

Unit 12 - Homework 2: Plato's *Thrasymachus* Dialogue

~~*

Originally a short dialogue about the cardinal virtue of justice, Plato's *Thrasymachus* dialogue later became Book 1 of his *Republic* (Πολιτεία), which long has been considered to be his most important writing. In order to answer the following questions, read Plato's *Thrasymachus* on pages 4—7 in Unit 12.

1. Socrates invited Cephalus to say what justice *is*.

(i) According to Cephalus, what *is* justice?

(ii) Why did Socrates believe that Cephalus had *misdefined* justice?

2. Cephalus then invited his son Polemarchus to help him tell Socrates what justice is.

(i) According to Polemarchus, what is justice?

(ii) According to Socrates, if justice always leads to only good things, then why is Polemarchus mistaken about what justice is?

3. How did Socrates change his mind about what justice is? (Hint: On page 3 of Unit 12, see what Socrates had said to Cleitophon about justice, and then compare & contrast that to how Socrates had reacted to what Polemarchus had said about justice.)

4. Without being invited to do so, Thrasymachus insisted that he explain what justice *is*.
 - (i) According to Thrasymachus, what *is* justice?

 - (ii) According to Socrates, if justice is *a/ways* good, then why is Thrasymachus mistaken about what justice is?

5. In reaction to Socrates, Thrasymachus said, “Even an *unjust* man can be *wise*.” Based on all of what Socrates and Protagoras had concluded (in Plato’s *Protagoras* dialogue), why would Socrates most likely have *disagreed* with what Thrasymachus said? (Hint: Keeping in mind how the five civic virtues were discussed in Plato’s *Protagoras* dialogue, think about what Socrates suggested about whether or not virtue is an ‘all-or-nothing’ affair.)

(For the *Protagoras* dialogue, see pages 41-45 in Unit 11.)