

Freedom and the Tyrant

1 The Oligarch

“And doesn’t this make it clear that in those other contractual obligations, where he [the oligarchic person] has a good reputation and is thought to be just, he’s forcibly holding his other evil appetites in check by means of some decent part of himself? He holds them in check, not by persuading them that it’s better not to act on them or taming them with arguments, but by compulsion and fear, trembling for his other possessions.” (554d)

2 The Democratic Individual

“so he lives, always surrendering rule over himself to whichever desire comes along, as if it were chosen by lot. And when that is satisfied, he surrenders the rule to another, not disdaining any but satisfying them all equally. *That’s right*. And he doesn’t admit any word of truth into the guardhouse, for if someone tells him that some pleasures belong to fine and good desires and others to evil ones and that he must pursue and value the former and restrain and enslave the latter, he denies all this and declares that all pleasures are equal and must be valued equally. *That’s just what someone in that condition would do*. And so he lives on, yielding day by day to the desire at hand. Sometimes he drinks heavily while listening to the flute; at other times, he drinks only water and is on a diet; sometimes he goes in for physical training; at other times, he’s idle and neglects everything; and sometimes he even occupies himself with what he takes to be philosophy. He often engages in politics, leaping up from his seat and saying and doing whatever comes into his mind. If he happens to admire soldiers, he’s carried in that direction, if money-makers, in that one. There’s neither order nor necessity in his life, but he calls it pleasant, free, and blessedly happy, and he follows it for as long as he lives. *You’ve perfectly described the life of a man who believes in legal equality*. I also suppose that he’s a complex man, full of all sorts of characters, fine and multicolored, just like the democratic city, and that many men and women might envy his life, since it

contains the most models of constitutions and ways of living. *That's right*. Then shall we set this man beside democracy as one who is rightly called democratic? *Let's do so.*" (561b-562a)

3 The Democratic City

"What do you think it [a democracy or democratic city - mjgl] defines as the good? Freedom: Surely you'd hear a democratic city say that this is the finest thing it has, so that as a result it is the only city worth living in for someone who is by nature free." (562c)

"isn't it inevitable that freedom should go to all lengths in such a city?" (562e)

"the son behaves like a father, feeling neither shame nor fear in front of his parents, in order to be free. A resident alien or a foreign visitor is made equal to a citizen" (562e)

"The utmost freedom for the majority is reached in such a city when bought slaves, both male and female, are no less free than those who bought them. And I almost forgot to mention the extent of the legal equality of men and women and of the freedom in relations between them." (563b)

"No one who hasn't experienced it would believe how much freer domestic animals are in a democratic city than anywhere else. As the proverb says, dogs become like their mistresses; horses and donkeys are accustomed to roam freely and proudly along the streets, bumping into anyone who doesn't get out of their way; and all the rest are equally full of freedom." (563c)

4 The Tyrannical City and the Tyrant

"First, speaking of the city, would you say that a tyrannical city is free or enslaved? It is as enslaved as it is possible to be." (577c)

"Then, if man and city are alike, mustn't the same structure be in him too? And mustn't his soul be full of slavery and unfreedom, with the most decent parts

enslaved and with a small part, the maddest and most vicious, as their master? It must. What will you say about such a soul then? Is it free or slave? Slave, of course. And isn't the enslaved and tyrannical city least likely to do what it wants? Certainly." (577d)

5 Thrasymachus's Unjust Person

"Consider him [a person of great power] if you want to figure out how much more advantageous it is for the individual to be just rather than unjust. You'll understand this most easily if you turn your thoughts to the most complete injustice, the one that makes the doer of injustice happiest and the sufferers of it, who are unwilling to do injustice, most wretched. This is tyranny, which through stealth or force appropriates the property of others, whether sacred or profane, public or private, not little by little, but all at once. If someone commits only one part of injustice and is caught, he's punished and greatly reproached — such partly unjust people are called temple-robbers, kidnappers, housebreakers, robbers, and thieves when they commit these crimes. But when someone, in addition to appropriating their possessions, kidnaps and enslaves the citizens as well, instead of these shameful names he is called happy and blessed, not only by the citizens themselves, but by all who learn that he has done the whole of injustice." (344a-c)

6 Glaucon's Unjust Person

"we must suppose that an unjust person will act as clever craftsmen do: A first-rate captain or doctor, for example, knows the difference between what his craft can and cannot do. He attempts the first but lets the second go by In the same way, an unjust person's successful attempts at injustice must remain undetected, if he is to be fully unjust. Anyone who is caught should be thought inept, for the extreme of injustice is to be believed to be just without being just. And our completely unjust person must be given complete injustice We must allow that, while doing the greatest injustice, he has nonetheless provided himself with the greatest reputation for justice. ... If any of his unjust activities should be discovered, he must be able to speak persuasively or to use force. And if force is needed he must have the help

of courage and strength and of the substantial wealth and friends he has provided himself with.” (360e-361a)

7 Nice summary statement of the good life for an individual

“Then can’t we confidently assert that those desires of even the money-loving and honor-loving parts that follow knowledge and argument and pursue with their help those pleasures that reason approves will attain the truest pleasures possible for them, because they follow truth, and the ones that are most their own, if indeed what is best for each thing is most its own? ... Therefore, when the entire soul follows the philosophic part, and there is no civil war in it, each part of it does its own work exclusively and is just, and in particular it enjoys its own pleasures, the best and truest pleasures possible for it. ... But when one of the other parts gains control, it won’t be able to secure its own pleasure and will compel the other parts to pursue an alien and untrue pleasure.” (586d-e)

8 Nice summary statement of what a good city is like

“it isn’t the law’s concern to make any one class in the city outstandingly happy but to contrive to spread happiness throughout the city by bringing the citizens into harmony with each other through persuasion or compulsion and by making them share with each other the benefits that each class can confer on the community. The law produces such people [guardians] in the city, not in order to allow them to turn in whatever direction they want, but to make use of them to bind the city together.” (519e-520a)

9 Finally, an implausibly precise claim

“if someone wants to say how far a king’s pleasure is from a tyrant’s, he’ll find, if he completes the calculation, that a king lives seven hundred and twenty-nine times more pleasantly than a tyrant and that a tyrant is the same number of times more wretched.” (587e)