive immortality with 'immortality of cult, or another form of literal immortality' (2005, 73). On the superficial interpretation of CH, Virtue is promising that exceptionally just individuals can win eternal renown from their descendants and their city. This corresponds nicely to Currie's exclusive immortality. According to the deeper interpretation, Virtue is suggesting that an exceptional individual may win the status of a god who is revered in posterity. This nicely corresponds to the cult aspect of inclusive immortality. A central claim of Currie's book is that one finds evidence (particularly in Pindar's work) that some Greeks aspired to inclusive immortality. This is a salutary finding for my thesis, for it is something like this richer understanding of immortality to which Virtue appeals on my deeper interpretation of CH.

and men who once conferred a spectacular benefit to humankind. Every member of Prodicus' audience would surely have known that, according to the myths, Heracles was born a mortal and that it was only once he had been recognised as the greatest of all Greek heroes that he was immortalised, when immolated at the peak of Mt Oeta in central Greece, and elevated to the rank of a god. It seems unlikely that this is all a coincidence.[40] Within the religious myths there existed a figure who illustrated the very truth of Prodicus' genealogical account: born mortal, Heracles was later welcomed into the divine ranks because of the great services he rendered to his fellow Greeks. By using Heracles in his CH, Prodicus hints that this might happen again.

These considerations make the deeper reading of CH at least more plausible. We may cautiously infer that Prodicus expected some of his audience to connect the dots and extrapolate from his speech that mere mortals could, in some rare circumstances, bridge the gap between the human and the divine. This surely makes CH's version of Immortal Repute powerful and appealing. Very few Greeks could have denied that any person sung about for all time and honoured as a god had lived a successful and prosperous life, if not the most blessedly prosperous life possible. If Prodicus' clever audience members were convinced that they could win a posterity of praise for themselves through their virtuous behaviour, they would have incurred a very strong consideration in favour of adopting the just life and cultivating virtue.[41] However, it is important to note that one need not accept this deeper interpretation of CH to see it as a defence of the just and virtuous life. For on any reasonable interpretation of the speech, the just and virtuous life is profitable insofar as it enables one to hear one's deeds praised, see one's glorious and noble deeds and win a posthumous reputation. This is enough to conclude that CH endorses the third and fifth theses of the Traditional View of Justice without appealing to the gods for divine support. We once again find a modernised and secular defence of traditional ideas in a sophistic text.

Democritus' Ethical and Political Fragments

It may seem out of place to include Democritus in a chapter on sophistic discussions of justice. Best known as the presocratic champion of atomism, Democritus is most often studied as an important natural philosopher and

[40] Currie (2005, 77) also stresses the appropriateness of the Heracles example.

[41] It is tempting to see the view advanced on the deeper interpretation of CH as indirectly responding to the position implicitly advanced in SF. As we saw in the previous chapter, the author of SF seemed to think that those who came to accept that there were no gods would be tempted towards the path of secret wrongdoing. That text, in other words, saw subversive religious ideas as paving the way to injustice being more profitable than justice. But our text shows how radical religious views are eminently compatible with a commitment to the just and virtuous life.

epistemologist. Given his influence on Epicurus, Lucretius and, through those two, the development of early modern science, this is not surprising. But it is somewhat surprising that he has not also been recognised as an important ethical and political thinker. Diogenes Laertius lists eight full works of his that concern ethical topics.[42] And the reader may be surprised to discover that of the paltry scraps of Democritus' writings that survive today, very few say anything about natural philosophy or epistemology at all; the vast majority of the purportedly verbatim fragments concern what we today would call value theory.[43] Why, then, has Democritus' value theoretic credentials not been widely recognised? This may be due to influential early judgements of his ethics as undeserving of serious consideration.[44] It may be because several notable attempts to connect his ethics with his far more well-known science were largely unsuccessful.[45] Excessive scepticism about the authenticity and reliability of the ethical fragments may also have contributed to this neglect.[46] Whatever the reason, there has been relatively

[42] D.L. 9.7.46. For a discussion of the titles of Democritus' corpus, see Leszl (2007).

[43] Diels and Kranz (1951) attribute 298 genuine fragments to Democritus. Of these, about 250 treat what I would call ethical or political topics, whereas just over twenty-five address the other areas of philosophy. (The remaining fragments are miscellanea that cannot really be called philosophical.)

[44] Bailey (1928, 212), for example, claimed that '[t]he moral teaching of Democritus is not based on any profound metaphysical or ethical basis, nor is it, as far as we can judge from detached fragments, in any sense a complete system … The teaching rests no doubt on a selfish basis and, insofar as it remains conscious of the basis, it is self-centered in its attitude towards life.'

[45] Gregory Vlastos (1945, 1946) famously offered an interpretation of Democritus' ethics as grounded in his atomism. His ambitious attempt later found support from Farrar (1988) and others. But the tides have turned against Vlastos, and there is a growing consensus that one need not posit a robust connection between Democritus' atomism and ethics; on this, see Taylor (Leucippus and Democritus, 1999 edn, 232–4).

[46] Democritus' ethical and political fragments pose a special problem for the scholar of ancient philosophy. Most presocratic fragments are preserved by later philosophers who had access to the relevant primary texts and who presumably quoted and commented upon them directly. But most of Democritus' ethical and political fragments are preserved by late anthologists who likely had no access to Democritus' original texts. Given that it was not uncommon for famous authors' quotations to be changed as they were passed down through the centuries, it would have been very difficult for an anthologist with no access to primary texts to confirm the authenticity of the Democritean fragments they collected. Coupled with the complete lack of any Platonic, Aristotelian or Theophrastan material so much as mentioning Democritus' ethical or political views, some have doubted the evidentiary value of the relevant fragments in Diels and Kranz.

The situation is, however, not as bad as it may seem. We have independent attestations that Democritus wrote ethical treatises, and we even have some testimony by later philosophers about the content of these works (DK68 A166–70). Thus, while the silence from Plato, Aristotle and Theophrastus is perhaps strange, it should not be taken as evidence that Democritus was not a serious author of ethical works. Additionally, a number of the fragments quoted by the most significant anthologist, Stobaeus, are also attributed to Democritus by earlier authors who likely did have access to his complete texts. This gives us some reason to expect that the Stobaean material is at least broadly reliable. Finally, it is worth noting that the most important ethical and political fragments are quite lengthy. In contrast to the shorter maxims, which are susceptible to being changed during their transmission, these longer fragments are substantially more likely to have been preserved in their original form (or at least very close to it). All that is to say: with a judicious use of the material there is hope for a compelling interpretation of Democritus' ethics and politics given our evidence, which is in fact bountiful. In this context it is worth bearing in mind Johnson's (2020, 216) remarks: 'We have much more to go on for Democritus than for any other early Greek writer on ethics, and indeed anyone writing before Isocrates, Xenophon, or Plato.'

little work done on Democritus' ethics and even less on his politics.[47] Sadly, it remains uncommon to treat him as an important moralist as well as a notable natural philosopher.

Additionally, it is important to note that the simplistic picture of the sophists as exclusively concerned with ethical questions and the presocratics as exclusively concerned with natural philosophy cannot be maintained. Democritus was interested in value theory just as many of the sophists were interested in natural science. Antiphon's OT, for example, includes discussions of physics (DK87 B15, B29 and B30) and complex mathematical problems (B12) alongside reflections about the nature and value of justice.[48] It was normal for curious Greek thinkers to partake in many intellectual pursuits. Democritus' well-deserved reputation as a serious natural philosopher should not, therefore, lead us to think he was uninterested in justice or would have refused to engage with those we now label 'sophists'. The biographical evidence we have indicates that our atomist would have been familiar with the central debates about justice and its value. We possess reports that he travelled extensively to learn all that he could, and we have his own words that he spent time in Athens, the centre of intellectual debate (DK68 A1 and B116). We also have reason to believe that he was acquainted with the work of his fellow Abderite, Protagoras, whose epistemological views our evidence suggests he attacked, and who was almost certainly a major voice in 5th-century discussions about justice, society and the individual's place within it.[49] I thus agree with Adkins (1972, 103), who claimed that '[t]he atomist Democritus may be broadly classed with the sophists when he is concerned with ethical topics'. And importantly for our purposes, an unprejudiced reading of his ethical fragments reveals that Democritus actively responded to (what he saw as) a pernicious challenge to justice and a corresponding trend towards injustice.

Consider just one example before we move on. Recall that, according to Antiphon, it is often profitable to break the laws absent witnesses who might report one's transgression. In such cases the unjust agent will suffer no adverse shame or punishment as a result of following their natural inclinations (DK87 B44(a)1.12–2.10). Democritus was aware of this sort of thinking, and in a number

[47] Three exceptions to the dearth of work on his political thought are Nill (1985), Farrar (1988) and Procopé (1989, 1990). I have profited in particular from Procopé's excellent work.

[48] Hoffmann (1997, 183–4) also draws a comparison between Democritus and Antiphon and stresses how difficult it can be to distinguish the so-called natural philosophers from the sophists.

[49] The exact relationship between Democritus and Protagoras is puzzling. A few reports suggest that Democritus took Protagoras as a 'secretary' after being impressed with his strategy for bundling wood (DK68 A9 and DK80 A1). But this is very difficult to believe because it wrongly implies that Democritus was the elder of the pair. No solid evidence indicates the two had a sustained relationship. Still, they were citizens of the same city and we may assume they knew each other. Sextus plausibly reports that Democritus argued against Protagoras' epistemological views (DK68 A9); on this, see Lee (2008, 181–251). If Democritus was aware of Protagoras' epistemological views, he would have been familiar with his ethical and political views as well.

of fragments he responds directly to it.[50] Highlighting the problem of secret injustice, he explains, 'for it is likely that the one barred from injustice by law will do wrong in secret'. He then floats a possible solution to this problem: 'but the one led to do what they ought by persuasion is not likely to do anything offensive either secretly or openly' (DK68 B181).[51] Democritus recognises that if punitive force is the only thing holding back unjust behaviour, then people will find ways to practise injustice that cannot be effectively policed by the laws. The threat of punishment only deters behaviour that might be recognised.[52] A more effective way to prevent injustice is to persuade people to do what they should. Though B181 does not explain how this persuasion would operate in practice, another fragment fills the gap: 'Even if you are alone, neither say nor do anything base; but learn to feel shame before yourself much more than before others' (B244; cf. B84 and B264). Democritus invokes the powerful psychological force of shame as a deterrent to unjust behaviour. The idea seems to be that well-educated agents want to avoid feeling shame before themselves and will, consequently, avoid doing or saying anything objectionable.

The suggestion that one should feel shame before oneself is remarkable. Standardly, shame was thought to be a social emotion triggered by the recognition—and, in particular, the sight—of another.[53] It is for this reason Antiphon claims that the unjust agent escapes shame if their violation goes unrecognised. By arguing that shame should operate in private Democritus was both making a significant moral psychological innovation (to which we shall return) and posing a novel solution to the problem of the secret injustice. Indeed, it is very tempting to interpret Democritus' two fragments as a direct response to OT. Antiphon claimed that the unjust agent who goes unnoticed (λάθῃ) will escape both shame (αἰσχύνη) and punishment (ζημία). In B181 Democritus seems to concede that the person who does injustice in secret (λάθρῃ) may avoid legal punishment, but he is quick to note that this is not the end of the story. B244 adds that humans can and sometimes do experience enough shame (αἰσχύνεσθαι) to regulate their behaviour even when it is done in secret. The temptation to interpret B181 and B244 as a response to the claims made in OT, though admittedly speculative, is

[50] This is noted by Johnson (2020, 218) too: Democritus 'provides a solution to one of the leading problems of early Greek ethics: how to discourage unethical behaviour that goes undetected.'

[51] The Greek of Democritus is from Diels and Kranz (1951). Translations are my own, although I have profited by consulting Taylor's (1999) edition, translation and commentary on the fragments.

[52] B199 and B297 suggest that some people may fear (divine?) punishment after death for the wrongdoing committed during their lifetime. But since the people referred to in these fragments have already done things worthy of punishment, it is unclear if or how the possibility of punishment in the next life actually changes their behaviour in their current life. There is not enough evidence to know what Democritus thought about people's attitude towards the gods vis-à-vis injustice and punishment. So I set this issue aside here.

[53] On shame in Greek thought in the period prior to Plato, see the influential treatments in Cairns (1993) and Williams (2008, esp. 75–102 and 219–24). It is regrettable that Williams does not include a discussion of Democritus, for whom shame is a crucial feature of our capacity as humans.

not completely unmotivated. One might think that the tight etymological relationship between Antiphon's verb λάθῃ and Democritus' adverb λάθρῃ, on the one hand, and Antiphon's noun αἰσχύνη and Democritus' infinitive αἰσχύνεσθαι, on the other, betrays a conscious attempt to oppose the view advanced in OT.[54] Mercifully, it is not important for our purposes to determine whether Democritus had Antiphon or some other figure in his crosshairs. My point in stressing the thematic and linguistic similarities between these two authors is not to establish influence or chronology. It is to highlight Democritus' awareness of, and his attempt to respond to, the sort of ideas introduced and endorsed by the 5th-century Cynics.

If an unprejudiced reading of Democritus' texts shows that he engaged in moral debates, it also indicates that he defended a broadly traditional account of justice according to which it is best for the individual to behave justly. Working through the fragments one can reconstruct two strands of thought defending justice as valuable and exposing injustice as unprofitable. The first and most recognisable strand focuses on the importance of a properly functioning society for the prospering of the citizens within it. In Democritus' most important political fragment he writes (B252):

> How the city's affairs will be well-managed ought to be considered as the greatest of all things. One should not be contentious beyond what is reasonable nor increase one's strength beyond the common utility. For the city's being well-managed is the greatest source of success, and everything depends on this one thing. If this is preserved, everything is preserved; and if this is destroyed, everything is destroyed.

This fragment advances what J. F. Procopé (1989, 310) calls 'the primacy of the common good'. Because the city's being well managed is a prerequisite for the success of the projects within it—including, crucially, the projects of each citizen—the success of the individual's life is inextricably tied to the success of the city (cf. B287). Promoting the proper functioning of the city thus becomes an imperative for the individual who wishes to prosper.[55] So too does stopping any unjust or otherwise self-serving behaviour (cf. B259). This is why Democritus feels entitled to demand of his readers that they not be contentious or increase their strength beyond the common good. To do so would harm the city in which they live and, hopefully, thrive, the very foundation of their well-being.

[54] In yet another fragment urging individuals to feel shame before themselves, Democritus suggests that individuals establish a law for their soul about how they should act (B264). This could very well be understood as a response to Antiphon's belief that the laws are wholly conventional, established only by the agreement of many and able to be broken with impunity. If laws are set up in the individual's soul, then they are presumably deeply binding for that individual.

[55] Procopé (1989, 310) offers a similar interpretation of the fragment when he claims that '[p]rivate well-being depends entirely on the continued well-being of the state'.

There is obviously a great deal of wisdom in this fragment. At a time when ostracism and exile could be tantamount to death, there was little hope for leading a satisfying life outside the protective walls of a city.[56] This is a basic truth about humans to which everyone who profits from a society ought to attend. But it is also a truth that people neglect. Humans have a well-documented tendency to forget or downplay the extent to which their own prospering depends on a stable and peaceful society.[57] Democritus may well have been right to think his contemporaries needed to be reminded about the importance of the *polis* and the responsibilities they incur to preserve it. Yet though it may be true that a city is vitally important for the citizens within it, no arguments based on this basic truth can prove that justice is invariably more profitable than injustice for the individual. Democritus' reasoning in this fragment is broadly similar to the reasoning in Political Animals: because everyone profits from a well-run city and because an unjust city is not well run, individuals threaten their own prospering when they act unjustly. We have already seen that this is not very convincing. Though an individual's prospering surely depends on their city, it is simply not true that every criminal or unjust act threatens the stability or proper functioning of that city. One can be contentious or unjustly increase one's strength without harming the common utility.

I thus leave this strand of thought behind and turn to the novel and more impressive of Democritus' defences of justice, which is rooted in a clear appreciation of what really matters for a successful human life. One can find in the atomist's fragments (possibly for the first time in Western philosophy) clear traces of a highly sophisticated and relatively well worked out account of what prospering is and what it takes for a human to prosper. This understanding manifests itself, in the first place, in Democritus' dogged attempts to debunk his contemporaries' common assumption that political power and wealth are important. What really matters is not acquiring External Goods of any kind but that we cultivate psychological well-being. So far as one can tell from the extant fragments, Democritus identifies a particular psychological condition as productive of human prospering. The fragments further indicate that just and virtuous behaviour tends to produce and sustain this condition of the soul and, additionally, that unjust desires and behaviour tend to undermine it. One can thus reconstruct a clear Democritean argument according to which justice is more valuable than injustice for us because of the direct effects it has on our souls.

[56] Consider the deplorable description of Orestes as being 'destroyed' since he lacks protection from any laws of a city at Eur. *El.* 233–4.

[57] There has been a great deal of research about what contributes to human well-being. This research shows that even today the political stability of a country and its protection of human rights are two of the most important statistical factors in determining the prospering of its citizens. Yet those citizens are unlikely to recognise the importance of these factors for the quality of their lives. For a fascinating discussion of the psychology behind this tendency, see Sharot (2011, 72–90).

To see that Democritus denied that External Goods had any great value, we must attend to his criticisms of a vulgar conception of prospering held by his contemporaries. We can do this by attending to his use of the word 'εὐδαιμονία'. It must be noted that before the time of Plato this word did not always have the philosophically rich meaning that is sometimes ascribed to it today. Recall that in WD the life of divinely bestowed material riches as well as favourable social recognition was said to be εὐδαίμων. And the word retained a strong connotation of material wealth well into the 5th century, so much so, in fact, that Herodotus explicitly contrasts the εὐδαίμονες with the πένητες—a word that literally means day labourer but is more often used simply to mean 'poor' (1.133.1).[58] The historian's use of these words is, as other commentators have noted, presumably in keeping with standard use at that time. As one authority tells us, 'in common usage the idea of material prosperity is much more evident in εὐδαιμονία than "happiness" would suggest'.[59] This is not to deny that εὐδαιμονία meant prospering. It is rather to highlight how central wealth was to people's understanding of prospering. The poor were assumed to be miserable and possessing wealth was assumed to be—at the very least—a significant part of the prosperous life.

We can see Democritus actively reject these common assumptions in B251:

> Poverty in democracy is as much more choice-worthy
> than so-called prospering (καλεομένης εὐδαιμονίης)
> under tyrants as freedom is than slavery.

This fragment preserves the contrast between poverty and εὐδαιμονία found in Herodotus but undermines it with the mocking expression 'so-called prospering' and the pointed comparison of wealth with slavery. Democritus is clearly challenging commonplace assumptions about wealth and prospering by pointing out that a poor but free life is better than a rich but unfree life (cf. B283, where he challenges a commonplace understanding of poverty). At the very least, B251 suggests that the value of material wealth is contingent on other possessions, such as the freedom to use it as one pleases and the intelligence to use it well. Several other fragments criticise wealth and other external possessions by stressing the huge practical and psychological difficulties to which a desire for External Goods gives rise (B191, B219, B224 and B284).[60] Democritus' overall attitude towards the External Goods seems to be akin to the attitude of some people today towards firearms. They are necessary tools that are useful for certain, circumscribed purposes, but they can also be highly dangerous, especially for those who exhibit an excessive zeal for their acquisition and use.

[58] Compare 1.5.4, 1.86.6, 1.196.2, 3.14.10, 3.52.4 and 8.111.2; similar uses of the word are in Thucydides' *History* at 1.6.3, 2.43.4, 2.53.1, 2.97.5 and 3.39.3.
[59] Adkins (1960, 257).
[60] B281 looks to compare wealth to cancer, though the fragment is corrupt and the sense unclear.

But if not material prosperity, what makes for a successful life? In yet another fragment rejecting the assumption that wealth makes one prosperous, Democritus encourages people to look within: 'Prospering does not reside in herds or gold; the soul is the dwelling-place of the δαίμων' (B171; cf. B187). Playing off the near etymological tautology that εὐδαιμονία is having one's δαίμων in a good condition, the atomist identifies the soul as the seat of prospering. The importance of the soul for Democritus is, thus, made abundantly clear. Yet when one tries to discover what state or condition of the soul is productive of prospering, things get more complicated. It is easy enough to identify what Democritus called the condition that is best for human beings (B189):

> The best thing for a person is to live life with as much εὐθυμίη (ὡς πλεῖστα εὐθυμηθέντι) as possible and as little as possible dispirited …

As this very important fragment notes, the best thing for humans is to possess as much εὐθυμίη as possible. That this concept is central to Democritus' ethics is confirmed by the later doxographical tradition. Cicero tells us that Democritus held εὐθυμίη to be the 'blessed life itself' (A169), and Stobaeus informs us that he calls prospering εὐθυμίη (A167). So far, so good.

The real difficulty begins when one tries to articulate what εὐθυμίη is and what it means to have as much of it as possible. This, sadly, is no easy task. The extant fragments do not contain a clear discussion of its nature and the later doxographical reports are only marginally instructive.[61]

Progress can be made, firstly, by noting that just as εὐδαιμονία is to have one's δαίμων in a good condition, to have εὐθυμίη must be to have one's θυμός in a good condition; and secondly, by attending to the way earlier authors understood this term.[62] θυμός is an important and frequently studied, if poorly understood, feature of early poetic psychology. There is a general scholarly confusion as to what, exactly, the θυμός is or does. In Homer the word appears to have such a bewildering number of senses that one prominent scholar has said it covers 'almost every important aspect of inner human experience … [I]t seems possible only to translate each occurrence as is fitting to that passage without attempting consistency.'[63] For our purposes, however, we may note its importance for the emotions—one grieves, rejoices and seethes in the θυμός—and its role as a powerful source of motivation. Homeric heroes often imply that their θυμός is urging them towards a certain course of action and then take it.[64]

[61] Annoyingly, they give different accounts of what εὐθυμίη is. Cicero says it is tranquillity of mind (A169), whereas Stobaeus likens it to well-being, harmony and freedom from trouble (A167).

[62] The line of thought developed in the next few pages has been substantially shaped by John Cooper, who shared some unpublished notes on Democritus' ethics with me. These notes were at one point supposed to form the basis of a chapter in the book that ultimately became *Pursuits of Wisdom*. The chapter was abandoned in part, I think, because John could not figure out how to complete his account of Democritus' ethics. I hope he would appreciate the discussion of Democritus' ethics and politics presented in this section.

[63] Caswell (1990, 1).

[64] *Il.* 17.90–105, 21.552–70, 22.122 and 385.

Sometimes they endorse this course of action, but not always. Heroes may deliberate with or in their θυμός and wonder at what their θυμός 'says' to them.[65] On rare occasions, they object to what it says and represent it as pressuring them to do things contrary to what they think they should do.[66] One's θυμός is, therefore, not always under one's conscious control and may at times motivate behaviour that feels strange or alien.

As we move towards the 5th century, the psychological vocabulary becomes more precise and tractable. All the mental and affective functions eventually become part of a singular entity, the ψυχή, which is sharply contrasted with the visible σῶμα and is understood to be the animating force behind it.[67] At this point, the θυμός becomes one identifiable part of the whole soul with its own unique functions. It retains the emotive and motivational power it had in earlier literature and takes on a number of new circumscribed roles or associations as well. In the lyric and elegiac poets, for example, the θυμός becomes particularly associated with the experience of joy and delight.[68] It also becomes increasingly tameable. Though these later poets continue to represent the θυμός as responding to external stimuli in ways that might surprise the individual who possesses it, there is a growing sense that people can exert control over it in the long run. The θυμός can mature and become restrained—ultimately, it may even be cultivated so as to react to life's ebbs and flows in a way that makes it easier for its owner to cope.[69] This is connected to a final development seen in later authors, namely, the normative assumption that the θυμός should come to react to the world in certain ways. In some texts, the θυμός serves as a sort of barometer of the moral character of the individual and can even be assigned credit for their virtuous behaviour.[70]

Democritus' thinking appears to be broadly consonant with this tradition. As in the poets, responses implicating one's θυμός are understood to be subjective (by which I mean both that they vary depending on the subject and that the subject is somehow especially aware of them): they are emotions or feelings elicited by external events and, in particular, by events that have the potential to bear on others' appraisal of the subject's character. It is also clear from Democritus' fragments that the θυμός is a particularly intractable part of our psyche prone to respond to external events in unruly and even harmful ways. However, like the lyric and elegiac poets, our atomist thinks that the good person can master their obstinate spirit and train it to become better (B236),

[65] *Il.* 11.403–7.
[66] *Il.* 22.98–130.
[67] The first sharp distinction drawn between the body and soul in extant Greek literature is in Gorgias' 'Encomium of Helen'. On this, see Long (2015, 15–50).
[68] Pind. *Ol.* 7.43 and *Is.* 7.2. For this point and the others developed in this paragraph, I am indebted to the helpful discussion of the lyric and elegiac poets in Sullivan (1995, 59–67).
[69] Archil. 128.
[70] Pind. *Ol.* 8.4–7, *Is.* 4.46 and *Pyth.* 2.73–4.

though doing so requires both hard work on the part of the individual and an ethical education. Several fragments offer advice about self-cultivation and how an individual may achieve εὐθυμίη (B3 and B191). Other fragments tell us from what it arises. In B258 it is said to come from upstanding, helpful behaviour, and in B191 Democritus suggests that the enjoyment of moderate pleasures leads to εὐθυμίη. It is also suggested that those who manage to master their θυμός can expect to experience less emotional turmoil than others, lead largely pleasurable lives and be generally content with their place in the world (B191). Finally, some remaining fragments stress the connection between εὐθυμίη and motivation. The 'eu-thumetic individual'[71] has a positive, forward-looking motivation and a strong sense of agency because they have a sense of what they can and cannot accomplish (B3 and B174).

Taking this all together, we may say that εὐθυμίη is a pleasant psychological condition characterised by a justifiably confident and even joyous outlook about one's place in the world. It is commonly translated as 'cheerfulness' or something similar.[72] Such translations accurately capture the positive and subjective features of Democritus' concept. They are particularly good at conveying the obvious fact that εὐθυμίη is characterised by a great deal of pleasure or enjoyment. But these translations may otherwise be misleading. In particular, they do not reflect the fact that mastering one's θυμός is a genuine accomplishment. One must have a fairly sophisticated understanding of one's abilities and work at self-cultivation to achieve this condition. At least in my English, this long-term project is by no means required for good cheer. 'Cheerfulness' also strikes me as too trivial or superficial to capture the full force of εὐθυμίη, which, as we have seen, is the best thing for humans.[73] Were it not for the baggage this word has in ancient scholarship, 'happiness' (understood according to our contemporary and subjectivist ideas about happiness) would be an appropriate translation for εὐθυμίη. But given this baggage, and in order to preserve the connection with the θυμός, 'joyful spirits' will have to do. Hence, I suggest we adopt this translation and understand the eu-thumetic individual to have a full appreciation of their powers, to rejoice at their active role in the world and to be generally pleased with how their life is going.

[71] By 'eu-thumetic individual' I simply mean an individual who has εὐθυμίη.

[72] Taylor (Leucippus and Democritus, 1999 edn) translates it as 'cheerfulness'; Procopé (1989 and 1990) opts for 'good cheer'.

[73] A similar point can be made about one of the opposites of εὐθυμίη, δυσθυμία. The Greeks used this word to describe profoundly disturbed and upset people. At Eur. *Med.* 691, for example, Aegeus asks the visibly distraught Medea the reasons for her δυσθυμία. She proceeds to tell him about Jason's betrayal and her imminent exile from Corinth. Whatever the opposite of 'cheerful' is in English, I doubt it would be apt to capture the depth of Medea's horrible anguish.

So much for what εὐθυμίη is. Now consider the richest characterisation of the eu-thumetic individual in Democritus' fragments (B174):

> The εὔθυμος is impelled towards just and lawful deeds. They rejoice in sleep and wakefulness and are strengthened and free from worry. But the one who disregards justice and doesn't do what ought to be done, this person is pained at all such things when they remember them and fear and reproach themselves.

This confirms that the eu-thumetic individual is generally pleased and contented with their place in the world. Crucially for our purposes, though, we also learn from this fragment that this individual is also impelled towards just and lawful deeds (NB the passive ἐπιφερόμενος) and that the person who disregards justice reproaches themselves, feels fear and, we may safely assume, is lacking εὐθυμίη.[74] The claim that the individual with a joyful disposition is impelled towards just and lawful deeds may come as a bit of a surprise, but we must remember that Democritus believes joyful spirits require ethical education and self-cultivation. This education would inculcate an appreciation for just and lawful deeds and could, Democritus thought, irrevocably change the student: 'Nature and teaching are similar. For even teaching reshapes the person, and by reshaping it makes a second nature', one famous fragment reads (B33; cf. B242). In the case of ethical education in particular, Democritus must have thought that the individual comes to accept and identify with the values they are taught. Once they do, some deep feature of themselves—likely the θυμός itself—exerts some internal force impelling them to pursue these values in practice. For the individual discussed in B174, the identification is so complete that their behaviour becomes an expression and affirmation of their commitment to law and justice.

Unfortunately, the fragments do not contain much information about the ethical education that reshapes our nature and has such profound effects on our character. It's safe to assume that Democritus would have expected formal instruction as well as informal associates to inculcate an appreciation for fundamental values in youths (B179, B181, B184 and B208). He also seems to have assigned the laws a particularly important role in educating the sort of ethically sensitive individual that is likely to achieve joyful spirits. According to B248, 'the laws wish to help people's lives and they can whenever people wish to do well. For they display their virtue to those

[74] One need not take ἐπιφερόμενος as passive. Taylor (Leucippus and Democritus, 1999 edn, 19) takes this as a middle and translates it as 'the cheerful man who undertakes right and lawful deeds'. This is linguistically possible, but given ἐπιφερόμενος's collocation with εἰς, which is often used with a passive verb to indicate orientation or direction, my reading and corresponding translation seem preferable.

who obey.'[75] How obedience to the law is supposed to help us appreciate our virtue is, again, sadly not elaborated upon. But what does seem clear from this fragment is that Democritus expected the acquisition of virtue to make our lives better and increase our chances of prospering. Taken together with B174, this comes close to an explicit statement that the good person—the one impelled towards just and lawful deeds—is the individual with joyful spirits. And while nowhere in the extant fragments does Democritus say this in so many words, he does often take pains to highlight that justice is preferable to injustice and that injustice leads to misery.

Consider B215:

> Justice's glory is confidence and imperturbability of mind;
> injustice's end is a fear of disaster.[76]

Given that εὐθυμίη is so closely associated with a calm and confident demeanour, this comes close to saying that justice leads to joyful spirits and, therefore, prospering (cf. B191). It certainly reveals Democritus' considered judgement that justice has better consequences for our lives than injustice. He seems to double down on this sentiment in B45: 'The one doing injustice is more miserable than the one suffering it.' Some commentators have found the content of this fragment so Platonic that they doubt its authenticity, but the considerations adduced are not convincing.[77] We have already seen that Democritus associates just, lawful and virtuous behaviour with the eu-thumetic individual, and indeed that the person who disregards justice is pained and reproaches themself. It is no great leap from this to claim that the unjust individual is somehow harmed by their injustice and made miserable through their unjust behaviour. And though this on its own does not establish the comparative claim that the unjust person is worse off than the person

[75] There is an ambiguity in the Greek here. The text says that the law shows τὴν ἰδίην ἀρετήν to those who obey. This could mean that the law shows the law's virtue to the individual who obeys or that the law shows the individual their own virtue. Without the larger context of the fragment, there is no way to determine the correct reading. But my suspicion is that Democritus means that the laws demonstrate the individual's own virtue to themselves. On this reading, the laws mandate the right behaviour and, in this way, help to cultivate the individual's own virtue. That being said, Democritus thinks that the process of being educated involves internalising a certain sort of (correct) socially sanctioned standard. If the law reflects these standards in demonstrating its own virtue (whatever exactly that might mean), this may only be so that those who follow the law come to internalise those standards themselves. So both readings may arrive at the same upshot.

[76] Procopé (1990, 35): 'A troublesome jingle, the sentence is syntactically ambiguous in its second half.' One might also translate the fragment as 'Justice's glory is confidence and imperturbability of mind; injustice's fear is a disastrous ending'.

[77] Guthrie (1965, 490) thought this fragment was 'astonishingly Socratic or Platonic' and could not be genuinely Democritean. But why not? It is true that the sentiment is similar to the Socratic view advanced in the *Gorgias*, for example, but to assume that either the historical Plato or Socrates must get the credit for first articulating such a view is presumptuous. We have already seen that centuries before Plato wrote, Hesiod had said much the same thing: 'A man makes harm for himself when he makes harm for another. A bad plan is worst for the one who plans it' (WD 266–7). Admittedly, both Democritus and Plato use participles formed from the verb ἀδικέω while Hesiod uses nouns and adjectives derived from κακός. Yet either Democritus or Plato could have creatively adapted Hesiod's sentiment for their own purposes.

they harm, we have noted already that Democritus believes the good person is able to withstand unfortunate circumstances tolerably well and, therefore, may manage being wronged without falling into ruin (B191).

Though these fragments are sufficient to show that Democritus regarded the just life as superior to the unjust life, it is worth considering two further fragments which seem to explicate the way in which the unjust agent undermines their own psychological well-being. Consider B262:

> And those who do things deserving exile or imprisonment or who deserve a punishment must be tried and not set free. The one who, desiring profit or pleasure, frees them contrary to law does injustice. And it is necessary that this weigh on their heart (τοῦτο ἐγκάρδιον ἀνάγκη εἶναι).[78]

And now B264:

> Don't feel any more shame before other people than before oneself; be no more willing to do something wicked if no one or everyone will know it. Rather, be ashamed before yourself most of all, and establish this law in your soul: that you do nothing unfitting.

The first of these fragments begins with a statement of the necessity of punishing those who do wrong. Criminal acts threaten the stability and the proper functioning of the state, especially when they are not publicly denounced and punished. Because of this, it is very important that punishments are in place to sanction those who have violated the laws and that citizens dutifully distribute those punishments. To fail to do so would itself be an injustice. But interestingly, the delinquent pleasure- or profit-seeking jurors are not threatened with the same formal punishments they fail to mete out. Instead, Democritus insists that their perversion of justice will 'weigh on their heart'—or, as we might say, that they will feel terrible regret. Presumably, Democritus expects them to feel this way because they are jeopardising the common good, on which every citizen depends, for their narrow interests. It may also be that such people fear that their injustice will become known to others and that they may suffer as a result (B45 and B174).[79]

[78] 'ἐγκάρδιον' is a rare word in Classical Greek, and its sense is hard to pin down. It is likely related to a group of words in which the prefix 'ἐν' precedes an element of the psyche and which indicates a painful experience in that part of the psyche. See Dover (1994, 220), who suggests these words be translated by a phrase akin to 'conscience'. I prefer to avoid this terminology because of the connotation conscience has of feelings of guilt, an emotion with which some people think the Greeks were not familiar. Nevertheless, I accept Dover's point and translate accordingly.

[79] What do they fear? Procopé (1989, 318–19) suggests the unjust jurists fear divine retribution. This is possible. Democritus expects that many Greeks will worry about the gods and posthumous punishments (even if he did not, B297). But I am inclined to think that the fear of being discovered as a selfish cheat who is willing to subvert justice is sufficiently alarming on its own. This could mark one as a social pariah undeserving of the respect of one's peers in the way that AI and CH warned about; it could also potentially lead to formal punishment. These are no small disasters.

Either way, all this psychological anxiety is enough to upset our spirit and make injustice disturbing to us.

In turning to the second of these fragments, the reader should recall that I earlier called attention to Democritus' introduction of feeling shame before oneself. To better understand how the atomist would have expected shame to work in practice, one must recall how important ethical education is for the eu-thumetic individual. An effectively educated individual comes to accept, internalise and endorse certain fundamental values. To gloss B33, these values become part of the individual's very nature. Democritus' great insight was to see that the person tempted to do something unfitting would, *in being so tempted*, be motivated to violate a norm partly constitutive of their character. An individual experiencing this conflict is psychologically divided and at odds with themself. I might, for example, desire to acquire Midas' gold and plan to take it by assaulting his person. Yet I might also sincerely believe that violent assault is wrong. Having recognised my desire to do something contrary to the norms I accept, it would be natural for me to feel a painful twinge of shame urging me against this course of action. We might even imagine that Democritus would say that my θυμός 'sees' the unjust motivation driving me to violate one of its ideals and that this occasions an experience of shame as well as a force resisting my wicked plans. And if—heaven forbid—this internal force is not strong enough to stop me from giving in to my temptation, my assault on Midas will show that my integrity has been compromised.

It is entirely likely that Democritus saw shame operating both as a prospective deterrent against the general practice of injustice and as a retrospective punishment for having committed acts of injustice.[80] If properly educated, anyone tempted to break the laws and commit injustice would be ashamed of their desire to do wrong. This would cause mild to moderate psychological distress, but Democritus clearly hoped it would also prevent actual injustice. In B264 the result of feeling shame before oneself is supposed to be that one does nothing unfitting (cf. B179). But if this deterrent feature of shame failed and someone went in for injustice all the same, a more severe sort of shame might then function as a punishment for the one who acted on their wicked desires and dared to commit an injustice. This must be how shame could function as a 'punishment', or at least cause psychological discomfort, after the sort of unjust behaviour mentioned in B174 and B262. Democritus apparently thought that wrongdoers would suffer significant psychological distress upon realising that they had betrayed their ethical commitments and compromised their own integrity. This presumably also

[80] This might explain why Democritus uses αἰσχύνεσθαι and αἰδεῖσθαι at different points in his fragments; see, for example, B179, B264 and B244. One could serve to identify the prospective, deterrent aspect of shame, and the other to identify the painful, retrospective aspect of the emotion. Although the issue is by no means settled, there is some scholarly support for thinking that αἰδώς was generally used in the Classical period to specify a forward-looking inhibitory emotion, whereas αἰσχύνη was used to pick out a backward-looking emotion akin to regret. See Konstan (2003).

explains why the atomist thought the person who commits injustice is more miserable than the one who suffers it. The unjust person turns out to be the author of their own distress and assumes responsibility for their lack of integrity. As many of us can attest from our personal experiences (and as the Greeks knew, too),[81] this is a dreadful situation.

It should be obvious that Democritus' second strand of thought defending the value of justice is closer in spirit to the later philosophical tradition (sometimes thought to be initiated by Socrates or Plato) than to the arguments made by the other 5th-century Friends of Justice. In contrast to AI and CH, the atomist does not appeal to the Refined External Goods in order to respond to the Cynics; instead, he appeals to the internal life of the individual and argues that whereas just behaviour promotes psychic well-being, unjust behaviour undermines it. This strategy has the considerable advantage that it can sidestep the Problem of the Plurality of the Goods that we briefly discussed above. Democritus need not concede that power, money or the base pleasures won through unjust behaviour are all that valuable. He can claim that unjust behaviour will destabilise the agent's psychological well-being while denying that the unjust gains from such behaviour offer much in the way of recompense (B218 and B220). Of course, no Cynic was forced to accept that the state of one's soul was particularly important for one's prospering. They could (and no doubt did) reject his account of joyful spirits as well as his ideas about how prospering is won. Nevertheless, Democritus' focus on the soul represents an important philosophical advance that would be picked up and developed by Plato and Aristotle in the following century.

In any case, while the atomist goes much further than the other 5th-century Friends of Justice in certain respects, other features of his thought are reminiscent of the thinkers discussed earlier in the chapter. For he, too, puts forward a line of thought similar to Political Animals. And, like the author of AI and Prodicus, he purports to establish the benefits and ultimate prudence of justice without recourse to the interventionist gods. In defending the fifth thesis of the Traditional View of Justice, he should also be seen as offering a modernised and secularised version of that view.

Final Thoughts

The texts discussed in this chapter represent some of the most sophisticated written defences of morality from the 5th century. In them we find, among other things, three different attempts to establish that the just and virtuous life is more

[81] Soph. *Aj.* 260–2: 'To look upon one's own troubles when no other has had a hand in it gives great pains.'

conducive to human prospering than the unjust and vicious life. Some arguments present justice as a necessary prerequisite for a well-functioning human society, which is itself a necessary prerequisite for the prospering of every member of that society. Others represent the eternal renown achieved through virtuous behaviour as significant enough to make the honourable practice of justice more profitable than the shameful practice of injustice. And still others argue that justice leaves one in a psychologically sound state whereas injustice leaves one psychologically distraught and upset. All of the Friends of Justice's ideas are worth studying as serious contributions to Greek ethical and political thought in their own right. However, if the guiding insight of these first three chapters is correct, these texts are not just isolated investigations into the fundamental concerns of human morality. Like the early humans of which the Friends are wont to talk, their texts are part of something much bigger. Each of these texts responds directly to Cynical ideas that present injustice as valuable for the individual and, moreover, they do so without appealing to the interventionist gods that the Cynics had themselves rejected. The Friends of Justice thus made the case for a life of justice in a way that the Cynics could not dismiss out of hand and must, therefore, be understood as contributing to a larger debate about the value of justice. Through their new and innovative arguments, they offer a modernised and naturalistic version of the Traditional View of Justice with which we began.

	Hesiod's *Works and Days*	**'Anonymous Iamblichi'**	**'Choice of Heracles'**	**Democritus' Fragments**
1. The gods (Zeus) gave justice to humanity	**Agree:** 274–80	**Disagree:** By omission	**Disagree:** PHerc. 1428, Col. 3.2–13; and see discussion on pp. 77–81	**Disagree:** By omission
2. The gods reward those who are just and punish those who are unjust	**Agree:** 280–5	**Disagree:** By omission	**Disagree:** PHerc. 1428, Col. 3.2–13; and see discussion on pp. 77–81	**Disagree:** By omission; cf. B297
3. Justice is beneficial to the just agent	**Agree:** 225–47	**Agree:** P.99.21–7/B1 5.2 and P.100.9–18/B1 6.1	**Agree:** 2.1.33/ B2.33	**Agree:** B174, B215, B248 and B252
4. The rewards the just receive are (primarily) External Goods	**Agree:** 225–47	**Qualifiedly Agree:** P.99.22–8/B1 5.2 and P.101.17–104.1/ B1 7.1–14	**Qualifiedly Agree:** 2.1.28/ B2.28 and 2.1.33/B2.33	**Disagree:** B174 and B215; cf. the critique of External Goods in B171, B191, B224, B219 and B284
5. It is, all things considered, prudent for the individual to be just	**Agree:** 270–3	**Agree:** P.99.22–8/B1 5.2 and P.100.9–101.6/B1 6.1–5	**Agree:** 2.1.33/ B2.33	**Agree:** B189 with B174; cf. B45 and B215

Table 3.1 Summary: The Defence of Justice

Part II

The Debate in Plato

4

Transition to Plato

Part I of this book reconstructed an important 5th-century debate about the value of justice. This chapter begins by taking stock of that debate. I consider the power of the Moral Cynics' challenge to the Traditional View and the Friends of Justice's attempt to defend the prudence and profitability of justice in the light of that challenge. We shall see that although the debate was not definitively resolved by the century's end, the Cynics could fairly claim to have the upper hand. The central and dangerous idea advanced in their texts—namely, that injustice is more profitable than justice—dealt a serious blow to conventional morality and received no definitive response.

Retrospectively evaluating the debate is important because, as I argue in the second part of the chapter, Plato was very much aware of it. We can see this by attending to his 'early dialogues' and, in particular, *Gorgias* and *Protagoras*. The first of these reproduces several Cynical challenges to morality that show clear affinities to the ideas discussed in the earlier chapters; and the second includes a sophistic speaker who praises justice in part by presenting a mythologised account of humanity's development that is so strikingly similar to what we find in AI that the two texts must be presenting two versions of the same theory. Considering these two dialogues will pave the way for our consideration of *Republic* in the following chapters. There we shall see that Plato was not only aware of the 5th-century debate about justice but was also alive to its lack of a clear resolution. Ultimately, I will suggest he set himself the task of ending the debate in favour of the Friends and that he himself offers a sort of return to the Traditional View of Justice.

Taking Stock of the Debate

We saw in Chapter 1 that Hesiod canonised the Traditional View of Justice, including the important idea that justice is, all things considered, the most profitable and prudent way to live one's life. 'Prosperous and blessed is the one who knows all these things and does their work without giving offense to the immortals, discerning the messages of the birds, and avoiding trespasses', reads the last lines

of WD (826–9). Yet as these remarks suggest, the view that justice was one's best bet for prospering presumed—indeed, depended upon—the existence of fair and interventionist deities. Absent the gods who reliably intervene to reward just behaviour and punish unjust behaviour, there could be no way to be sure that the path of justice would be better for the individual than the path of injustice. True, WD 274–80 suggests that δίκη is what liberates humans from the cannibalistic infighting that characterises the rest of the animal kingdom and also that justice is in some profound (though unclear) sense natural for the sort of creatures we are. But even granting these pregnant ideas, which would be seized upon and developed by the Friends centuries later, the poet frankly admits that he would not want to be just in dealings with other people if those who are unjust win a better settlement in the long run (270–3). As I argued in Chapter 1, this concession indicates that the ultimate consideration recommending in favour of just behaviour is the fact that justice is profitable and wins more of the External Goods than unjust behaviour.

It was not terribly difficult for the Cynics to challenge this noble but naïve view. Having matured in a culture where intellectuals were becoming increasingly sceptical about the existence of interventionist gods, these sophists were in an ideal position to tease out the explosive implications of this new, naturalistic worldview. No place was left for gods that reliably punish injustice and, it followed as a consequence, humans were the only agents left to deter unjust behaviour. This particular realisation quickly led to another: to avoid being punished for injustice, an individual need only escape the notice of their fellow citizens. Both these points were highlighted in a number of the Cynics' texts, but nowhere more pointedly than in Antiphon's OT (DK87 B44 2.3–10):

> When a person transgresses the laws, then, they are free from shame and punishment if they escape the notice of those who agreed on them; but if not, then they are not.

It is worth recalling that this passage clearly, albeit implicitly, rejects divine punishment. For if Antiphon believes that anyone can escape punishment by having their transgressions go unnoticed by those who have agreed upon the laws, and if it is only (human) citizens that have agreed upon those laws, then he must be assuming that the gods neither shame nor punish violations of justice. Injustice is, then, likely to go unpunished if it occurs in secret. This means that on those occasions when one can secretly break the laws and benefit oneself in the process, being unjust will likely result in some profit. The implications for our practical deliberations are obvious (1.12–23):

> Thus, a person would make use of justice most beneficially for themselves if they considered the laws as great when in the presence of witnesses and the things of nature [as great] when bereft of witnesses.

These two short passages contain the core of a powerful challenge to the Traditional View of Justice. In a world bereft of gods who reward just behaviour and punish injustice, it is possible for an unjust act to win External Goods or some other natural advantage, go undetected and, as a result, be a net gain from the unjust individual's perspective. We see a similar idea suggested in SF. Recall that SF implicitly endorses a pessimistic account of human psychology and motivation, according to which humans naturally desire to get the better of those around them. That is why, after laws were instituted, a significant number of the authors of those very laws started breaking them in secret (DK88 B25.5–11). Of course, all this secret lawbreaking stopped after some clever man introduced the belief in a god that punished all violations of justice. But by revealing to its audience that this god was a mere political fiction, SF also revealed that as long as most people continue to believe in the gods it is possible both to do injustice without getting punished and to avoid being wronged by others. The text thereby hints that a secret life of injustice is the best way to satisfy our natural desires. A similar idea pops up in *Clouds* as well. After boisterously claiming that the gods can't be bothered to distribute punishments for injustice among themselves—let alone among humans—the Wrong Argument teaches its student how to avoid the only sort of credible punishment left. Pheidippides need not fear his peers if only he learns how to argue his way out of paying for his crimes. The student is then urged to unjustly pursue anything his nature might desire, such as an affair with a married woman (1075–82).

Of course, the Cynics' challenge was not exhausted by advancing this one dangerous idea. As the preceding chapters have shown, the Cynics were responsible for a number of innovative critiques. To highlight just one example, their novel and compelling historical analyses were developed in part as reinterpretations of, and correctives to, the Hesiodic myths. In response to WD's claim that Zeus gave justice to humanity, SF explains that it was humans themselves who established laws and justice at some now-forgotten time in the past. In response to the simplistic idea that we were ordained as essentially distinct from the other animals, SF offers a more complex picture. True, humans are now different from other animals in obvious and important respects. But this was neither decreed by the gods nor always the case. In reality, humans once lived a violent life just like all the other animals, and they were only able to escape the chaos through a difficult and painful self-imposed process. History became a weapon wielded by the Cynics against the Traditional View. With it they ripped back the curtain of mythology and revealed the immanent and often ugly truths lying behind it. But perhaps the most remarkable feature of these historical analyses is that they even included their own error theory about how people came to believe in the gods described by the poets. SF makes it plain that humans did not take to justice immediately. In order to cajole us into following the laws and treating others fairly, the idea of an

interventionist god needed to be propagated. This god looks suspiciously like the Zeus of WD, and its inclusion in SF seems to be the author's way of hinting that the real function of myths was to solve a pressing political problem by manipulating—however benignly—people into being just.

Yet for all that these historical accounts were provocative and important, the true force of the Cynics' challenge lay in their central, dangerous idea. For if one can commit injustice and gain External Goods or natural advantages without suffering any punishment in return, how could this fail to be profitable for the self-interested individual? And if it was profitable, would not a whole life of intelligent injustice be the most profitable and prudent life? This single idea threatened the fifth and most important thesis of the Traditional View of Justice. Even Hesiod had admitted that *if* the unjust person were to win a better settlement than the just person, it would be preferable to be unjust. The Cynics argued effectively that in a naturalistic world the unjust person could—at least in many circumstances—secure that better settlement. Thus, they might have claimed to have made an argument that would have convinced even the great champion of traditional morality.

The Friends objected to many aspects of the Cynics' challenge and developed their own arguments to defend traditional morality and, in particular, the thesis that justice is more profitable and prudent than injustice. This is clear from our analysis of AI. A little over halfway through the transmitted text, the author introduces the Cynical ideas that the life of unpunished injustice is more profitable than the just life and—even more strikingly—that such a life is virtuous for human beings (P.100.18–101.4/DK89 B1 6.2–4 and P.100.5–9/B1 6.1). These ideas are immediately denounced as wicked and harmful and are argued against. One of AI's responses is Political Animals, which purports to establish that lawful societies are necessary for the survival of human beings and, as a general rule, that the more lawful societies are, the more individuals within them thrive. This is a very significant line of thought, and in one respect it must be considered a resounding success. For it forcefully maintains not only that being ruled by laws and justice is broadly beneficial for the sort of creatures that we are but also that it is natural for us. By drawing on the historical accounts that the Cynics wielded so effectively against Hesiod, AI argues that it was essential for the survival and prospering of our species that we united into cooperative groups regulated by laws and justice. The text further maintains that continuing to be so regulated is essential for the well-being of the people within society. And because there is nothing more natural to humans than the desire to stay alive and prosper, our author can take himself to have shown that laws and justice are indispensable tools for the pursuit of our natural ends. AI thereby ingeniously offers an updated take on Hesiod's idea that it is especially natural for humans to follow the laws and be just. This is a powerful response to the Cynics' beliefs that the laws are hostile to our nature and that it is appropriate and virtuous for humans to practise injustice.

However, it is all too clear that this argument cannot effectively respond to the idea that injustice is profitable for the intelligent individual. The fact that groups must be governed by justice shows neither that individuals must be nor that it is profitable for them to be. Antiphon and the author of SF are aware that it is advantageous to live in a well-functioning society. They nevertheless insist that successful injustice is profitable when it goes unpunished. Neither the core of Political Animals nor its two addenda have much to say in response to this. The first addendum may show that if an individual is recognised as having committed an injustice they will be punished (no matter how strong they are). The second may show that people generally do better when society is lawful and that they generally do worse when society is lawless. But it does not follow that an individual's secret and unrecognised injustice will result in harm *to them*. To infer this one would have to assume that all unjust acts—no matter how minor or secret—so significantly disrupt society that they materially impact the life of everyone. Such an assumption is obviously untenable. In fact, it looks like AI quietly concedes that some injustice can be perpetrated without any large-scale consequences while arguing that tyranny arises from the lawlessness of the citizens: 'For whenever everyone turns towards vice, then [the tyrant] occurs, since people are not able to live without laws and justice' (P.103.28–104.1/B1 7.13). The claim here is that a tyrant emerges when *everyone* turns to vice. Let's grant that the emergence of a tyrant would make the life of everyone, including the unjust individual, worse. It's still difficult not to read the above as an admission that some people can go in for injustice without their society feeling the disastrous and widespread harms associated with tyranny.[1] And if that is true, then it should be possible for some intelligent individuals to reap the rewards of injustice without paying any penalty.

So Political Animals fails to respond to the Cynics' central, dangerous idea. Contrary to initial appearances, it cannot show that secret injustice is harmful. It cannot even show that injustice fails to profit the intelligent individual. However, AI contains a second argument. We might hope that it fares better. And, as a matter of fact, there is some reason to think it does. At least there is some reason to think that the Friends thought it did. We possess two versions of Immortal Repute from two different sophists. This makes Immortal Repute unique among the arguments made by the sophistic moralists. One might reasonably infer from this that they themselves privileged it as especially valuable or effective. Admittedly, our evidence from this period is far from complete. It is entirely possible that if we possessed more texts we would find some hitherto unrecognised Friend making an argument similar to Political Animals or some argument advanced by

[1] The same surely holds for the benefits of a just and lawful community. It is unimaginable that the injustice of a single individual or even a few, intelligent individuals could destroy those benefits.

Democritus.[2] Nevertheless, I want to argue that the 5th-century sophists *should* have identified Immortal Repute as particularly effective at responding to the arguments of the Cynics.

There are three reasons for thinking this. The first reason is that the argument has the right structure and target. The strategy is to leverage the possibility of one single individual securing high social status and repute in order to argue that virtue and justice are profitable for them. This makes it distinct from Political Animals, which functions at the level of whole societies and then dubiously draws conclusions about the people within them. In contrast, Immortal Repute is resolutely focused on the individual. A second strength of Immortal Repute is that the argument's advocates could—and, in the case of Prodicus, did—freely concede that injustice may win many Crude External Goods or natural advantages. Advocates could even allow that secret injustice sometimes goes unpunished. This is because Immortal Repute functions by identifying the different and superior Refined External Goods. Who cares how much money one has, how many luxurious feasts one has attended or how many trysts with beautiful boys one can boast of? The value of winning immortal praise eclipses these goods and makes a greater contribution to human prospering. At least in the Prodicean version of the argument, an immortal reputation is presented as a dominant or at least major contribution to the blessedly prosperous life (*Mem.* 2.1.31/DK84 B2.31). And if one grants that a high social standing and the prospect of winning immortality through posthumous praise has something close to a lexical priority over wealth and the base pleasures vis-à-vis prospering, then Immortal Repute can concede much of what the Cynics had to say about injustice and still maintain that justice and virtue are more important for the prosperous human life.

The final reason to think that Immortal Repute was particularly important to the 5th-century debate about justice is circumstantial but nevertheless revealing. As we shall see later, Plato has Glaucon and Adeimantus target the broad considerations leveraged by Immortal Repute in his *Republic*. I argue for this at length in the following chapter, but briefly: Plato does this, firstly, because he recognises that the versions of this argument put forward by earlier authors had a particular weakness, making them susceptible to being co-opted by would-be Cynics; and, secondly, he thought that by co-opting the argument he could make the strongest

[2] As we have seen, Democritus' most important political fragment advances a view broadly akin to what we find in Political Animals (DK68 B218). But without more explicit argumentation or the original context, there is no way to be sure that the argument is close enough to what we find in AI to count as another instance of Political Animals. Later in the chapter we will see that Protagoras' speech in Plato's *Protagoras* does advance an argument that can fairly be called a version of Political Animals. But, unfortunately, there is no way of knowing whether Protagoras himself actually made such an argument in the 5th century.

case on behalf of injustice. What is important for present purposes is that Glaucon and Adeimantus seem to think that by co-opting the considerations raised by Immortal Repute and deploying them for their own purposes, they clinch the case for injustice. And this strongly suggests that such considerations were especially important or prominent for the moralists' responses to the Cynics prior to the composition of *Republic*.

Notwithstanding this, Immortal Repute also had some limitations that those writing in the 5th century were likely to have realised. The first and most obvious is that the argument would only have any traction on those who antecedently cared about winning a good reputation or a posterity of praise. I can find no passage in either AI or CH explicitly arguing that a good reputation—let alone a posthumous one—is something after which it is worth striving.[3] It is simply assumed that people will recognise this as valuable. Of course, this was not a wild assumption. Reputation was highlighted as valuable by Hesiod. And even if posthumous fame was not explicitly presented as good in WD, it is celebrated in Homer and later literature.[4] There can be little doubt that many Classical Greeks would have aspired to be honoured after their deaths. Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that Prodicus and the author of AI simply posit that this sort of honour is valuable and an important part of a good life. This is obviously something that might be questioned or criticised. A second and compounding difficulty is that repute, especially in its posthumous variety, is a scarce good. It can only ever be a minority of individuals who are crowned with the wreath of eternal fame. So even if Prodicus convinced his audience that it was in principle possible for an individual to be revered as a god in their afterlife because of benefaction in their present life, such a fate would never be likely. For every Heracles there are a hundred other heroes who gave up the pleasures of vice, attempted to become virtuous and have sadly been forgotten by history.

These two limitations are significant enough that the Cynics could reasonably have claimed that Immortal Repute was insufficient to establish that the just and virtuous life is better than the life of intelligent injustice. They could have resisted the idea that it is rational to aspire to the elusive good of posthumous fame. And, in any case, it seems unlikely that they would have ascribed as much value to repute or high standing in society as Prodicus did in CH.[5]

[3] I will, however, identify an implicit but nevertheless pointed consideration to this effect below.

[4] See Nagy (2013, 26–47) for a discussion of the prominent role posthumous reputation plays in depictions of the Homeric and other Greek heroes.

[5] Some Greeks denied that they cared about a posthumous reputation. At Eur. *Alc.* 725–7 Pheres claims not to care what people say or think about him after he dies. He is, however, subsequently rebuked because his comment is apparently characteristic of a shameless, unenviable individual.

The Problem of the Plurality of Goods

This brings us back to the Problem of the Plurality of Goods. We are now in a position to see that lying behind the arguments made by both sides of the 5th-century debate is a disagreement over the relative value of the Crude and Refined External Goods. The existence of different goods that could be acquired through different sorts of behaviour made the debate about justice more complex and increasingly intractable. For it allowed each side to hunker down in the trenches of their own preferences and fend off the theoretical assaults of their opponents. However, it also prompted the development of new argumentative artillery that, I think, led to real advances in early Greek theorising about value. Unfortunately, these advances have not yet been widely appreciated or commented upon. So, a quick digression about the Problem of the Plurality of Goods is in order.

Recall that in WD Zeus bestowed both material prosperity and reputation upon those individuals and cities that were just and punished those that were unjust. This allowed Hesiod to believe that most of the goods crucial to human prospering could be achieved through hard work and the moral behaviour rewarded by the gods. Such a belief could not be maintained in the 5th century. Though the Cynics thought that injustice promised many advantages for the unjust agent, none of our extant evidence indicates that they were so bold as to claim that injustice would ever win the unjust agent widespread honour or esteem. True, Antiphon indicates that the unjust individual can avoid shame if they are tactical. But in so doing he tacitly acknowledges that unjust behaviour is typically considered shameful. Similarly, the Friends do not deny that the unjust individual can procure for themself the Crude External Goods. Even though Prodicus' Virtue has much to say about the hollowness of Vice, she never claims that her counterpart is wrong to suggest that Heracles might secure food, drink and boys for himself if he turns to injustice. On the contrary. Virtue insists that if Heracles follows her path he will have to work hard and forgo the luxuries often associated with Vice.[6] Of course, the Friends of Justice could (and, in the case of AI and Democritus, did) highlight how hard it might be to practise injustice in such a way that one both wins Crude External Goods and escapes punishment. But such considerations are

[6] These observations do not amount to a literal concession that the unjust individual will win more Crude External Goods than the just individual will. And Prodicus is careful to have his Virtue remind Heracles that the life advocated by Vice will achieve immediate gratification only at the expense of pains later in life, giving the impression that any External Goods won through vicious behaviour may be 'cancelled out' in the future (2.1.31/B2.31). But no arguments are given to show that those indulging now must suffer later, and at least as expressed by Virtue the claim reads as a transparent attempt at rationalising away a problem. I can see no good reason to think that the sensual indulgences of one's youth inevitably lead to trouble later, and, if pressed, I suspect Prodicus would concede that the vicious life could often be less laborious and more luxurious than the just life.

not decisive objections to the possibility that intelligent injustice might result in money, pleasures or other things of genuine value.

The clash between the Cynics and the Friends thus functioned to uncover a fork in the ethical landscape of 5th-century Greece. In a world where honour is bestowed upon those who are recognised as virtuous but money and power can be stolen in secret, people with different values may well recognise different sorts of behaviour as profitable and prudent. They might, therefore, agree over the empirical question of which sort of life is likely to result in what sorts of goods and nevertheless disagree about what sort of life is, all things considered, most prudent and profitable.

This problem forced the sophists to confront the difficult theoretical question of how (and how much) different goods contributed to human prospering. We can see this most clearly by contrasting their texts with WD. Hesiod evinces no clear thinking about the relative value of different goods or the precise contribution they make to the prosperous human life. He is more or less content to list all the good things that a fortunate person might enjoy and then call them εὐδαίμων. The poet's lack of theoretical sophistication does not simply reflect the fact he was writing earlier than most other Greek authors. It also reflects the deeper point that Hesiod represents conventional and largely unquestioned views in his text. He neither seriously confronts any ideological opponents nor engages with any real alternative routes to, or different conceptions of, prospering. Yet because the sophists' views evolved out of a confrontation with ideas they rejected, they did not have the luxury of being ignorant of these alternative routes or conceptions. This led to much more sophisticated and increasingly more explicit views about which goods possess significant value. When the Cynics objected to the Traditional View by arguing that unjust behaviour can be profitable despite the risk of shame and punishment, they were making an implicit but clear judgement about the value of the Crude External Goods. It makes no sense to risk social life and literal limb for things that are of no value. Things become more obvious still with the Friends. CH's version of Immortal Repute explicitly contrasts the Crude External Goods won through vice with the Refined External Goods won through virtue, and it unambiguously indicates that the latter make a more significant contribution to human prospering than the former.

The pressures of the 5th-century debate thus led its contributors to articulate with ever greater precision the relative value of goods. This was a significant philosophical development that would be picked up on and further refined by later thinkers. And alongside this development we can also find several theoretical attempts to justify the greater value ascribed to various goods or the lives to which they were thought to lead. Sometimes, it is true, this happened 'negatively' by simply ridiculing the things valued by one's intellectual opponents. This occurs in CH when Prodicus' Virtue launches into a tirade about how deplorable Vice

is (2.1.31/DK84 B2.31). At other times it happened by showcasing paradigmatic examples of prosperous individuals to make the value and choice-worthiness of their way of life especially vivid (e.g. 2.1.33/B2.33).[7] But we also find sophists employing rational considerations and arguments to establish one kind of good or life as better than another. For one brief example of this, recall that AI encourages us to 'leave behind instead of this mortal thing [sc. life] something immortal, an eternal and ever-living good repute' (P.99.26–8/B1 5.2). The wordplay of this passage serves to identify one salient feature of the Refined External Good of repute that distinguishes it from the base desires foolishly pursued by most people: good repute can last forever, whereas our bodies and desires perish relatively quickly.[8] The longevity of esteem is presented as one ideology-independent reason to prefer it over somatic pleasures or the accumulation of wealth. This is a nifty albeit modest bit of philosophy.

Other attempts to argue for the value of certain goods were, however, more consequential. The most important sought to justify the superior value of certain goods by establishing a clear link between them and prospering. Here we must return to Democritus, who was, among other things, a vocal critic of his contemporaries' juvenile ideas about the good life. Recall his attack on the so-called prospering of tyrannies. He saw that many people thought wealth was an important feature of the prosperous life—so important, apparently, that it might be worth living under a tyrant to get it (DK68 B251; cf. B191). This was an absurd error, and it was one, Democritus evidently thought, born from a failure to understand what prospering really is. It was presumably in response to such errors that he came to appreciate the importance of identifying and articulating (however incompletely) the nature of human prospering and how an individual can realise it. As I argued at the end of the last chapter, this is a project we see him engaging in in a number of his most important ethical fragments. Drawing on many observations and considerations—including ideology-independent ones, such as etymology (B171)—those fragments argue that the human soul is the seat of prospering. It follows from this that the most important thing an individual who hopes to prosper can do is work on their soul. Above all else, Democritus thought, such an individual should strive to experience joyful spirits to the greatest degree: 'The best thing for a person is to live life with as much εὐθυμίη as possible and as little as possible dispirited …' (B189).

Identifying a rough account of what human prospering is provided our atomist with a powerful tool to discriminate between different purported goods. Those things productive of as much εὐθυμίη as possible, such as the divine pleasures

[7] This may have been an important feature of sophistic thought more generally. On this, see Anderson (2016, 156–68).

[8] A similar contrast between the fleetingness of life and the longevity of one's repute (or, literally, 'tomb') after death is found at Eur. *Hec*. 317–19.

alluded to later in B189, really do deserve to be called good. But those that make no contribution or undermine it do not. We can see Democritus put this tool to use in his fragments that pass critical judgement on experiences or objects that were often highly valued by his peers. At least one fragment comes right out and claims that wealth is not where one must look if one hopes to be prosperous (B171; cf. B187). Other fragments criticise people who take their pleasures from food and sex. Such pleasures are fleeting and make no significant contribution to one's long-term well-being (B235). Still other fragments expose problems associated with injustice. Indeed, this particular Friend of Justice criticised cupidity because it could drive people to unjust behaviour, which we learn elsewhere is destructive of prospering (B191, B218, B221 and B262). In place of injustice, we are told in no uncertain terms that justice is better for us: the eu-thumetic individual rejoices and thrives in doing just and lawful deeds (B174). These fragments seem particularly well placed to respond to those who thought that the goods secured through injustice make a significant contribution to the prosperous human life.

Democritus' project of identifying and articulating the outlines of an account of human prospering was hugely philosophically significant. Not only did it provide a loose criterion that could be used to respond to the Cynics who placed an undue value on the Crude External Goods, but it also made it possible to imagine a truly rational approach to life that could answer all practical questions about how an individual ought to behave by referring to the individual's own good. Though this truly rational approach towards life is not fully developed by Democritus, we do find in his fragments the theoretical foundation of a robust philosophical eudaemonism.[9] Arguably, the nascent ideas found in those fragments would be developed in an increasingly systematic way by Plato and Aristotle in the following century, and they would ultimately grow to structure Hellenistic ethical thought.[10] Of course, Democritus' contributions to the history of ethics have been noted by others (though his systematicity and the extent of his influence remain a topic of scholarly controversy).[11] But if the considerations adduced here are on the right

[9] It is for this reason that Julia Annas (2002, 180) has called Democritus 'one of the pioneers of the dominant form of ethical theory in the ancient world'; compare Johnson (2020, 212).

[10] Several Hellenistic philosophers seemed to find in Democritus' works a clear antecedent to their own systematic and teleological approach to ethics (A166, A168 A169 and Sen. *Tranq.* 9.2.3; see also Annas (1993a, 361–4). I take their interest in the atomist to offer further (although modest) support for the idea that Democritus himself identified something approximating a normative end or *telos* for human beings that could help guide their practical decision-making.

[11] Exactly how systematic Democritus' ethics was and to what extent it had a eudaemonistic structure is a matter of some controversy. Gosling and Taylor (1982, 27–37) have argued that Democritus' theory was genuinely systematic. But others have taken a much more sceptical approach to his work, denying both that his ethics was systematic and that it was an important predecessor to later eudaemonism; see, for example, Striker (1990, 97–9). It seems very likely to me that his work was an important predecessor to Hellenistic versions of eudaemonism, if only because of his obvious influence on Epicurus. The extent to which his ethics can be said to be properly eudaemonistic is, however, a question I do not think we can answer with much confidence.

track, then Democritus' pioneering approach to ethics developed largely against the backdrop of the 5th-century debate about justice. And to the best of my knowledge, this has not been widely appreciated by past scholars of ancient philosophy.

Back to the Debate

With our digression at an end, we return to our retrospective evaluation of the debate and ask whether Democritus' defence of justice fared any better than Political Animals or Immortal Repute. This is a tricky question to answer. Although Democritus appears to have responded directly to views encouraging the practice of secret injustice, the extant fragments do not provide a clear indication of the particular claims to which he was objecting. This makes it difficult to provide a satisfactory answer to our question. Nevertheless, I think some progress can be made.

We should start by noting that it is a virtual certainty that the Cynics disagreed with Democritus' account of joyful spirits and the successful human life. Notwithstanding his ground-breaking attempt to identify the basis of human prospering, no self-respecting Cynic would have conceded that the prosperous individual is wholeheartedly impelled towards just and lawful deeds. But Democritus also offered considerations about the downsides of unjust behaviour which, though not unrelated to his understanding of prospering, could have found purchase among those who either rejected or were unaware of that understanding. Of particular interest here is his innovative use of shame. As I argued in the previous chapter, the fragments gesture towards an ethical education that inculcates a deep attachment to the laws and the values of the community. Our atomist hoped that one result of this attachment would be that those tempted to commit unjust deeds would feel a twinge of shame and refrain from acting unjustly (B244). Additionally, he expected appropriately educated individuals to suffer deep psychological pain if they actually gave in to their temptation and committed injustice. B174 says in so many words that the individual who disregards justice will reproach themself and implies that they will lack prospering as a result (cf. B215 and B262).

Democritus saw these negative, self-imposed emotions as a sort of 'punishment' that could and should deter unjust behaviour. It is, therefore, interesting to note that the Cynics thought very hard about shame. Indeed, it is a theme that unites all the texts discussed in Chapter 1 save for SF. Recall that while studying with the Wrong Argument Pheidippides is implored to νόμιζε μηδὲν αἰσχρόν (1076–7). This advice evidently presupposes that Pheidippides is currently disposed to recognise many things as shameful and feel shame about doing them. The student is implored to give up his nagging internal compass because the experience of

shame makes it more difficult to effectively pursue the natural necessities. That is to say, the λόγος appears to admit that shame has the real potential to deter unjust behaviour—or, at the very least, make it much more psychologically demanding. However, this fact is nothing to celebrate. According to the Wrong Argument, it would be best for the calculating individual to overcome any internal obstacles to the unjust behaviour that might secure what is truly advantageous for them.

A similar point is made by the Athenian envoys in their conversation with the Melians, though in this case the worry is not that shame will prevent Melos from enjoying an evening with a married woman. The worry is rather that the seductive feeling of shame might push them into a disastrous military confrontation they cannot survive. The envoys explain (Thuc. 5.111.3):

> In many cases those who can look ahead to the things that are coming are nevertheless drawn by the power of a seductive name, that of the thing called shame (τὸ αἰσχρὸν), to a point at which they become so defeated by the phrase as indeed to fall willingly into fatal disasters …

By painting shame as a seductress, the Athenians imply that the emotion has the power to exert a great deal of influence on people's deliberations. I take this to be a concession that shame really is a significant feature of human psychology. But unlike Democritus, who welcomes and embraces this fact, the Athenians regard it as problematic. For if shame at the prospect of submitting to Athens leads the Melians to resist, it will literally be the death of them. The envoys thus urge the city to coldly consider what will secure its safety and not to be misled by a seductive emotion, which in any case only really makes sense in a contest between equal parties (5.101).

The Melian Dialogue and the Wrong Argument present a critical view of shame as a common and powerful emotion, albeit one often at odds with an enlightened understanding of what is beneficial for the individual or city. Antiphon has a slightly different view. Our evidence does not indicate that he saw shame as a particularly salient feature of human psychology needing to be struggled against.[12] Nevertheless, he thinks that the intelligent individual ought at least to avoid the shame associated with being recognised as having committed an injustice (B44 2.3–10). It seems, therefore, that the Cynics were concerned about shame and that they established a loose but united front against it. This suggests that they would have taken seriously a thinker who rooted a defence of justice in the human propensity to feel shame. But it also shows that they had thought through the issue and decided that, however natural or common shame might be, it was incumbent on the intelligent individual to overcome or otherwise avoid it. For this reason, I suggest that the Moral Cynics would not have been convinced by Democritus'

[12] Cairns (1993, 362).

suggestion that shame could *and should* function as a 'punishment' for injustice. And they certainly would never have agreed that shame was sufficient to make injustice less profitable than justice.

Taking everything together, then, our evidence suggests that the 5th-century Friends of Justice failed to effectively respond to the Moral Cynics' central, dangerous idea. Though Political Animals plausibly shows that laws and justice are natural to humans, it cannot prove that secret injustice is unprofitable. Immortal Repute arguably fares a bit better. But in presuming the superiority of the Refined External Goods it begs important questions that needed answering. And to the extent that Democritus' nuanced take on shame as a psychological deterrent for injustice would have resonated with the Cynics, it seems unlikely that this take would have convinced them to change their views. At most it would have strengthened their critical attitude towards shame and provided an example of how conventional morality inappropriately shapes how people think and feel. We may conclude that by the end of the sophistic debate the question of the value of justice remained an open one. In spite of the Friends' valiant efforts, no one had yet been able to definitively and persuasively debunk the idea that injustice is valuable. Future moralists who hoped to offer a complete defence of the Traditional View would, then, need to offer a more comprehensive and persuasive defence of justice and its value for the intelligent individual.

Plato and the Debate

It is all but certain that Plato was aware of this debate about justice. Book II of *Republic*, which the following chapters will analyse in detail, reconstructs, engages with and then promises a response to much of that debate. But even if we lacked Glaucon and Adeimantus' famous challenge to Socrates and the latter's response, there would be sufficient evidence to conclude that the philosopher of the Forms was broadly familiar with the arguments put forward by the Moral Cynics and Friends of Justice. Let us consider some of that evidence now.

The place to begin is a group of dialogues often called the 'early' or 'Socratic' dialogues. These dialogues are thematically similar and are sometimes thought to have been written early in Plato's career, before the so-called middle period in which *Republic* is supposed to have been written. For the purposes of this book we may remain agnostic about whether the early dialogues were composed chronologically prior to the middle dialogues or, indeed, if they form any sort of chronological grouping at all, for their stylistic and thematic similarity is sufficient to merit discussing them as a group.[13] The dialogues in question are *Apology*,

[13] Attempts to order the dialogues by their date of composition are highly contentious and notoriously subject to personal bias. Our best evidence about the relative order of the dialogues comes from ancient testimony. Aristotle tells us that *Laws* was written after *Republic*, and Olympiodorus adds that

Charmides, *Crito*, *Euthydemus*, *Euthyphro*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Major*, *Hippias Minor*, *Ion*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, *Menexenus*, *Protagoras*, possibly the *Meno* and (according to some) Book I of *Republic*.[14] The first thing to note about these dialogues is that fully five of them are named after particular sophists and feature those sophists as one of Socrates' main interlocutors. Additionally, both *Charmides* and *Republic* I feature figures associated with the sophistic movement as principal interlocutors. Finally, the title character of the *Meno* is a student of the sophist Gorgias and offers conspicuously 'Gorgianic' answers to some of Socrates' questions (e.g. 71b1–72a5; see also Plato (1961 edn, 205–6)).

Thus, Plato was clearly aware of the sophists and willing to engage with their thinking in his dialogues. It also cannot be denied that our philosopher was profoundly moved by moral and political questions and, more specifically, the question of what role justice and injustice play (if any) in the prosperous human life. Given that most of the presocratic natural philosophers seem not to have been particularly preoccupied with these questions, the sophists would have been a natural group of predecessors to turn to in thinking about these issues. It is, therefore, entirely unsurprising that most of the Platonic dialogues featuring sophists have overtly ethical themes.[15] There is no denying the sophists and their legacy had a profound impact on Plato's moral thinking, if not his entire philosophy.[16] Indeed,

Laws remained unfinished at the time of Plato's death (*Pol.* 1264b24–7 and *Prol* 6.24; cf. D.L. 3.37). Taking the final position of *Laws* as fixed, the findings of stylometric studies (helpfully summarised in Brandwood (1992)) have identified a group of dialogues that were written relatively late in Plato's career. In addition to *Laws*, this group includes *Timaeus*, *Critias*, *Statesman*, *Sophist* and *Philebus*. Yet aside from the likelihood that these dialogues were written after the others, there is little we can say about the ordering of Plato's works with any degree of certainty. This has not stopped prominent scholars (e.g. Vlastos (1991, 46–7; 1994, 135–6) and Kahn (1996, 42–8)) from dividing up Plato's corpus into early, middle and late dialogues and inferring things about the development of Plato's philosophy. Other scholars have denounced these attempts (see, in particular, the influential remarks of Cooper (Plato, 1997 edn, xii–xviii)). Others still reject chronological orderings of the dialogues in favour of fictive orderings, which follow the dramatic dates of the dialogues rather than the date of composition; see, for example, Griswold (1999, 388–93).

[14] The list is taken from Vlastos (1994, 135), who thought that these dialogues were composed chronologically prior to the middle and late dialogues. *Meno* is 'possibly' early because Vlastos takes it to transition into the middle period. Like Kahn (1993), I reject the idea that Book I of *Republic* was constructed as a separate dialogue and only later incorporated with Books II–X.

[15] The guiding question of *Charmides* is 'what is temperance?' (158e6–159a10). Euthydemus and his brother, in *Euthydemus*, pique Socrates' interest by claiming that they can teach virtue and instil in students a desire to become virtuous (273d1–275a3). *Gorgias* begins with a discussion about rhetoric, but it quickly leads to an investigation about justice, injustice and the prosperous life. The aporetic conclusion of *Hippias Minor* is that the good person with a good soul does unjust and shameful things willingly (367b1–c6). *Hippias Major* refers to a 'Trojan Speech' given by Hippias, which is reminiscent of several views expressed in AI. (It is particularly reminiscent of Immortal Repute. On this, see Barigazzi (1992, 254–7)). The question of *Protagoras* is whether virtue can be taught, though this quickly leads to an investigation of what virtue is (329b5–d2). And Meno opens his dialogue by asking Socrates how virtue is acquired (70a1–4).

[16] Democritus is a possible exception to this claim. He will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

I do not think it would be unfair to assume that the sophists influenced Plato's moral thought more than any other thinker(s) save for Socrates himself.[17]

There is thus a very strong prima facie reason to believe that Plato would have been interested in the debate discussed in the preceding chapters and that he would have familiarised himself with it to the extent that he could have. But we need not content ourselves with prima facie considerations. I turn now to a discussion of *Gorgias* and *Protagoras*, where we can witness Plato's familiarity with the 5th-century debate about justice playing out in practice. The former dialogue features the characters Polus and Callicles, who openly claim that the unjust life is better than the just life and, in response to Socrates' elenctic onslaught, attempt to defend their views. In the process of doing so they commit themselves to the central, dangerous idea of the Cynics and avail themselves of familiar Cynical arguments and strategies. In the latter dialogue the oldest and most famous of all the sophists, Protagoras, makes a lengthy speech that contains within it a kind of encomium of justice. This encomium relies on an anthropological account of early humanity and the development of cities that is so similar to what we find in AI that the two accounts must be related.

Gorgias

The dialogue begins with Socrates and Chaerephon arriving on the scene shortly after Gorgias has completed a public speech. Since Socrates wishes to know what the sophist's craft of oratory is and what power it has, he takes this opportunity to question the visitor from Sicily. Gorgias reveals a conception of his craft as able to persuade judges in the law court, councillors in a meeting, citizens in an assembly or, indeed, any group of people in any political gathering. In spite of the fact that the subject of these speeches typically revolves around what is just, the default topic of the law courts, the orator is quick to note that the good speaker has a capacious power and can persuade most people to do whatever the speaker wants. Oratory can—as Gorgias memorably puts it—make a 'slave' out of others, including experts (452e1–453a5). He thereby hints at a sinister side of his craft that is particularly attractive to Gorgias' students, who were evidently wont to use his lessons for unjust purposes (456c7–457c3). Obviously uneasy about the implications of mass persuasion being handed over to ambitious youths, Socrates

[17] If the reader finds this claim incredible, let them consider that more dialogues are named after the sophists than are named after any presocratic philosopher or student of presocratic philosophy combined. The influence the sophists had on Plato need not have been entirely positive; it could, of course, have been negative at times. For discussions of Plato's general engagement with or attitude towards the sophists, consider the different treatments in Nehamas (1990) and Tell (2011).

returns to the topic of justice and argues his interlocutor into admitting that if he teaches his students what is just, as he claims to, then none will act unjustly. But the sophist had all but admitted that his students do, in fact, use oratory in the service of injustice (460c3–461b2).[18] Sensing his teacher's impending refutation, Polus intervenes and tries to save the elder orator by claiming that Gorgias doesn't really teach justice and only claimed to out of shame and fear due to his foreign status.

It is with Polus that the dialogue takes an explicitly ethical turn. The ambitious student thinks that oratory is such a useful craft because it allows the individual to pursue the life of unchecked injustice, almost as if one were a tyrant (466a9–c2). This energises Socrates, and in short order the discussion turns into a lively disagreement about what kind of life is valuable and what role (if any) oratory plays in that life. In a passage that could summarise the Friends' attitude towards the Cynics, Socrates says about his disagreement with Polus that it is (472c6–e5):

> [S] not about some small thing but is pretty much about those things that are finest to know and most shameful not to know. For the crux of the matter is recognising or failing to recognise who is prosperous and who is not. Take the first thing about the present discussion: you consider it possible for a man who does injustice and really is unjust to be blessed, if indeed you consider Archelaus to be unjust and prosperous. Should we understand that you really consider it so?
> [P] Very much so.
> [S] And I say this is impossible … At least according to my opinion, Polus, the person who does injustice and really is unjust is miserable.

Socrates is actually understating his disagreement. Polus does not only think it is possible for the one who does injustice and really is unjust to be prosperous. He also thinks that the unjust life is *better* than the life of justice and more likely to lead to prospering. Thus he offers the famously unjust Macedonian tyrant Archelaus as an example of someone who is (from his perspective, at least) openly unjust, undeniably prosperous and worthy of envy by all (471a4–d2).[19]

[18] For a rich discussion of Gorgias' influential attempt to defend himself against Socrates' objections, see Barney (2010).

[19] It is important to remember that Polus and Socrates' discussion evolves out of an earlier discussion concerning the craft of oratory. This is important because, according to Polus, the orator possesses a power similar to that of the tyrant. Both can openly coerce people to do their bidding, even if this involves unfairly sentencing another to death. There is, therefore, little incentive for the unjust orator to practise injustice in secret. Indeed, to the extent that the orator needs others to abet their injustice, it is unlikely to remain completely hidden. As a result, we do not hear much from Polus or his successor, Callicles, about secret injustice. That is not to say they would deny that such injustice is profitable. They almost certainly would not (see, e.g., 480b7–c4). But given the subject matter of the dialogue, they do not focus on secret injustice.

Here we can see how Polus in many respects endorses the Cynical party line. It is clear, for example, that he subscribes to the Cynics' central and dangerous idea. Injustice is valuable because it secures Crude External Goods, such as money, and gives the individual the freedom to act on their desires. Polus' first point of praise is that the orator can, like a tyrant, confiscate the property of or even put to death whomever they like. That is to say, they are free to do things that the laws and social norms typically proscribe or otherwise prevent (466b11–c2). As with the earlier Cynics, the laws are understood by him as hurdles to be surmounted in getting what one naturally desires. Unfortunately, what Polus desires is never made completely explicit. But the text more than hints at his pursuit of the base pleasures: after Archelaus he offers as a model of prospering the 'Great King' of Persia, whose lavish life of excess would have satisfied even the debauched Wrong Argument of *Clouds* (470e4–5).[20] Such is the sort of life to which Polus aspires.[21]

Of course, in keeping with the Cynics' central and dangerous idea, Polus holds injustice to be valuable and to lead to prospering only if the unjust individual manages to escape punishment. Indeed, for those who lack the power of the tyrant or the orator it is often foolish to be unjust, 'because it is necessary that the person acting this way get punished' (470a5–6). Socrates correctly takes Polus to be claiming that injustice is only really good when it results in some benefit (τὸ ὠφελίμως πράττειν, 470a9–12). What exactly counts as beneficial becomes a point of contention between the two, but it is obvious that Polus means that injustice is beneficial when it secures some goods and at the same time avoids any punishment. 'You think the unjust are prosperous if they avoid paying any penalty?', Socrates later asks Polus. 'Very much so', he responds (473b3–4).[22]

This is enough to show that Polus subscribed to the Cynics' core commitments. He rejects the fifth and final thesis of the Traditional View and accepts that the life of injustice is better than the life of justice. Before moving on to Callicles and his more radical claims, however, it will be worthwhile to take note of Polus' revealing attitude towards shame. Despite claiming that doing injustice is better than suffering it, he freely concedes that it is more shameful to do injustice than to suffer it (474c4–d1). His idea seems to be that though successful injustice is profitable, it is also condemned as immoral by many people and is, therefore, an appropriate

[20] Elsewhere in Plato the King of Persia is presented as an epitome of prospering (e.g. *Euthyd.* 274a7; cf. Aris. *Soph El.* 173a26). This seems to be because his wealth and power gave him access to every conceivable pleasure. He is represented as a sort of expert on pleasure at *Apol.* 40d8.

[21] See also Moss (2005, 139–49), who argues persuasively that Polus' attachment to injustice is ultimately rooted in his desire to live a pleasurable life.

[22] It is interesting to note that though Polus is almost certainly thinking about human punishment when he first states his view, Socrates later raises the possibility of divine punishment only to have Polus reject as preposterous the supposition that it might be good for the unjust agent to experience remedial divine punishment (472e–473a). Why Socrates introduces the gods halfway into his discussion with Polus is unclear. But whatever his reason for mentioning it, the latter's emphatic rejection of divine punishment is very much in keeping with his Cynical predecessors.

object of moral reprobation and shame.[23] This simplistic take on shame leads directly to Polus' claims about injustice being refuted. By exploring his assumptions about shame, Socrates is quickly able to reveal that Polus is committed to many things, including injustice, being harmful for their possessor in virtue of the fact that they are shameful (474c4–476a2).[24] The young colt would have saved himself a world of trouble by denying that injustice was shameful. This point is made by Callicles, who notes that Polus has done the very thing he called out Gorgias for doing earlier: he has conceded something ruinous to his argument out of shame. Callicles tries to avoid falling into the same trap by claiming that doing injustice is good and admirable in addition to being profitable: 'For by nature everything shameful is in fact also bad, such as suffering injustice' (483a7–8).[25]

In contrast to what conventional justice demands, Callicles believes it is right 'for the better and more capable person to have more than the worse and less capable person' (483d1–2). He claims that nature reveals (ἀποφαίνει/δηλοῖ) this to be the case almost everywhere (πολλαχοῦ, 483c8–d2). And in a move that would have made Pheidippides and the Athenian envoys proud, he cites in particular the animal kingdom and the international sphere as domains in which nature reveals that it is just for the strong to have more. Callicles is presumably thinking about how strong animals take what they want (often violently) from the other animals and how stronger cities do the same to weaker ones. Xerxes' invasion of Greece and his father's treatment of Scythia are mentioned explicitly by Callicles (483d2–7), but Athens and her slaughter of Melos would presumably have made the point just as well. In any case, Callicles takes his examples to show that among the animals and cities it is just for stronger parties to rule and have more. He then appears to draw the inference that it is equally just for people within cities to do the same.[26]

[23] This is similar to the attitude of Antiphon, who rejected the value of justice but did not (so far as we can tell) question the validity of the shame suffered when someone's injustice is discovered.

[24] Several scholars have noted that it is shame that forces Polus to confront his own implicit beliefs about injustice; see, for example, Kahn (1996, 138): 'Shame reflects a Platonic conception corresponding to our own notion of an innate moral sense … Shame operates in this dialogue as an obscure intuition of the good on the part of Socrates' interlocutors.' See also Kahn (1983) and McKim (1988).

[25] Callicles' take on shame is more sophisticated than Polus', and it is close to the position of the Athenian envoys in Thucydides' *History*. One is tempted to suppose that Plato planned the transition from Polus to Callicles to mirror a theoretical evolution in Cynical ideas. The supposition must remain speculative, but it may be that whereas Polus represents an Antiphon-style view, Callicles represents a more radical view akin to the view advanced by the Athenian envoys.

[26] If this is right, then Callicles does not fall prey to the naturalistic fallacy—or at least not to a crude version of it. He does not claim that it is just for strong animals and cities to take more than weak animals and cities *because* that is what actually happens. And more to the point, he can't be reasoning that way about individuals, since he does not think strong people currently take an appropriately greater share of good things than weak people (NB the conditional about what a real man would do *if* he existed at 484a2–b1). His inference is not about what is naturally just within different domains. He is, rather, inferring something about what is just within the domain of human activity from what nature reveals to be just in the animal kingdom and international relations. Admittedly, it remains unclear how it is that nature shows what is just in these other domains. Still, the argument is not as crude as some readers have supposed.

Opposed to this natural justice Callicles posits a distinct and pernicious conventional justice. In fact, he claims that conventional principles of justice were designed by the many for the express purpose of keeping the better and more capable people from having more than others—that is to say, for the purpose of thwarting what is naturally just (483b4–c5):

> I think it is the weak people and the many who establish the laws. And indeed they establish the laws and praise and blame looking to themselves and their own advantage. They frighten the stronger people and those capable of having more so that they do not get more than them by saying that it is shameful and unjust to overreach. And this is doing injustice: seeking to have more than other people.

Laws and social norms are devices meant to hold the strong people down and unfairly keep the weak as their equals. This feature of conventional justice explains why Callicles thinks that 'for the most part law and nature are opposed to one another'.[27]

In opposing nature and convention Callicles was taking a page straight out of the Cynics' playbook. There is little doubt that he would have agreed with Antiphon that 'most of the things just according to the law are hostile to our nature', at least when it comes to stronger individuals.[28] And because he goes beyond Polus in rejecting conventional ideas of shame, he would almost surely have agreed with the Wrong Argument's advice to recognise nothing as shameful in the pursuit of what nature requires (τὰς τῆς φύσεως ἀνάγκας, 1075–82). The truly shameful thing for Callicles would be to fail to get what, as a strong person, one deserves. Callicles also wholeheartedly endorses an almost comically gluttonous conception of human prospering, not unlike the one advanced by the unjust λόγος (1071–4). He claims that it is correct and conducive to prospering to 'allow one's appetites to be as big as possible and not to check them, and once they are as big as possible to be sufficient at serving them through courage and intelligence, and on each occasion to satisfy whatever appetite comes to be' (491e8–492a3). The natural life involves violating conventional laws in order to satisfy every possible appetite one has cultivated in oneself.

There is, however, one respect in which Callicles' view arguably goes beyond anything advanced by the 5th-century Cynics. He notably claims there is a natural and true justice opposed to the conventional justice ruling in most cities. A number of scholars have thought that in positing a natural justice Callicles is being genuinely innovative and introducing a new dimension to Greek critiques of conventional morality.[29] And one can find some tentative support for this thought within *Gorgias* itself. As Dodds notes in his commentary on the text,

[27] 'ὡς τὰ πολλὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐναντί' ἀλλήλοις ἐστίν, ἥ τε φύσις καὶ ὁ νόμος' (482e5–6).
[28] 'τὰ πολλὰ τῶν κατὰ νόμον δικαίων πολεμίως τῇ φύσ[ει] κεῖται' (B44 2.25–30).
[29] See, for example, Weiss (2007, 94): 'The truly distinctive feature of Callicles' thinking on the matter is his notion of the "just by nature"'.

Callicles' expression 'law of nature' (νόμον γε τὸν τῆς φύσεως) is unprecedented at this point in Greek literature, and it is introduced in a way that suggests real novelty.[30] This might lead one to doubt that Callicles' position was influenced by earlier Cynics and suspect instead that it was Plato's own creation. But this would be rash. Not even Callicles takes his central idea to be new to him. He quotes a few lines of old poetry that apparently contain the same conception of natural justice that he advances (484b1–c3). Additionally, one can find at least one example of opposing conventional justice with a higher, natural sort of justice in 5th-century tragedy. When Antigone is charged with breaking the city's laws she responds by invoking 'the justice of the gods below' (ἡ … τῶν κάτω θεῶν Δίκη) and their 'unwritten laws' (ἄγραπτα … θεῶν νόμιμα, Soph. *Ant.* 451 and 454–5). This is not far off from claiming the unwritten laws dictate what is naturally just.[31] Of course, Antigone's substantive views about justice are not nearly as radical as Callicles'. But her statements show that the conceptual move of subordinating the justice of the city to a higher, timeless and more authoritative sort of justice had already been made before Plato began his philosophical career.[32]

One final reason to suspect that Callicles' statements about natural justice were inspired by earlier authors is that one Cynic apparently did put forward a view very much like that of Callicles. The figure in question left behind no texts that we are aware of but did leave a mark on the author of AI. As we saw in the last chapter, one section of that text introduces the view that 'the power aiming at having more is virtue, while obeying the laws is cowardice' (P.100.6–7/B1 6.1). I argued earlier that this view was likely held and advanced by some real figure. And on any fair reading of *Gorgias*, the view introduced in AI is close to the one put forward by Callicles. Consider, for example, that in elaborating on his position that the one who lives correctly ought to cultivate all their appetites and then satisfy them, Callicles claims that such a person should use their 'bravery and intelligence' to get more for themself and satisfy their appetites (492a2–3). Moreover, he goes on to claim that it is the 'lack of courage' among the many that leads them to praise temperance and justice and, by implication, to obey the laws designed to thwart the strong (492a7–b1). This reveals not only that Callicles agrees that virtue demands that the strong individual aims at getting more, but also that he believes that most people lack the courage to disregard the laws and pursue their own selfish interests. AI's Cynical view is close to Callicles' indeed.

It therefore strikes me as not at all unlikely that even in the case of Callicles' claim that there exists a natural justice superordinate to conventional justice

[30] Plato (1959 edn, 268).
[31] Indeed, in a well-known passage of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* he interprets Sophocles' Antigone as appealing to what is 'by nature just' (φύσει ὂν τοῦτο δίκαιον, 1373b9–13).
[32] See also Woodruff (2002), who argues for the existence of a concept of natural justice in 5th-century thought.

Plato may have been drawing significant inspiration from earlier, Cynical doctrines. But even if he was not and this was a genuinely new idea, the remainder of what he and Polus argue for is sufficiently similar to earlier Cynical thought for us to fairly suspect that Plato was drawing inspiration from its central idea in this dialogue.

Protagoras

Early in the morning Socrates is dragged by his young friend, Hippocrates, to the house of Callias in order to see the famous Protagoras who is lodging there while in Athens. Plato's description of the house upon the pair's arrival is rich in its artistry and provides a precious glimpse into the lives of the sophists. The famous Protagoras is followed by a train of attendants including Charmides and Paralus, son of the eminent Pericles; Hippias is sitting in the courtyard above a group of students holding court on astronomy and physics; and Prodicus, still swaddled by blankets in bed, is surrounded by attractive young men anxious to hear him speak (314e3–316a2). Socrates is alarmed by the fact that Hippocrates has been caught up in the prevailing sophist hysteria and wishes to hand himself over to Protagoras, despite not knowing exactly what Protagoras teaches or what effect that teaching might have. So Socrates questions the great sophist about what will become of his friend if he enrols as a student. Protagoras boldly claims that every day Hippocrates studies with him he will become a better person. Not quite satisfied with this answer, Socrates pushes for clarification. Better how? Protagoras eventually explains that what he teaches is 'good judgement about private things—how one would best manage one's household—and about public matters—how one would most ably do and speak about city matters' (318e5–319a2).

Socrates takes this to be a claim that Protagoras teaches the art of citizenship, and the sophist is happy to own it. This gives rise to the dialogue's first point of philosophical tension. For Socrates doubts that this art can be taught and offers two objections against its teachability. The first objection is informed by Athenian deliberative practices. In formal proceedings the Athenians allow only expert craftspeople to advise on technical matters, yet when it comes to political questions anyone may stand and give advice. Socrates believes this is because there exists teachable expertise in technical but not in political matters. There is no reason to prevent anyone from speaking about politics if no one really knows more than others. Next, Socrates notes that virtuous parents endeavour to give their children every possible advantage but fail utterly to teach the virtue they themselves possess. And yet what could explain this failure aside from their not being able to teach it at all? Thus Socrates doubts the art of citizenship, which by now he calls

simply 'virtue', can be taught. But he is willing to be proved wrong: 'If you are able to more clearly demonstrate to us that virtue is teachable, don't begrudge us but demonstrate it' (320b7–c2).

Protagoras responds with a genuine *tour de force*. In what is often called his Great Speech, Protagoras offers a mythological story about the development of the human species and a subsequent argument designed to respond to Socrates' objections and show that virtue is teachable. The speech falls (roughly) into three parts: Protagoras first shows that everyone living inside cities possesses virtue (320d–323c); he then argues that this virtue is teachable (323c–324d); and finally, he responds to the worry about virtuous parents being unable to pass on their virtue to their children (324d–328a).[33] It is the first part of the speech that concerns us here. Though undeniably brilliant, the sophist's strategy is rather curious. One might wonder why it should be necessary to prove that everyone possesses virtue given that he had only been asked to show that virtue is teachable. The official answer is that proving this is instrumental in responding to Socrates' first objection. Protagoras does not deny the well-known fact that all Athenian citizens are allowed to speak about politics in public deliberations. Instead, he argues that Socrates is wrong to think that this is because there is no teachable political expertise. The truth is that no city (including Athens) could ever exist unless its citizens possess virtue. The Athenians understand this, and this explains why everyone can speak on political matters. It is because all Athenians share in virtue and possess some amount of political understanding that they are allowed to speak (322e–323a).

But this official answer is only half satisfying. For though Protagoras eventually offers an alternative interpretation of the deliberative practices in Athens, he does so on the back of a *Kulturgeschichte* that begins with the birth of the human species and ends with Zeus granting us δίκη and αἰδώς. Along the way we meet two titans, Epimetheus and Prometheus, and even learn about early humanity's struggle to unite in large cooperative groups for the first time. This all seems *a bit much* to prove that the Athenians allow their citizens to speak because everyone is understood to be virtuous. It seems to me that there must be another purpose to the epochal narrative about the birth of humans and their gradual development into social and political creatures. Unsurprisingly, past readers of the dialogue have arrived at a similar conclusion. There seems to be a growing appreciation that a deeper purpose of the speech is to highlight the fact that virtue—the art of citizenship Protagoras claims to teach—is essential

[33] The division of the Great Speech into three parts is my own. Most scholars divide it into two parts (normally 320c–324d and 324d–328c) corresponding to Protagoras' responses to Socrates' two objections; see, for example, Manuwald (Plato, 2006 edn, 89–112). I have further divided Protagoras' first response into its properly mythical first half and its more argumentative half because they seem to me to do importantly different work.

to human well-being. Only it makes possible the sustained cooperative activity that is characteristic of human life.[34]

Let us zoom in on this part of his speech. The stages of the *Kulturgeschichte* run as follows:

1 Compared with other animals, humans are born ill-equipped and physically defenceless (321b6–c7).
2 Prometheus gifted practical wisdom and the fire needed to make use of it (but not the political art) to humans. This wisdom allowed early humans to use the crafts and survive while scattered about in the wild. There are no cities at this time (321c7–322b1).
3 Early humans were destroyed by the stronger animals. They attempted to band together and form cities in order to escape these attacks (322b1–6).
4 But lacking the political art humans committed injustices against one another. Cities are abandoned. Humans scatter once again and are vulnerable in the wild (322b6–8).
5 Fearing the annihilation of the human species, Zeus endows humans with δίκη and αἰδώς (which either includes or is equivalent to the political art) so that life in cities is possible. Every human must partake of virtue (322c1–d5).

Stripped of its mythological accoutrements, Protagoras is offering a rationalist account of the origin and subsequent development of the human species that is reminiscent of what we saw in SF and AI.[35] The account traces how early humans managed to survive in the wild despite being all-around less physically impressive than the other animals. With our superior practical rationality we were able to satisfy our most basic needs for food, clothing and shelter. But still we did not thrive, and we often perished at the hands of the stronger animals. Initial attempts to create large groups that would have protected us from the animals failed. It was only because of our moral nature—our justice and temperance—that we were able to join together and form successful cities, thus protecting ourselves from hostile animals and facilitating successful communal living.[36]

[34] This point is made by Manuwald (2013) and Barney (2019, 136–7), who both suggest that this deeper purpose may reflect the thought of the real Protagoras. Thus Manuwald (2013, 164–5): '[F]ive times in the course of the speech it is stated that all human beings share or must share respect for the rights of others or self-restraint (αἰδώς/σωφροσύνη) and justice (δίκη/δικαιοσύνη), or else human societies (πόλεις) could not exist. This statement is obviously intended to appear as the main belief of the Protagoras of the dialogue. Hence one might infer that it agrees with the views of the historical Protagoras …'

[35] See Beresford (2013), who persuasively compares the account of humanity's origin in Plato's *Protagoras* with the (possibly Democritean) rationalist account found in the first book of Diodorus Siculus' *Library of History* (1.7–8 = DK68 B 5.1).

[36] Protagoras switches from talking about δίκη and αἰδώς at 322c4 to δικαιοσύνη and σωφροσύνη at 323a1–2. He seems to treat the pairs as interchangeable.

In other words, this part of Protagoras' speech offers a historical narrative that highlights how humans were ultimately saved by virtue. Justice and temperance made large, cooperative groups possible and this allowed humanity to survive and thrive into the present. And still to this very day, Protagoras maintains, justice and shame are the bonds that make cooperative human society possible (323c2–3). We might call this part of the speech his encomium of justice.

Now we can see some particularly notable similarities to AI.[37] The core of Political Animals also features a historical narrative that highlights how law and justice became necessary for humanity to survive and thrive. So let us reconsider that text. As we saw in the previous chapter, the narrative in question also offers a five-stage account according to which (P.100.9–17/B1 6.1):

1 Humans were born ill-equipped to live alone but nevertheless began their career living as isolated individuals.
2 After yielding to necessity, early humans joined together into groups.
3 A new way of life and the techniques for it (τεχνήματα πρὸς ταύτην) were developed to make living together possible.
4 Humans are unable to live well with others in a condition of lawlessness. Doing so is worse than living an isolated life.
5 Based on 1–4, the author infers that law and justice rule as kings among people.

There are several obvious similarities between this and the Great Speech. Both texts identify justice (or justice and something else) as essential for cooperative society, which in turn is essential for the survival and well-being of humanity. In so doing, both texts highlight justice as the most useful common possession of the species. Moreover, both Protagoras and the author of AI conclude their arguments by suggesting that justice is natural for the sort of creatures we are. The final sentence of the narrative in AI ends: 'For [justice and law] are firmly fixed [in us] by nature' (P.100.18). Similarly, the last thing Protagoras says in the epilogue to his myth is that everyone must 'somehow partake of [justice], lest they not be among humans' (μὴ εἶναι ἐν ἀνθρώποις, 323c1–2).

All this could, perhaps, be a coincidence. But both texts arrive at their conclusions concerning justice from a historical account about our past. And two further points about these accounts cannot, I think, be explained by mere chance. The first is that both narratives indicate that humans developed many technical skills before the moral virtues. This is heavily marked in Protagoras' speech. Prometheus does not have access to the political art and can only give humans the

[37] See Barney (2019, 138), who claims that Protagoras' position is 'strikingly similar' to the position of AI. Though Barney and I are in agreement about the two texts being similar, we read them differently. She is not inclined to take the historical-sounding claims in either text at face value or to accept that both authors are arguing on the basis of what happened in history. I am.

other, practical τέχναι (321d4–7). With these crafts we were able to speak, build houses, make clothes and extract food from the earth (322a5–7). But we could not live together in groups. It was only later—after humans attempted and failed to form cities—that Zeus gave us justice and temperance. As several commentators have noted, this feature of Protagoras' account is a bit strange. It is difficult to understand how the technical crafts could have been developed before humans were able to live peacefully in large groups.[38] Although there are satisfying ways to explain away this difficulty,[39] it cannot be denied that it is a difficulty that needs explaining away. But for that very reason, it is all the more striking that we find the same 'craft-*then*-justice' order of presentation in AI's Political Animals. Before we are told about law and justice at the end of 6.1 (P.100.16)—indeed, even before we learn about the need for humans to avoid lawlessness (P.100.13–15)—AI notes that early humans developed τεχνήματα for their new way of life (P.100.11–12). We are never told what these are, but the 'τεχνή-' root suggests rather strongly that they must have at least included the practical crafts. And if that is the case, then here, too, we are left asking why the author would bring up the τεχνήματα before emphasising the need for justice and law?[40]

The second surprising similarity concerns just how bad it is to live in unjust societies. In one way or another, both Protagoras and the author of AI emphasise that it is worse to live with other unjust humans than it is to live in relative isolation. Note that in discussing humanity's first attempts to create a city Protagoras says: 'They tried to gather together and save themselves by founding cities. Yet when they gathered together, they committed injustice against one another (since they did not yet have the political art) with the result that they scattered again and were destroyed' (322b6–8). This passage strongly implies that the injustice early humans suffered at the hands of their peers was worse than whatever horrors they suffered scattered about in the wild. For having experienced both the hostile animals outside the city's walls and their neighbours' treachery within, they chose to abandon living in groups and return to life among the animals. A nearly identical point is made in AI, which explicitly states that humans cannot pass their lives living together in a condition of lawlessness. To do so, we are told, 'would be a greater punishment than an isolated way of life' (P.100.14–15). It is striking that both texts should make the same claim, especially given how difficult the Greeks

[38] See, for example, Barney (2019, 137): '[G]iven that the *technai* are only really of use given a cooperative division of labour … the presentation of their development as prior to justice seems historically wrong anyway.' Compare Hoffmann (1997, 47–9), who is more severe in his analysis of this difficulty.

[39] Taylor develops the core of a satisfactory response in his commentary on *Protagoras* (Plato, 1991a edn, 84–5).

[40] In the case of both texts I think the obvious answer to this question is the correct one. That is: both authors were drawing on common ideas or a historical tradition (or, alternatively, some other text that itself drew from these) in which humans developed some of the crafts before entering into political communities. For the existence of such a tradition, see the first 'pattern of prehistory' described by Cole (1967, 25–46).

imagined life outside political communities to be. The authors presumably made their points in order to highlight how terrible injustice is and to encourage their readers to respect the demands of justice. But the claim they made to get to this conclusion is counter-intuitive, and to the best of my knowledge it is made only in these two texts.

I see no reason to shy away from the conclusion that these two texts are presenting two versions of one broad argument in defence of justice. They arrive at similar conclusions and use similar means to get there. Indeed, I would go further and suggest on the strength of the last two similarities that one of our texts directly influenced the other or that they both drew from an existing account of human history that highlighted the importance of justice, the laws and our moral nature. Unfortunately, it is all but pointless to speculate about the precise relationship between Protagoras' Great Speech and AI. Their origins are shrouded in too much historical obscurity. Even establishing their relative chronology is no simple matter. We cannot know exactly when AI was written, though it was very likely composed late in the 5th century. Plato's *Protagoras* was surely written after this, but how much of the Great Speech was adopted from the views of the historical Protagoras is unknown. If substantial portions of Protagoras' myth were taken from the sophist's own work, as is often thought,[41] then AI would have been composed between the Protagorean original and *Protagoras*. It is therefore entirely possible that AI was influenced by the historical Protagoras and then later exerted an influence on Plato's composition of *Protagoras*. This would obviously make tracing the influence between these two texts impossible without further evidence.

Let us set this issue aside here. For our purposes, it will be enough to note, first, that Plato puts the Great Speech into the mouth of the most famous of all sophists and, second, that many of Plato's readers would have known enough about the actual Protagoras to balk if Plato's character said something flatly incompatible with the historical figure's views. These two observations allow us to conclude that Plato at least thought the ideas he put into the mouth of his Protagoras were broadly Protagorean or sophistic. And if that is right, then Plato presumably regarded the encomium of justice put forward by Protagoras as at least broadly Protagorean or sophistic. This is a happy finding for this book. It shows that Plato was aware of a strategy for praising justice that was very similar to one used by a 5th-century Friend and that he associated that sort of strategy with the sophists. From this we can cautiously but optimistically conclude that Plato had some familiarity with the earlier sophistic Friends and their defences of the Traditional View of Justice.

[41] Recent treatments of Protagoras often assume that we can learn about the historical Protagoras from Plato's dialogue, for example Bonazzi (2019, 68–75). Arguing for the veracity of Protagoras' account is difficult, but see Manuwald (2013). For an example of the opposing view, see Döring (1993).

An Unfortunate Blind Spot

Notoriously, Plato does not mention Democritus in any of his writings. How could Plato fail to engage with one of the most prolific and impressive intellectuals from the 5th century? Was it because he was upset by the atomist and wanted to expunge his works from the historical record, as Diogenes Laertius seems to suggest in one bizarre report (D.L. 9.40)? Or was it for some other reason? These questions have caused much frustration in the past and have been the topic of some speculation.[42] But the sad fact of the matter is that we will almost certainly never know the answer to these questions. This leaves us in the regrettable position of having to admit that we cannot be sure of how much of Democritus' ethics Plato ever encountered. Though one can find clear traces of the Cynics and the other Friends in the Platonic corpus, I cannot find any passage that obviously or even plausibly suggests a direct awareness of the atomist's ethics. This is a sad state of affairs, especially because the defence of justice found in the atomist's fragments anticipates what we find in Plato in a number of important respects. Firstly and most obviously, Democritus privileges the importance of the soul and downplays the significance of both the Crude and Refined External Goods. He may well have been the first historical figure in the West to do so while thinking about justice and the prosperous human life. Connected with this first point is the notable fact that Democritus was clearly willing to criticise his contemporaries and put forward a novel and unpopular picture of what the prosperous human life looks like. He was not merely refining or tweaking ideas that were already popular in the Greek consciousness. He seemed to have developed his own theory very much despite the popular ideas he found all around him.

In these two cases, and possibly in others as well, it is likely that Democritus blazed a trail that Plato would later traverse. But it may have been others, such as the historical Socrates, who interacted with Democritus and eventually led Plato down that trail. We cannot know for sure. Fortunately, we are in a better position when it comes to detecting Plato's awareness of and attitude towards the other authors and ideas discussed in Part I of this book. I have argued above that Plato attended to the work and ideas of the sophists and, in particular, that he was interested in their views on justice and its value. The dialogues evince too great a preoccupation with the sophists and virtue to doubt this. Our reading of *Gorgias* and *Protagoras*, moreover, strongly suggests not only that Plato was aware of the debate about justice that occurred among the sophists but also that he attended to the specific arguments that the Cynics and the Friends wielded against each

[42] The most detailed study on Plato and his relationship to Democritus that I know of is Ferwerda (1972). Based on an analysis of their different attitudes towards politics (370–8), Ferwerda suggests that it may have been philosophical differences that led Plato to exclude Democritus from his corpus (and perhaps wish to burn Democritus' books). This strikes me as overly speculative.

other. It might be too much for us to assume that Plato would have arrived at the conclusion we came to earlier—namely, that if anyone had the upper hand at the end of the 5th century it was the Cynics. But then again it might not. For the considerations Plato puts into the mouth of Protagoras cannot satisfactorily respond to the points Polus and Callicles make about injustice in *Gorgias*. Nor, I think, can any other argument made by a sophist in the dialogues. We might take this as a subtle indication that none of Plato's predecessors had the theoretical resources to convincingly refute the Cynics' central and dangerous idea. And we can say with certainty that Plato eventually sensed that the time was right for a new defence of justice's value and the Traditional View. For *Republic* offers such a defence and does so in response to a highly refined Cynical challenge. It is this dialogue that will occupy us for the remainder of the book.

5

A Challenge Old and New

In no dialogue is Plato's familiarity with the 5th-century debate about justice more pronounced than in *Republic*. From the moment Thrasymachus interrupts Socrates' discussion with Polemarchus until Socrates completes his defence of justice, the spirit of the sophistic debate pervades this dialogue. The project of this and the following two chapters is to demonstrate that this is so.

We begin the present chapter with a consideration of the two immoralist challenges that Socrates encounters in *Republic*. After a brief treatment of Socrates' discussion with Thrasymachus in Book I, I turn to Book II and offer a historically informed analysis of the famous challenge posed by Glaucon and Adeimantus. The theoretical core of this challenge is substantially reconstructed from the ideas of the 5th-century sophists—and especially from the ideas of the Moral Cynics. For this reason, it can be seen as an 'old' challenge to justice. But Plato also has the brothers introduce one theoretical innovation that is designed to expose a serious weakness in past attempts to defend the value of justice. This innovation comes into play with the character I call the 'Dorian Rogue', an individual who is thoroughly unjust yet nevertheless manages to win a reputation for justice through their injustice. As I argue in the latter sections of this chapter, the Dorian Rogue is introduced to respond to the sorts of considerations utilised by Immortal Repute, and by incorporating the Rogue into their challenge the brothers are able to show decisively why many past attempts to defend justice's value have failed. In particular, it allows them to show that strategies which appeal to the Refined External Goods of repute and social esteem function more as defences of the value of being recognised as just by other agents than as defences of justice itself. On the back of this insight, the brothers urge Socrates to offer a new defence of justice that makes no reference to the good things that come about from being recognised as just by others. This aspect of Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge is genuinely novel, and for this reason the challenge also deserves to be called 'new' as well. The chapter ends by noting that Book II can be read as a Platonic commentary on the state of the debate about justice in his own time.

Book I

Book I opens with Socrates and Glaucon being intercepted on their way back from Piraeus to Athens. They are taken to the house of Cephalus during a religious festival honouring Bendis. In the process of exchanging pleasantries with his elderly host, Socrates somewhat artificially steers the conversation to an examination of the nature of justice. Cephalus has no interest in such conversations, so he has his son take over for him. Polemarchus does his best to answer Socrates' questions and explain what justice is, but his ideas are quickly exposed as confused through elenctic examination. After five awkward Stephanus Pages of Socrates asking questions that Polemarchus cannot answer, an annoyed Thrasymachus offers to give his own answer about what justice is, which he clearly expects to impress everyone present. Following some aggressive bluster, the sophist finally asks: 'Don't you know that some cities are ruled by a tyranny, some by a democracy, and some by an aristocracy?' (338d6–7). He then continues (338e1–339a2):

> And each ruling faction lays down laws for its own benefit. Democracy makes democratic laws, tyranny makes tyrannical laws, and so on with the others. And they declare what they have laid down—namely, that which benefits them—as just for those they rule, and they punish anyone who goes against this as transgressing the laws and unjust. This, then, is what I say the just is, the same in all cities: the benefit of the established authority.

Thrasymachus appears here to be offering a conventionalist account of justice, very much akin to the accounts we saw earlier in OT and SF.[1] He is suggesting that justice is a matter of acting in accordance with the laws of one's city and, as we later learn, treating others fairly (e.g. 343d1–e1). However, in contrast to the authors we discussed earlier, Thrasymachus adds a sceptical twist to his conventionalist account. Based (presumably) on his own experience visiting different cities, he suggests that the true purpose of the laws in any given πόλις is to materially advantage those in the ruling regime. This particular suggestion is new, yet the philosophical motivation lying behind it should be familiar to us. Thrasymachus' purpose here is to debunk the authority of the laws and expose some unsavoury truths about justice, which is all quite reminiscent of Pheidippides in *Clouds*.[2]

[1] Thrasymachus pivots away from conventionalism at 340c–341a. Though the pivot he makes at this point in the dialogue has struck some as an ad hoc move in response to Socrates' objection (e.g. Maguire (1971)), I suggest below that it actually gets us closer to Thrasymachus' real beliefs.

[2] Recall that laws were traditionally believed to have divine provenance and to benefit humanity as a whole. This belief endowed the laws with significant authority. Pheidippides tries to strip away that authority by explaining how the laws were really developed. Late in *Clouds* he explains that the laws his father holds so dear were actually established relatively recently by people just like himself (1421–4). This revelation about their true origin is expected to undermine the laws' authority and at least partially justify Pheidippides' violation of them.

For the moment, Socrates ignores the sceptical implications of Thrasymachus' remarks and proceeds as though the sophist has attempted to offer a definition of justice. In the elenchus that follows, Socrates undermines Thrasymachus' account by getting him to concede that, at least some of the time, rulers unintentionally establish laws that are harmful to them. Since these laws end up doing the opposite of benefiting the rulers but are still called just and must still be obeyed by all, it cannot be that justice *is* the benefit of the established ruling party. After Thrasymachus patches up this particular hole in his argument, Socrates proceeds to make a different and more sweeping argument that challenges many of his opponent's most basic assumptions. Socrates claims that every craft and rule—including political rule—must properly pursue the good of its subjects.[3] It follows from this that no political ruler *qua* political ruler should ever look out for their own benefit at the expense of the people they rule. This Socratic argument launches Thrasymachus into a tirade in which he insists that rulers do, in fact, look out for their own good even if it means being unjust. Moreover, he lets slip that injustice is the surest way for the individual to prosper (344a4–c9):

> You will understand this most easily if you go to the most complete injustice, the sort that makes the one doing injustice most prosperous and those who suffer injustice and are not willing to do it most miserable. This is tyranny, which does not take away the things of others—whether sacred, pious, private or public—little by little through secrecy or force, but all together … So, Socrates, injustice is stronger, freer, and more masterful than justice if it comes to be sufficiently (ικανῶς γιγνομένη). And, just as I've said from the beginning, justice really is the benefit of the stronger, while injustice profits and benefits oneself.

This speech is important for a number of reasons. It introduces the tyrant as a paradigm of injustice and therefore anticipates the argument of Book IX, which casts tyranny as the purest instantiation of injustice. More importantly, it exposes Thrasymachus' real concern. It turns out the sophist is not that interested in Socrates' question of what justice is.[4] In truth he is concerned to convince his listeners that injustice is better than justice. And he thinks that drawing his audience's attention to the example of the tyrant will make this point. When Socrates claims not to be convinced that injustice is better than justice and asks for Thrasymachus to say more, the latter responds: 'And how will I persuade you? Since if you're not persuaded by what I just now said, what

[3] For a helpful discussion of this argument, see Barney (2006a, 49–51). See also Lane (2019).

[4] Many scholars believe Thrasymachus is sincerely concerned with the question of what justice is in *Republic*; see, for example, the sophisticated attempt to interpret Thrasymachus as offering a definition of justice in Wedgwood (2017). These interpretations typically ignore or downplay the relevant historical background. Some also ascribe to Thrasymachus a questionable account of justice. I raise a number of considerations against this sort of interpretive strategy in Anderson (2016).

more should I do for you?' (345b5–6). The example is supposed to have decisive persuasive force.[5]

Socrates, of course, remains unconvinced. Despite Thrasymachus' exasperation, he would like to continue talking about the just life, the unjust life and which is better. And this brings us to the most important consequence of Thrasymachus' speech at 343b–344c. The speech explicitly raises the question of justice's value for the first time in the dialogue, and by holding up the completely unjust tyrant as the model of human prospering it assigns a very high value to injustice. This is a provocation that Socrates cannot ignore, and after it the explicit focus of the pair's conversation shifts dramatically. Originally, the focus of the discussion was—officially, at least—the nature of justice and what it is. But after Thrasymachus' tirade the conversation turns to the prosperous human life and what role justice and injustice play in it.[6] This marks a pivotal moment. For the remainder of Book I—and, indeed, for the remainder of the dialogue—the question to be answered becomes: 'Is justice or injustice more profitable for human beings?' Answering the question of what justice is becomes instrumental to answering this pressing practical question (cf. 354b6–c3).

It would be natural to suppose that the rest of Socrates' conversation with Thrasymachus might be useful for understanding our 5th-century debate. The historical Thrasymachus was a 5th-century sophist interested in politics and morality.[7] Unfortunately, what follows is far too short, and, in any case, the conversation is dominated by Socrates. There are some brief but tantalising connections between what we find in Book I and the work of the earlier Cynics, which I have tried to draw out. But these connections don't amount to much. For our purposes, the true importance of Book I lies not in the fact that it preserves arguments used in the 5th century. Its importance lies, rather, in how Thrasymachus' intervention sets the stage for a reconsideration of justice's value. Socrates begins his conversation by posing the typically Platonic question of what a particular virtue—in this case, justice—is. This theoretical question is more than enough to occupy the dialogue's first two interlocutors. Yet no sooner does Thrasymachus enter the fray and provide his answer about justice than Socrates is pulled into a discussion about the value of justice, which he

[5] In this respect, Thrasymachus' argument has a certain affinity with some of the sophistic texts discussed earlier. As I noted in the previous chapter, to defend a particular sort of life some sophists showcased paradigmatic examples of prosperous individuals to make the choice-worthiness of that life especially vivid. That is what Thrasymachus is doing here with the example of the tyrant.

[6] Socrates explicitly calls attention to this switch of focus a short while later (347d8–e4): 'I at least agree with Thrasymachus in no way about this—that justice is the benefit of the stronger. But we will consider this at some later time. What Thrasymachus just now said is a much bigger deal, since he claims that the life of the unjust person is better than that of the just person.'

[7] For a helpful discussion about the historical Thrasymachus, see White (1995).

apparently was not planning to have. The sceptical conventionalism the sophist first puts forward gives way to the Cynical idea that the individual would do best to violate justice in the pursuit of their own prospering. The introduction of this idea short-circuits Socrates' theoretical investigation and alerts him to the much more pressing practical question of justice's value. It is almost as if *Republic*'s sole sophist is there to remind readers of the unresolved status of the 5th-century debate about justice.

An Old Challenge to Morality

Book II opens with Glaucon announcing that he is unpersuaded by Socrates' attempts to defend the value of justice. The problem is not only that Socrates' arguments were problematic or poor in their own right (though a number of them are).[8] The more pressing problem is that, apparently, a defence of justice can only be persuasive if it is made in response to a genuine and forceful defence of injustice. But no such defence occurs in Book I. Glaucon feels that Thrasymachus was 'charmed' sooner than he needed to be and didn't really make a compelling case on behalf of injustice. And so he claims that he has yet to hear a sufficient demonstration of the value of either justice or injustice (358b2–4). To rectify the problem, Glaucon suggests that he 'rehabilitate' the argument of Thrasymachus and present the strongest case he can for the value of injustice (ἐπανανεώσομαι τὸν Θρασυμάχου λόγον, 358b8–c1). Only in response to this philosophically sophisticated attack on justice will Socrates be able to offer a compelling defence of its value.

Clear hints suggest that the challenge Glaucon and his brother Adeimantus go on to present is reconstructed in large part from the claims and ideas that featured in the 5th-century debate. The first indication of this comes into view from the way the two introduce and frame their project. In discussing their motivations with Socrates, they claim to be reflecting upon and influenced by a set of views and arguments that were prominent in the intellectual climate of their conversation, which is set late in the 5th century.[9] The brothers single out two broad sets of arguments (λόγοι) from that intellectual climate as especially important: those made on behalf of justice and those made on behalf of injustice. Note, for example, the way Glaucon attempts to justify the vigour with which he praises injustice to Socrates. It is not that he is actually committed to

[8] Some of the problems are helpfully discussed in Barney (2006a, 51–9).

[9] The dramatic date of *Republic* is normally thought to be either 422/1 or 411/410. But as Nails (1998) has pointed out, there are reasons to be suspicious of either of these dates—or, indeed, any one specific date—because the internal evidence is not wholly consistent. It may be that all we can say is that the conversation took place at some point in the last twenty-five years of the 5th century.

the unjust life being better than the just life, but many people have tried to convince him of this (358c6–d1):

> I'm confused, however, since my ears have been talked off listening to Thrasymachus and countless others, but the argument on behalf of justice (τὸν δὲ ὑπὲρ τῆς δικαιοσύνης λόγον)—that it is better than injustice—I have not yet heard from anyone as I want to.

Glaucon has heard the argument on behalf of injustice compellingly stated from a number of sources. But he has not yet heard the argument on behalf of justice stated to his liking.

Importantly, Glaucon does not claim he has not heard anyone defend the life of justice as better than the life of injustice. His particular complaint is that he has not heard justice praised *in the right way*. In particular, he has not heard it praised all on its own (αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτό, 358d3).[10] We later learn from Adeimantus' contribution to the challenge that the brothers were familiar with past figures who made arguments on behalf of justice (366d7–e5):

> Of all of you who claim to be praisers of justice—beginning with the heroes of old whose arguments (λόγοι) survive, up to the people of today—no one has yet blamed injustice nor praised justice aside from the reputations, honours and gifts that come to be from them.

The problem with these past praisers is not that they don't exist; it is that they argue in philosophically unsatisfying ways. They appeal to the good reputation, honours and gifts that come to be from justice. But they do not explain what justice does all on its own. I shall return to this somewhat confusing contrast in the following chapter. For the moment, the point to bear in mind is that the brothers clearly refer to two sets of arguments made in the past.

In referring to these arguments the brothers seem to be thinking about a relatively institutionalised debate. There appear to be clear rules governing the way the two different sides operate, for example. One argues on behalf of justice by showing that the just life is better and leads to more prospering than the unjust life; similarly, the other argues on behalf of injustice by showing the opposite is the case (358c4–d8). At one point, we even learn about a taxonomy of the types of arguments advanced earlier. Adeimantus distinguishes between 'kinds' of λόγοι made about justice and injustice using the same word that Glaucon uses to distinguish between the different kinds of goods in his division of goods (ἄλλο αὖ εἶδος λόγων περὶ δικαιοσύνης τε καὶ ἀδικίας, 363e5–6). This all gives the distinct

[10] In addition to speaking about the value justice possesses 'αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτό', Plato also uses the expressions 'αὑτοῦ χάριν', 'αὑτοῦ ἕνεκα' and 'δι' αὑτό' (see, e.g., 357b–358a). He later adds αὐτὸ δικαιοσύνην at 363a1. These expressions seem to be used interchangeably in order to indicate one kind of value justice possesses. In what follows I generally prefer the English expression 'all on its own' to translate these expressions, though due to context I sometimes use a different translation.

impression that the brothers take themselves to be thinking about an existing, quasi-established debate over the place of justice (or lack thereof) in the well-lived human life. They also clearly understand themselves as making their own points largely by reconstructing views expressed in that debate. Recall that Glaucon explicitly claims to be rehabilitating the argument of Thrasymachus and others in Book II, not presenting his own views.

The brothers thus present themselves as reflecting upon an existing debate about the value of justice and, further, as using the resources of that debate to construct their challenge to Socrates. As the reader no doubt suspects, this debate is the one discussed in Part I. For that debate also had two well-defined sides, one arguing on behalf of justice and the other on behalf of injustice. And, as the brothers here suppose, participants of that earlier debate argued on behalf of justice or its opposite by showing that it was profitable and contributed to human prospering.[11] Moreover—and this is the second indication that Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge is reconstructed from earlier texts and ideas—the theoretical core of the brothers' challenge clearly bears the mark of sophistic methods and ideas. The three central parts of Glaucon's contribution to the challenge all exhibit similarities in content and method to the texts and arguments encountered earlier.

To see this, begin by considering the outlines of Glaucon's contribution to the challenge. As he himself explains to Socrates near the beginning of Book II, his contribution will fall into three distinct parts. He will rehabilitate the Thrasymachean view by explaining (358c1–5):

1 from where 'they' say justice came to be and what it is (explained at 358e2–359b7);
2 that all who practise justice do so unwillingly, as something necessary but not good (explained at 359b7–360d7);
3 that it is reasonable to practise justice unwillingly, since the unjust life is better than the just life (explained at 360d8–362c6).

A consideration of the arguments offered to defend these claims shows that each has notable and distinct parallels to a number of arguments and ideas found in earlier sophistic texts.[12]

[11] Admittedly, Adeimantus mentions parents, priests and poets who advance arguments relevant to the debate (see 362e, 363b–c, 364a, 364c–d, 364d–e). But this should not prevent us from giving pride of place to the sophistic debate as the relevant background. As we saw in Chapter 2, the Cynical challenge had a large cultural impact. Its ideas could, then, have been picked up and parroted by parents and priests. Moreover, the mentions of parents, priests and poets all come after the theoretical core of the brothers' challenge has been presented. And it is that theoretical core that is so obviously influenced by past sophistic texts and ideas. For a discussion of the invocation of poetry in Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge, see Ney (2004).

[12] Many scholars have noted that these three claims structure Glaucon's contribution to the challenge. See, for example, Hyland (1989), Gilboa (1996), Ausland (2003), Shields (2006) and Santas (2010, esp. 36–53). But these works generally do not stress the sophistic background of Book II.

In order to explain where 'they' say justice comes from and what its nature is, Glaucon offers a speculative historical narrative about humanity, its original aggressive ways and its later adoption of laws and justice. The core of his account proceeds as follows (358e4–359a7):

> By nature, they say, to do injustice is good and to suffer injustice bad, but the badness of suffering injustice exceeds the goodness of doing injustice. Thus whenever people both do injustice and suffer injustice from one another and get a taste of both, it seems profitable to those who are unable to flee and choose it to contract with one another neither to do nor suffer injustice. Thereupon, of course, they began to establish laws and treaties among themselves, and they named the command of the law lawful and just. And this indeed is the origin and essence of justice. It is a midpoint between the best thing—if one does injustice without paying the penalty—and the worst thing—if one cannot pay back injustice suffered.

This passage begins by introducing several purported facts about human nature and history. Apparently, humans by nature desire to perpetrate injustice upon others and find this good. This natural proclivity of ours explains why early humans harmed one another and why we once lived in a state of widespread aggression. At some point in the past, however, some of our ancestors realised that it would be advantageous to overcome this condition of mutual aggression. They subsequently introduced a contract for everyone to neither do nor suffer injustice, and they created laws to enforce this contract. This results in the origin (γένεσίν) of justice itself.

Of all three parts of Glaucon's challenge, this one has the most obvious affinities with earlier sophistic texts and ideas. Two particular points are revealing in this respect. Firstly, as was characteristic of the 5th-century Cynics and Friends, Glaucon offers a loose historical account that features a discussion of the origin and purpose of the laws and justice in human communities. The point of this narrative is not primarily to state or establish historical facts. It is, rather, to derive truths about justice and the laws as they currently exist by exploring how they came to be. Glaucon's account is particularly similar to the one found in SF, for that text also suggests that humans originally lived in a condition characterised by violence and force which was overcome, at least in part,[13] once they decided to institute laws so that justice would rule (DK88 B25.1–8).[14] And secondly, Glaucon draws a clear distinction between the demands of conventional justice and the demands of our nature. As we have seen, this was a standard move in the playbook of the sophists critical of justice, who often urged individuals to follow the demands of nature rather than the law. Like those earlier sophists, Glaucon believes it is in the individual's interest to violate justice if they can do so without getting punished.

[13] Even after the institution of laws people continue to practise injustice secretly. It is not until some 'clever man' invents belief in the gods that injustice is totally overcome (DK88 B25.9–15).
[14] It is partly for this reason that Kahn (1981, 97) connects Glaucon's discussion with SF.

He even ends this section of his speech by claiming that no 'true man' would ever agree not to perpetrate injustice on others (359b2–4).[15]

These two points are striking, and they have not gone unnoticed in the past. It is common for scholars to identify sophistic influence in this passage.[16] What is less often realised is that the second and third parts of Glaucon's contribution also exhibit a notable sophistic influence.

To see that all those who practise justice do so unwillingly, Socrates is told to entertain a thought experiment. Imagine that a just and an unjust individual are each given the power to do whatever they want without suffering any consequences. If we do this, Glaucon claims, we will find the just person travelling the same path as the unjust person out of 'an appetite for getting more (πλεονεξία), which every nature naturally pursues as good' (359c4–5). To help illustrate his point, Glaucon fleshes out his thought experiment with a story about a nameless Lydian shepherd.[17] While roaming around his pasturage this shepherd happens upon a gold ring, which he later learns can make him invisible. After discovering the full extent of the power he now possesses, the shepherd executes a plot to enter into an adulterous affair with the queen, murder the king and become the illegitimate ruler of Lydia.[18] After recounting this story Glaucon concludes (360b4–c7):

> Then if two such rings were to come to be and the just person were to put on one, and the unjust person the other, it seems there would be no one so adamantine

[15] It is sometimes held that, in addition to sophists such as Antiphon and the author of the 'Sisyphus Fragment', Protagoras may have been an influence on this passage. Taylor (2007, 13), for example, claims that 'Glaucon's account of the origin and nature of justice in Book II of the *Republic* (358e–359b) gives a non-mythological version of Protagoras' story'. Yet while there may be some relevant parallels between Glaucon's discussion and what Protagoras presents in the Platonic dialogue named after him, we cannot be confident that the historical Protagoras was a relevant influence on our text. For one thing, we have already seen that Plato's *Protagoras* may not represent the views of the historical Protagoras. But more importantly, Protagoras' substantive view about history, society and justice is incompatible with Glaucon's. One of the conclusions Protagoras draws from his myth is that everyone needs to partake of virtue if cities are to exist (322d3–6 and 323a2–3). But Glaucon denies this. Indeed, he goes on to show how the most unjust person can get along swimmingly in society without it ceasing to exist. In truth, the stories are different, and they have different lessons for how we should act.

[16] At least two scholars have gone so far as to quote Glaucon's whole speech from 358e3–359b5 in an anthology of sophistic texts. Gagarin and Woodruff (1995, 309–10) reproduce the passage in its entirety and say it probably reflects the views of an earlier, unknown sophistic author.

[17] Although it is common to read about 'Gyges' ring' in the secondary literature, Glaucon's story in Book II is about an unnamed ancestor (προγόνῳ, 359d1) of Gyges. The ring bearer's anonymity is important for Glaucon's purposes because the thought experiment is designed to show that anyone can turn towards injustice. The ancestor is nameless because, in a way, we are that ancestor.

[18] Because Gyges' ancestor uses his power to ascend to the throne of Lydia, it is natural to suppose that the ring is somehow a metaphor for the power of tyranny. There is something to this idea. The tyrant is highlighted as the extreme of injustice by Thrasymachus in Book I and later in Book IX (344a–c and 580b–c). Moreover, as Arruzza reminds us (2018, 48; see also 38–47), the 5th-century Cynics had a soft spot for tyrants. (See also the earlier work of Connor (1977), upon which Arruzza is building.) However, it is important to remember that the extreme of injustice is not, according to Glaucon in Book II, the tyrant. The extreme of injustice is the person who seems completely just while being unjust.

> (ἀδαμάντινος) to remain in justice and endure keeping their hands off the property of others and not touch it, even though they were able to take whatever they wanted from the market … And indeed someone would say this is a great proof that no one is willingly just but only by necessity.

There is good reason to believe that this argument was also deeply influenced by the sophists and that it may have been particularly influenced by one passage or view found in AI.

Consider first that it was something of a trope for early critics of morality to hypothesise the existence of an exceptionally talented or strong agent in order to show that injustice is reasonable, desirable or both. In one way or another, the Wrong Argument of Aristophanes' *Clouds* (1075–82), the Athenian envoys in Thucydides' *History* (5.89 and 5.105.1–3) and Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias* (484a2–c3) all stress that human or state actors with above average power can or will get away with profitable unjust behaviour. These texts offer examples of intelligent or strong actors doing what they do in order to argue that (at least for those in a position to abuse their power) injustice is good or even necessary. This is very much in keeping with Glaucon's thought experiment, which asks us to imagine giving exceptional power to hitherto normal people and then to consider what they would do with that power.

But of all previous texts that offer examples of powerful agents exploiting their power, AI stands out as special. For it is only in that text that we encounter another thought experiment featuring a person with genuinely superhuman abilities that are used for unjust ends. Consider again the relevant passage of that text (P.100.18–101.4/DK89 B1 6.2–4):

> If someone were born having such a nature from birth—invulnerable of skin, free from disease and suffering, superhuman and adamantine (ἀδαμάντινος) in both body and soul—one might perhaps think the power aiming at getting more (ἐπὶ τῆι πλεονεξίᾳ κράτος) would befit such a person (for such a person can remain unpunished without submitting to the law), but they would not think correctly.

This passage was quite possibly a direct influence on Plato's composition of 359b7–360d7. Not only is AI unique among earlier texts in hypothesising the existence of a supervillain with genuine superpowers, but its author also suggests that thinking about such a character will lead some people to conclude that it would be in their interest to try to get more. This is striking because Glaucon's thought experiment is similarly designed to show that with the power of invisibility anyone would turn to injustice out of πλεονεξία (359c4–5). Of course, as the last line of the AI passage indicates, the example of the supervillain is introduced only so that these people's reactions to it may ultimately be exposed as dangerously misguided. But this arguably reinforces the parallel to *Republic*—for Plato will eventually have

Socrates show that justice is genuinely worth choosing as good for everyone, even a hypothetical invisible regicide.[19]

Now consider two final peculiarities that further suggest a direct influence. In both *Republic* and AI, the supervillains are introduced immediately after a speculative historical discussion about the origin of the laws and justice. Glaucon's discussion of Gyges' ancestor comes directly after the narrative discussed above, while AI's adamantine individual follows the more optimistic historical narrative discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The placement of the two thought experiments is thus similar in the two texts. And, finally, we must note that Plato chose to use the word ἀδαμάντινος at 360b6. This is a relatively rare word in Greek, and it is normally used to indicate *physical* strength.[20] Physical strength is alluded to by Plato the one other time the adjective appears in his corpus: a conclusion is said to be held down and bound by arguments of iron and adamant at *Gorg.* 509a1.[21] Yet in *Republic* it is used of someone who is able to resist moral corruption—that is to say, it is here about strength of character. Given that there were other words for moral strength ready for the taking, Plato's choice of ἀδαμάντινος at 360b6 calls out for explanation. It seems plausible that Plato chose that word in order to allude to or engage with AI (or perhaps some common source with which both texts engage).[22] Of course, with no direct evidence this suggestion must remain somewhat speculative. But the indirect and circumstantial evidence is fairly impressive. At the very least, we should now be convinced that this part of Glaucon's challenge is as likely to have been influenced by sophistic texts and ideas as the first part.

The third and final part of Glaucon's contribution is the longest. There are a number of complexities and nuances to the argument at this stage, but in essence it functions by contrasting an exemplary life of complete justice with an exemplary life of complete injustice and then by comparing the overall quality of those two lives. The judgement elicited on the basis of that comparison indicates (apparently decisively) that injustice is better for humans than justice. Glaucon insists while making his case that we must examine both individuals 'so that, having come

[19] Because AI ultimately agrees with Socrates and Plato that justice is better for us than injustice, one must be careful in discussing its influence on Book II. Horky (2021) argues that the author of AI is an obvious candidate for being one of the 'countless others' who Glaucon claims have talked his ears off at 358c6–d2. But this is unlikely. It is clear that these 'others' are grouped with Thrasymachus as people advancing the argument *on behalf of injustice*—that is to say, the argument that injustice is better than justice. Since AI is one of our earliest texts making the argument on behalf of justice, its author is not one of the immoralist others. It is possible that the immoralist position mentioned and then argued against in AI was known to Plato. Whoever advanced that position may have been among the countless others, but not the author of AI himself.

[20] According to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, there are only five examples of this adjective in pre-Platonic literature. Aside from the two uses in Anon. there is Pind. *Pyth.*4.224, Aesch. *PB* 6 and 64. In *Prometheus Bound* the word is used to describe the strong physical bonds that restrain the titan Prometheus.

[21] I owe this observation to Rachel Barney and thank her heartily for it.

[22] A very similar suggestion is made by Lacore (1997, 401–4). Lacore's study is illuminating in many respects, especially in its discussion of the term 'ἀδαμάντινος'. But it does not attempt to situate Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge against a broader sophistic background.

to the extremes—the one of justice, the other of injustice—both may be judged as to which is more prosperous' (361d2–3). To this Socrates gives an interesting response (361d4–6):

> My, my, dear Glaucon, how enthusiastically you polish each of the two men up—just like statues—for judgement.

It is as if the two lives are aesthetic objects of appreciation being readied for official judgement. And once they are shown side by side and judged against one another, it is supposed to be obvious which of their lives is better (362c4–6). The unjust life triumphs.

Though the influence of past texts and ideas may not be immediately apparent here, I think that is only because readers tend to focus on the substance of this argument rather than its form. The form of this argument is what I earlier called an Evaluative Comparison and Contrast.[23] Glaucon offers an evocative description of a completely just and unjust life in order to illustrate the effects that justice and injustice have on those lives. By comparing the two lives, justice and injustice are themselves thereby evaluated insofar as we can see which leads to a more prosperous result. When viewed from this perspective it is clear that this form of argument has a rich and long pedigree—and, in particular, that it has a rich and long pedigree in discussions of the value of justice and injustice. The *locus classicus* of this form of argument is WD 225–47, where Hesiod offers an evocative description of what happens in a just and unjust city. In the just city:

> Those who give straight judgements to foreigners
> And fellow citizens and do not turn aside from justice at all,
> Their city blooms and the people in it flower.
> Peace, the nurse of the young, is on the earth for them,
> And far-seeing Zeus never marks out painful war;
> Nor does famine attend straight-judging men,
> Nor calamity, but they share in festivities the labours they care for.
> For these the earth bears the means of life in abundance, and on the mountains
> The oak tree bears acorns on its surface, and bees in its centre;
> Their woolly sheep are weighed down by their fleeces;
> And their wives give birth to children who resemble their parents.
> They bloom with good things continuously. And they do not
> Go onto ships, for the grain-giving field bears them crops.

But, on the other hand, in the unjust city:

> To those who care only for evil outrageousness and cruel deeds,
> Far-seeing Zeus, Cronus' son, makes out justice.
> Often a whole city suffers because of an evil man
> Who sins and devises wicked deeds.
> Upon them, Cronus' son brings forth woe from the sky,

[23] See p. 21.

> Famine together with pestilence, and the people die away;
> The women do not give birth, and the households are diminished
> By the plans of Olympian Zeus. And at another time
> Cronus' son destroys their broad army or their wall,
> Or he takes vengeance upon their ships on the sea.

The clear purpose of placing these two passages side by side is to highlight how much better life in a just city is than in an unjust city. Hesiod exploits the contrast to show that justice is preferable to injustice and that all people should therefore respect the demands of justice. Another instance of an Evaluative Comparison and Contrast is found near the end of AI. In the text's last transmitted section the beneficial effects of social lawfulness and justice are contrasted with the harmful effects of widespread lawlessness and injustice (P.101.17–103.21/B1 7.1–12). In this instance, which itself is clearly influenced by WD 225–47, the contrast between the two πόλεις functions as a consideration that justice is profitable and therefore desirable for individuals living in cities.

Glaucon's argument is a descendent of Hesiod's original—not quite a grandchild, but something like a great-nephew or niece. For unlike the Evaluative Comparisons and Contrasts found in WD and AI, the one in *Republic* II concerns individuals rather than states. It is, for that reason, closer in spirit to the central argument of CH. Recall that this text offers an illustrative description of the life Heracles can expect to live if he follows the path of vice, on the one hand, and the life he can expect to live if he follows the path of virtue, on the other. Because Heracles is a demigod and extremely capable, we can assume the text is presenting the best or most extreme cases for what the virtuous and vicious lives might look like. (NB Glaucon also claims to be presenting Socrates with the extremes of justice and injustice). And it is on the basis of comparing and contrasting those two lives that we are ultimately supposed to conclude that the virtuous life is better, both for Heracles and for ourselves. This, too, is a sort of Evaluative Comparison and Contrast.[24]

Of course, all three of these past texts purport to show that virtue and justice are better for cities and individuals than vice and injustice. This is obviously not Glaucon's intention with his third and final argument. And to be clear: I am not claiming to have identified the text(s) that Plato drew from in writing this part of his dialogue. My claim is, rather, that he was adopting a *form* of argumentation that was prominent among earlier contributions to the debate about justice's value and repurposing it to make his own argument. To engage in a brief comparison

[24] Though he does not mention the background discussed above, Emlyn-Jones (Plato, 2007 edn, 179) also calls attention to CH and suggests that Plato might have been borrowing from that earlier text in his commentary on *Republic*. A rich discussion of the broader Hesiodic background to *Republic* that speaks directly to the choice of lives motif can be found in Harbsmeier (2013), who also finds several similarities between Glaucon's procedure in Book II and Prodicus' procedure in CH.

and contrast of our own, consider the way Plato and Aristotle sometimes think about goodness and prospering. They elsewhere identify formal aspects of the highest human good, such as completeness and self-sufficiency, and then use these criteria to discriminate between different conceptions of prospering.[25] Arguments relying on these criteria are very different from Evaluative Comparisons and Contrasts, which may bottom out at intuitive or even aesthetic judgements.[26] The fact that Glaucon's attempt to demonstrate that the unjust life is better than the just life looks so much more like the arguments made by earlier authors than the arguments in Plato's other dialogues suggests that earlier texts and ideas exerted a real influence on this part of *Republic*.

A New Challenge to Morality

Glaucon's three claims and the arguments he makes to defend them exhaust the theoretical core of the immoralist challenge in Book II. Adeimantus says much of interest after his brother speaks, but his contribution only builds on what has preceded. We can, then, safely conclude that the immoralist challenge posed to Socrates evolved out of earlier sophistic attacks on conventional morality. For this reason, it can largely be seen as an 'old' challenge to morality. However, against this familiar background we find one new and ingenious development that deserves special attention. The development in question is the Dorian Rogue—an individual who is completely unjust but nevertheless cultivates an outstanding appearance and reputation for justice. I have named them after Oscar Wilde's famous character, who, despite his vicious behaviour, never loses his youthful and innocent appearance such that no one 'could believe anything to his dishonour when they saw him'.[27] The Rogue makes their first appearance in the third part of Glaucon's contribution, and they reappear a number of times afterwards. Consider their introduction at 361a5–b1:

> For the extreme of injustice is to seem to be just although one is not. So let us give (δοτέον) to the completely unjust individual the most complete injustice. Let us take nothing away (ἀφαιρετέον) but allow (ἐατέον) that while committing the greatest injustices they cultivate for themselves the greatest reputation for justice.

[25] *Phlb.* 20b–23a and 60a–61a include an argument that relies on the criteria of completeness. These formal features become more clearly articulated by Aristotle in his *Nic. Eth.* (see, esp., 1097a15–b22).
[26] Recall Socrates' playful suggestion that Glaucon is polishing statues for judgement at 361d4–6. I will say more about the artistic imagery used here, as well as later in Book IX, in Chapter 7.
[27] I quote from the 1891 text of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* found in Volume 3 of *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (2005, 276). The parallels between Glaucon's and Wilde's characters are not exact. There is clearly some supernatural power at work keeping Gray young, and he does eventually achieve a significant level of infamy. Still, the comparison is apt insofar as it captures the striking contrast drawn by Glaucon between the Rogue's outward appearance, on the one hand, and, on the other, the way they actually behave as well as the disfigured condition of their soul.

Just before their formal introduction, the Rogue is compared to some 'clever craftsman, such as a top ship captain or doctor' who understands everything about their illicit craft (360e6–361a1). Indeed, so expert are they at doing injustice and cultivating a reputation for justice that they hoodwink not only other people but, Glaucon once suggests, even the gods themselves (362c1–6).

The Dorian Rogue is a curious character, and they do not appear in any of our sources prior to *Republic*. Certainly, no earlier extant contribution to the debate considers the possibility of an unjust individual who acquires an outstanding reputation for justice. Of course, earlier critics of conventional morality had stressed that one should practise injustice in secret to avoid being identified as unjust. We have already seen that Antiphon made this point clearly in OT: 'When a person transgresses the laws, then, they are free from shame and punishment if they escape the notice of those who agreed on them; but if not, then they are not' (DK87 B44 2.3–10). In advancing the argument on behalf of injustice, then, it was important to these earlier critics that one be able to practise injustice without incurring any serious harm as a result. However, none of the earlier critics suggested that, in addition to avoiding any penalty, someone was likely to win a good reputation. In general, it was understood that unjust people ran a great risk of acquiring a bad reputation. Yet Glaucon is making the shocking claim that it is precisely *by means of their injustice* that the Dorian Rogue will win a reputation for justice. This must be what he means by saying that 'the extreme of injustice is to seem to be just although one is not'. And this feature of the Rogue is unprecedented in the past debate about justice and, indeed, in earlier Greek literature as well.[28]

There are, moreover, good reasons to doubt that the Dorian Rogue made its way into the earlier debate through a text that has now been lost to us. Note that the Rogue is compared to an expert craftsperson. So far as we can tell, expert craftspeople only became particularly significant in Greek moral thinking with Plato's Socrates.[29] This suggests that 5th-century authors were unlikely to have countenanced an expertise of injustice in their criticisms of morality. Readers should also note the striking way that Glaucon introduces the character at 361a6–b1. The unusual multiplication of verbal adjectives gives the impression that he is constructing the Dorian Rogue in real time for Socrates' consideration—almost as if such a person had not been imagined before.

[28] Christopher Moore has suggested to me that one can find a precursor to the Dorian Rogue in the poetry of Theognis. Theognis warns against false friends and people at a number of points in his poetry (see Theog. 117–28). His idea seems to be that we need to be on guard against individuals who might seem good to us although they are not. Though there are some superficial similarities between Theognis' false friend and what we find in *Republic*, I think there are deeper differences. For one thing, Theognis is worried about one individual duping another individual. But Glaucon is raising the possibility of one individual duping everyone. And for another, I don't see any suggestion that it is through the false friend's injustice that they appear good to others.

[29] On this, see the first two chapters of Roochnik (1998, 1–89). This book shows that it is first with Plato's dialogues that the τέχναι are so systematically applied to moral issues.

Yet perhaps the most telling reason for thinking that the Dorian Rogue must be new is that earlier texts appear to reject the possibility of anyone acquiring a reputation for virtue absent actual virtue. This is most obvious in the case of AI, which accepts what I earlier called the Bob Marley principle: 'You can fool some people sometimes, but you can't fool all the people all the time.' The first three fragments of AI inform us about how suspicious people are and how hard it is to win a reputation for virtue. In order to recognise real virtue in others and give them the honour they deserve, we are told, people must be forced ὑπό τῆς ἀνάγκης αὐτῆς—and still, they bestow this honour reluctantly (P.96.11–15/B1 2.3)! The clear implication is that if one's virtue is not genuine and not demonstrated regularly, it will be met with cynicism and annoyance rather than honour and glory. A similar idea is found in CH. That text offers a stark choice between the life of virtue, which will win Heracles reputation and glory, and the life of vice, which will win him base pleasures and infamy. If Heracles wants to be honoured by his city, he must actually help it. If he wishes for all of Greece to admire him, he must actually do good for all of Greece (*Mem.* 2.1.28/DK84 B2.28). There is no shortcut to the Refined External Goods of honour or repute. If one wants them, one must actually do the virtuous work that merits the desired honour and repute.

I take this all to be compelling evidence that the Dorian Rogue was not—and probably could not have been—deployed in any argument about the value of justice before Plato. It follows that this individual is genuinely new to *Republic* as well as to the debate about justice and its role in human prospering. We must now ask what philosophical purpose this character served.

Their purpose, I suggest, was to disarm and, indeed, co-opt the sort of considerations raised by the Friends of Justice when they made their versions of Immortal Repute. As we saw in the previous chapters, in response to the Cynics who claimed that injustice was profitable because it could win the Crude External Goods, the Friends defended the life of justice and virtue by appealing to the honour and glory that apparently follow from justice and virtue. Consider again CH. Vice promises Heracles a life of ease and endless pleasure if he turns towards her path. Virtue does not promise Heracles a life of ease; rather, she stresses how hard the virtuous life will be. However, she does promise an even greater reward. She claims of virtuous individuals that (2.1.33/B2.33):

> Because of me they are dear to the gods, loved by their friends,
> and honoured by their fatherland. And indeed when they come
> to their fated end, they do not lie dishonoured and forgotten, but
> they blossom through memory and are sung about for all time.
> Oh Heracles, child of good parents, if you cultivate yourself
> as I have described, you may win the most blessed prospering.

This caps off Prodicus' version of Immortal Repute. His suggestion is that by giving up vice and turning to virtue an individual may be able to win the greatest

sort of prospering—one fuelled by eternal fame and glory. AI, of course, offers another version of this same argument. And one finds traces of arguments similar to this being made well into the 4th century as well.[30]

My claim is that Plato recognised a crucial problem with this argument and then had his brothers introduce the Dorian Rogue to expose it. Note that Immortal Repute relies on there being a tight link between *actual* justice and the Refined External Goods of honour, glory or indeed any other sort of positive reputation. That is one of the reasons the author of AI insists that one will win a reputation only from genuinely virtuous behaviour; it is also why Virtue indicates to Heracles that there is no shortcut to being admired by all of Greece. Yet if the Dorian Rogue can really exist, then this tight link is instantly severed. For the Rogue is unjust and commits injustice but is still clever enough to win a reputation for justice. Notably, Glaucon and Adeimantus do seem to think that such a person can really exist. Though they admit that the life of a Dorian Rogue will not be easy, they highlight practical steps one can take to make it work. We are told that a prospective Rogue must be rich in friends and money, and we are alerted to the existence of secret clubs and oratorical training that help to facilitate injustice (361b4–5 and 365c7–d6).[31] This practical advice would be pointless if the life of the Dorian Rogue was not supposed to be a practical possibility.

The introduction of this character, then, serves to undermine what we saw in the previous chapter was likely to be the most prominent defence of justice offered in the 5th century. If an unjust individual can seem to be just to others and even the gods, then there is no reason to accept the logic behind Immortal Repute. It seems as though Glaucon and Adeimantus understand how devastating their claims are to past moralists. In fact, it even looks like they are toying with the Friends of Justice at times. Consider the following statement from AI (P.99.13–15/B1 4.6):

> Whoever is a truly good man, he does not chase after reputation (τὴν δόξαν) by an alien adornment laid around him (ἀλλοτρίῳ κόσμῳ περικειμένῳ) but by his own virtue.[32]

[30] Consider the following claims made by Plato's academic rival, Isocrates:

> I am astonished if anyone believes that those practising piety and justice preserve and remain in them because they hope to have less than the wicked, rather than because they suppose that they will carry away more than others from both gods and humans (*On the Peace*, 33).
>
> And you ought now suppose that they get more and, further, consider that those who are most pious and most careful in their service to the gods will continue to get more, and they get and will continue to get more from people who, because they are best disposed towards those with whom they live and practise politics, have the best reputation (*Antidosis*, 282).

In these texts, which were written in the 350s, Isocrates suggests that behaving virtuously is profitable because it will result in gods or other people rewarding such behaviour.

[31] Arruzza (2018, 72–87) contains a helpful discussion of the secret clubs to which Adeimantus here refers. She argues that they were real, historical clubs that were broadly oligarchic in orientation.

[32] Though the author of AI does not think that one can successfully win a sustained and widespread reputation for virtue absent actual virtue, he also recognises that bad people may still try.

Consider now the kind of deliberation Adeimantus suggests the intelligent individual will engage in during his own contribution to the challenge (365c3–6):

> An illusory painting of virtue ought to be traced around me (ἐμαυτὸν σκιαγραφίαν ἀρετῆς περιγραπτέον) as a façade and pretence, while the wily and cunning fox of the very wise Archilochus should be drawn behind it.

Understood correctly, Adeimantus is here suggesting that it is by constructing a false pretence of virtue around oneself that the intelligent agent should try to win the Refined External Goods that come from a reputation for justice (ἀπό τῆς δόξης, 363a4). That is because, as Glaucon earlier argued, the intelligent individual will practise injustice to win money and power. If this individual would like a good reputation as well, then they must acquire it through deceit. The truly prudent individual thus becomes the individual who hunts for a good reputation through an alien adornment.

Aside from plausibly alluding to past authors, this passage also helps us to see that the Dorian Rogue is even more devastating to the arguments of the past Friends of Justice than we have yet to realise. We have already seen that the unjust agent will break the laws in the pursuit of getting more and will, therefore, win for themself the Crude External Goods that past Cynics championed. But as both brothers take pains to stress, the Dorian Rogue wins the Refined External Goods of virtue in addition to the Crude External Goods normally associated with injustice. That is to say, the introduction of the Rogue not only severs the apparently tight link between virtue and the reputation for it, but also shows how an unjust agent can win all the significant External Goods contested in the 5th-century debate about justice. This is a point Glaucon makes consciously. Indeed, he marks this as the decisive consideration in favour of the life of injustice (362b2–c8):

> First [the completely unjust individual] rules in the city in virtue of their seeming to be just. Next they marry from wherever they wish and they give [in marriage] to whomever they wish. They contract and make partnerships with whomever they please. And above and beyond all these things (καὶ παρὰ ταῦτα πάντα)[33] they are benefitted and make a profit by not shying away from injustice: and so going into contests both private and public they prevail over and get more than their enemies … So they say, Socrates, both from the gods and from humans a better life is prepared for the unjust than the just person.

The first part of the passage highlights several of the good things that the Dorian Rogue will win because they acquire a reputation for justice. They can attain offices of influence and have social access to other respectable members of their society.

[33] The use of παρὰ governing an accusative here is notable. Typically, when Plato uses παρὰ to mean 'in addition to' it is used with the dative. The fact that it is used with an accusative here is distinctive and is, I believe, used to indicate that there is a qualitative difference between the sorts of goods described in the first half of this passage and those described in the second half.

These are examples of the Refined External Goods, even if they are not quite as exalted as immortal praise. Glaucon next enumerates a list of additional good things the Dorian Rogue receives on account of their unjust behaviour. Here he highlights the money they can cheat their business partners and enemies out of. That is to say, this second set of examples are examples of the Crude External Goods. Notably, it is only after explaining how the completely unjust individual wins both Refined and Crude External Goods (and after briefly mentioning the goods they get from the gods as well, 362c1–6) that Glaucon feels entitled to conclude that the unjust life must be vastly better than the just life. The example of the Dorian Rogue is the capstone to Glaucon's third and final immoralist argument in Book II.

Through co-opting the considerations adduced by Immortal Repute, then, the Dorian Rogue turns out to be the perfect Cynical response to the Problem of the Plurality of Goods. They prove that the unjust life does not need to forsake the Refined External Goods, which texts such as AI and CH assume make such a great contribution to human prospering. By carefully cultivating an appearance of justice, the unjust Rogue can achieve good repute, secure a high social standing in their society and win the fruits thereof. Moreover, they can do so all while ruthlessly practising injustice, taking advantage of others and securing the sorts of goods highlighted in OT and SF!

We can now see the real genius behind the beginning of Book II. With the introduction of the Dorian Rogue Plato diagnoses a major theoretical flaw in the work of the past Friends of Justice: they incorrectly assumed the rewards for justice and virtue can only be won through genuine virtue. And he segues that diagnosis into a demonstration of how an intelligent Cynic might co-opt the broad considerations once used by the Friends in order to advance their own cause. The result is the most powerful defence of injustice to come down to us from ancient Greece. This is because it shows how the unjust agent might win all the desired External Goods—both Crude and Refined. And who could fail to desire this? It is tempting to call this challenge a 'super-sophistic' defence of injustice insofar as it incorporates the strongest considerations raised by the 5th-century sophistic critics *and defenders* of morality. But whatever one decides to call it, it should be clear that the Dorian Rogue posed a major challenge to conventional morality. Just as it was earlier difficult to see how Hesiod could have denied that in a godless world the 5th-century Cynics' picture of an unjust life was a good one, now it becomes very difficult to see how the sophistic moralists could have denied that the life of the Dorian Rogue was extremely attractive and prosperous.

Reflections on the 5th-Century Debate

If the considerations raised above are correct, then the challenge posed to Socrates in the first half of Book II was thoroughly influenced by the 5th-century sophistic debate about justice. Not only do the brothers clearly refer to a background debate

that shapes their claims about the relative value of justice and injustice, but the arguments Glaucon makes during his contribution to the challenge also bear striking resemblances (and possibly even direct allusions) to the texts and ideas discussed earlier in this book. Even the genuinely new character of the Dorian Rogue seems to have been introduced as an ingenious response to a particular theoretical failing of the past Friends of Justice. Given that Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge to Socrates is the launching pad for the remainder of the dialogue, we thus have good reason to suspect that the dialogue's central investigation is itself shaped by this earlier debate. I argue for this conclusion at length in the following chapter. But before turning to that argument, we should return to the question of Plato's attitude towards the 5th-century debate about justice in the light of our discussion of Books I and II.

One thing that should now be obvious is that if *Republic* was meant to be relevant at the time it was written, Plato must have thought that the question of whether the intelligent individual should live a just or unjust life remained an open one. Apparently, there was no settled and widely accepted answer to the question of which life was best for the intelligent individual. Within the dialogue itself Socrates is deeply committed to the idea that justice is more profitable and prudent than injustice. But Thrasymachus seems equally convinced that the opposite is the case. Of course, these are fictionalised characters in a dramatic work of philosophy. But the 'countless others' that Glaucon claims side with Thrasymachus and his argument in favour of injustice do not appear to be fictionalised characters. They presumably represent real people who existed in Classical Greece and who accepted that injustice was more valuable than justice. Even allowing for some exaggeration on Plato's part, these 'countless' people cannot have been negligible in number. So our dialogue attests to the fact that Cynical ideas were still very much relevant at the time of its composition. And though one must be careful about how much we infer about Greece from the contents of any one text, there are some compelling indications that Plato was particularly worried about the theoretical force of the Cynics' arguments. This at least is what bothers Glaucon and Adeimantus. Both claim to hold justice close to their hearts. They are personally committed to the just way of life being superior to the unjust way of life. But they are also presented as being impressed by Cynical arguments and unable to respond to them. In spite of themselves, their minds are unable to theoretically defend and justify the beliefs they hold so dear. What they beg of Socrates is a persuasive argument on behalf of justice so that they can rebut the theoretical attacks on their commitments and continue to hold their beliefs firm.[34]

[34] A similar point is made by Harbsmeier (2013, 96), who cites 366b4–5 to argue: 'Was die beiden Brüder von Sokrates erhoffen, ist demnach keine charakterliche Festigung oder Motivationshilfe. Die Aporie, in der sie sich befinden, besteht vielmehr darin, dass sie zwar an der Überlegenheit des gerechten Lebens glauben wollen, sich aber außerstande sehen, diesen Glauben begründen zu können.'

We must not, however, infer from the brothers' personal commitments that Plato thought the Cynics' arguments had no negative real-world consequences. For though Glaucon and Adeimantus are somehow able to resist the siren song of injustice, others were not so lucky. This becomes perfectly clear from a part of the brothers' challenge that I call Adeimantus' Diagnosis. In this passage Adeimantus offers some impromptu remarks about the state of moral education in Greece. He begins by reminding Socrates of his inability to respond to the Cynics' arguments: 'On the basis of what argument (κατὰ τίνα … λόγον), then, would we choose justice before the greatest injustice?' (366b4–5). But as the passage goes on Adeimantus draws some disturbing conclusions about the current lack of persuasive arguments effectively responding to the immoralists. For example, we learn that as things stand the first person 'to come into power (εἰς δύναμιν ἐλθὼν) is the first to do injustice to the extent that they are able to' (366d3–4). This appears to be a remark about the attitude that actual elite Greeks in fact held towards injustice. They were so convinced by the arguments in defence of injustice that if they had the power to practise injustice without incurring any significant repercussions, they would. Adeimantus suggests that the strength of the Cynics' position actually convinced many real-life people to value injustice more than justice.[35]

Thus there is some reason to believe that Plato thought the Moral Cynics were not only winning the minds but also capturing the hearts of young elite Greek males at the time he wrote *Republic*. It is therefore interesting to observe that Adeimantus pins the blame for this sad state of affairs on the past defenders of justice. Note that immediately after explaining that the first of his contemporaries to come into power will be the first to do injustice, he says (366d5–e5):

> And the cause of all this is nothing other than that point from which this whole argument began. [Glaucon] and I said to you, Socrates, 'My amazing friend, of all of you who claim to be praisers of justice—beginning with the heroes of old whose arguments survive, up to the people of today—no one has yet blamed injustice nor praised justice aside from the reputations, honours, and gifts that come to be from them' (τὰς ἀπ' αὐτῶν γιγνομένας).

According to Adeimantus, the fact that young elites are ready to go in for injustice is explained by past moralists and their philosophically unsatisfying attempts to show that justice is valuable.

It is curious that Plato has such a young interlocutor make such a pointed diagnosis of the poor state of moral education and the dire consequences to which

[35] There are apparently some exceptions to this rule. Adeimantus claims that no individual of any power will be able to resist injustice. But he then qualifies this by allowing that someone who has a divine nature or has attained truth about the nature of justice might somehow refrain from doing injustice (366c–d). See also the discussion about the 'oddball' in Brown (2007, 49–52).

that education gives rise. This is certainly not something we would expect of the intellectually humble Adeimantus, whose later interventions in the dialogue are mostly limited to asking questions and expressing confusion.[36] Why Plato has him make such sweeping claims about moral education at this point in the challenge is not entirely clear. But it is not much of a stretch to suppose that the philosopher's own views are bleeding into Adeimantus' remarks. It is Plato, after all, who has so acutely diagnosed the failures of the past moralists and who realises the disastrous real-life consequences of this failure.

In this connection it is important to note that though Adeimantus' Diagnosis is in general rather alarming, it nevertheless contains an important silver lining. For it evidently implies that if a better and more theoretically robust defence of justice were to be offered, then those who were otherwise drawn towards the path of injustice might be redirected towards the path of justice. This implication is drawn explicitly later in the passage. After calling out the past praisers of justice for appealing to the reputations, honours and gifts that come from it, Adeimantus notes that no one has yet praised justice as the greatest good by looking at what it does in the soul of the one possessing it. But if they had, he optimistically claims, things would be very different (367a1–5):

> For if you all had spoken in this way from the beginning and we had been persuaded from our youth, we would not guard over others lest they do injustice, but we would each one of us be the best guard of ourselves out of fear that, by being unjust, we would be cohabitating with the greatest bad thing.

If only the youths of Greece had been raised on philosophically satisfying accounts of justice's value! Not only would they then not be so concerned about suffering injustice at the hands of others, they would also guard themselves to make sure they never acted unjustly towards anyone else.

The Greek of this passage makes it clear that this is a hypothetical conditional.[37] The passage is, therefore, not literally claiming that a new philosophically satisfying defence of justice would help things. Yet once again, it is very hard not to hear the authorial voice and hopes of Plato ringing through these comments. The subtext of Book II strongly suggests that Plato himself recognised that the debate about justice remained unsettled but favoured the Cynics. It further suggests that he believed the strength of their arguments and the corresponding weakness of the past Friends' responses is partly responsible for the fact that so many young elite Greeks were tempted towards the life of injustice. But, finally, it reveals the hope that a more persuasive and rigorous defence of justice and its value might be able to change this state of affairs. This is, of course, the project that Plato sets for

[36] See, for example, 419a–420a, 449a–c and 487b–e.
[37] The conditional is what Smyth calls a past unreal conditional (1984, §2302–13).

himself in *Republic*. In response to Glaucon and Adeimantus' powerful critique of justice, he will have Socrates offer a second defence of justice that does not rely on the sorts of considerations that earlier Friends of Justice relied on, and that may finally respond to the Cynics in an adequate way. By offering a novel defence of justice's value that focuses on the value that justice itself has for the just agent, Plato hopes to settle the debate once and for all. He offers a new and true return to the Traditional View of Justice.

6

The Division of Goods and the Defence of Justice

In the last two chapters we have seen that Plato was keenly aware of the sophistic debate about justice and that he engages with it in the early parts of *Republic*. The immoralist challenge he puts into the mouths of Glaucon and Adeimantus draws from and reconstructs the ideas of the sophists, and, in particular, the Moral Cynics. Even the genuinely novel figure of the Dorian Rogue serves to highlight a theoretical weakness of one type of argument popular among the earlier Friends of Justice. This weakness made their arguments susceptible to being co-opted by a clever Cynical thinker, as Plato himself ably shows with the example of the Rogue who wins the Refined External Goods in addition to the Crude External Goods normally associated with injustice. The previous chapter ended by calling attention to Adeimantus' Diagnosis. In it Adeimantus places the blame for his contemporaries' proclivity towards injustice on the failures of past defenders of morality. But he also clearly implies that someone might rectify the situation by offering a new and persuasive defence of justice that is free from the weaknesses of the past Friends. This is important for our purposes. It suggests that beyond merely influencing Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge, the sophistic debate in fact shapes the entire trajectory of *Republic*.

And so it does. Below I further analyse the brothers' challenge to show that their demands about how Socrates should defend justice are informed by their understanding of the failures of past moralists. I then argue that it is in the light of these failures that we must understand Glaucon's fundamental distinction between the value justice possesses for the sake of 'the things that come from it' and the value it possesses 'all on its own'. According to this distinction, one praises justice in the former way by appealing to the benefits one gets on account of being recognised as just by other agents, whereas one praises justice in the latter way by appealing to all the ways it reliably contributes to the prospering of the just agent absent the mediation of other agents—that is to say, to the ways it contributes to the just agent's prospering by itself. The brothers ask to hear about the value

justice possesses all on its own because any praise based on this sort of value will be immune to the objections that plagued the past Friends. And so in Books II–IX, Plato has Socrates make the case that justice is valuable all on its own by arguing that it contributes to the just individual's prospering even if they are not recognised as just by others. That Socrates so scrupulously follows the brothers' request, which is informed by their analysis of the 5th-century debate, indicates that the contours of *Republic*'s central argument are influenced by that debate.

Or it would indicate this if my historically informed interpretation of the brothers' challenge and their subsequent requests could be so easily accepted. Unfortunately, many scholars interpret the distinction between possessing value all on its own and possessing it because of the things that come from something differently than I do. Based on a reading of Glaucon's famous division of goods, these scholars have insisted that this fundamental distinction is rather akin to the familiar distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value.[1] As a result, these scholars interpret the challenge and Socrates' response to it very differently than I do.[2] They offer a much more restrictive interpretation, according to which Socrates is to exclude all non-intrinsic value from his praise of justice in Books II–IX, not merely the good things that accrue to the individual on account of being recognised as just. Given the prominence of this interpretation, I must respond to it here. Thus in the second part of this chapter I present my own reading of the famous division of goods and then defend that reading by responding to one important objection to it. Once this is done, I conclude by turning to Socrates' later arguments and showing they unfold just as one would expect given Glaucon and Adeimantus' analysis of the past debate and, in particular, their concern to hear a defence of justice that avoids the problems faced by the earlier Friends of Justice.

Looking Forward from the Challenge

The challenge posed to Socrates in the first half of Book II provides clear expectations about how the remainder of the dialogue should unfold. Glaucon's purpose in 'rehabilitating' Thrasymachus' argument and speaking at such length in praise of injustice is to facilitate a persuasive defence of justice and its value. Recall that Glaucon bluntly passes judgement on Socrates and Thrasymachus' conversation

[1] Or, alternatively, the distinction between instrumental and final value. Korsgaard (1983) has influentially argued there is an important difference between instrumental and final value, on the one hand, and extrinsic and intrinsic value, on the other. I follow past commentators on *Republic* and adopt the language of instrumental and intrinsic value, but those persuaded by Korsgaard should feel free to think instead about the distinction between instrumental and final value.

[2] As I discuss in more detail later in this chapter, I am not the only person who is dissatisfied with scholars who find the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value in the division of goods.

by noting, 'it seems to me that Thrasymachus was charmed by you earlier than was necessary, as if a snake, so there has not yet been a demonstration about [justice and injustice] to my liking' (358b2–3). The implication is that Socrates will not be able to offer a persuasive demonstration of justice's value without first encountering an advocate for injustice who can make a decent argument on behalf of vice and push back on Socrates' claims about justice from Book I.

There are at least two reasons why this should be the case. The most obvious is that the interlocutors will not be able to judge whether the life of justice is better than the life of injustice without first hearing a full case for each. Otherwise, on what would they base their judgement?[3] This provides the general motivation behind Glaucon and Adeimantus' intervention in Book II. They make the strongest case they can in favour of injustice so that Socrates, the partisan of justice, can convince them that the argument against injustice is stronger still. Another reason why it is necessary to begin with a new challenge to morality was hinted at in the previous chapter. Doing so alerts Socrates to the failings of past moralists and indicates strategies that must be avoided going forward. Glaucon and Adeimantus are adamant that past moralists have failed to defend justice effectively because they have relied on arguments that appeal to the reputations, honours and gifts that purportedly follow from justice. As a result, they vehemently insist that anyone who wishes to offer a persuasive defence of justice must find a new and different strategy.

In other words, the case for injustice also needs to be stated because it identifies paths that Socrates must not take in the remainder of the dialogue, and, in so doing, it gestures towards more convincing paths that he might take. Nor are the brothers very subtle about pointing Socrates in the right argumentative direction. Consider how Adeimantus concludes the challenge (367b3–e4):

> Don't only show us in the abstract that justice is stronger than injustice, but [show] what each does because of itself to the one possessing it—the one that it is bad, the other that it is good.[4] Exclude the reputations, just as Glaucon ordered. For if you don't exclude the true reputations from each and add the false ones, we will say you are not praising justice but the seeming [to be just] nor blaming injustice but

[3] In the agonistic context of Greece, it was almost a truism that both sides of a case needed to be heard before a judgement could be rendered. See, for example, Aristoph. *Wasps* 725–6: 'Wise was whoever that said you should not judge before you have heard the argument of both sides.'

[4] The words that I have translated as 'show in the abstract' are 'ἐνδείξῃ τῷ λόγῳ'. Elsewhere, I have translated 'λόγος' as 'argument'. This translation would not be appropriate here or at 367e1, for the brothers do want Socrates to offer an argument about justice. Recall that Glaucon rehabilitates Thrasymachus' position because he has not yet heard the argument on behalf of justice (τὸν δὲ ὑπὲρ τῆς δικαιοσύνης λόγον) stated adequately (358d1). Socrates is to offer this λόγος. I take Adeimantus to be objecting to Socrates' earlier treatment of justice in the above passage. His point is that the arguments made in Book I lacked any real substance. They left listeners with the impression that Thrasymachus was refuted by clever wordplay, not in reality (cf. the complaint at 487b–d). This is the impression Socrates must avoid giving in his second defence of justice.

> the seeming [to be unjust], and [we will say] you are agreeing with Thrasymachus that justice is the good of another, a benefit of the stronger, whereas injustice is a benefit and profit to oneself, and harmful to the weaker person … Leave the wages and reputations to others to praise. Because I would accept others praising justice and blaming injustice in this way—extolling and reviling the reputations and wages about them—but not from you, unless you were to order [it], since you have spent your whole life considering nothing else but this. So then don't only show us in the abstract that justice is stronger than injustice, but [show], too, what each because of itself makes the one possessing it—the one that it is bad, the other that it is good, whether it escapes the notice of the gods and other humans or not.[5]

These are the final words addressed to Socrates before he launches into the central argument of *Republic*, which runs until the end of Book IX. This passage ends with the exhortation that Socrates leave the wages and reputations (μισθοὺς καὶ δόξας) of justice to others and that he focus instead on what justice because of itself makes or does to the one possessing it (τί ποιοῦσα τὸν ἔχοντα αὐτὴ δι' αὑτήν). Given that Socrates presents himself as anxious to do what the brothers want (see 368b–c), we have reason to believe that he will do what he is asked in the remainder of the dialogue. It is, therefore, crucial to understand what the brothers mean by telling him to leave aside the wages and reputations of justice and to focus on what justice does to or makes the just person.

The mention of this contrast brings us back to the distinction introduced in the previous chapter between praising something all on its own and praising it for the sake of what comes from it. The distinction is first drawn by Glaucon at the very outset of Book II in his famous division of goods. Yet it is almost immediately incorporated into the brothers' challenge, where it becomes fundamental to their analysis of the past debate about justice and injustice. We will turn to the text of the division of goods soon enough. For the moment, consider the first time Glaucon employs this distinction to explain what he wants to hear from Socrates. Right after saying that Thrasymachus was charmed too early, Glaucon explains: 'I desire to hear what each [sc. justice and injustice] is and what power each has all on its own (αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ) in the soul. Forget about the wages (μισθοὺς) and the things that come to be from them (τὰ γιγνομένα ἀπ' αὐτῶν)' (358b4–7). Glaucon wants to hear what justice is and does all on its own; he does not want to hear about the things that come to be from it. Following this first use of the distinction in the challenge, different versions appear—albeit with slight linguistic variations—over and over again. Adeimantus, for example, opens his contribution to the challenge by noting that most defenders of justice 'don't praise justice itself (αὐτὸ δικαιοσύνην) but the good reputations that come from it (τὰς ἀπ' αὐτῆς εὐδοκιμήσεις) so that by means of seeming to be just offices and wives and all the things Glaucon just now mentioned will come to be from the good reputation'

[5] Thanks to Stephen Menn for discussing the translation of this passage with me.

(363a1–5). And, as we have just seen, he ends his contribution with another invocation of that same distinction.[6]

So what, exactly, is the point of this distinction of which the brothers make so much? Though there has been significant scholarly confusion around this question, I want to argue that matters are relatively straightforward. When Adeimantus and Glaucon urge Socrates not to praise justice for the things that come from it (or for its wages and reputations, both of which are frequently invoked as things arising from it), they are urging him not to praise justice by appealing to the benefits that accrue to individuals because they are recognised as just. Three initial observations support this interpretation. The first is that wages and reputations are things one gets after one is seen or otherwise recognised as having done something. This is self-evident in the case of reputations, but it is also true of wages. Outside of *Republic*, Plato uses the word 'μισθός' almost exclusively to refer to monetary fees. A wage is a remuneration received for services rendered—in most cases, for educational services.[7] And one must be recognised as having completed such services—and preferably as having completed them *well*—to get paid.[8] In our dialogue wages evidently refer to more than just monetary rewards, but there is no good reason to think that Plato changes his mind about the basic processes through which one wins wages. So, the vocabulary itself suggests that the things coming to be from justice are things that come to be from being recognised as just. This is further suggested by the fact that Adeimantus focuses so much on the appearance of justice. In the above passage he contrasts praising justice for itself with praising the appearance or 'seeming' (τὸ δοκεῖν) of it, which can give rise to such things as political offices and wives. He warns Socrates that if considerations such as these are not excluded he will not be praising justice all on its own but the seeming of it, suggesting that the seeming of justice is the relevant contrast case to justice itself. However, perhaps the most compelling reason for thinking that the things that come to be from justice depend on recognition is that past moralists are criticised for their attempts at defending justice precisely because they appealed to the things that come from justice: 'No one has yet blamed injustice nor praised justice aside from the reputations, honours and gifts that come to be from them' (366e3–5). The brothers desperately want Socrates to do something different than this.

This, then, is one side of the distinction. To praise justice for its wages and reputations—or for the things that come from it—is to praise it for the profitable

[6] Other instances of the distinction in the brothers' challenge include 361c1–8 and 366d5–367a1.

[7] The majority of the uses of μισθός outside of *Republic* refer to fees paid to teachers, often sophists. The one obvious exception is *Leg.* 921e1, where the word refers to honours. Here μισθός is used in an extended sense of an honour being given as 'pay' to those in the military. But even here the soldier must be recognised as valorous in some way in order to win the wage of honour.

[8] Otherwise wages are withheld or demanded back; see, for example, *Men.* 91d5–e3.

consequences that accrue to the individual because they are recognised as just. What, then, is it to praise justice because of itself or all on its own? Aside from Glaucon's suggestion that Socrates will have to mention what justice does to the soul at 358b4–7, we do not get much insight into what this sort of praise is expected to look like. The brothers' main concern is clearly that this type of praise be co-option-proof. They do not want Socrates' defence to be susceptible to the sort of objections to which the past Friends' defences were susceptible. And to that end they articulate a picture of the value justice has all on its own primarily by excluding other, objectionable ways of possessing value. This is done consciously. Consider, for example, Glaucon's important methodological statement at 361c1–5:

> We must take away the seeming. For if [the just individual] will seem to be just, then there will be honours and gifts for them since they seem to be this sort of person. It would then be unclear whether they were that sort of person because of justice or the gifts and honours. We must make them naked of everything except for justice …

Strip away the attractive aspects of the just individual's life save for those that derive from justice itself in the soul. Only then will one be able to appreciate the contribution justice makes to human prospering all on its own. Adeimantus is clearly getting at the same idea when, in the passage quoted at length above, he twice asks to hear what justice because of itself makes the one possessing it. He wants to hear what good things will happen to the just individual simply in virtue of their possession of justice, not whatever happens through the mediation of other agents.

This is a clever—sophisticated, even—sounding philosophical strategy. It is reminiscent of Moore's famous method of isolation for determining whether something is intrinsically valuable.[9] Socrates is to strip away everything from the just individual except for justice in order to evaluate its true contribution to prospering. Doing so will make his defence of justice persuasive because it will then be immune to the problems that the earlier Friends of Justice faced. In particular, by removing all the good things that come from seeming to be just Socrates' defence will not be vulnerable to being undercut or co-opted by the character of the Dorian Rogue, who gets all the good things that come from being recognised as just while nevertheless being unjust.

At this point the reader is surely wondering what other attractive aspects of the just life need to be removed to evaluate justice all on its own. What more needs to go to leave the just individual naked of everything save for justice and to

[9] This method is deployed in Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903, §53, §55, §57, §112–13 and §119). His thoughts on intrinsic value were developed later in his career (1922, 253–75). However, unlike Moore, the brothers are not interested in determining whether justice is intrinsically valuable, or valuable independently of its causal effects. As with those in the 5th century, they are primarily concerned with the contribution justice makes (if any) to prospering. If it makes us prosperous via its causal effects on the soul, as Glaucon clearly expects (e.g. 358b4–7), that is no cause for alarm.

render Socrates' praise of justice immune from the sorts of objections with which Glaucon and Adeimantus are so concerned? The answer to this question is found in the last passage. It is, in fact, *only the seeming*—along with the rewards that follow from it—that Glaucon and Adeimantus explicitly mention as needing to be excised from Socrates' forthcoming defence.[10] And the reason for this is presumably straightforward: the brothers believe that to isolate the contribution justice makes to the prospering of the just individual all on its own it is sufficient to exclude the rewards of justice that come from a reputation for it.

This belief may seem strange or even wrong. But it is entirely understandable against the historical background discussed in Part I of this book. Here it is crucial to bear in mind that the goods which featured most prominently in the earlier debate were the Crude and Refined External Goods. The former were the goods that the Cynics typically claimed injustice could win; the latter were what the Friends often relied on in making their own case for the profitability of justice. Glaucon and Adeimantus introduce the Rogue in large part because this character shows that it is possible for the unjust agent to win all the External Goods and, with them, most of the goods contested in the 5th-century debate about justice. Yet, having done so much work to show that the reputational rewards normally associated with justice are not, in fact, necessarily tied to justice, Plato must have realised that there existed conceptual space for other benefits associated with justice. Indeed, any good thing that came from virtue itself—rather than a reputation for it or the material goods won through this reputation—would be safe from the arguments that upset the earlier moralists. With the possible exception of Democritus (of whom Plato and his brothers evince no awareness), no previous thinker had made inroads into this safe space for justice. Glaucon and Adeimantus ask Socrates to do exactly that. They urge him to make a novel case for justice by asking for a defence that passes what we might call the 'Dorian Rogue Test'. Socrates must show that the just individual lives a better life than the unjust individual even if the latter somehow wins for themself all the External Goods normally associated with justice and injustice. He must, moreover, show that this is true even if the just individual is deprived of all these goods. This is the only decisive way to show that justice all on its own is what makes the just life prosperous.

If this is the right way to understand the brothers' distinction between praising justice because of the things that come from it and because of itself, then the challenge they pose in Book II gives us clear expectations about how Socrates should argue in the remainder of the dialogue. He ought simply to demonstrate that justice is valuable and contributes to human prospering without appealing to any benefits that depend upon the just individual being recognised as just by other

[10] Thus Brown (2007, 54): 'So for Glaucon, stripping [the just man] of everything but his justice simply equates to removing his reputation and all the good things which accrue to him from that.'

agents. This is the way to overcome the failures of the past Friends of Justice and offer a persuasive defence of justice with the potential to establish that it is profitable and prudent to live justly.

Before moving on to discuss the division of goods and other potential difficulties of my view, it is worth pointing out that Socrates gives no indication that he seriously objects to the brothers' procedure or that he rejects any of their requests. Quite the contrary. We shall see later on that there is an overwhelming amount of textual evidence that Socrates not only accepts the brothers' distinction as I have described it but also that by the end of Book IX he takes himself to have shown that justice is valuable all on its own precisely *because* he has shown that it contributes to the just individual's prospering even if they get no wages or reputation from it. And this, once again, is exactly what we should expect given everything the brothers say in their challenge. There is no more fitting way to end this section than by reminding ourselves of the concluding lines of the brothers' challenge: 'Don't only show us in the abstract that justice is stronger than injustice, but [show], too, what each because of itself makes the one possessing it—the one that it is bad, the other that it is good, whether it escapes the notice of the gods and other humans or not.'

The Division of Goods

Despite the existence of such passages, my understanding of the distinction between the value that justice possesses all on its own and the value it possesses because of the things that come from it is controversial. To see why, let us take a look at the division of goods from the beginning of Book II. In this famous passage Glaucon distinguishes three different kinds of goods and the different types of value they possess. The first kind (Kind-A: 357b5–8) of good is one:

> we would choose to have not desiring the things that arise from it but welcoming it for the sake of itself (αὐτὸ αὑτοῦ ἕνεκα): rejoicing, for example, or the harmless pleasures from which nothing comes in the future other than rejoicing.

The second (Kind-B; 357c2–4) is that which:

> we prize both on account of itself (αὐτό τε αὑτοῦ χάριν) and on account of the things that come from it (τῶν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ γιγνομένων): knowing, for example, and seeing and being healthy.

The final kind (Kind-C; 357c6–d2) is introduced in the following way:

> There is athletic training, being treated while sick, and practising medicine as well as the other money-making activities. For we would say these are onerous, but that they benefit us, and we would not choose to have them for the sake of themselves (ἑαυτῶν ἕνεκα), but on account of the wages and the other things that come from them (τῶν δὲ μισθῶν τε χάριν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα γίγνεται ἀπ' αὐτῶν).

After making this tripartite division, Glaucon asks Socrates what kind of good he thinks justice is. The latter claims that it is a Kind-B Good and further suggests that anyone who hopes to live a prosperous life ought to prize justice both because of itself and because of the things that come from it, though he believes that the value it possesses because of itself makes a much, much larger contribution to our prospering than the totality of the things that come from it (358a1–3).

The division of goods has occupied scholarly attention for nearly a century. Many scholars have based their interpretation of the dialogue and its considered account of justice's value primarily on their reading of it. Yet because they typically ascribe greater importance to this passage and read it differently than I do, many have also developed a very different interpretation of the project of *Republic* than the historically informed interpretation sketched above. Broadly speaking, there are two ways people have interpreted the division of goods in the past. According to the dominant way of understanding the division and the argument that follows, which I have elsewhere called the No-Effects interpretation,[11] Glaucon's division of goods draws a distinction similar to our own distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value. The example of pleasures and the language of valuing it 'for the sake of itself' has convinced generations of scholars that Kind-A Goods possess value in themselves—that is to say, independently of any of their causal effects. Similarly, the example of money-making activities being valued for the things that come from them has suggested that Kind-C Goods are instrumentally valuable. And since Glaucon's division evidently presents Kind-B goods as possessing the value of the other two kinds, this interpretation claims that Kind-B Goods are hybrid goods: valuable both intrinsically and instrumentally.

This broad interpretation of the division of goods enjoys fairly wide support. It has been endorsed by many scholars of ancient philosophy.[12] It is also frequently touted by contemporary ethicists.[13] Although the details of individual interpretations may differ, proponents of this dominant view generally agree that to say Kind-B Goods are valuable because of the things that come from them is to say that they are valuable in virtue of any and all their (beneficial) causal effects, whereas to say that they are valuable all on their own is to say that they

[11] Anderson (2020, 3). Substantial portions of the following sections are excerpted from that paper.

[12] In one of the first articles on the division of goods, Mabbott (1937, 471) argued: 'The task of Socrates, on my theory, is to show that justice is in "the best class"—good in itself and for its consequences. In proving the first half of this thesis, all consequences must be eliminated.' Mabbott's language of consequences is, I think, functionally equivalent to my language of causal effects. On his view, Socrates is meant to show in the first half of his argument that justice is valuable even if it does not have the consequence of making the just agent prosperous. Different and more plausible versions of this view were subsequently advanced by Kirwan (1965), Irwin (1979), Reeve (1988), Irwin (1995), Kraut (1996), Singpurwalla (2006) and others.

[13] For one example chosen at random, note the opening lines of Bradley (1998, 109): 'In Republic 357, Plato distinguishes three kinds of goods … The three kinds of goods Plato distinguishes are intrinsic goods, instrumental goods, and goods that are both intrinsic and instrumental.'

are valuable independently of these effects. This has led sophisticated advocates of the dominant interpretation to claim that we must see Socrates as defending the value of justice by showing that it is literally a part or constituent element of human prospering. Terence Irwin, for example, says: 'If Plato's claims about the intrinsic goodness of justice are consistent with his promise to prove that justice contributes to happiness … then he ought to show that justice is a dominant component of happiness.'[14] It cannot be that justice makes a causal contribution to the prospering of the just agent because then its value wouldn't be intrinsic, which is what these scholars take Glaucon to be indicating when his division of goods suggests that justice is valuable all on its own or on account of itself. Of course, proponents of this interpretation maintain that Socrates also believes that justice is instrumentally valuable. But they believe that any instrumental value must be excluded from the praise of justice all on its own and may only be mentioned again in Book X, once the central defence of justice as valuable because of itself has been completed at the end of Book IX.

A number of other scholars have, however, rejected this interpretation. Based on evidence from elsewhere in *Republic*, rather than the division itself, some have concluded that causal effects must feature in the value justice possesses all on its own.[15] There is no consensus as to which effects of justice are allowed into the praise of justice all on its own, but these scholars are united in rejecting the idea that no causal consequences can feature in the value justice possesses all on its own.[16]

My own view aligns with this latter group of scholars. Some causal consequences of justice can indeed feature in the value it possesses because of itself. Unfortunately, this view remains the minority position in the literature. So, I must here argue against the dominant interpretation of Glaucon's division of goods and what that division entails about Socrates' argument that follows.

We should start by pointing out that the brothers' challenge is itself a major strike against the dominant interpretation. For though Glaucon first introduces the division of goods in the abstract and analytical way presented above, he and Adeimantus almost immediately put the distinction drawn in that division to work in the challenge. And absolutely nothing about that challenge suggests that

[14] Irwin (1995, 193). 'Happiness' is his translation of 'εὐδαιμονία'.

[15] The importance of causal effects in the praise of justice all on its own was first stressed by Foster (1937). He was followed by White (1979, 1984), Heinaman (2002) and Payne (2011). These are the advocates of the Yes-Effects interpretation. One also finds a view lying somewhere in between the No-Effects and Yes-Effects interpretations advanced by Annas (1981) and Devereux (2005), though in spirit they are closer to the No-Effects interpretation than the Yes-Effects one.

[16] White (1984) allows only a limited number of causal consequences into the value justice possesses because of itself. Heinaman allows almost all consequences save for what I have been calling the wages and reputations of justice. Of all past authors who have written on this subject, Heinaman's view is closest to my own, though he arrives at his conclusions very differently than I do. He is not at all concerned about the 5th-century sophistic background in the way I am.

praising justice all on its own is supposed to preclude citing any of its causal effects. On the contrary, Socrates is asked by both brothers to praise justice by showing what justice *does to* or *makes* the just individual, which suggests that some of its effects are expected to feature in his demonstration.[17] There is, moreover, nothing in the brothers' challenge suggesting that the value justice possesses because of the things that come from it includes all its causal effects, which is what we would expect if the dominant interpretation of the division of goods were correct. As we have seen above, the brothers consistently connect the value justice possesses because of the things that come from it with—and *only* with—the benefits the just individual receives on account of being recognised as just by others. Proponents of the dominant interpretation can offer no satisfactory explanation as to why the brothers speak as if the things that come from justice are exhausted by the benefits one gets because of having been recognised as just by others.

Yet though my interpretation of the two ways justice possesses value fares well when it comes to the brothers' challenge, it is not obvious how to square my interpretation with the division of goods. I have suggested that justice is supposed to possess value because of the things that come from it in virtue of being recognised and then responded to by other agents. But it is—to put it mildly—not at all clear that this should be so from the way Glaucon introduces and describes the Kind-C Goods, which are (like justice) valuable because of the things that come from them. Thus, to defend my claims about justice in *Republic*, we must reconsider the famous division of goods.

Consider again Glaucon's initial characterisation of the Kind-C Goods (357c8–d2):

> For we would say these are onerous, but that they benefit us, and we would not choose to have them for the sake of themselves, but on account of [1] the wages and [2] the other things that come from them.[18]

To understand the sort of value ascribed to these goods, we must analyse '[1] the wages and [2] the other things that come from them'. Let us consider the two parts of this expression separately. I have already argued that wages refer to those goods that accrue to an individual only after they have been recognised as having done something. Consequently, to value a Kind-C Good on account of its wages should be to value it on account of the good things that somehow come from being recognised. But what of 'the other things that come from them'? If this refers to any and everything that might come from a good, such as beauty, confidence or

[17] See 358b4–7, 367b3–6 and 367e1–4. White (1979, 78–9) has criticised the dominant interpretation by pointing out that these passages clearly imply that causal effects will feature in Socrates' defence; see also the related criticisms of the dominant view in Butler (2002, 11–13).

[18] ταῦτα γὰρ ἐπίπονα φαῖμεν ἄν, ὠφελεῖν δὲ ἡμᾶς, καὶ αὐτὰ μὲν ἑαυτῶν ἕνεκα οὐκ ἂν δεξαίμεθα ἔχειν, [1] τῶν δὲ μισθῶν τε χάριν καὶ [2] τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα γίγνεται ἀπ' αὐτῶν.

comfort, then the Kind-C Goods are valuable in a much different way than I have been suggesting. But this is far from certain.

Note, in the first place, that there is a question about how to construe the Greek here. There are at least two possible antecedents to which the final word of the expression could refer. All the translations I know of read the 'them' (αὐτῶν) in [2] as picking up the earlier 'them' (αὐτά), which is itself a pronoun whose antecedent is the Kind-C Goods under discussion in this passage. On this construal 'the other things that come from them' (τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα γίγνεται ἀπ' αὐτῶν) are *everything other than the wages which come to be from the Kind-C Goods*.[19] However, it is also possible for the antecedent of 'them' to be 'the wages' (τῶν δὲ μισθῶν) in [1], in which case Glaucon would be saying that the Kind-C Goods are valuable on account of their wages and *the things that come from those wages*.[20] If this is the correct way to read the Greek, then the value of the Kind-C Goods derives entirely from their wages, which themselves depend on recognition.[21]

At least two considerations suggest that this neglected construal may be preferable to the alternative. Firstly, the proximity of 'the wages' to 'from them' would seem to make 'the wages' the natural antecedent. Secondly, in a nearby parallel passage mentioning 'the other things that come from them', wages are the only plural antecedent available.[22] But even if one does not read the Greek in this way and sticks with the more familiar construal, there is good reason to think the second part of Glaucon's expression must also refer to rewards deriving from reputation of one sort or another. This is made clear a few lines later in the only other text in our dialogue that explicitly discusses the nature and value of the Kind-C Goods as a class. Consider (358a1–6):

> [S] I at least think that [justice] is in the finest kind [of goods], [the kind] which ought to be prized both because of itself and because of the things that come from it by the one who is going to be blessed.
>
> [G] Well, it does not seem so to the many, but rather that [it] is a member of the painful kind [of goods], [the kind] which should be practised for the sake of wages and good repute coming from reputation …[23]

[19] Note that this construal is of course neutral about what comes from the Kind-C Goods. The relationship of coming to be from something could be very capacious or highly restricted.

[20] One might object that the τῶν ἄλλων makes this construal impossible. It is the wages and the other things that come from them, which suggests that these other things are distinct from wages. But ἄλλος does not need to mean 'other' in this sense. It can be used to mean 'as well as' or 'in addition to', as in Σωκράτης καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι γυναῖκες. See Smyth (1984, §1272).

[21] Thanks to Hendrik Lorenz and Tom Davies for discussing this passage with me.

[22] ἐπιθυμῶ γὰρ ακοῦσαι τί τ' ἐστὶν ἑκάτερον καὶ τίνα ἔχει δύναμιν αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ ἐνὸν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, τοὺς δὲ μισθοὺς καὶ τὰ γιγνόμενα ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐᾶσαι χαίρειν (358b4–7).

[23] [S] Ἐγὼ μὲν οἶμαι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἐν τῷ καλλίστῳ, ὃ καὶ δι' αὑτὸ καὶ διὰ τὰ γιγνόμενα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἀγαπητέον τῷ μέλλοντι μακαρίῳ ἔσεσθαι.

[G] Οὐ τοίνυν δοκεῖ, ἔφη, τοῖς πολλοῖς, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐπιπόνου εἴδους, ὃ μισθῶν θ' ἕνεκα καὶ εὐδοκιμήσεων διὰ δόξαν ἐπιτηδευτέον …

I have found it necessary to fill out the structure of this passage because its translation is sometimes blundered—in a big way. Grube's translation (later revised by C. D. C. Reeve), for example, renders the last two lines as follows: 'That isn't most people's opinion. They'd say that justice belongs to the onerous kind, and is to be practiced for the sake of the rewards and popularity that come from a reputation for justice.'[24] This translation runs roughshod over the neuter relative pronoun (ὅ) and takes justice as the subject of the relative clause. But this cannot be correct. The marked parallelism with the previous two lines, which are clearly not about justice itself but about the entire class of Kind-B Goods, and the ready availability of a neuter noun compel us to construe 'the painful kind' (τοῦ ἐπιπόνου εἴδους) as the antecedent of ὅ and translate it as I have above.[25]

This is crucial because, once read correctly, this passage does not offer a statement about why justice is to be practised according to the many. Rather, it offers a supplementary characterisation of the Kind-C Goods and their value as well as a statement that most people consider justice to be a good of that kind. We can, therefore, draw from this characterisation to supplement our account of Kind-C Goods from the division itself, which unfortunately leaves the source of these goods' value underspecified. This second passage indicates that, aside from any wages, the Kind-C Goods are valuable because of 'good reputations coming from reputation' (μισθῶν … εὐδοκιμήσεων διὰ δόξαν).[26] This should be read back into the initial division to fill out the valuable effects possessed by the Kind-C Goods. We must understand that they are valuable on account of [1] the wages and [2] good reputation (as well as anything else that follows from these). So even if we reject the alternative translation of the division presented above, there is compelling textual evidence that the Kind-C Goods are valuable for effects that depend on recognition of one sort or another.

On closer inspection, then, it looks as though Glaucon's opening claims about the Kind-C Goods are not so hostile to my interpretation as they first appeared. There is a straightforward, textually based reading of the division of goods that makes it at least broadly compatible with the interpretation presented above. That being said, there is one serious philosophical objection to this reading which must now be confronted. The objection takes its cue from the examples of Kind-C Goods given by Glaucon. Those examples are athletic training (τὸ γυμνάζεσθαι), medical treatment while sick (τὸ κάμνοντα ἰατρεύεσθαι) and practising medicine and other money-making activities (ἰάτρευσίς τε καὶ ὁ ἄλλος χρηματισμός).

[24] Plato (1997 edn, 999).

[25] Others have seen this. Bloom (Plato, 1991b edn, 36) does a better job with his literal translation: '"Well, that's not the opinion of the many," he said, "rather it seems to belong to the form of drudgery, which should be practiced for the sake of wages and the reputation that comes from opinion …'.

[26] Note that the διὰ δόξαν is modifying both the wages and the good reputations. This strongly suggests that the δόξα is causally responsible for the wages and any good reputations.

These examples are normally assumed to be valuable for bodily fitness (or health), the restoration of good health, and monetary compensation respectively. Yet fitness and good health do not seem to be wages and neither do the processes that produce them depend on recognition. Thus, an objector will claim my reading of the division must be mistaken because it cannot possibly accommodate Glaucon's examples of Kind-C Goods. It must be that the value Kind-C Goods possess because of the things that come from them derives—at least in some cases—from effects other than those that depend on social or divine recognition.[27]

I grant that this is a serious objection. If I cannot respond to it, my interpretation of the division of goods and the trajectory of the argument that follows will be less plausible. My response is to bite the bullet and say that even these three goods are valued for benefits that depend on some sort of recognition. I argue that, according to the division of goods as articulated by Glaucon, undergoing athletic training is valuable for the sake of prizes and honours, undergoing medical treatment while sick is valuable for other recognitional rewards, such as making money or winning honour, and practising medicine is valuable for the salary and social esteem that doctors receive.

We begin with a methodological point. Glaucon twice uses the first-person plural while discussing the Kind-C Goods. He explains that 'we' choose to pursue these goods, despite the fact that doing so is difficult or painful, on account of the benefits to which they give rise. This reveals something about the thinking behind this classification. Like Adeimantus telling us about how other youths react to moral education, Glaucon is drawing on the experiences and practices of his contemporaries to articulate, characterise and categorise the value of particular goods. We have, in fact, seen a clear example of this methodological practice already. In response to Socrates' claim that justice is a Kind-B Good, Glaucon counters that it is a Kind-C Good by appealing to what the many think and, in particular, by highlighting the recognitional rewards that they take to be the fruit of justice's labour. To understand the value that Glaucon ascribes to athletic training, receiving medical treatment while sick or practising medicine and other money-making activities, we should be asking ourselves why he and his contemporaries would engage in these practices.

Let us begin with the least troubling example, 'practising medicine as well as the other money-making activities'. Glaucon clearly does not think his contemporaries value practising medicine for itself. The activities involved in treating others were often uncomfortable and hazardous.[28] And although restoring a

[27] A version of this objection has been made recently by Payne (2011, 76 n.6): A Kind-C Good 'such as medical treatment produces valuable consequences apart from any consequence based on reputation'. A similar charge is made by Parry (1996, 106 n.3).

[28] In *Breaths* 1, the Hippocratic author points out that medicine is often a great imposition on doctors, who must see many terrible sights and touch many unpleasant things. Practising medicine was also dangerous. In Thucydides' account of the plague, we learn that doctors died earlier and in larger numbers than the general population (2.47).

patient's health was no doubt recognised as beneficial for the patient and society more generally, this did not automatically make the activity good for the doctor. So why did doctors practise medicine? The mention of the other money-making activities—which is almost epexegetic of practising medicine—indicates how Glaucon would answer this question. Doctors practise medicine in order to get paid. Non-Platonic texts suggest that Glaucon is correct in assuming money is what doctors were really after,[29] though, to be sure, certain doctors may also have desired social prestige and authority among their peers.[30] Presumably this was true for all the crafts. One person became a housebuilder to earn a salary and another entered politics because they desired to win honour. In each case, the activities are valued for the wages and esteem that come from them. And, of course, as we have seen above, wages are only paid once the relevant work is recognised as having been completed.

I turn now to athletic training (τὸ γυμνάζεσθαι). Although Socrates knows that athletic training produces strong bodies, in Book III he indicates that the purpose of such training, especially when combined with musical education, is to train the soul and improve its overall condition (410b–412a). It is very unlikely that Glaucon included the example of athletic training on the philosophically loaded assumption that its beneficial effects include a properly attuned soul. He must, then, disagree with Socrates' assessment of the good-making feature of athletic training.[31] So, why did Glaucon think it was valuable? I suggest that he and his contemporaries practised and valued such training for the prizes and rewards that could be won from athletic competitions. Evidence from elsewhere in Plato's dialogues suggests that athletic training served two broad functions: training children in general physical education (which would have included basic training for war) and, more particularly, preparing youths for athletic competition.[32] This is also suggested by what we know about ancient athletic trainers.[33] There was also a vivid, felt connection with athletic competitions and prizes because 'etymologically and historically, "athletics"

[29] Aristophanes has one of his characters say that where there are no μισθοί there are no doctors (*Pl.* 407–8). The implication is clearly that wages are the reason doctors practise medicine.

[30] Despite the fact that most practising doctors were βάναυσοι and would have been looked down upon by aristocrats, who believed working for wages was beneath them, doctors could trace their lineage back to Asklepios. Appealing to this lineage would have conferred prestige. See Wickkiser (2008, 54): 'By doing so, [doctors] undoubtedly gained, and presumably intended to gain, authority and prestige among the population at large.' A similar point is made by Nutton (2004, 87).

[31] This is a subtle but significant indication that Plato may not completely agree with Glaucon's characterisation—or perhaps even classification—of some goods.

[32] See, for example, *Leg.* 764c5–7: 'The fitting thing to do after this would be to establish officials for music and athletic training—and two for each of these: those for the sake of education in them and those for the sake of competition.' See also *Pol.* 1288b10–19, where Aristotle holds that the athletic trainer has the expertise to train students for competition.

[33] According to Kyle (1987, 142), the 'γυμναστής was a more specialised trainer, hired to prepare an athlete for competition, supervising his exercises and diet'.

presupposed prizes (ἆθλα) and "prize-givers" (ἀθλοθέται). In short, Greeks could not imagine life without athletics, nor athletics without prizes.'[34] As one authority here suggests, the connection between athletics and prizes was so intimate that it was embedded in language itself.

There can be no doubt that the quest for prizes led many people to the training grounds. In a passage from *Statesman*, which appears to represent a historical truth rather than Plato's idiosyncratic views about athletics, the visitor from Elea talks to Young Socrates about the reasons why elite citizens would have trained under experts (294d3–8):

> [V] Aren't there also among your people the sort of training of large groups that there are in other cities—either for racing or anything else—and this for the sake of love of victory (φιλονικίας ἕνεκα)?
> [YS] Indeed, there are very many.
> [V] Come now and let us call back to mind the orders of the expert athletic trainers (τὰς τῶν τέχνῃ γυμναζόντων ἐπιτάξεις) in these circumstances.

Training is here said to be 'for the sake of the love of victory'. ἕνεκα is, of course, one of the prepositions used in Glaucon's division of goods to indicate the reason or end on account of which certain practices or possessions are valued. In this passage it identifies the goal that makes the otherwise onerous practice of athletic training worthwhile. Because those who train do so on account of their love of victory, if asked they would presumably claim that they do not value the training itself or even the bodily fitness it produces. Rather, they would claim to value victory in athletic competitions as well as the prizes, honour and glory that attend such victories. This is highly revealing. Glaucon is operating with the background understanding—surprising to us, perhaps, but natural to his contemporaries—that one trains for the sake of the prizes and honours that could be won through competition. This is why he can so casually offer the example of athletic training and trust his interlocutors to understand that its value derives from the prizes offered at athletic competitions and the great honour the bearer of these prizes could boast.

We turn now to the final example, being treated while sick (τὸ κάμνοντα ἰατρεύεσθαι). Can it be that Glaucon offered medical treatment as valuable for effects that are mediated through the recognition of others rather than the restoration of good health? This strikes me as not at all implausible. It is a fact of everyday life that those who are sick are often unable to act in the ways needed to accomplish their goals. If these goals depend on recognition, as they so often do (just think of the singer addicted to the adoration of the crowd or the athlete craving the podium), these individuals will value medical treatment because it facilitates those goals. It is something of a platitude that much of Greek life revolved around

[34] Kyle (1996, 106).

glory and reputation. Consider the famous Greek heroes at war. In the pursuit of revenge and glory, Achilles sacrifices health and life, thinking that neither is worth much on its own; Ajax chooses to kill himself rather than live in dishonour. The Greeks frequently pledged allegiance to the ideal of disregarding their own safety and health in battle to win the rewards of honour and fame. And this was clearly regarded as a noble way to comport oneself.[35] Perhaps because of the relatively low premium placed upon health itself, we see Greek heroes hoping to be healed not for the sake of health but for glory. In the *Iliad* Glaucus, for example, asks Apollo to heal him so that he may rally in defence of Sarpedon's armour, a great prize of war. Glaucus' monologue is perfectly unambiguous. The hero does not want to be healed for the sake of health but so that he may rejoin the battle and defend his honour (*Il.* 16.514–29).[36]

These examples suggest that warriors could desire medical intervention for the sake of rewards that derive from recognition instead of health. We possess other texts indicating that the same was true for Glaucon's contemporaries as well. In Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* Socrates' aristocratic interlocutor, Ischomachus, doubts that the value of health can be understood absent the wartime behaviour and personal enrichment that it helps to facilitate. Indeed, Ischomachus claims that noble behaviour and the acquisition of wealth follows (ἀκόλουθα) from, among other things, health and that health is desirable for this reason (11.12).[37] Similarly, at *Republic* 406d1–e3 we learn that poor manual labourers demand expedient courses of treatment because they have no time for a prolonged recovery. Though the rich have the leisure for lengthy treatments, most people want to return to their employment in a timely fashion so that they might receive their wages, win the social prestige associated with good work and avoid the obloquy that follows from being perceived as lazy.

Although by no means uncontroversial, thinking about medical treatment along these lines is intuitive. We certainly do value our body insofar as it helps us pursue goals, and should certain goals be sufficiently salient in our motivations we might well conceive of medical treatment as no more than one step in the pursuit of fortune or fame. I suggest that this is how Glaucon thinks of medical treatment when he introduces it as an example of a Kind-C Good. He comes from an

[35] For a general discussion of the Greeks' attitude towards such things, see Dover (1994, 226–42).

[36] Compare the similar request by Iolaus at Eur. *Heraclid.* 849–53.

[37] Xenophon's syntax reinforces this point: ἀλλ' ἔστι μέν, ἔφη ὁ Ἰσχόμαχος, ὥς γε ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀκόλουθα ταῦτα πάντα ἀλλήλων. ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐσθίειν τις τὰ ἱκανὰ ἔχει, ἐκπονοῦντι μὲν ὀρθῶς μᾶλλον δοκεῖ μοι ἡ ὑγίεια παραμένειν, ἐκπονοῦντι δὲ πολέμου κάλλιον σῴζεσθαι, ὀρθῶς δὲ ἐπιμελομένῳ καὶ μὴ καταμαλακιζομένῳ μᾶλλον εἰκὸς τὸν οἶκον αὔξεσθαι. The datives indicating the activity of the agent—ἐκπονοῦντι, ἐκπονοῦντι, σκοῦντι, ἐπιμελομένῳ and καταμαλακιζομένῳ—give a sense of necessity to the progression from health to money, which suggests that all these activities lead to riches (11.12). If this is right, then an important and valuable feature of health is that it contributes to the enrichment of the healthy individual.

aristocratic family who could easily regard proper bodily functioning as a means to pursuing glory or wealth, and he recognises that the less well-off members of Greek society value medical treatment so that they can earn wages and win their own modicum of social esteem.[38]

I do not insist that the preceding is correct in every detail. Although *Republic* offers an extended discussion of justice that clearly indicates that the value it possesses because of the things that come from it depends on the recognition of others, it contains very little discussion regarding the other Kind-C Goods. Glaucon says virtually nothing about undergoing athletic training, receiving medical treatment while sick or practising medicine. As a result, we are unfortunately not in a position to know exactly what he thought about them. But the argument of this chapter does not depend on my precise interpretation of these three examples being correct. The real force of my argument comes from the analysis of the brothers' challenge along with our reconstruction of the 5th-century debate presented earlier. My purpose here has been to respond to the objection that my argument fails because it cannot accommodate the examples of Kind-C Goods given by Glaucon. To respond to this objection, it is sufficient to show that there is a plausible interpretation such that these examples are valuable for effects mediated through the recognition of other agents.

The Central Argument of the Dialogue

We have now seen that there is no compelling textual or philosophical basis to reject the interpretation of the dialogue sketched in the first part of this chapter. This is true even if we restrict ourselves to the division of goods, which has long been the central piece of evidence adduced by proponents of the dominant interpretation. Nothing in this division indicates that the value justice possesses all on its own is equivalent to the value it possesses independently of its causal effects. And, as we have just seen, nothing forces us to understand the value it possesses because of the things that arise from it as deriving from any and all its causal effects. Of course, the preceding discussion has not shown that the interpretation sketched earlier is correct. What it shows is that we have no reason to doubt the

[38] It must be admitted that this interpretation has one counter-intuitive consequence. Glaucon presents health as a Kind-B Good, valuable both all on its own and because of the things that come from it, but receiving medical treatment as valuable not for health but for other effects. Glaucon presumably does this because he thinks that most of those who are sick think about the distant goals they desire to attain with a healthy body and, therefore, value treatment as a means to those goals. Nevertheless, this is a problematic oversight. My own view is that Plato includes this infelicity to remind attentive readers that it is Glaucon who articulates the division of goods rather than the more sophisticated Socrates, and to hint at his intellectual shortcomings, which are displayed throughout and spoken of explicitly in Book VI (e.g. 504b and 506d–e).

expectations Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge gives us about how the argument of the dialogue will unfold. The purpose of the current section is to briefly discuss the trajectory of the central defence of justice in *Republic*. We will find not only that Socrates understands his job to be demonstrating that justice is valuable by showing that it contributes to the just agent's prospering even if their justice is never recognised, but also that he and the other interlocutors agree that he has done exactly that by the dialogue's end. That is to say, we shall see that Socrates argues exactly as we would expect him to given our analysis of the failures of the past Friends as well as our historically informed reading of the brothers' challenge.

Let us return to where we left off before turning to the division of goods. The closing lines of Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge run as follows: 'Don't only show us in the abstract that justice is stronger than injustice, but [show], too, what each because of itself makes the one possessing it—*the one that it is bad, the other that it is good, whether it escapes the notice of the gods and other humans or not*' (367e1–4). I have italicised this final qualification because it becomes synonymous with the appropriate sort of praise of justice in the remainder of the dialogue. Adeimantus is here asking Socrates to demonstrate the value justice possesses all on its own, and he tells him to do this by showing that it contributes to the prospering of the just individual even if the justice of that individual goes unnoticed by gods and other humans. And, of course, Socrates rises to the challenge. His defence of justice begins immediately with the introduction of the city–soul analogy and the project of founding a city in speech, which apparently helps the investigation into the nature of justice run more expeditiously. Then, once the city has finally been successfully founded and the discussion turns to the soul in Book IV, everyone is given a reminder about what still needs to be done, and the interlocutors are told to look at the soul for (427d2–7):

> Whether somehow we might see wherever justice and injustice are, how they differ from one another, and which the one who is going to be prosperous ought to possess, *whether or not they escape the notice of all the gods and humans*.

Strikingly, Socrates adopts the language earlier used by Adeimantus. He has picked up on the brothers' way of framing the philosophical issues surrounding justice. Indeed, he has incorporated this framing into his own argument. And in this passage he states explicitly and unambiguously that he plans to consider the contribution justice makes to human prospering by excluding any and all benefits associated with being recognised as just by the gods or other people.

A similar statement is made by Socrates later in Book IV once he and the interlocutors have found where justice and injustice are in the soul. With this crucial information in hand, he pauses to explain what has been accomplished and

what now remains to be done. Everyone must now consider whether justice or injustice will make the individual more prosperous (444e6–445a4):

> The remaining thing, then, as is likely, is for us to return to investigate whether doing just things, practising fine ones, and being just is profitable—*if one goes unnoticed or not as such a person*—or if practising injustice and being unjust is—if one doesn't pay for it or, by being punished, becomes better.

These two texts offer clear indications about how Socrates understands his own argument to be progressing in *Republic*. They also function as signposts that Plato uses to signal to the reader about what will follow. And they lead us to believe that what will follow is a demonstration that justice is good for human beings even if it is never recognised by any god or other human. Note that Socrates says nothing about excluding any other effects of justice during his praise of it.

To be sure, these claims are all provisional. It is only after Book IV and the discovery of the nature of justice that the investigation turns to the value of justice.[39] Moreover, the path this investigation takes is winding, and the argument ultimately given in defence of justice's value is complex. I pass over the details of that argument here. Its logic and structure are considered in Chapter 7. In any case, I concede that there is only so much we can make of Socrates' early claims about what he plans to do. Fortunately, Socrates will later indicate what he takes himself to have accomplished when he offers a retrospective analysis of what his central argument has shown. So now we must ask: does Socrates' defence of justice function by showing that justice contributes to prospering whether or not it is noticed by other agents? Or does he show justice is valuable in some other way—perhaps in the way proponents of the No-Effects interpretation suggest? We find a clear answer to these questions in Book IX. Consider the exchange Socrates has with Glaucon after the former completes his principal argument in defence of justice and its value (580b8–c8):

> [S] Should we hire a herald then or shall I myself announce that the son of Ariston judged the best and most just person to be most prosperous—the one who is most kingly and king over themselves—and the worst and most unjust person to be most miserable—the one who happens to be most tyrannical and is most of all a tyrant over themselves and their city?
> [G] Let it be announced.
> [S] Then should I announce it *whether or not they escape the notice of all humans and gods as being such?*
> [G] Announce it.

[39] Many scholars believe that the identification of the nature of justice in Book IV—as well as, perhaps, the brief conversation that follows—constitutes a central part of Socrates' demonstration that justice is valuable all on its own (e.g. Irwin (1995, 252–6)). This is a mistake. These scholars ignore or misinterpret the important passages at the end of Book IV in which Socrates explicitly suggests that only once justice has been identified can the investigation move on to a consideration of whether it is good for us. For a helpful discussion of these passages, see White (1986, 34–40). The demonstration that justice is more valuable than injustice proper comes later in Book IX.

This text reveals that by midway through Book IX Socrates takes himself to have shown that the most just person is the most prosperous person, whereas the most unjust person is the most miserable. And, crucially, it emphasises that this is true even if the just agent has gone unnoticed as being just and, therefore, has not received any of the wages and reputations associated with justice. Socrates takes himself to have accomplished the task Adeimantus set for him at 367b3–e4.

I believe that these last four texts are enough to make my point. But for good measure, let us look at one more passage. Midway through Book X, after a second discussion of poetry and its place in the well-run city, Socrates makes the following telling retrospective claim (612c7–d2):

> I gave to you the just person seeming-to-be-unjust (τὸν δίκαιον δοκεῖν ἄδικον εἶναι) and the unjust person seeming-to-be-just (τὸν ἄδικον δίκαιον). For you were claiming that, even if it would not be possible for such things *to escape the notice of gods and humans*, nevertheless this needed to be granted so that justice itself could be compared to injustice itself.

This passage is significant for a number of reasons. In the first place, it recalls Glaucon's methodological statement at 361c1–5 advising that Socrates remove the 'seeming' of justice from the just individual in order to evaluate the contribution justice itself makes to the prosperous human life. It thereby confirms that Socrates takes himself to have completed the task set for him earlier by the brothers. But much more importantly than this, the passage also explicitly connects the project of taking away the just individual's appearance of justice with the project of praising justice itself or all on its own. That is to say, it confirms that the appropriate way to demonstrate that justice is valuable is by demonstrating that it contributes to the prospering of the just individual even if that individual is never seen as just and their virtue is never responded to by other agents.

It should now be abundantly clear that our initial suspicions about what it means to show that justice is valuable all on its own were correct. There is no good reason to think that showing that justice is valuable all on its own is somehow equivalent to showing that justice is intrinsically valuable, or valuable independently of all its causal effects. All the same, we should briefly look at what the remainder of *Republic* has to tell us about the value that justice possesses because of the things that come from it. Is this value wholly dependent on the recognition of others, as I have been insisting throughout? Yes, it is. Consider the following passage in which Socrates transitions from praising justice itself to praising it for the things that come to be from it (612a8–c2):

> [S] Haven't we done away with the other things in the argument and praised neither the wages nor the reputation of justice (οὐ τοὺς μισθοὺς οὐδὲ τὰς δόξας δικαιοσύνης), as you said Homer and Hesiod did? And haven't we found that justice itself (αὐτὸ δικαιοσύνην) is the best thing for the soul itself and that the soul should do just things …?

> [G] We have. That's most true.
> [S] Well then, Glaucon, can there now be any objection to, beyond these things, returning the wages (τοὺς μισθούς)—the full number and kind furnished for the soul both from people and gods—to justice and the rest of virtue …?

Note that the wages here seem to be equated to the things the just agent gets from gods and people.

But what, exactly, are the wages of justice discussed in Book X? The answer is exactly what we would expect given our reading of Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge in Book II. They all depend on recognition of or a reputation for being just. This is a point emphasised by the text time and time again. These wages are, Socrates says, procured *through seeming* and given to those who have justice (ἀπὸ τοῦ δοκεῖν κτωμένη ἃ δίδωσι τοῖς ἔχουσιν αὐτήν, 612d7–8). And over the course of the next Stephanus Page, we are told in no fewer than three places that the justice of the just individual will ultimately be recognised by the gods and other people (612e2–3, 613b2–6 and 613c5–7). This is why Socrates makes such a big deal of virtuous agents evincing their virtue for a protracted period of time. Even if one's justice goes unrecognised at first, over the course of an entire life it will be noticed and rewarded (613c9–e3). A similar point is made about the afterlife as well. Our dearly departed souls are judged in the court of the dead and receive rewards or punishments for their earthly behaviour. With signs of all they have done branded on their backs, the souls convicted of vice are sent away for a millennium of torture. Those found to be virtuous mount their judgements proudly on their chest and spend an equal amount of time in heavenly delights (614a–615c). The documents attached to the just souls not only lay bare their moral characters for all to see. They also literally display their sentences and the rewards of which they have been found worthy. Even in death one's justice is recognised and rewarded by the gods.[40]

I take all this to show that the dominant interpretation of the division of goods and the argument that follows cannot be correct. Our historically informed reading of the brothers' challenge and the argument that follows does a much better job of capturing the force of the dialogue's central claims. However, before moving on it is worth pausing to ask whether, once we have rejected the idea that Plato attempts to show that justice is both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable, there is some other fundamental distinction lying behind the two types of value he ascribed to justice in *Republic*. The answer is, unsurprisingly, yes. As

[40] Kamtekar (2016) has called attention to the fact that many of the benefits that accrue to the just soul in the afterlife accrue to them because they have been recognised as just by the gods. She goes on to argue that the benefits the just soul receives in the afterlife can be divided into 'artificial consequences'—which follow from a reputation for justice from gods and people—and the 'natural consequences' of justice—which are the effects of a person being just. I agree with her analysis, and I take her paper to show that even in the afterlife the value of justice must be divided into the value of it all on its own and the value of the things that come to be from it.

Book X helps us to see, it is much more accurate to think of the two types of value ascribed to justice as the value coming from the reality of justice, on the one hand, and its appearance, on the other. That is to say, we would do much better to think of the famous Platonic distinction between appearance and reality or seeming and being than the modern distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value. Plato has Socrates say in so many words that the reality of justice and its appearance is valuable. And he clearly expects his interlocutors to understand that the value of justice's reality and appearance correspond to the value that it possesses all on its own and because of the things that come from it. Thus 612d4–10:

> Well, since [justice and injustice] have been judged, on behalf of justice I demand back the reputation it holds from gods and humans; and [I ask that] we agree justice is so reputed that it also gives to those who possess it the prizes it procures from its seeming (ἀπὸ τοῦ δοκεῖν), since indeed it is clear that it gives good things from its being (τὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶναι ἀγαθὰ).

This passage is part of Socrates' transition to the discussion of the wages and reputations of justice. He takes himself already to have shown in Books II–IX that justice gives good things from its being to those who possess justice. All that remains to be shown in Book X is that the just individual procures good things from the seeming or appearance of justice as well.

Republic and the 5th-Century Debate

We are now in a position to state some conclusions about the influence of the sophistic debate on the central argument of *Republic*. Let us begin with a quick recap. After raising the question of what justice is in Book I, Socrates is drawn into a heated discussion about its value with the sophist Thrasymachus. Though this discussion arrives at no satisfactory conclusion, it sets the stage for the remainder of the dialogue by reorienting the investigation towards the question of whether justice or injustice makes a greater contribution to human prospering. In Book II Glaucon and Adeimantus rehabilitate the Thrasymachean view that injustice is profitable and prudent in order to goad Socrates to offer a more complete defence of justice and its value. In making their case the brothers claim to be drawing inspiration from, and are in fact partially reconstructing, one side of an existing debate. This debate appears to be the 5th-century sophistic debate about justice, and this is confirmed by the fact that the theoretical core of the brothers' challenge bears striking substantive and methodological similarities to the ideas and texts discussed earlier in this book. Even the one novel feature of the brothers' challenge is, we have seen, introduced in order to seize upon and expose a theoretical weakness in the arguments of the 5th-century Friends of Justice.

Part I of this book suggests that the brothers' criticism of past moralists is a fair one. Sophists such as Prodicus and the author of AI really did make the wages and reputations of virtue central to their defences of justice and its place in the prosperous human life. Plato evidently realised (even if no critics in the 5th century had) that this left their arguments unable to effectively respond to the Moral Cynics and their dangerous suggestion that the life of calculated injustice is more profitable and prudent than the just life. Moreover, if we were right to hear his authorial voice behind Adeimantus' Diagnosis, then he also believed that the inability of moralists to argue effectively against the past Cynics was a cause of serious social woes in Athens. As I suggested above, this is why Plato has Glaucon and Adeimantus urge Socrates to make a new and better defence of justice and its value. And it is surely why they do so while openly lamenting past moralists and demanding of Socrates that he reject their argumentative strategies. Recall again: 'Of all of you who claim to be praisers of justice—beginning with the heroes of old whose arguments survive, up to the people of today—no one has yet blamed injustice nor praised justice aside from the reputations, honours and gifts that come to be from them' (366d7–e5).

All this is the crucial background to the distinction between the value justice possesses all on its own and the value it possesses because of the things that come from it, and, indeed, for the central argument of *Republic*. When Glaucon first announces that he desires 'to hear what each [sc. justice and injustice] is and what power each has all on its own in the soul' and further urges Socrates to 'forget about the wages and the things that come to be from them' (358b4–7), he is attempting to stop Socrates from discussing the value of justice in the way that his predecessors had. He is also gesturing towards a new kind of argument showing that justice is profitable and prudent. The same point is being made in the closing lines of the brothers' challenge, where Adeimantus tells Socrates to forget about the wages and reputations of justice and instead explain what justice itself makes the just individual. The failures of the past moralists and their unsatisfying attempts to defend justice animate the brothers throughout. Even at 612a8–c3—almost the very end of the work—Socrates takes pains to remind us about Homer and Hesiod, as well as Glaucon and Adeimantus' negative evaluation of their strategies for defending justice and its value. It would be difficult to overstate the extent to which Plato's analysis of the earlier debate about justice shapes the trajectory of *Republic*. Having recognised the failures of the past moralists and that the debate about justice remained unresolved, he aimed to refute the view of the Cynics and show that justice is, all things considered, the most profitable and prudent way to

live. In so doing, he aimed to complete the project Hesiod began centuries before when he canonised the Traditional View of Justice.[41]

[41] It is fair to wonder whether proponents of the dominant interpretation might agree that Plato's project in *Republic* was so decisively shaped by the 5th-century debate about justice. It might seem obvious that they could agree with this. Irwin *et al*. are close readers of the text, after all. They know that in Book I Socrates engages with Thrasymachus, a historical sophist. Moreover, if they are right in thinking that Plato intended to show that justice is a dominant component of prospering, *Republic* would be attempting to put forward a defence of justice that passes what I have called the Dorian Rogue Test and establishes that justice is valuable even if it is never recognised. The defence would, then, avoid the problems that I claimed saddled the past Friends of Justice. However, none of this shows that Plato was, according to these scholars, consciously engaging with the earlier debate about justice. And there is some reason to believe that proponents of the dominant interpretation would deny that Plato was motivated by or intending to respond to that earlier debate. In what is probably the first article to clearly state a version of the dominant interpretation, Mabbott (1937, 468) rejects the idea that Plato was concerned with the 'sophistic principle' about justice and advantage. He claims that Glaucon's division of goods is the 'most striking piece of evidence against' the idea that Plato was engaged in the same project as the earlier sophists. Few if any scholars today would accept Mabbott's claim that Plato wanted to show that justice was good even if it did not contribute to human prospering. But many proponents of the dominant interpretation continue to believe that Plato's project in *Republic* is especially new or distinctive and not in any robust sense a continuation of the sort of projects engaged in by Hesiod, Prodicus and the author of AI. This much is made clear from the simple fact that these scholars do not find it necessary to mention or refer to the earlier debate about justice in their discussions of Plato's dialogue. At the very least, it seems clear to me that proponents of the dominant view do not fully appreciate how much of *Republic* was informed by this debate.

7

Further Sophistic Echoes

The previous chapter showed that the central project of *Republic* is informed by the 5th-century debate about justice. Having learned an important lesson from the failures of past moralists, Plato constructs Socrates' defence of justice so as to render it immune to a potentially devastating objection to which the past Friends of Justice were vulnerable. In the present chapter, I make the case that Plato not only learned from the failures of past moralists. In at least two specific arguments, I suggest, Plato was also positively influenced by the ideas and the methods of the past Friends. That is to say, he also learned from what he considered to be their successes. This is perhaps most obvious in the way Plato structures the principal argument that the just life is better than the unjust life. The basic structure of this argument is taken almost directly from Glaucon's earlier contribution to the dialogue, which, as we saw in Chapter 5, was itself influenced by past moralists. A surprisingly clear echo of one particular 5th-century Friend also shows up in Socrates' otherwise puzzling treatment of the origins of justice in Book II. Attending to the ways the later arguments of *Republic* drew from past moralists helps us to properly understand the force and strategy of Socrates' responses to Glaucon and Adeimantus. It also confirms that Plato was a Friend of Justice who inherited the project of defending the Traditional View of Justice.

Glaucon's Request

We must return again to the brothers. In Chapter 5 we saw that their challenge was influenced by, and indeed partly reconstructed, the 5th-century debate about justice—and, in particular, that it reconstructed the views of the Moral Cynics. This influence was detected in a number of places, such as the character of the Dorian Rogue, but it was especially prominent in what I called the Old Challenge to Morality. Recall that near the outset of Book II Glaucon announces he will

rehabilitate Thrasymachus' view by defending three claims or theses. He will explain (358b8–c5):

1 from where 'they' say justice came to be and what it is (explained at 358e2–359b7);
2 that all who practise justice do so unwillingly, as something necessary but not good (explained at 359b7–360d7);
3 that it is reasonable to practise it unwillingly, since the unjust life is better than the just life (explained at 360d8–362c6).

One aspect of Glaucon's contribution to Book II that is sometimes overlooked is the pre-emptive justification he gives for the intensity with which he is going to defend these three theses. Early in his programmatic remarks he promises to vigorously praise injustice at some length so that Socrates can see how he should, in turn, praise justice. As Glaucon explains to his elder, in stretching out his own argument he hopes to show him '*the way* (ὃν τρόπον) I, in turn, wish to hear you blaming injustice and praising justice' (358d5–7). We know by now that Socrates takes the brothers' requests seriously and works hard to fulfil them. So we must ask ourselves: what exactly is Glaucon getting at when he proposes to demonstrate 'the way' he wishes Socrates to blame injustice and praise justice? Let us begin by noting that Glaucon cannot simply be emphasising that he wants a full response to the renewed Thrasymachean position, which will address each of the three claims outlined above. For at this point in the text he has already identified the three theses, and, despite sincerely wishing to hear justice proven to be better than injustice, he argues for those Cynical theses in his next breath. Thus it is sufficiently clear that he desires to hear these claims refuted *before* he makes his statement at 358d5–7. The wish that his τρόπος of praise and blame be adopted must, therefore, be understood as an additional and different request.

A natural way to interpret the request is to hear it as enjoining Socrates to praise justice all on its own rather than for what comes from it. This is because Glaucon announces that Socrates is the one person who might be able to demonstrate the value of justice itself immediately before explaining that he will speak at length in praise of injustice (διὸ κατατείνας ἐρῶ τὸν ἄδικον βίον ἐπαινῶν, 358d5). There is something to this interpretation. Glaucon certainly wants to hear justice praised all on its own, and he takes himself to be showing that injustice is valuable for itself in his contribution to the challenge. But this cannot be the full extent of Glaucon's request at 358d5–7 for at least two reasons. Firstly, the word he uses in that request, τρόπος, is typically used to refer to something much more robust and determinate than an abstract and broad kind of praise. Later in Book II, for example, the word is used to refer to the whole way of life exhibited by the citizens in the so-called city of pigs—including how they work, dress, cook, dine, socialise,

procreate, pray to the gods and even die (372a4).[1] This leads one to expect that the τρόπος of blaming injustice and praising justice that Glaucon has in mind is both more comprehensive and more specific than simply praising it all on its own. Secondly, Glaucon could easily have asked Socrates to praise justice itself without offering his own praise of injustice as a sort of model.

The key to understanding Glaucon's request lies in the observation that he offers his own praise of injustice as a model to be emulated. He does not just want Socrates to defend justice by simply responding to the three theses outlined above; he wants him to do so using the same types of arguments that he uses to defend injustice. And it is not difficult to understand why. As we have already seen, the brothers find the theoretical force of the Cynical position compelling. So, apparently, do their contemporaries. Adeimantus' Diagnosis reveals that the brothers' peers have been won over by the force of the immoralists' arguments and the lack of a convincing response to these arguments. So Glaucon presumably wishes for Socrates to adopt the method or style of arguments used by his ideological opponents because he will then be more likely to persuade the brothers and their contemporaries, who already recognise the merits of the Cynics' case.

Confirmation that this is the correct way to understand the request at 358d5–7 will come later when we see that Socrates does, in fact, employ undeniably similar argumentative tactics in responding to Glaucon's defence of injustice.[2] But assuming for the moment that this is what happens later in our dialogue, one relevant observation should be made here. Because the methods Glaucon uses to defend his Cynical theses in Book II were so clearly influenced by past sophists, we should expect that after being asked to follow Glaucon's lead Socrates will himself be adopting broadly sophistic methods for his own purposes. And this—as I shall argue presently—is exactly what we find happening in two later arguments. Although much of the philosophical content of these arguments is original and Platonic, they nevertheless preserve some of the structure and guiding strategies found in the texts of the earlier sophists. We shall even see that

[1] For similar examples, see *Rep.* 329e3, 352d7, 416d4, 557a9, 571a3 and 600b3; *Lach.* 188a1; and *Gorg.* 500c4, 500c6 and 512e4. τρόπος can also be used to refer to a method of investigation, in which case it gestures towards the rules and logic inherent to one procedure that is particularly apt for discovering the thing investigated; see, for example, *Soph.* 235c8; *Pol.* 276e4 and 292c1; *Rep.* 609d4; *Phd.* 97b6 and 97b7; *Crat.* 400d3, 436a5, 436a8 and 439b4; *Theaet.* 187d8; *Phlb.* 40e10; and *Men.* 80d4–5.

[2] So far as I can tell, this point has not been widely appreciated in past critical literature. Ausland (2003) perceptively notes that Socrates' arguments are carefully constructed to respond to each of Glaucon's three claims outlined at 358e–359b. But he suggests that the explanation for this is to be found in the fact that Glaucon and Socrates are adopting certain epideictic and rhetorical conventions. Whatever independent merit this suggestion has, it overlooks something important about the brothers' motivations. They want to be shown that the strongest philosophical arguments on behalf of injustice can be bested by the argument on behalf of justice. Their primary concern is not about conventions of speechmaking. It is about persuasive philosophical argumentation.

one key philosophical move made in Book II was plausibly taken over from a text discussed in Part I.

Socrates' Response: Book II

Let us return to the first of Glaucon's three theses, which addresses the origin and essence of justice. The centrepiece of his discussion is a speculative account of early history describing humanity, its original aggressive ways and its later adoption of justice (358e4–359a7):

> By nature, they say, to do injustice is good and to suffer injustice bad, but the badness of suffering injustice exceeds the goodness of doing injustice. Thus whenever people both do injustice and suffer injustice from one another and get a taste of both, it seems profitable to those who are unable to flee and choose it to contract with one another neither to do nor suffer injustice. Thereupon, of course, they began to establish laws and treaties amongst themselves, and they named the command of the law lawful and just. And this indeed is the origin and essence of justice. It is a midpoint between the best thing—if one does injustice without paying the penalty—and the worst thing—if one cannot pay back injustice suffered.

I take it that all but the end of this passage is meant to describe justice's origins, according to the Cynical folk that Glaucon is here channelling, whereas the final two sentences are about its nature.

It is the account of justice's origins that concerns us here. Broadly speaking, we can say that Glaucon begins by introducing certain purported facts about human nature. He then presents an account of early human behaviour and the development of the first regulated communities grounded in those facts. Apparently, our nature is such that we find perpetrating injustice against others good but we hate even more having injustice perpetrated against us. Taken together, these two facts explain how we behaved in our original condition. In particular, the fact that injustice is good for the individual explains why early humans perpetrated so much of it against each other.[3] However, our strong natural aversion to suffering injustice explains why, after experiencing enough widespread injustice, many people came to the conclusion that it would be in their best interest to stop harming others if everyone else agreed to stop harming them. It is at this point that Glaucon transitions from a general discussion of human nature and

[3] Why, exactly, does the theory hold that doing injustice is naturally good? Though Glaucon does not mention the satisfaction of desires during his discussion of the origin and essence of justice, shortly after this discussion he claims that those who practise injustice are led by their ἐπιθυμία (359c1–3). He means that such people commit injustices because they think it will lead to their appetites being fulfilled. If pressed, Glaucon would presumably say this explains why (according to the account given at 358e–359b) doing injustice is naturally good. It provides an effective means of satisfying one's desires as well as the pleasure that attends having one's desires satisfied.

behaviour to more specific claims about history. The text next indicates that it was after this realisation that humans began to establish laws and contracts, which must have happened at some specific point in the past.[4] Confirmation that we are talking about a genuine historical development comes when we are told that the introduction of laws and agreements marked the genesis (γένεσίν) of justice itself.

If this is right, then we can say that Glaucon begins his discussion of justice by thinking about human nature and history. He recounts the development of a minimally cooperative society by first identifying salient facts about human nature and then, as it were, 'observing' how the sort of creatures that he (at least in his Cynical moments) supposes us to be would have behaved long ago given that nature. In particular, he explains what early humans must have done to escape the condition of widespread conflict that was the result of their natural tendency towards injustice. This makes his account particularly reminiscent of SF. As we saw in Chapter 2, that text assumes humans are naturally disposed to perpetrate injustice against others. It also claims that humans originally led violent and disordered lives and that this miserable original condition was not overcome until they created effective laws so that justice would rule. Much like the author of that earlier text, Glaucon appears to think that a broadly historical narrative tracing the motive for, and institution of, the norms governing human communities is an appropriate way to identify how and why justice came to be. The result of his account is that justice is a contract of non-interference entered into by selfish creatures to make their lives more tolerable. I agree to forgo harming you (much though I might want to) so that I myself may remain unharmed by you and others.

This account forms the basis of Glaucon's blame of justice and praise of injustice. What is important for us to recognise now, though, is that Socrates begins his response with his own speculative discussion about justice's origins in the earliest communities. And despite the fact that he goes on to propose and endorse a very different conception of justice and injustice than Glaucon's, his speculative historical account nevertheless forms the basis of his later praise of justice.[5] Consider, for example, that Socrates' discussion also begins by highlighting certain facts about human nature, and it also leverages those facts to explain early

[4] Note the conspicuous switch from the present infinitive and the general ἐπειδὰν clause in lines 358e4–359a2 to the ἐντεῦθεν followed by aorist infinitives in lines 359a2–4. This switch marks the transition away from a consideration about our nature and general behaviour and towards claims about what humans did at some specific, if indeterminate, time in the past.

[5] Admittedly, Socrates' contribution to the dialogue is much longer than his interlocutors' contributions. So, too, is his discussion about how justice comes to be and what it is. Whereas Glaucon's account of the origin and essence of justice spans a grand total of one-half of one Stephanus Page, Socrates' account begins with the project of founding the first city at 369a and runs at least until 371e, where he asks Adeimantus with which feature of the city is justice coeval. But the account quite possibly extends much further. It's not clear to me when Socrates stops talking about justice's origins and transitions to its nature. Certainly, Socrates drops hints after 371e that the interlocutors still need to see how the city's justice and injustice originate (e.g. 372e5–6). And I can find no clear point between 371e and 427d, where the city is finally established, that obviously indicates that anyone identified the origin of justice in the city.

human behaviour. Almost the first thing we are told by Socrates is that 'each of us is not self-sufficient but is in need of much' (369b7–8). This truth about our nature explains why humans first formed cities (369c1–4):

> So then doesn't one person call on another for one need, and another person call on yet another for another need, and, since they are in need of much, they gathered many people in one district as partners and helpers; and to this shared district didn't we give the name 'city'?

It is because humans are not self-sufficient and need much that they first gathered together. This fundamental neediness of ours is not only what brought us together long ago; it also guided the development of the earliest cities. Socrates literally claims that need will make (ποιήσει, 369c9–10) the city he describes in Book II. His point seems to be that because our need for food, shelter and protection from the elements is basic and ineliminable, the first cities must have at least functioned to provide food, clothing and buildings. The minimal city is, therefore, one of four or five citizens: a farmer, a builder, a weaver, a cobbler and perhaps a doctor (369d6–9).

One further important fact about our nature explains why we could never have remained living in minimal cities of this size and make-up. Different people are born with different abilities and proclivities and are, therefore, naturally suited for different jobs (370b1–b3). And yet because we all work most effectively when we focus on one task (370b5–7), cities will only operate efficiently if each citizen focuses on one specific task and then shares the fruits of their labour with others, who reciprocate in turn by sharing what they produce or do through their own special task. But this means that farmers, builders and weavers should not be making the tools they themselves use. Cities must also have carpenters and smiths if farmers and builders are going to focus on their own important work. And, of course, if carpenters and smiths are going to make high-quality tools, they cannot occupy themselves with sourcing the raw materials necessary for their craft. As a result, traders and importers will have to be added to cities, and this, in turn, will require vehicles for importing goods and spaces for trade. And so on, and so forth. Socrates implies that there is a natural progression to the way that the earliest cities must have come to be and then evolved.

Socrates' discussion at 369a–371e must be understood as a sort of pro-justice rejoinder to the discussion at 358e–359b insofar as it, too, offers an account of early human behaviour that is rooted in apparently fundamental features of our nature.[6] Socrates also recounts the development of the earliest cooperative communities

[6] Some scholars have correctly noted that Socrates undertakes a new, anti-immoralist investigation into the origins of justice in Book II. Consider, for example, Cooper (2000, 10): 'When Socrates undertakes his response to Glaucon and Adeimantus' challenge, he does not, of course, agree to accept Glaucon's account of what justice is and how it arises … In fact, the first thing he does is to begin a prolonged investigation, *de novo*, into the true nature of justice.' Compare Devereux (1979). Though I have profited from reading Cooper, he tends not to focus on or explicate the methodological continuities between Glaucon's and Socrates' respective discussions.

by 'observing' how people must have worked together to overcome the difficulties arising from their nature.[7] Along the way we learn the motivations that led early humans to form the first cooperative societies. Of course, unlike Glaucon, Socrates discusses all this as part of an argument that will eventually show the just life to be better than the unjust life. Nevertheless, the fact that he addresses the origin of justice through a speculative historical investigation is itself remarkable. Theorising about the historical origins of justice and the earliest political communities was an especially sophistic practice.[8] Plato's Socrates is typically averse to engaging in or even with such theorising. Consider that after listening to Protagoras' captivating myth about the birth of the human species and its subsequent struggle to become wise, politically engaged and prosperous, Socrates all but ignores his interlocutor's thinly veiled historical account. His response to the sophist's Great Speech is to pose a number of conceptual questions about the nature of the virtues, which (so far as I can tell) have no direct bearing on the point of Protagoras' myth (329b5–d2).[9] There is nothing about Socrates in Book I that suggests he thinks historical considerations will be helpful for discovering what justice is.[10]

It appears, then, that Socrates has gone out of his way to begin his praise of justice and blame of injustice in much the same way that Glaucon earlier began his own praise of injustice and blame of justice. Uncharacteristically, he decides to offer a discussion of human nature and the first human societies. We must now ask what philosophical purpose this serves in the dialogue.

One clear reason Plato has Socrates adopt Glaucon's historical approach is to object to the Cynical account presented at 358e2–359b7 as well as to settle his own defence of justice on more secure historical and sociological foundations. To see this, begin by noting that Glaucon adopts a number of problematic assumptions and draws some dangerous implications while discussing how the laws and justice came to be. I will mention three here. Firstly, Glaucon is evidently assuming that humanity's original condition was a social one, albeit not a sociable one. Recall

[7] Socrates literally suggests that we observe (θεασαίμεθα, 369a6) a city come into being.

[8] We have seen the extent to which the sophists engaged in this sort of investigation in earlier chapters. The claim that this sort of investigation was especially or distinctively sophistic has been argued for (correctly and effectively, in my opinion) by Bett (2002, esp. 257).

[9] Near the end of *Protagoras* Socrates makes one passing reference to the sophist's earlier myth. At 361d2–3 he explains that he liked the Prometheus character in Protagoras' story more than his brother, Epimetheus. But this is only because Prometheus represents forethought about one's life. It has almost nothing to do with the actual content of Protagoras' myth or historical account.

[10] None of Plato's other ventures into speculative human history come from Socrates. The lengthiest such discussion in the Platonic corpus appears in Book III of *Laws*, a dialogue in which Socrates does not appear (676a–681d). We have already discussed the myth of *Protagoras*. The bewildering myth about earlier human generations in the *Statesman* is presented by the Eleatic Visitor (269c–274e). And finally, what little we hear about early Athens and Atlantis in *Timaeus* and *Critias* comes from Critias (*Tim.* 20d–26c and *Crit.*108e–121c). Book II of the *Republic* is the only place where Plato has Socrates engage in this sort of speculative historical investigation himself.

that his account *begins* with people practising injustice against one another. It is this widespread antisocial behaviour that leads to the institution of laws, which are designed to prevent anyone from harming anyone else. This all plainly presupposes that humans began their careers interacting with one another. Secondly, Glaucon is assuming that most people are basically self-sufficient and require only freedom from being mistreated to live tolerably well. At least some such thought must lie behind the contract that he attributes to early humans. Nothing about the laws mentioned by him requires anyone to offer assistance to others. They simply demand that each person leave the others alone to pursue their interests however they see fit.[11] And finally, Glaucon all but states that justice and the laws supporting it are hostile to our nature in an important and harmful way. They are hostile because they restrain us from doing what would satisfy our natural desires. And for those who are strong enough to escape suffering injustice in the original condition, agreeing to such laws would make no sense.[12] Thus Glaucon claims that no 'true man' (ἀληθῶς ἄνδρα, 359b3–4) would agree to refrain from practising injustice because, for them, breaking the laws and harming others would be beneficial and good, whereas following them would be harmful and bad.

As we learn from his discussion at 369a6–371e12, Socrates rejects these ideas and thinks they provide a poor foundation for understanding the nature and purpose of political unions. Indeed, in many respects this pro-justice rejoinder seems tailor-made to expose Glaucon's treatment of the origin of justice and society as deeply problematic. Consider, first, how Socrates quietly rejects Glaucon's assumption that the original human condition was one of widespread social conflict. At 369c1–4 Socrates claims that many people gathered into a single dwelling place because they needed much. This obviously implies that there was a time before people gathered together and, moreover, that in that time they lived without the help of others. We are plainly meant to infer that in this earlier time humans lived alone, or at least in relative isolation from one another. Socrates, therefore, rejects any account of the earliest human communities that starts with people already situated together and deliberately begins his own account by stepping back in time to a point before humans could have perpetrated widespread injustice.[13] This crucial philosophical move enables him to offer explanations for phenomena that Glaucon's Cynical account plainly cannot. Most importantly, Socrates can

[11] Some scholars, for example Cooper (2000, 10), have noted that nothing prevents the people in Glaucon's account from forming temporary, cooperative unions. He can, then, accommodate the possibility that some people worked together in earlier times. Though this may be true, that Glaucon never mentions any cooperative venture is surely indicative of the way he believes most people actually behaved in the past—and, I would add, how most people continue to be motivated in the present.

[12] Even those who on the whole profit from the pact of mutual forbearance might still find following the laws bad at the moment when they wish to break them.

[13] This is perceptively noted by Cooper (2000, 11): Socrates 'suggests that we need to start one step farther back, historically speaking, than Glaucon's account did'.

plausibly explain why humans joined together in one place and formed political groupings at all. He can also explain why they continue to stay together despite the real tensions and difficulties that inevitably arise from life in a political society. In contrast, it's unclear what Glaucon would say if asked why our weaker ancestors didn't just go off on their own in order to escape the violence that, he clearly implies, characterised early human life.

Socrates' account is also deeply unsympathetic to the idea that humans are largely self-sufficient and must only be left alone to live tolerably well. The first and most fundamental postulate of his discussion is that humans are profoundly needy creatures who cannot possibly live well on their own.[14] Our fundamental neediness has, moreover, decidedly anti-Glauconian implications for understanding the nature of cities. Instead of seeing cities as groups of selfish individuals who each pursue their own interests, Socrates invites us to see cities as necessarily cooperative enterprises formed by weak creatures who depend on one another. He suggests that the true function of a city is to provide for everyone's common needs.[15] Finally, let us note that Socrates' illustration of how political communities develop also lays the groundwork for a clear rejection of the idea that the regulations binding citizens together are harmful to their natures. The discussion of the first city emphasises that its citizens fully understand that the cooperative norms uniting them to their peers, and their peers to them, benefit the individual. 'Does one person give to another (if they do give something) or take in exchange thinking that this is better for themselves', Socrates asks at 369c6–7. Adeimantus' answer indicates that early humans entered into political relationships because they thought doing so would profit them. The motivations of these citizens pose an implicit challenge to Glaucon's earlier idea that laws and social regulations are harmful to our nature.[16]

[14] Socrates is so consistent and emphatic about our neediness and how it structures political communities that when Adeimantus is later asked where to find justice in the first city, he can only think to suggest that it might be located in the need the citizens have for one another (372a1–2).

[15] Plato surely endorsed this understanding of the nature and purpose of cities. We get confirmation of this in Book IV, when we are told that the measure of a city is not how well it satisfies the desires of the few but whether every citizen's needs are met and whether everyone can live the most prosperous life possible for them (420b–421c). But this just makes explicit the goal already hinted at in Socrates' vivid illustration of how political communities develop in Book II.

[16] Once again, this implicit idea will be made explicit later. Socrates eventually denies that the laws threaten any harm to our nature when they prevent the individual from satisfying their immediate desires. At the end of Book IX, he explains that people who are unable to rule themselves with divine reason may need to be enslaved by the best people. This is apparently for the benefit of the 'slaves' themselves because this is the only way they will ever be ruled by divine reason. Following this passage, Socrates claims that it is clear 'that the law wants something like this' too (590e1–591a3). He must mean that the law wants people to be ruled in a way that benefits them even if it appears to be coercive. A similar point is made at 604a–d. Socrates explains that law and argument urge us to refrain from doing things that are shameful and bad, whereas pain and suffering push us towards those things. He ends by noting that by restraining us from what our appetite impels us towards, the law enables us to do what is most needful in difficult situations.

Socrates' discussion at 369a6–371e12 functions to challenge the problematic assumptions and ideas introduced by Glaucon. His own speculative account of the earliest political communities provides readers with considerations that undermine the foundation of Glaucon's praise of injustice, and it helps to establish Socrates' later defence of justice on firmer grounds.[17] Plato could have simply had Socrates state that Glaucon was wrong to imply that humanity's earliest condition was a social one; or that humans are basically self-sufficient; or that the laws are hostile to our nature. The fact that he has Socrates reject Glaucon's Cynical assumptions indirectly, by first introducing his own speculative historical narrative, is surely to be explained by the fact that Glaucon asked to hear injustice blamed *in the same way* that he earlier blamed justice. The brothers have evidently already bought into the idea that investigating the origins of justice is particularly revealing of its value. So Plato has Socrates show them that, when properly conducted, an investigation into its origins leaves little doubt that justice is important and valuable for human beings. That is to say, Socrates adopts Glaucon's speculative historical method in order to reject his Cynical conclusions and instead launch his own defence of justice and its superlative value.

It is here that we can very clearly detect an echo of the earlier sophists and their political ideas. As we saw in Chapter 3, the earlier Friends adopted the Cynics' historical method of investigation in order to resist the Cynics' immoralist conclusions. And this is exactly what we see Socrates doing in Book II. Attentive readers may even have noticed that the exchange between Glaucon and Socrates appears to mirror the dialectic we saw play out between the 5th-century Cynics and one particular Friend of Justice discussed in Part I. We have already had opportunity to note that SF puts forward a speculative account of human history similar to the one presented by Glaucon. In Chapter 3 I argued that AI responded to such accounts with—among other considerations—the argument Political Animals. A prominent feature of this argument was an alternative account of human history that is not at all dissimilar to the one Socrates later puts forward in *Republic*. Recall that while discussing AI, we saw that one of the crucial moves of that text was to go beyond the historical narrative presented in SF and plausibly presupposed by OT, which posits an original condition in which humans were

[17] This is often missed by commentators who assume that the purpose of Socrates' discussion in Book II must be entirely forward-looking. And this, in turn, has led to some disparaging remarks about the earliest stages of his defence of justice. According to Annas (1981, 76–8), for example: 'The first city is allowed to develop, and becomes corrupt, in a very odd way, which forces us to ask what is the point of the first city in the *Republic*'s argument … [W]e have to conclude, though reluctantly, that Plato has not given the first city a clear place in the *Republic*'s moral argument.' Though many commentators would not agree with Annas' blunt analysis, her remarks are indicative of a general tendency that overlooks the important fact that Socrates' discussion at 369a–371e is partly designed to respond to Glaucon's earlier Cynical discussion. Once this is granted there is no reason to conclude that the first city has no real place in *Republic*'s argument.

already social and already harming one another, and instead to begin at an earlier time when humans lived as isolated individuals.

Though other similarities between AI and Socrates' discussion of justice should be evident, this one is surely the most striking. In their respective responses to a Cynical view that posited humanity's original condition to be a social one, the author of AI and Socrates both make the conscious decision to step back in time and start their historical accounts at a point in time before humans had become social and, therefore, at a point before there was any real possibility of widespread harm or injustice. In both cases the decision to start further back is leveraged to illustrate just how much humans need one another and how crucial social cooperation and regulations are for our species. The obvious takeaway from this last point, which both AI and, through Socrates, Plato emphasise, is that the laws are not best understood as harmful restrictions on our nature. They are, rather, natural outgrowths of our natural desire to live and live well. Antiphon and Glaucon are wrong to suggest otherwise.

This is highly revealing, and it suggests that Plato may have been selectively incorporating the views of the earlier Friends in *Republic*. Of course, one must not overstate the influence earlier texts could have had on Plato. I certainly do not mean to imply either that the whole of Socrates' pro-justice rejoinder at 369a–371e is meant to problematise Glaucon's earlier discussion or that Plato was somehow copying AI when he wrote this part of his dialogue. Socrates' discussion of how justice comes to be is clearly designed to do more than simply respond to his antagonist's views. To state the obvious, the discussion is also intended to help the interlocutors arrive at the novel and revisionist conception of justice that we eventually encounter in Book IV.[18] Nevertheless, it remains notable that Socrates devotes as much space as he does to the earliest political communities and the subsequent development of the city of pigs. The length and detail of his discussion seem to me to obviously go beyond what would be necessary to prepare readers for a new account of justice.[19] And there is no denying that what we encounter in Book II looks very much like what some earlier Friends tried to do in their own texts. Whether Plato was consciously drawing from his predecessors or simply using a line of thought that was earlier employed by them is something we may never know for certain. But there are some reasons to suspect that there may have been direct influence. Consider, once again, that Socrates typically does not go in for historical investigations. It was, rather, the Moral Cynics who used this investigation to such devastating effect in the 5th century, and it was the Friends who adopted this same style of investigation to respond to those Cynics. And it is extremely revealing that Socrates uses the same philosophical move of going back

[18] Facilitating the explication of justice's nature is, in fact, the putative reason Socrates offers before beginning his long speculative historical narrative (369a–b).
[19] A similar point is made by Menn (2006, 14).

in time that AI earlier used to challenge the ideas presented in texts such as SF. Given that we have some reason to believe Plato knew AI, I take this to be a pretty good ground to conclude that *Republic* may have been influenced by that text.

Socrates' Response: Books IV–IX

Let us turn now to the argument Glaucon gives for his final thesis—namely, that the unjust life is better than the just life.[20] The transition to the third thesis runs as follows (360d8–e5):

> Concerning the judgement itself about the life of those [people] we are discussing: if we differentiate (διαστησώμεθα) the most just individual and the most unjust individual we will be able to judge (κρῖναι) correctly. But if not, then not. Whatever, then, is this differentiation? This: let us take nothing away from the injustice of the unjust individual nor the justice of the just individual. But let us set up each as complete in their own practice.

Glaucon goes on to offer a general characterisation of the most just and unjust individuals. The completely unjust person, who turns out to be the Dorian Rogue, knows what they can and cannot accomplish and is careful to only practise injustice when they can get away with it. They are, therefore, able to avoid infamy. Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 4, they not only are able to avoid infamy, which is what the earlier Cynics had suggested the unjust individual do. In addition to that, they are able to win a reputation for justice and get all the good things that come from that. This is because, as we are told, 'the extreme of injustice is to seem to be just although one is not' (361a5). At the same time, Glaucon claims the completely just individual is the mirror image of the completely unjust individual. Although they are just, they do not care about seeming to be just at all. As a result, though they are scrupulously virtuous, they end up with a reputation for the greatest injustice.[21] After hearing these initial characterisations Socrates

[20] There is a Socratic answer to the argument Glaucon offers to defend his second thesis—namely, that all those who practise justice do so unwillingly. Very briefly: the response to the example of Gyges' ancestor, who, once freed from the threat of punishment, goes in for the most extreme injustice, is the perfectly just and wise philosopher (see Ausland (2003, 131–2)). As we learn at 519e–520e, true philosophers will do the just thing and return to the cave to rule even absent the threat of punishment. And they will do this even though they would rather be quietly contemplating. The example of the philosopher proves that it is not the case that everyone practises justice unwillingly and would do injustice if they could get away with it. I cannot, however, see that Plato's claims at 519e–520e were influenced by any prior thinker, let alone any sophist.

[21] Glaucon arguably cheats in his reasoning about the completely just individual. He cites Aeschylus to suggest that the just individual does not want to seem to be but rather to be just (361b6–7). From this he infers that seeming to be just is no part of the just life as such. This much is, I think, fair enough. But he then suggests not only that the reputation for justice be taken away from the completely just individual but also that a reputation for injustice be added. Why is it part of the extreme of justice to appear to be unjust? Glaucon claims that saddling the just individual with a poor reputation for injustice is

chimes in: 'My, my, dear Glaucon, how enthusiastically you polish each of the two men up—just like statues—for their judgement (εἰς τὴν κρίσιν)' (361d4–6). We are being prepared for a comparison of these two lives.

In what follows, Socrates' fiery interlocutor compares and contrasts these individuals and then renders a judgement about their lives. On the one hand, though the truly just individual may treat others fairly, they turn out to be tortured mercilessly because of their reputation for injustice. They are whipped, bound, have their eyes gouged out and are ultimately crucified. They end their life learning the hard lesson that 'one ought not wish to be but to seem just' (362a2). The unjust individual, on the other hand, enjoys all the fruits of genuine injustice. Their unscrupulous behaviour allows them to get the better of their competition and, as a result, they become rich in the Crude External Goods and attain power. But because they have a reputation for the greatest justice, they also enjoy all the trappings of high social standing. We are told, in particular, that they get to rule in their city as well as marry and do business with whomever they choose. They can even honour the gods with especially generous sacrifices and gifts. As a result, they are said to be dearer to the gods than the genuinely just person (362b2–c6). In the light of this evocative and blunt comparison of the two individuals, Glaucon believes it is evident (at least in his Cynical mood) that the unjust life is better and more prosperous than the just life (362c7–8). The judgement in favour of the unjust life is taken to establish that injustice itself is better and more valuable for humans than justice.

The overall force and strategy of Glaucon's argument is clear enough. It unfolds in three successive stages. He first 'differentiates' the completely just and unjust individuals; he then compares and contrasts their respective lives; and, finally, he offers a judgement about who is more prosperous. We might, however, wonder about the argument's nuances. Two questions in particular are worth asking here. Firstly, why does Glaucon look at *the most* just and unjust individuals? Secondly, what, exactly, justifies the final judgement that one life is better and more prosperous than the other?

The first question is especially pressing, for one might think the most just and unjust individuals are statistical anomalies that can only exist in extreme circumstances and are, for that reason, poor examples for an argument intended to inform how most of us should live. 'Don't compare me to the Almighty, compare

necessary for ascertaining the value of justice itself (361c5–9). This may well be true (cf. 612c7–d2), but it is not obviously relevant to the issue at hand. An interpreter charitable to Glaucon might suppose he thinks one needs to saddle the just individual with a bad reputation to strip them of the appearance of justice, which, as we have seen above, is no part of the just life itself. Another possibility is that he has some background commitment to the completely just life being diametrically opposed to the completely unjust life. Either way, it looks as though Glaucon is either making a mistake or being a little slippery at this stage of his argument.

me to the alternative', runs a common political quip. In a similar vein, some people have found it suspicious that Glaucon showcases apparently unrealistic moral saints and demons rather than regular people in regular environments.[22] This suspicion is unfair to Glaucon and, more than that, it misses something important in his argument. It is unfair because, as I argued in Chapter 5, the brothers really do believe the life of the Dorian Rogue is possible. Although they admit that the Rogue's life will be difficult, they nevertheless suggest practical steps one can take to live it (e.g. 361b4–5 and 365c7–d6). They even imagine themselves deliberating about that life (e.g. 365b2–c6), which presumably indicates that they do not take it to be so rare or extreme as to be totally unrealistic. But just as importantly, Glaucon thinks there is some special utility in considering extreme cases. He specifically describes the lives of the completely just and unjust individuals 'so that (ἵνα), having come to the extremes—the one of justice, the other of injustice—both may be judged as to which is more prosperous' (361d1–3). The recourse to the extremes is important, in the first place, because it facilitates an evaluation of the quality of the respective lives.[23] But Glaucon also thinks that 'differentiating' the purest embodied forms of justice and injustice will provide insight into the effects of each. He thinks, in other words, that his discussion will provide useful information about the consequences of virtue and vice for normal human lives. And this serves an important function in his argument: it allows the conclusion to generalise to those who are not completely just or unjust. We are to understand that the intelligent person who leads a modestly unjust life will still profit from injustice and do better than the just person. They just won't get all the wonderful things had by the Dorian Rogue.[24]

One might also wonder what justifies the conclusion at which Glaucon arrives. Clearly, he thinks that a contest between two exemplary lives will result in the judgement that the life of injustice is more prosperous and, therefore, better than the life of justice. But it is worth asking who is supposed to be making this

[22] A version of this complaint is raised by Irwin (1995, 186), who reflects on Glaucon's argument thusly: 'We might wonder what the relevance of the counterfactual suppositions … is meant to be. Why should the fact that we would prefer injustice if conditions were radically and unrealistically different show that there is something objectionable about our commitment to justice in actual circumstances?' I don't believe Glaucon expects his audience to think the conditions he describes are quite as 'radically and unrealistically different' to their reality as Irwin supposes them to be.

[23] This is why Socrates makes his remark about the statues in response to the claim at 361d2–3.

[24] Glaucon is here following Thrasymachus. In defending his claim that injustice is more profitable for the individual than justice, Thrasymachus claims Socrates will see this '*most easily of all*' if he looks at the most complete form of injustice, tyranny, 'which makes the one doing injustice most prosperous' (344a4–5). But Thrasymachus also believes that mundane injustice is profitable and advisable. Indeed, earlier in this same speech he explains how unjust business partners typically get a better deal than their just colleagues. And he notes that the unjust person pays less tax and, if they are in a position to hold political office, they freely profit from abusing their powers (344d–345a). This is about the normal unjust individual. They, too, profit from injustice and are more prosperous than the just individual, even if less prosperous than the tyrant.

judgement and why it is that we or anyone else should trust them.[25] Glaucon appears to think that almost everyone would judge his paragon of injustice to be more prosperous than the paragon of justice. He concludes: 'So they say (φασίν), Socrates, both from the gods and from humans a better life is prepared for the unjust than the just person' (362c7–8). The 'they' mentioned here hearkens back to the many people Glaucon claims to be drawing on in his programmatic roadmap, including the 'countless others' mentioned alongside Thrasymachus as advancing the argument on behalf of injustice (358c7–d1). Thus he evidently thinks very many people would—indeed, already do—judge the unjust life to be better than the just life. This judgement is, moreover, presumed to be easy. Obvious, even. Glaucon emphasises that it is 'not difficult' to describe the sort of lives that await the completely just and unjust individual (361d7–e1). He likewise presents it as a simple matter to judge which is more prosperous. He appears to think that it can be *seen* from his description alone that one life is far superior. This is underscored by Socrates' remark likening the two lives to statues being readied for a contest. The explicit invocation of a visual artform suggests that Socrates thinks one is simply meant to perceive from appearances which of the two lives is better.[26] And this, if anything, is supposed to justify the conclusion of Glaucon's argument. Place the two lives next to one another and most people will immediately recognise the unjust life as more prosperous than the just life.

This ends Glaucon's contribution to the challenge. After claiming that 'they say' a better life awaits the unjust individual, Glaucon hands things over to his brother. And though Adeimantus adds much of philosophical interest, his contributions augment rather than supersede Glaucon's. The Cynical comparison of lives offered at 360d8–362c6 remains the theoretical centrepiece of the challenge with which Socrates must contend. It should not, therefore, come as any great surprise that the principal argument Socrates offers to defend justice (and blame injustice) later in *Republic* is deeply influenced by the form and structure of this comparison of lives from Book II.

Socrates attempts to begin this argument at the end of Book IV. Having successfully identified what justice and injustice are, he indicates that he and the interlocutors can now proceed to investigate which is better for us (444e6–445a4). To do this, he suggests, they should consider the four prominent forms of vice to

[25] This question becomes pressing in the light of Socrates' second proof of the superiority of justice in Book IX. For this proof notoriously introduces the idea that people who are dominated by different soul-parts cannot be brought to agree about which of three different types of pleasures—or, indeed, which life (αὐτὸς ὁ βίος)—is most pleasant (581e5–582a1). They make fundamentally distinct and irreconcilable judgements about the pleasures. It is not outlandish to suspect that they might also make different judgements about which lives are better or worse. We must, therefore, ask who Glaucon thinks is judging between these lives and why we should trust their judgement.

[26] This has been perceptively noted by Avgousti (2022, 218): '[T]he statues imply that there is no disjunction between what is and what appears.'

which humans are susceptible. This can be accomplished by looking at the four types of vicious cities that function as structural analogues to vicious human souls (445c1–e3). Presumably, Socrates plans to investigate these four kinds of injustice in order to compare and contrast the lives of those who lead them with the life of the just individual. However, before he can even explain his plan, he is interrupted by Adeimantus and Polemarchus, who wish to hear more about how wives and children will live in the virtuous city described in Books II–IV. This interruption puts the defence of justice on hold. Officially, it is not until Book VIII that Socrates returns to the argument he initiates at the end of Book IV.[27] But once he does, he outlines an argumentative strategy that should look familiar by now (545a2–b2):

> Well then, after this shouldn't we go through the worse [individuals]: the victory and honour-loving individual … and the oligarchic individual, and again the democratic and the tyrannical individual, so that (ἵνα), having seen the most unjust individual, we may set them against the most just individual? And have a complete investigation about how pure justice compares to pure injustice when it comes to the prospering and misery of the person possessing them, so that (ἵνα), having been persuaded by Thrasymachus, we may pursue injustice or, [being persuaded] by the argument now coming to light, [we may pursue] justice?

Here we see Socrates proposing his own three-stage investigation. First, he and the interlocutors should examine the vicious types of souls and characters in order to (NB the ἵνα at 545a4) be able to compare and contrast the most unjust individual with the most just individual, who was identified and discussed earlier in the dialogue.[28] The second stage is to compare and contrast the lives of these two individuals and, in particular, how they fare with respect to prospering. And all this is done, finally, in order that (NB the ἵνα at 545b1) Socrates and the interlocutors will know whether they should trust Thrasymachus and pursue injustice or instead turn towards justice.

Already we see marked similarities to Glaucon's earlier strategy. Glaucon had insisted that the interlocutors 'differentiate' the most just and the most unjust individual to judge correctly who lives a better life (360d8–e2). And this was done, in turn, to demonstrate that injustice is more valuable than justice. Though Socrates

[27] I do not mean to imply that nothing of importance occurs in Books V–VII. Much does. Perhaps most importantly for our purposes, Socrates offers a fuller description of the virtuous city than he had in Books II–IV. He also tells us much more about what the just, philosophic individual is like. Glaucon calls attention to these important additions at the beginning of Book VIII when he says, 'It seems you still had a finer city and man to speak about' (543d1–544a1). But this is compatible with Books V–VII being a digression from the central argument defending the value of justice. Socrates himself refers to these three books as a turning away (ἐξετραπόμεθα, 543c5) from that very argument.

[28] As Adam (Plato, 1969 edn, 2:198 and 201) notes in his commentary on the *Republic*, another ἵνα making essentially the same point is found earlier at 544a. Glaucon reminds Socrates that he earlier planned to study the four defective types of cities and human characters similar to them, 'so that (ἵνα), having seen them all and having agreed upon who the best and the worst man are, we might consider if the best person is most prosperous and the worst person most wretched …' (544a5–7).

employs a more elaborate procedure for properly differentiating these two individuals (which I address shortly), he, too, accepts that the appropriate way to evaluate justice and injustice is by comparing and contrasting the lives of the most just and unjust individuals. Of course, there are also surface differences in the two arguments. Socrates' is significantly longer than Glaucon's, as it plausibly stretches from the end of Book IV to the middle of Book IX.[29] Much of this space is devoted to a consideration of the three lesser types of injustice that one encounters on the slow descent towards the pure injustice embodied by the tyrannical individual. There is no parallel to this in Glaucon's argument. Yet this difference is easily explained. Lying behind Socrates' discussion of the different types of injustice is the moral psychology that evolves out of Book IV. By positing a soul with three distinct parts, each of which has motivational force, Socrates commits himself to a complex understanding of human psychology.[30] This, in turn, gives rise to four prominent psychological flavours of injustice. It is hardly a surprise that he should describe the three lesser types of injustice before arriving at a discussion of the most unjust city and individual. But this does not really affect the overall structure of Socrates' argument.[31] The judgement Socrates ultimately intends to make is a judgement about the most just and the most unjust lives. It is—as it was for Glaucon too—all about the extremes.

A much more significant departure from Glaucon's procedure comes into view when we consider how Socrates goes about differentiating the most just and unjust individuals. Notoriously, he relies on a discussion of the various cities to help describe the lives of the individuals that are analogous to them. These cities function as models elucidating how and how well the various unjust individuals live. This departure reflects a deep and genuine philosophical disagreement. Glaucon would presumably reject the utility of models designed to provide insight into the lives of the just and unjust individuals. As we saw above, he thinks that it is 'not difficult' to describe how the most just and unjust individuals live or to compare their lives (361d7–e1). Yet it is crucial to Socrates that he carefully analyse these cities so that he may explore, in addition to what sort of lives the just and unjust individuals have, how they actually experience those lives. This feature of his argument is presupposed throughout the second half of the dialogue, but

[29] For a helpful discussion of the length of the argument, see Kraut (2005, 276–7).

[30] For an overview of the tripartite soul and the moral psychology that develops from positing three soul-parts with motivational force, see Lorenz (2006).

[31] Arguably, Socrates' discussion of the progressively more unjust individuals exposes an underlying agreement with Glaucon. For we learn that Socrates believes that the more unjust one is, the more miserable one will be (see also 580b1–8, where this point is made explicitly). Another way of putting this point is that Socrates believes injustice comes in degrees and that the more of it one has, the greater its effect will be on one's life. This is a direct correlate to Glaucon's position, which, as I argued above, is really that the more unjust one is, the more prosperous one will be. Though both arguments focus on extreme cases, they can both be generalised to apply to all people, the vast majority of whom will be neither completely just nor completely unjust.

it is made explicit when Socrates turns to his discussion of democracy halfway through Book VIII (555b4–7):

> After this, it seems, we ought to consider democracy—in what way it comes to be and, once it comes into being, what character (τρόπον) it has, so that (ἵνα), knowing in turn the character (τρόπον) of this man, we may produce him for judgement (παραστησώμεθ᾽ αὐτὸν εἰς κρίσιν).[32]

We discuss the democratic city in order to have the character of the democratic individual at hand and, as a result, to be in a position to judge their prosperity relative to others (cf. 543c7–544b2).

The language used in this passage is noteworthy. Socrates suggests the interlocutors study democracy so that (ἵνα) they can eventually produce (παραστησώμεθ᾽) the democratic person for judgement (εἰς κρίσιν). It is clear from the Greek that this passage is picking up on Glaucon's earlier suggestion that the interlocutors differentiate (διαστησώμεθα) the just and unjust individuals so that (ἵνα) they may correctly judge (κρῖναι) which of the two is more prosperous.

But whence the need for cities as models? The need arises because, as we saw in Chapter 5, Socrates is asked to describe what justice and injustice do to the souls of those who possess them (e.g. 358b4–6). This is the only way to study the value justice possesses all on its own and to avoid the errors of past moralists. The soul is, moreover, agreed by all to be more determinative of the quality of one's life than anything else (445a5–b7). So it is entirely appropriate to focus on the individual's soul if one wants to evaluate how prosperous they are. But, as Socrates infamously explains when he first launches into his defence of justice in Book II, it is very difficult to 'see' into the soul or learn about its inner workings (368c8–d7). One consequence of this is Socrates' much discussed choice to investigate the nature of justice in the individual by first investigating justice in the city and only then turning to the structurally isomorphic soul.[33] But another consequence of the imperceptibility of the soul is that one cannot easily judge how prosperous an individual is. Judging the quality of the life from external appearances simply will not work.

Here we can see Socrates rejecting an assumption lying behind Glaucon's Evaluative Comparison and Contrast. He (and the 'they' he channels) clearly assumes that it is an easy thing to judge the relative prospering of the completely just and unjust individuals. But Glaucon's description of their lives focuses on what *happens to* them while they are alive. It makes almost no mention of

[32] In this passage, too, τρόπος must have a fairly robust meaning. Socrates wants to learn about the internal life of the democratic city so that he may know more about the experience of the democratic individual.

[33] For a helpful overview of the city–soul analogy, see Blössner (2007). Consider especially 346–7, where the motivations for Socrates' analogy are listed. The city's 'visibility' and the soul's 'invisibility' are listed as basic motivations behind the need for Plato's elaborate analogy.

how they experienced those happenings or, more generally, what it is like to be them. However, these are surely relevant considerations when evaluating the overall quality of a life. Socrates is, in other words, suggesting that people such as Glaucon make their judgements far too quickly and with far too superficial an understanding of what the completely just and unjust lives are like. He will later hammer this very point home when he finally turns to the most unjust individual, whom Glaucon and his allies had so hastily judged as supremely prosperous (576e6–577a5):

> Would I suggest correctly if I suggested the very same thing [sc. the need to observe the whole city and not just one element of it] about the men too? Isn't the person fit to judge the person who can go into the disposition of the tyrant with thought and see it thoroughly? The person who is not—like a child gazing from afar—amazed by the tyrants' conceited airs, which they put on for those outside of their circle, but who is rather sufficient to see things clearly?

This remark contains a thinly veiled critique of those people who passed judgement on the just and unjust individuals in Book II.[34] They are not fit to judge who is really prosperous or wretched because they are unable to travel into the souls of those individuals, understand their dispositions or even see how they behave when they are out of the limelight. In particular, they don't understand what it is to live like the most unjust of all individuals, the tyrannical individual. The fact that they confidently judge the tyrant to be the most prosperous individual simply reflects that many people are—like children—superficially judging on the basis of highly misleading appearances. They don't understand the reality of justice and injustice and what they mean for the individual.

Discussing cities that are similar to the unjust individuals is Socrates' way of correcting for Glaucon's assumption about the ease of understanding people's lives. It is how he avoids the errors that 'they' so readily rushed into. The rich accounts of the different types of cities we encounter in Books VIII and IX function as vistas offering glimpses into the internal workings of the unjust souls. It is what allows Socrates to identify and describe how unjust lives are actually experienced from the inside, rather than how they are perceived from the outside. This philosophical move adds a layer of complexity to Socrates' argument that Glaucon's lacked. Ultimately, Socrates' argument unfolds in four—rather than three—different stages. To gain insight into the experience of the individuals whose lives he wishes to evaluate, he first discusses the cities that are similar in character to those individuals; he then describes the lives of the just and the unjust individuals; following that, he compares and contrasts those lives; and, finally, this results in a judgement about which life is most prosperous and, therefore, best. In contrast to Glaucon,

[34] Harbsmeier (2013, 99–100) also finds in Socrates' discussion of who is fit to judge the prospering of just and unjust individuals an implicit critique of Glaucon's procedure in Book II.

we might describe Socrates' procedure as *understand first*, and only then compare, contrast and evaluate.

It would be hard to exaggerate how important this additional stage is to Socrates' argument. As the defence of justice begins to crescendo early in Book IX, the text reminds us time and time again that we learn about the most unjust individual by studying the tyrannical city. At 576c5–6, for example, Socrates asks Glaucon whether 'the tyrannical individual has a likeness with respect to the tyrannical city' (κατὰ τὴν τυραννουμένην πόλιν ἂν εἴη ὁμοιότητι)? After confirming that they do—and, in particular, after confirming that they have a likeness with respect to the city's prospering—Socrates proceeds to make inferences about the quality of the most unjust individual's life from the quality of life in a tyrannical πόλις. Reminding Glaucon again about the similarity of the individual to the city, Socrates asks whether the tyrannical city is free or full of slavery. Upon being told that this city is thoroughly enslaved, he concludes that the same must be true about the soul of the tyrannical individual. 'If, then, the man is similar to the city, is it not necessary that the same order be in him and that his soul be full of much slavery and lack of freedom …' (577d1–3)? A similar line of in-the-city-therefore-in-the-individual questioning continues (with one brief interlude at 578b7–579d9),[35] until the results of the conversation are summed up at 579d10–e6:

> In truth, then, (and even if they do not seem so to someone) the person who is truly a tyrant is truly a slave to the greatest flatteries and bondages and is also a toady to the worst people. Their appetites are in no way satisfied but they appear to be in the greatest need of the greatest number of things and truly poor—*if* someone knows how to observe the whole soul. And all life they are full of fear, filled up by spasms and pains—*if,* indeed, they are similar to the condition of the state they rule. But they are similar, right?

After Glaucon yet again confirms the similarity between the city and the individual, this is used to show that the most unjust person is also envious, untrustworthy, friendless, profane and nourished by every sort of vice (580a1–7). The fundamental likeness of the most unjust individual to the most unjust city is absolutely crucial to determining the quality of that individual's life. It is the linchpin upon which Socrates hangs his own Evaluative Comparison and Contrast.

Thus the introduction of cities as models to facilitate a fuller appreciation of the quality of the just and the unjust lives marks a real difference between Socrates' and Glaucon's philosophical procedures. Yet in other respects their arguments have much the same structure. To see just how similar the arguments are, let us

[35] In this interlude, Socrates asks us to imagine what might happen if a tyrant were transported outside of civil society. The passage is not often commented upon, but recently Lane (2018, 707–10) has drawn attention to it and its relevance for our understanding of Plato's conception of freedom.

pick up at the point where Socrates is ready to make his final evaluation about which life is more prosperous. Consider the following exchange (580b1–c9):

> [S] Come now, then, and just as the final judge (κριτὴς) declares their opinion, so should you. Judge who, according to your opinion, is first with respect to prospering, who is second, and so on with the others, five in all: the kingly, timocratic, oligarchic, democratic, and tyrannical individuals.
>
> [G] But the judging (ἡ κρίσις) is easy. For I judge them—like a chorus—in the same order as they entered, both with respect to virtue and vice and prospering and its opposite.
>
> [S] Should we hire a herald then or shall I myself announce that the son of Ariston judged the best and most just person to be most prosperous—the one who is most kingly and king over themselves—and the worst and most unjust person to be most miserable—the one who happens to be most tyrannical and is most of all a tyrant over themselves and their city?
>
> [G] Let it be announced.

Here we get, for the first time, an official statement of *Republic*'s conclusion that the just life is better and more prosperous than the unjust life (whether or not the just life is recognised as just by the gods or other people). Of course, as we saw in the previous chapter, the action of the dialogue does not end here. Two proofs that the just life is also more pleasant than the unjust life follow in Book IX (580d–583a and 583b–588a).[36] Moreover, Book X argues that, in addition to being valuable all on its own, justice is valuable because of the things that come from it (612b–614a). Still, the long argument ending with the lines quoted above is Socrates' primary response to the immoralist challenge posed to him by Glaucon and Adeimantus all the way back in Book II.

There can be no denying that the argument which ends at 580b1–c9 is a sort of pro-justice response to Glaucon's earlier Evaluative Comparison and Contrast.[37] Both Socrates' and Glaucon's arguments function by pitting exemplary lives against one another and then considering which is more prosperous. Moreover, the explicit mention of judging at 580b6 is plainly meant to remind us of Glaucon's third and final argument, which is likewise centred around a judgement concerning the relative prospering of the completely just and unjust individuals. What should also remind us of the earlier argument is the striking artistic simile operating in 580b1–c9. Glaucon is told to judge the five different lives as if they were part of an artistic competition. Though the lives are here likened to entries in dramatic or

[36] For a brief but helpful treatment of the two proofs about pleasure, see Butler (1999).

[37] I take this to be a decisive consideration against the view advanced by many scholars (examples of which were given in the previous chapter) that Socrates' main defence of justice comes in Book IV with his comparison of the healthy state of the soul to the healthy body. The argument ending at 580b1–c9 is clearly offered as a direct response to Glaucon's earlier argument that injustice is better than justice. And if that is so, I do not see how we can avoid concluding that the centrepiece of Socrates' own defence of justice is found here in Book IX. The comparison between the healthy soul and the healthy body is not meant to settle the question of which life is best for humans.

musical choruses, we are nevertheless to be reminded of Socrates' suggestion in Book II that Glaucon was proceeding as if his two lives were statues being readied for artistic judgement.[38] Finally, one must note that Plato has Glaucon pronounce the ultimate judgement in favour of the just life in Book IX. This is a clear throwback to the earlier argument, where it was also Glaucon who judged, and its purpose here is to signal that Glaucon has been so thoroughly convinced that he now rejects the views he earlier stated so eloquently.[39]

Thus, in Books IV–IX Socrates adopts Glaucon's earlier method of praising injustice and repurposes it to defend the value of justice instead. In so doing he quietly but nevertheless forcefully rejects some of the guiding assumptions of Glaucon's earlier argument, just as he did in responding to the Cynical historical narrative presented at 358e2–359b7. And here, too, Socrates' strategy pays off. For in adopting this method of praise and blame he manages to convince Glaucon and his brother that the just life is better and more prosperous than the completely unjust life.

Final Thoughts

The question we now must ask is: given that Glaucon was drawing on the sophists in making his arguments to Socrates, how likely is it that the latter's responses were themselves influenced by the sophists? Fairly likely, it seems to me. Recall from

[38] As Adam (Plato, 1969 edn, 2:340) notes of Glaucon being likened to ὁ διὰ πάντων κριτὴς at 580b1: 'The comparison is borrowed from the Athenian method of judging in musical or dramatic festivals.' It is interesting that Socrates distances himself from the 'statue' model of evaluating lives encountered earlier. There is presumably more to this distancing than the simple fact that judges in music or drama festivals must evaluate many choruses, rather than just two. For in evaluating statues judges presumably judge on the basis of the works' outward appearances. But this is not true of those who evaluate tragedies or music—or, as we have now learned, those who are to effectively judge the quality of human lives. To properly judge tragedies or music one must go beyond appearances and spend time with them and learn their inner meaning, just as Socrates thinks one must endeavour to understand the inner lives of the just and unjust individuals.

[39] For what it's worth, Socrates' principal argument in defence of justice relies on many of justice's and injustice's effects. This is easiest to see in the case of injustice. If Plato means for the fear, groaning or regret experienced by the tyrannical individual to somehow be explained by the presence of injustice in the tyrant's soul, and thus to be relevant to the evaluation of justice and injustice, this cannot be because these pathological emotions are constitutive or definitional elements of injustice. (On this, see Scott (2015, 71), who calls attention to the 'empirical character of the argument' under discussion.) Rather, they must be among its causal effects. Consider regret: Plato presumably means to point out that the unjust individual, dominated as they are by their indiscriminate whims, will at different times impede the satisfaction of some of their desires by acting to satisfy others. Their undisciplined appetitive part motivates them in such a way that, as a result of acting on their earlier motivations, they are later unable to satisfy other desires. This sort of regret and pain is clearly an effect of having an unjust soul. Injustice's effects on the soul, then, are invoked in an evaluation of the (dis)value injustice has all on its own. By parallel reasoning, the same types of considerations must be relevant to the evaluation of justice as well.

Chapter 5 that the clearest antecedents to the third part of Glaucon's challenge all come from earlier defenders of justice. The *locus classicus* for the Evaluative Comparison and Contrast is Hesiod's WD. At 225–47 the poet juxtaposes the sort of life an individual can expect to live in a just city with a life they can expect to live in an unjust city. Readers are supposed to see that the former life is preferable to the latter and, as a result, commit themselves to supporting justice. A similar contrast is found at the end of AI. That text includes a lengthy discussion of how much more hospitable and conducive to prospering a lawful and just society is than a lawless and unjust one (P.101.17–103.21/B1 7.1–12). This discussion is meant to reinforce the text's earlier argument that justice is best for humans. And, finally, we must remember that CH is one, extended Evaluative Comparison and Contrast of two diametrically opposed ways of life: the exemplary vicious life and the exemplary virtuous life. This, too, is an argument similar to *Republic*'s both in its structure and in its ultimate conclusion.

The extant evidence suggests, therefore, that the Evaluative Comparison and Contrast was a favourite argument of past moralists. I suggest, therefore, that it is no surprise that Plato adopts this form of argument and makes it the theoretical centrepiece of the defence of justice in *Republic*—a work, as we have seen, that so clearly engages with the earlier debate about justice.

Of course, much of Plato's argument is highly original and inventive. The Cynical choice of lives presented by Glaucon is carefully constructed to draw upon the possibility of an unjust individual winning for themself all the External Goods (be they Crude or Refined). It also exploits the even more disturbing possibility that the completely just individual might be left poor and hated by all. As we saw in the previous two chapters, this is designed to prevent Socrates from raising the substantive considerations raised by earlier Friends of Justice, especially those relied on in Prodicus' CH and in AI. Socrates is thus launched on a new argument that turns inward in order to demonstrate how justice and injustice by themselves shape the course and quality of human lives. By focusing on the direct effects that justice and injustice all on their own have on the souls of individuals, Plato is able to construct a defence of justice that can even show that the Dorian Rogue will live a miserable life in comparison with the supremely just individual. This obviously marks a significant advance over the arguments of the earlier moralists. But as the way Socrates makes this argument indicates, the advance is deeply informed by the tradition of early moralists.

Conclusion

Once the principal defence of justice has come to a close at the end of Book IX, Plato has Socrates return to the wages and reputations of virtue in Book X to show that, at least most of the time, the just individual appears just to the gods and other people whereas the unjust individual appears unjust to them. It follows from this that, at least most of the time, justice will be rewarded with wages and reputation whereas injustice will be punished. Socrates confidently assures Glaucon and Adeimantus that by the time just people come to the end of their lives they typically do have an excellent reputation as well as plenty of other good things that come about from such a reputation (613c5–7). Notably, the good things which they are said to receive in Book X are the exact same things Glaucon earlier claimed the unjust individual could win: the just person will get to rule in their city, marry their children to whomever they want and themselves marry whomever they want (613c9–d5). This is especially notable because these are all things associated with reputation and a high social standing. Socrates is in Book X wrenching the Refined External Goods out of the hands of the Dorian Rogue and returning them back to the just agent, where he thinks they truly belong. If what Socrates says about justice and the Refined External Goods here reflects Plato's beliefs at the time of writing *Republic*—and I can see no good reason to doubt this—it shows that Plato has, in fact, been in substantial agreement with past Friends of Justice all along. He, too, believes the just individual will win the Refined External Goods and that these make a genuine contribution to their prospering. This is yet another reason to identify him as a Friend and to situate him in the long tradition of those defending the Traditional View of Justice.

Of course, what makes the central argument of *Republic* so significant is that it does not rely on the gods or appeal to the Refined External Goods to defend justice's value. Plato was not content to rely on the considerations adduced by earlier moralists or to show that justice typically results in wages and rewards and that these typically contribute to the just individual's prospering. Any argument of this sort would be of limited value for a number of reasons, not least of which

is the one Plato himself highlights with the introduction of the Dorian Rogue. And so he endeavours to show that the just life would be better and more prosperous than the unjust life in all circumstances—even if an unjust individual were to win a reputation for justice or even in times and places where justice was not appropriately respected and, as a result, would not lead to social benefits. For this reason, he cannot appeal to the wages and rewards that depend upon the recognition and responses of other agents. Moreover, Plato was also not content to defend the value of justice by insisting on the existence of incorruptible and benevolent gods who recompense justice and punish injustice. Though it is easy to imagine how Socrates might have demonstrated that justice is valuable in all times and places by appealing to such gods, he stubbornly refuses to take this argumentative route in Books II–IX. This is almost certainly because his challengers Glaucon and Adeimantus—like the 5th-century Cynics they were channeling—denied that there were incorruptible and benevolent gods. Any argument that relied upon the existence of such gods would, then, have fallen on deaf ears and would have failed to truly persuade the brothers or their contemporaries. For this reason, Plato has Socrates turn inward to the soul to argue that justice all on its own is sufficient to make the just life better than the unjust life.

It is worth calling attention to just how *modern* this argumentative strategy feels, especially when compared with Plato's other works that cover similar themes and topics. In most places where Plato endeavours to defend the value of conventional morality or discuss the role of justice in the well-lived human life, the gods occupy a much more prominent position than they do in *Republic*. In *Gorgias*, for example, Socrates memorably caps off his discussion with Callicles by claiming: 'No one—at least no one who is not completely irrational and cowardly—fears dying itself. Rather they fear doing injustice. For a soul to arrive in Hades full of injustices is the extreme of all that is bad' (522e1–4). He then goes on to offer a myth about the punishments and rewards meted out by the gods in the afterlife. The invocation of the gods becomes even more pronounced in the dialogues typically thought to have been written later in Plato's life. When Socrates comes to discuss prospering and misery in the digression of *Theaetetus*, he explains—as David Sedley is well known to have argued—that god is the standard of goodness and prospering.[1] 'There are standards set up (παραδειγμάτων … ἑστώτων) in reality, my friend. One is divine and most prosperous, the other is godless and most miserable. But [unjust people] do not see that this is so and because of folly and the extreme of stupidity they don't notice that because of their injustices they become like the latter standard and unlike the former' (176e3–177a2). According to Socrates in this dialogue, one becomes prosperous by becoming as much like god as possible; to be unjust, meanwhile, is to stray away from god and to be miserable. And

[1] Sedley (1999, 309–16).

perhaps most notable of all for present purposes is Plato's response to the problem of immoralism in Book X of his *Laws*, possibly his very last work.[2] Early in this book the Athenian Stranger claims: 'No one who believes in the gods as the laws direct has ever willingly committed an impious deed or uttered a lawless word' (885b4–6). It follows that anyone who willingly speaks or acts badly must hold mistaken beliefs about the gods. Plato then spends the rest of the book putting forward complex arguments to the effect that the gods exist; that they care about human beings; and that they cannot be swayed by sacrifice or prayer. The hope is that such arguments will gently persuade unjust and ungodly citizens to 'abandon their current ways in favour of pious' and virtuous ways (907d5–6).

I mention these other works to highlight that more often than not in Plato's career our philosopher was quick to bring in the gods while thinking about justice's relationship to prospering and while tackling the problem of injustice. This is true of the dialogues that are conventionally held to have been written before *Republic*, but the trend is especially pronounced in the dialogues that were almost certainly written after it. Which of these discussions represents Plato's 'official' answer about the value of justice or his 'preferred' solution to the problem of injustice is a question that cannot be answered here. I am not myself convinced that the underlying assumption of this question—namely, that one discussion occupies a more authoritative place in understanding Plato's doctrine—is entirely defensible. All the discussions mentioned in the previous paragraph occur in particular dialogical contexts between unique sets of interlocutors, and it seems very unlikely to me that Plato the literary genius was insensitive to these facts. It is certainly possible that *Gorgias*, *Republic*, *Theaetetus* and *Laws* all include attempts to convince different audiences that justice is something to be cultivated and cherished, whereas injustice is something to flee and to be avoided. If this were the case, then the best one could do to identify Platonic doctrine would be to holistically reconstruct his considered view by drawing on all these dialogues and piecing together some overarching commitments. Such a project would certainly be worthwhile and profitable, though, once again, it goes far beyond the scope of this work. Of course, it might also be the case that Plato changes his mind over the course of his life and comes to accept different solutions to the problem of injustice. Either way, it remains striking that in so many of Plato's other works—including the dialogue most likely written at the end of his career—he leans so heavily on the gods when he discusses the issues we have been addressing in this book. Anyone who insisted upon identifying Plato's 'mature' response to the value of justice and the problem of injustice would be excused if they concluded that interventionist gods were central to the answer.

[2] Laks (2000, 291–2) has highlighted how significant god is in *Laws* and how that marks a departure from Plato's earlier work.

Though the later dialogues and their responses to the problem of vice and immoralism have had their defenders in modernity,[3] they are far less popular now than *Republic*. And they feel more alien to our sensibilities. What is it about this particular dialogue that calls out to us so much today? There are, of course, very many answers one could give to this question. *Republic* deftly incorporates moral, metaphysical and epistemological themes into a single, unified philosophical work of the highest calibre. It is arguably the first watershed work of political philosophy in the Western tradition. And in addition to all its analytical merits, it is a masterpiece of literature and drama. This is in marked contrast to *Laws*, which, whatever else one wants to say about the dialogue, is long, turgid and at times very boring. Nevertheless, I would hazard a guess that three features of *Republic*'s argument make the dialogue's philosophical project appealing to us today.

The first is that it aims to prove that the just and moral life is better for human beings to live than the unjust and immoral life. It aims to justify the practice of morality itself. This is a topic that has remained (almost) as important for us today as it was for the Greeks of the 5th century. Of course, *Republic* shares this ambition with the other dialogues discussed above. But unlike those other dialogues, in our work Plato resists appealing to the gods or the supernatural in his central argument defending the just life. Like Prodicus and the author of AI before him, Socrates is forced to develop new, mostly natural and yet still persuasive considerations to defend the value of justice and morality. And finally, Plato resists appealing to considerations of reputation, wages and esteem, which are all potentially time- and location-dependent. Learning from the failure of past moralists, he dismisses the things that come to be from justice because they can be won by someone who merely seemed to be just and, as Book X hints, because there have been and may yet be societies in different times and places that do not appropriately honour justice and virtue.

The central argument of *Republic*, then, aims to defend the practice of justice and attempts to do so in a way that is both largely naturalistic and universally applicable. This, I suspect, helps to give it its enduring appeal to philosophically inclined readers. But the naturalistic and secular bent of the argument also marks

[3] In the introduction to his commentary on *Laws* X, Lewis recommends the study of this text in part because it might help people realise the falsity of atheism (Plato, 1845 edn, xiii): 'Our main object, then, is to recommend this noble philosopher to the present generation of educated young men, especially theologians. The present work by no means professes to set forth his system as a whole, but merely to present some of its attractive points, to allure other minds among us to a more thorough examination … We conclude with the remark that, in a moral and practical, as well as speculative point of view, the particular subject of the dialogue selected has some claim to attention. He who thinks most deeply, and has the most intimate acquaintance with human nature, as exhibited in his own heart, will be the most apt to response all unbelief into Atheism.' A far more common reaction to *Laws* can, I think, be found in Pangle (1976, 1059): 'I believe the chief reason why the *Laws* is so rarely studied by political scientists, and that when studied it seems so alien, is the emphasis on the gods and "religion" which pervades the work.'

it as something of an outlier within Plato's corpus as a whole. By way of conclusion I would like to suggest that the best explanation for why the argument in this particular dialogue is so secular is because it was consciously offered as a contribution to an existing debate about the value of justice in which appeals to the gods would not have been persuasive. Rather than breaking the rules of that debate and trying to convince the immoralists that the gods exist, as Plato attempts to do in *Laws*, he tries in *Republic* to win the 5th-century sophistic debate about justice once and for all for the Friends of Justice. And that means showing that it is, all things considered, profitable and prudent for the individual to be just by appealing only to facts about human nature and the natural world. Thus it may be that the 5th-century debate about justice is largely responsible for many of the features of *Republic*'s argument that we value so much today.

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