

may pay his due and get well; and compel himself and the others not to play the coward, but to grit his teeth and present himself with grace and courage as to a doctor for cauterization and surgery, pursuing what's good and admirable without taking any account of the pain. And if his unjust behavior merits d flogging, he should present himself to be whipped; if it merits imprisonment, to be imprisoned; if a fine, to pay it; if exile, to be exiled; and if execution, to be executed. He should be his own chief accuser, and the accuser of other members of his family, and use his oratory for the purpose of getting rid of the greatest evil, injustice, as the unjust acts are being exposed. Are we to affirm or deny this, Polus?

e POLUS: I think these statements are absurd, Socrates, though no doubt you think they agree with those expressed earlier.

SOCRATES: Then either we should abandon those, or else these necessarily follow?

POLUS: Yes, that's how it is.

SOCRATES: And, on the other hand, to reverse the case, suppose a man had to harm someone, an enemy or anybody at all, provided that he didn't suffer anything unjust from this enemy himself—for this is something to be on guard against—if the enemy did something unjust against another person, then our man should see to it in every way, both in what he does and what he says, that his enemy does not go to the judge and pay his due. And if he does go, he should scheme to get his enemy off without paying what's due. If he's stolen a lot of gold, he should scheme to get him not to return it but to keep it and spend it in an unjust and godless way both on himself and his people. And if his crimes merit the death penalty, he should scheme to keep him from being executed, preferably never to die at all but to live forever in corruption, but failing that, to have him live as long as possible in that condition. Yes, this is the sort of thing I think oratory is useful for, Polus, since b for the person who has no intention of behaving unjustly it doesn't seem to me to have much use—if in fact it has any use at all—since its usefulness hasn't in any way become apparent so far.

CALLICLES: Tell me, Chaerephon, is Socrates in earnest about this or is he joking?

CHAEREPHON: I think he's in dead earnest about this, Callicles. There's nothing like asking him, though.

c CALLICLES: By the gods! Just the thing I'm eager to do. Tell me, Socrates, are we to take you as being in earnest now, or joking? For if you are in earnest, and these things you're saying are really true, won't this human life of ours be turned upside down, and won't everything we do evidently be the opposite of what we should do?

SOCRATES: Well, Callicles, if human beings didn't share common experiences, some sharing one, others sharing another, but one of us had some unique experience not shared by others, it wouldn't be easy for him to communicate what he d experienced to the other. I say this because I realize that you and I are both now actually sharing a common experience: each of the two of us is a lover of two objects, I of Alcibiades, Cleinias' son,²² and of philosophy, and you of the demos [people]²³ of Athens, and the Demos who's the son of Pylilampes. I notice that in each case you're unable to contradict your beloved, clever though you are, no matter what he says or what he claims is so. You keep shifting back and forth. If you say anything in the Assembly and the Athenian *demos* denies it, you shift your ground and say what it wants to hear. Other things e like this happen to you when you're with that good-looking young man, the son of Pylilampes. You're unable to oppose what your beloveds say or propose, so that if somebody heard you say what you do on their account and was amazed at how absurd that is, you'd probably say—if you were minded to tell him the truth—that unless somebody stops your beloveds from

²²For an account of Socrates' relationship with Alcibiades, see Symposium 215a–219d. Fascinating and clever, vain and shameless, Alcibiades was the chief instigator of Athens' disastrous expedition against Syracuse in 414 B.C.

²³The *dēmos* of Athens was its body of citizens. Citizens of Athens decided action and policy by vote in the Assembly, and as jurors in law courts voted to convict or acquit individuals brought to trial.

482a saying what they say, you'll never stop saying these things either. In that case you must believe that you're bound to hear me say things like that, too, and instead of being surprised at my saying them, you must stop my beloved, philosophy, from saying them. For she always says what you now hear me say, my dear friend, and she's by far less fickle than my other beloved. As for that son of Cleinias, what he says differs from one time to the next, but what philosophy says always stays the same, and she's saying things that now astound you, although
 b you were present when they were said. So, either refute her and show that doing what's unjust without paying what is due for it is not the ultimate of all evils, as I just now was saying it is, or else, if you leave this unrefuted, then by the Dog, the god of the Egyptians, Callicles will not agree with you, Callicles, but will be dissonant with you all your life long. And yet for my part, my good man, I think it's better to have my lyre or a chorus that I might lead out of tune and dissonant, and have the vast majority
 c of men disagree with me and contradict me, than to be out of harmony with myself, to contradict myself, though I'm only one person.

CALLICLES: Socrates, I think you're grandstanding in these speeches, acting like a true crowd pleaser. Here you are, playing to the crowd now that Polus has had the same thing happen to him that he accused Gorgias of letting you do to him. For he said, didn't he, that when Gorgias was asked by you whether he would teach anyone who came to him wanting to learn oratory but without expertise in what's just, Gorgias was
 d ashamed and, out of deference to human custom, since people would take it ill if a person refused, said that he'd teach him. And because Gorgias agreed on this point, he said, he was forced to contradict himself, just the thing you like. He ridiculed you at the time, and rightly so, as I think anyhow. And now the very same thing has happened to him. And for this same reason I don't approve of Polus: he agreed with you that doing what's unjust is more shameful than suffering it. As
 e a result of this admission he was bound and gagged by you in the discussion, too ashamed to say what he thought. Although you claim to be pursuing the truth, you're in fact bringing the

discussion around to the sort of crowd-pleasing vulgarities that are admirable only by law and not by nature.²⁴ And these, nature and law, are for the most part opposed to each other, so if a person is ashamed and doesn't dare to say what he thinks, he's forced to contradict himself. This is in fact the clever trick
 483a you've thought of, with which you work mischief in your discussions: if a person makes a statement in terms of law, you slyly question him in terms of nature; if he makes it in terms of nature, you question him in terms of law. That's just what happened here, on the question of doing what's unjust versus suffering it. While Polus meant that doing it is more shameful by law, you pursued the argument as though he meant by nature. For by nature all that is more evil is also more shameful, like suffering what's unjust, whereas by law doing it is more shameful. No, no man would put up with suffering what's unjust;
 b only a slave would do so, one who is better dead than alive, who when he's treated unjustly and abused can't protect himself or anyone else he cares about. I believe that the people who institute our laws are the weak and the many. They do this, and they assign praise and blame with themselves and their own advantage in mind. They're afraid of the more powerful among men, the ones who are capable of having a greater share, and so they say that getting more than one's share is "shameful" and "unjust," and that doing what's unjust is trying to get more than one's share. They do this so that those people won't get a greater share than they. I think they like getting an equal share, since they are inferior.

These are the reasons why trying to get a greater share than most is said to be unjust and shameful by law and why

²⁴Callicles here introduces and later develops the contrast, well known to the fifth century, between *nomos* (law, custom, convention) and *physis* (nature). Along with many (though not all) sophists, Callicles holds that social rules are devised by the weaker members of a society to restrain the stronger. He advocates repudiating such rules and endorses a "law of nature" (483e) according to which the stronger members of a society are entitled to lord it over the weaker and "to have a greater share" than they.

d they call it doing what's unjust. But I believe that nature itself
 reveals that it's a just thing for the better man and the more
 capable man to have a greater share than the worse man and
 the less capable man. Nature shows that this is so in many
 places; both among the other animals and in whole cities and
 races of men, it shows that this is what justice has been de-
 cided to be: that the superior rule the inferior and have a
 greater share than they. For what sort of justice did Xerxes go
 by when he campaigned against Greece, or his father when he
 e campaigned against Scythia?²⁵ Countless other such examples
 could be mentioned. I believe that these men do these things
 in accordance with the nature of what's just—yes, by Zeus, in
 accordance with the law of nature, and presumably not with
 the one we institute. We mold the best and the most powerful
 among us, taking them while they're still young, like lion cubs,
 and with charms and incantations we subdue them into slav-
 484a ery, telling them that one is supposed to get no more than his
 fair share, and that that's what's admirable and just. But I be-
 lieve that if a man whose nature is equal to it were to arise, one
 who had shaken off, torn apart, and escaped all this, who had
 trampled underfoot our documents, our tricks and charms, and
 all our laws that violate nature, he, the slave, would rise up and
 be revealed as our master, and here the justice of nature would
 shine forth. I think Pindar, too, refers to what I'm saying in that
 b song in which he says that

Law, the king of all
 Of mortals and the immortal gods

—this, he says,

Brings on and renders just what is most violent
 With towering hand. I take as proof of this
 The deeds of Heracles. For he . . . unbought . . .²⁶

²⁵The Persian King Xerxes campaigned unsuccessfully against the Greeks in 480/479. The Persian army under the command of his father Darius invaded Scythia in 514 and was all but destroyed at the Danube.

His words are something like that—I don't know the song well—he says that Heracles drove off Geryon's cattle, even though he hadn't paid for them and Geryon hadn't given them to him, on the ground that this is what's just by nature, and that cattle and all the other possessions of those who are worse and inferior belong to the one who's better and superior.²⁷

This is the truth of the matter, as you will acknowledge if you abandon philosophy and move on to more important things. Philosophy is no doubt a delightful thing, Socrates, as long as one is exposed to it in moderation at the appropriate time of life. But if one spends more time with it than he should, it's the undoing of mankind. For even if one is naturally well favored but engages in philosophy far beyond that appropriate time of life, he can't help but turn out to be inexperienced in everything a man who's to be admirable and good and well thought of is supposed to be experienced in. Such people turn out to be inexperienced in the laws of their city or in the kind of speech one must use to deal with people on matters of business, whether in public or private, inexperienced also in human pleasures and appetites and, in short, inexperienced in the ways of human beings altogether. So, when they venture into some private or political activity, they become a laughing stock, as I suppose men in politics do when they venture into your pursuits and your kind of speech. What results is Euripides' saying, where he says that "each man shines" in this and "presses on to this,

allotting the greatest part of the day to this,
 where he finds himself at his best."²⁸

²⁶The poem from which these lines are quoted (or misquoted) has been lost.

²⁷The tenth of Heracles' twelve labors for King Eurystheus was to overcome the triple-bodied monster Geryon and take his cattle.

²⁸These lines and the other quotations in Callicles' present speech derive from a speech by Zethus, a character in Euripides' lost play, the *Antiope*.

485a And whatever a man's inferior in, he avoids and rails against, while he praises the other thing, thinking well of himself and supposing that in this way he's praising himself. I believe, however, that it's most appropriate to have a share of both. To partake of as much philosophy as your education requires is an admirable thing, and it's not shameful to practice philosophy while you're a boy, but when you still do it after you've grown older and become a man, the thing gets to be ridiculous, b Socrates! My own reaction to men who philosophize is very much like that to men who speak haltingly and play like children. When I see a child, for whom it's still quite proper to make conversation this way, halting in its speech and playing like a child, I'm delighted. I find it a delightful thing, liberal and appropriate for the child's age. But when I hear a small child speaking clearly, I think it's a harsh thing; it hurts my ears. I think it is something fit for a slave. And when one hears c a man speaking haltingly or sees him playing like a child, it strikes me as ridiculous and unmanly, deserving of a flogging. Now, I react in the same way to men who engage in philosophy, too. When I see philosophy in a young boy, I approve of it; I think it's appropriate, and consider such a person a liberal one, whereas I consider one who doesn't engage in philosophy illiberal, one who'll never count himself deserving of any admirable or noble thing. But when I see an older man still d engaging in philosophy and not giving it up, I think such a man by this time needs a flogging. For, as I was just now saying, it's typical that such a man, even if he's naturally very well favored, becomes unmanly and avoids the centers of his city and the marketplaces—in which, according to the poet,²⁹ men attain "preeminence"—and, instead, lives the rest of his life in e hiding, whispering in a corner with three or four boys, never uttering anything liberal, important, or apt.

Socrates, I do have a rather warm regard for you. I find myself feeling what Zethus, whose words I recalled just now, felt toward Amphion in Euripides' play. In fact, the sorts of things he said to his brother come to my mind to say to you.

²⁹Homer, *Iliad* 11. 441.

"You're neglecting the things you should devote yourself to, Socrates, and though your spirit's nature is so noble, you show yourself to the world in the shape of a boy. You couldn't put a speech together correctly before councils of justice or utter any 486a plausible or persuasive sound. Nor could you make any bold proposal on behalf of anyone else." And so then, my dear Socrates—please don't be upset with me, for it's with good will toward you that I'll say this—don't you think it's shameful to be the way I take you to be, you and others who ever press on too far in philosophy? As it is, if someone got hold of you or of anyone else like you and took you off to prison on the charge that you're doing something unjust when in fact you aren't, you can know that you wouldn't have any use for yourself. You'd get dizzy, your mouth would hang open and you wouldn't know b what to say. You'd come up for trial and face some no good wretch of an accuser and be put to death, if death is what he'd want to condemn you to.³⁰ And yet, Socrates, "how can this be a wise thing, the craft which took a well-favored man and made him worse," able neither to protect himself nor to rescue himself or anyone else from the gravest dangers, to be robbed of all of his property by his enemies, and to live a life with c absolutely no rights in his city? Such a man one could knock on the jaw without paying what's due for it, to put it rather crudely. Listen to me, my good man, and stop this refuting. "Practice the sweet music of an active life and do it where you'll get a reputation for being intelligent. Leave these subtleties to others"—whether we should call them just silly or outright nonsense— "which will cause you to live in empty houses,"³¹ and envy not those men who refute such trivia, but those who have life and renown, and many other good things d as well.

³⁰The dramatic irony in this speech should not be missed. Plato surely expects his readers to recall at this point (as well as at 521b and 522d – e below) the circumstances of Socrates' death.

³¹The bits of this part of Callicles' speech enclosed in quotation marks are recognizably quotations or adaptations taken from the *Antiope*.

SOCRATES: If I actually had a soul made of gold, Callicles, don't you think I'd be pleased to find one of those stones on which they test gold? And if this stone to which I intended to take my soul were the best stone and it agreed that my soul had been well cared for, don't you think I could well know at that point that I'm in good shape and need no further test?

e CALLICLES: What's the point of your question, Socrates?

SOCRATES: I'll tell you. I believe that by running into you, I've run into just such a piece of luck.

CALLICLES: Why do you say that?

487a SOCRATES: I well know that if you concur with what my soul believes, then that is the very truth. I realize that the person who intends to put his soul to an adequate test to see whether it lives rightly or not must have three qualities, all of which you have: knowledge, good will, and frankness. I run into many people who aren't able to test me because they're not wise like you. Others are wise, but they're not willing to tell me the truth, because they don't care for me the way you do. As for these two visitors, Gorgias and Polus, they're both wise and fond of me, but rather more lacking in frankness, and more ashamed than they should be. No wonder! They've come to such a depth of shame that, because they are ashamed, each of them dares to contradict himself, face to face with many people, and on topics of the greatest importance. You have all these qualities which the others don't. You're well-enough educated, as many of the Athenians would attest, and you have good will toward me. What's my proof of this? I'll tell you. I know, Callicles, that there are four of you who've become partners in wisdom, you, Teisander of Aphidnae, Andron the son of Androtion, and Nausicydes of Cholarges. Once I overheard you deliberating on how far one should cultivate wisdom, and I know that some such opinion as this was winning out among you: you called on each other not to enthusiastically pursue philosophizing to the point of pedantry but to be careful not to become wiser than necessary and so inadvertently bring yourselves to ruin. So, now that I hear you giving me the same advice you gave your closest companions, I have sufficient proof that you really do have good will toward me. And as to my claim that you're able to speak frankly without being ashamed,

you yourself say so and the speech you gave a moment ago bears you out. It's clear, then, that this is how these matters stand at the moment. If there's any point in our discussions on which you agree with me, then that point will have been adequately put to the test by you and me, and it will not be necessary to put it to any further test, for you'd never have conceded the point through lack of wisdom or excess of shame, and you wouldn't do so by lying to me, either. You are my friend, as you yourself say, too. So, our mutual agreement will really lay hold of truth in the end. Most admirable of all, Callicles, is the examination of those issues about which you took me to task, that of what a man is supposed to be like, and of what he's supposed to devote himself to and how far, when he's older and when he's young. For my part, if I engage in anything that's improper in my own life, please know well that I do not make this mistake intentionally but out of my ignorance. So don't leave off lecturing me the way you began, but show me clearly what it is I'm to devote myself to, and in what way I might come by it; if you catch me agreeing with you now but at a later time not doing the very things I've agreed upon, then take me for a very stupid fellow and don't bother ever afterward with lecturing me, on the ground that I'm a worthless fellow. 488a b

Please restate your position for me from the beginning. What is it that you and Pindar hold to be true of what's just by nature? That the superior should take by force what belongs to the inferior, that the better should rule the worse and the more worthy have a greater share than the less worthy? You're not saying anything else, are you? I do remember correctly?

CALLICLES: Yes, that's what I was saying then, and I still say so now, too.

SOCRATES: Is it the same man you call both "better" and "superior"? I wasn't able then, either, to figure out what you meant. Is it the stronger ones you call superior, and should those who are weaker take orders from the one who's stronger? That's what I think you were trying to show then also, when you said that large cities attack small ones according to what's just by nature, because they're superior and stronger, assuming that superior, stronger and better are the same. Or is it possible c

d more wretched? Or do "better" and "superior" have the same definition? Please define this for me clearly. Are *superior*, *better* and *stronger* the same or are they different?

CALLICLES: Very well, I'm telling you clearly that they're the same.

SOCRATES: Now aren't the many superior by nature to the one? They're the ones who in fact impose the laws upon the one, as you were saying yourself a moment ago.

CALLICLES: Of course.

SOCRATES: So the rules of the many are the rules of the superior.

CALLICLES: Yes, they are.

e SOCRATES: Aren't they the rules of the better? For by your reasoning, I take it, the superior are the better.

CALLICLES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And aren't the rules of these people admirable by nature, seeing that they're the superior ones?

CALLICLES: That's my view.

489a SOCRATES: Now, isn't it a rule of the many that it's just to have an equal share and that doing what's unjust is more shameful than suffering it, as you yourself were saying just now? Is this so or not? Be careful that you in your turn don't get caught being ashamed now. Do the many observe or do they not observe the rule that it's just to have an equal and not a greater share, and that doing what's unjust is more shameful than suffering it? Don't grudge me your answer to this, Callicles, so that if you agree with me I may have my confirmation from you, seeing that it's the agreement of a man competent to pass judgment.

CALLICLES: All right, the many do have that rule.

b SOCRATES: It's not only by law, then, that doing what's unjust is more shameful than suffering it, or just to have an equal share, but it's so by nature, too. So it looks as though you weren't saying what's true earlier and weren't right to accuse me when you said that nature and law were opposed to each other and that I, well aware of this, am making mischief in my statements, taking any statement someone makes meant in terms of

nature, in terms of law, and any statement meant in terms of law, in terms of nature.

CALLICLES: This man will not stop talking nonsense! Tell me, Socrates, aren't you ashamed, at your age, of trying to catch people's words and of making hay out of someone's tripping on a phrase? Do you take me to mean by people being superior anything else than their being better? Haven't I been telling you all along that by "better" and "superior" I mean the same thing? Or do you suppose that I'm saying that if a rubbish heap of slaves and motley men, worthless except perhaps in physical strength, gets together and makes any statements, then these are the rules?

SOCRATES: Fair enough, wisest Callicles. Is this what you're saying?

CALLICLES: It certainly is.

SOCRATES: Well, my marvelous friend, I guessed some d time ago that it's some such thing you mean by "superior," and I'm questioning you because I'm intent upon knowing clearly what you mean. I don't really suppose that you think two are better than one or that your slaves are better than you just because they're stronger than you. Tell me once more from the beginning, what do you mean by *the better*, seeing that it's not *the stronger*? And, my wonderful man, go easier on me in your teaching, so that I won't quit your school.

CALLICLES: You're being ironic, Socrates.

SOCRATES: No I'm not, Callicles, by Zethus—the character you were invoking in being ironic with me so often just now! But come and tell me: whom do you mean by *the better*?

CALLICLES: I mean the worthier.

SOCRATES: So do you see that you yourself are uttering words, without making anything clear? Won't you say whether by *the better* and *the superior* you mean *the more intelligent*, or any others?

CALLICLES: Yes, by Zeus, they're very much the ones I mean.

SOCRATES: So on your reasoning it will often be the case 490a that a single intelligent person is superior to countless unintelligent ones, that this person should rule and they be ruled,

and that the one ruling should have a greater share than the ones being ruled. This is the meaning I think you intend—and I'm not trying to catch you with a phrase—if the one is superior to these countless others.

CALLICLES: Yes, that's what I do mean. This is what I take the just by nature to be: that the better one, the more intelligent one, that is, both rules over and has a greater share than his inferiors.

b SOCRATES: Hold it right there! What can your meaning be this time? Suppose we were assembled together in great numbers in the same place, as we are now, and we held in common a great supply of food and drink, and suppose we were a motley group, some strong and some weak, but one of us, being a doctor, was more intelligent about these things. He would, very likely, be stronger than some and weaker than others. Now this man, being more intelligent than we are, will certainly be better and superior in these matters?

CALLICLES: Yes, he will.

c SOCRATES: So should he have a share of this food greater than ours because he's better? Or should he be the one to distribute everything because he's in charge, but not to get a greater share to consume and use up on his own body if he's to escape being punished for it? Shouldn't he, instead, have a greater share than some and a lesser than others, and if he should happen to be the weakest of all, shouldn't the best man have the least share of all, Callicles? Isn't this so, my good man?

d CALLICLES: You keep talking of food and drink and doctors and such nonsense. That's not what I mean!

SOCRATES: Don't you mean that the more intelligent one is the better one? Say yes or no.

CALLICLES: Yes, I do.

SOCRATES: But not that the better should have a greater share?

CALLICLES: Not of food or drink, anyhow.

SOCRATES: I see. Of clothes, perhaps? Should the weaver have the biggest garment and go about wearing the greatest number and the most beautiful clothes?

CALLICLES: What do you mean, clothes?

SOCRATES: But when it comes to shoes, obviously the most intelligent, the best man in that area should have the greater share. Perhaps the cobbler should walk around with the largest and greatest number of shoes on. e

CALLICLES: What do you mean, shoes? You keep on with this nonsense!

SOCRATES: Well, if that's not the sort of thing you mean, perhaps it's this. Take a farmer, a man intelligent and admirable and good about land. Perhaps he should have the greater share of seed and use the largest possible quantity of it on his own land.

CALLICLES: How you keep on saying the same things, Socrates!

SOCRATES: Yes, Callicles, not only the same things, but also about the same subjects.

CALLICLES: By the gods! You simply don't let up on your continual talk of shoemakers and cleaners, cooks and doctors, as if our discussion were about them! 491a

SOCRATES: Won't you say whom it's about, then? What does the superior, the more intelligent man have a greater share of, and have it justly? Will you neither bear with my promptings nor tell me yourself?

CALLICLES: I've been saying it all along. First of all, by the ones who are the superior I don't mean cobblers or cooks, but those who are intelligent about the affairs of the city, about the way it's to be well managed. And not only intelligent, but also brave, competent to accomplish whatever they have in mind, without slackening off because of softness of spirit. b

SOCRATES: Do you see, my good Callicles, that you and I are not accusing each other of the same thing? You claim that I'm always saying the same things, and you criticize me for it, whereas I, just the opposite of you, claim that you never say the same things about the same subjects. At one time you were defining the better and the superior as the stronger then again as the more intelligent, and now you've come up with something else again: the superior and the better are now said by c

you to be *the braver*. But tell me, my good fellow, once and for all, whom you mean by the better and the superior, and what they're better and superior in.

d CALLICLES: But I've already said that I mean those who are intelligent in the affairs of the city, and brave, too. It's fitting that they should be the ones who rule their cities, and what's just is that they, as the rulers, should have a greater share than the others, the ruled.

SOCRATES: But what of themselves, my friend?

CALLICLES: What of *what*?

SOCRATES: Ruling or being ruled?

CALLICLES: What do you mean?

SOCRATES: I mean each individual ruling himself. Or is there no need at all for him to rule himself, but only to rule others?

CALLICLES: What do you mean, rule himself?

e SOCRATES: Nothing very subtle. Just what the many mean: being self-controlled and master of oneself, ruling the pleasures and appetites within oneself.

CALLICLES: How delightful you are! By the self-controlled you mean the stupid ones!

SOCRATES: How so? There's no one who'd fail to recognize that I mean no such thing.

492a CALLICLES: Yes you do, Socrates, very much so. How could a man prove to be happy if he's enslaved to anyone at all? Rather, this is what's admirable and just by nature—and I'll say it to you now with all frankness—that the man who'll live correctly ought to allow his own appetites to get as large as possible and not restrain them. And when they are as large as possible, he ought to be competent to devote himself to them by virtue of his bravery and intelligence, and to fill them with whatever he may have an appetite for at the time. But this isn't possible for the many, I believe; hence, they become detractors of people like this because of the shame they feel, while they conceal their own impotence. And they say that lack of discipline is shameful, as I was saying earlier, and so they enslave men who are better by nature, and while they themselves lack the ability to provide for themselves fulfillment for their pleasures, their own lack of courage leads them to praise self-con-

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65 trol and justice. As for all those who were either sons of kings to begin with or else naturally competent to secure some position of rule for themselves as tyrants or potentates, what in truth could be more shameful and worse than self-control and justice for these people who, although they are free to enjoy good things without any interference, should bring as master upon themselves the law of the many, their talk, and their criticism? Or how could they exist without becoming miserable under that "admirable" regime of justice and self-control, allotting no greater share to their friends than to their enemies, and in this way "rule" in their cities? Rather, the truth of it, Socrates—the thing you claim to pursue—is like this: wantonness, lack of discipline, and freedom, if available in good supply, are excellence and happiness; as for these other things, these fancy phrases, these contracts of men that go against nature, they're worthless nonsense!

SOCRATES: The way you pursue your argument, speaking frankly as you do, certainly does you credit, Callicles. For you are now saying clearly what others are thinking but are unwilling to say. I beg you, then, not to relax in any way, so that it may really become clear how we're to live. Tell me: are you saying that if a person is to be the kind of person he should be, he shouldn't restrain his appetites but let them become as large as possible and then should procure their fulfillment from some source or other, and that this is excellence?

CALLICLES: Yes, that's what I'm saying.

SOCRATES: So then those who have no need of anything are wrongly said to be happy?

CALLICLES: Yes, for in that case stones and corpses would be happiest.

SOCRATES: But then the life of those people you call happiest is a strange one, too. I shouldn't be surprised that Euripides' lines are true when he says:

But who knows whether being alive is being dead
And being dead is being alive?³²

³²The source of these lines is uncertain.

493a Perhaps in reality we're dead. Once I even heard one of the wise men say that we are now dead and that our bodies are our tombs, and that the part of our souls in which our appetites reside is actually the sort of thing to be open to persuasion and to shift back and forth. And hence some clever man, a teller of stories, a Sicilian, perhaps, or an Italian, named this part a jar [pithos], on account of its being a persuadable [pithanon] and suggestible thing, thus slightly changing the name. And fools b [anoëtoi] he named *uninitiated* [amuëtoi], suggesting that that part of the souls of fools where their appetites are located is their undisciplined part, one not tightly closed, a leaking jar, as it were. He based the image on its insatiability. Now this man, Callicles, quite to the contrary of your view, shows that of the people in Hades—meaning the unseen [aides]—these, the uninitiated ones, would be the most miserable. They would carry water into the leaking jar using another leaky thing, a sieve. That's why by the sieve he means the soul (as the man who c talked with me claimed). And because they leak, he likened the souls of fools to sieves; for their untrustworthiness and forgetfulness makes them unable to retain anything. This account is on the whole a bit strange; but now that I've shown it to you, it does make clear what I want to persuade you to change your mind about if I can: to choose the orderly life, the life that is adequate to and satisfied with its circumstances at any given time instead of the insatiable, undisciplined life. Do d I persuade you at all, and are you changing your mind to believe that those who are orderly are happier than those who are undisciplined, or, even if I tell you many other such stories, will you change it none the more for that?

CALLICLES: The latter thing you said is the truer, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Come then, and let me give you another image, one from the same school as this one. Consider whether what you're saying about each life, the life of the self-controlled man and that of the undisciplined one, is like this: Suppose there are two men, each of whom has many jars. The jars e belonging to one of them are sound and full, one with wine, another with honey, a third with milk, and many others with lots of other things. And suppose that the sources of each of

these things are scarce and difficult to come by, procurable only with much toil and trouble. Now the one man, having filled up his jars, doesn't pour anything more into them and gives them no further thought. He can relax over them. As for the other one, he too has resources that can be procured, though with difficulty, but his containers are leaky and rotten. He's forced to keep on filling them, day and night, or else he suffers extreme pain. Now since each life is the way I describe it, are you saying that the life of the undisciplined man is happier than that of the orderly man? When I say this, do I at all persuade you to concede that the orderly life is better than the undisciplined one, or do I not? 494a

CALLICLES: You do not, Socrates. The man who has filled himself up has no pleasure any more, and when he's been filled up and experiences neither joy nor pain, that's living like a stone, as I was saying just now. Rather, living pleasantly consists in this: having as much as possible flow in. b

SOCRATES: Isn't it necessary, then, that if there's a lot flowing in, there should also be a lot going out and that there should be big holes for what's passed out?

CALLICLES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Now you're talking about the life of a stone-curlew³³ instead of that of a corpse or a stone. Tell me, do you say that there is such a thing as hunger, and eating when one is hungry?

CALLICLES: Yes, there is.

SOCRATES: And thirst, and drinking when one is thirsty? c

CALLICLES: Yes, and also having all other appetites and being able to fill them and enjoy it, and so live happily.

SOCRATES: Very good, my good man! Do carry on the way you've begun, and take care not to be ashamed. And I evidently shouldn't shrink from being ashamed, either. Tell me now first whether a man who has an itch and scratches it and can scratch to his heart's content, scratching his whole life long, can also live happily.

³³"A bird of messy habits and uncertain identity," Dodds.

d CALLICLES: What nonsense, Socrates. You're a regular crowd pleaser.

SOCRATES: That's just how I shocked Polus and Gorgias and made them be ashamed. You certainly won't be shocked, however, or be ashamed, for you're a brave man. Just answer me, please.

CALLICLES: I say that even the man who scratches would have a pleasant life.

SOCRATES: And if a pleasant one, a happy one, too?

CALLICLES: Yes indeed.

e SOCRATES: What if he scratches only his head—or what am I to ask you further? See what you'll answer if somebody asked you one after the other every question that comes next. And isn't the climax of this sort of thing, the life of catamites, a frightfully shameful and miserable one? Or will you have the nerve to say that they are happy as long as they have what they need to their hearts' content?

CALLICLES: Aren't you ashamed, Socrates, to bring our discussion to such matters?

495a SOCRATES: Is it I who bring them there, my splendid fellow, or is it the man who claims, just like that, that those who enjoy themselves, however they may be doing it, are happy, and doesn't discriminate between good kinds of pleasures and bad? Tell me now too whether you say that the pleasant and the good are the same or whether there is some pleasure that isn't good.

CALLICLES: Well, to keep my argument from being inconsistent if I say that they're different, I say they're the same.

SOOCRATES: You're wrecking your earlier statements, Callicles, and you'd no longer be adequately inquiring into the truth of the matter with me if you speak contrary to what you think.

b CALLICLES: You do it too, Socrates.

SOOCRATES: In that case, it isn't right for me to do it, if it's what I do, or for you either. But consider, my marvelous friend, surely the good isn't just unrestricted enjoyment. For both those many shameful things hinted at just now obviously follow if this is the case, and many others as well.

CALLICLES: That's your opinion, Socrates.

SOOCRATES: Do you really assert these things, Callicles?

CALLICLES: Yes, I do.

SOOCRATES: So we're to undertake the discussion on the assumption that you're in earnest? c

CALLICLES: Most certainly.

SOOCRATES: All right, since that's what you think, distinguish the following things for me: There is something you call knowledge, I take it?

CALLICLES: Yes.

SOOCRATES: Weren't you also saying just now that there is such a thing as bravery with knowledge?

CALLICLES: Yes, I was.

SOOCRATES: Was it just on the assumption that bravery is distinct from knowledge that you were speaking of them as two?

CALLICLES: Yes, very much so.

SOOCRATES: Well now, do you say that pleasure and knowledge are the same or different?

CALLICLES: Different of course, you wisest of men. d

SOOCRATES: And surely that bravery is different from pleasure, too?

CALLICLES: Of course.

SOOCRATES: All right, let's put this on the record: Callicles from Acharnae says that *pleasant* and *good* are the same, and that *knowledge* and *bravery* are different both from each other and from what's good.

CALLICLES: And Socrates from Alopecce doesn't agree with us about this. Or does he?

SOOCRATES: He does not. And I believe that Callicles e doesn't either when he comes to see himself rightly. Tell me: don't you think that those who do well have the opposite experience of those who do badly?

CALLICLES: Yes, I do.

SOOCRATES: Now since these experiences are the opposites of each other, isn't it necessary that it's just the same with them as it is with health and disease? For a man isn't both healthy and sick at the same time, I take it, nor does he get rid of both health and disease at the same time.

CALLICLES: What do you mean?