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# CLASSICS IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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JENE M. PORTER

Editor

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T O S U S A N

Hang up philosophy!  
Unless philosophy can make you a Juliet.

*Those who seek the direct road to truth should not  
bother with any object of which they cannot have a  
certainty equal to the demonstrations of arithmetic and  
geometry.*

D E S C A R T E S

*The slenderest knowledge that may be obtained of the  
highest things is more desirable than the most certain  
knowledge obtained of lesser things.*

S T . T H O M A S A Q U I N A S

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# P R E F A C E

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This textbook was born from desperation. It has become increasingly hard to justify requiring students, particularly at the introductory level, to purchase a series of expensive paperbacks covering each major political philosopher. Yet no professor would happily rely solely on a secondary text. A reader was necessary. The search for a suitable textbook of readings, though, quickly led to a sense of despair. There are readers providing snippets from Plato to Mussolini. There are those devoted to one theme, such as the development of democracy, or the concept of rights. There are many that simply begin with Hobbes. What was needed was a text that contains the major political thinkers: Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, Mill, and Marx. The usual problem with a book of readings is that it is difficult to have a consensus on the selection, but by listing only the indisputable classics and by having lengthy selections this problem is solved.

Modern translations and editions have been used throughout this book. In the cases where the work is a recognized masterpiece, such as Plato's *The Republic* or Rousseau's *On the Social Contract*, brief summaries of omitted sections have been provided so that the student can see better the entire structure of the work. Some writings have been included which are not tightly constructed literary wholes but nevertheless are held to be "classics," owing to their influence and insights. Knowledge of Aristotle's *The Politics*, the most disjointed and tedious of ancient texts for students, is considered indispensable simply because of its extraordinary influence and encyclopedic scope. Similarly, neither St. Augustine nor Aquinas wrote a masterpiece on political philosophy, but the impact of Christian

theology on political philosophy is not disputed; thus both thinkers must be included. Finally, there are some thinkers whose political philosophy cannot be perceived in one work but in a combination of publications. Marx is the best example of such a thinker. In all cases, literary masterpieces or not, the selections offered in this book are large enough for the student to see the whole of a thinker's vision.

Editing requires excising. I have tried to err on the side of having more than enough material for each thinker, and certainly more than found in other readers. In order to make certain that this would be an adequate text, I went to most of the standard secondary textbooks and noted the themes discussed for each major thinker. Then I included all the passages necessary to parallel the coverage in the secondary material.

I would be remiss if I failed to thank my colleagues for their suggestions as to what material to include and to excise. All of them, I suspect, would wish to be arrayed only on the side of those who suggested inclusions: Stewart Farnell, Hans J. Michelmann, Richard A. Nordahl, Jeffrey S. Steeves, and Donald C. Story. I will bravely accept the responsibility for the excisions.

Finally, in spite of the untiring efforts of my two young daughters, Julia and Jeannette, the time was found to complete the manuscript. They were unknowingly right, however, in assuming that the time spent with them was of more lasting significance. I am grateful to my wife, Susan, for her editing and for her support.

J.M. PORTER  
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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# P L A T O

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*Plato (427–347 B.C.) was the most famous student of Socrates (470–399 B.C.). Although he was born into a leading aristocratic family of Athens, the trial and death of Socrates and the general political and moral decay of the city-state convinced Plato to pursue philosophy rather than the expected political career. Socrates never wrote a word, but his lasting influence is in no small degree a result of Plato's Dialogues. In them one again can hear Socrates, the powerfully built stonemason, questioning his fellow citizens about justice and truth. Following Socrates' execution, Plato prudently withdrew from Athens. By 387 B.C. he had returned and founded the Academy, a school which endured for over 900 years. Plato died at the age of 81.*

*Beginning with a series of biographical dialogues defending Socrates and the philosophic life, Plato wrote some 25 Dialogues. Throughout these works he uses the name of Socrates, never his own. A discussion of politics can be found in most of his writings, but three of them—The Republic, The Laws, and The Statesman—are the primary sources of Plato's political philosophy. The most celebrated is The Republic. It remains without question one of the greatest works in political philosophy.*

—J.M.P.

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From Plato's *Republic* translated by G.M.A. Grube, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis (1975). Reprinted by permission of the Publisher.

**N.B.** The topic headings inserted in the text have been added by the editor.

# The Republic

## BOOK I

### *Cephalus: Justice as Truthfulness and Repayment*

- 327 I went down to the Piraeus yesterday with Glaucon, the son of Ariston. I intended to say a prayer to the goddess, and I also wanted to see how they would manage the festival, since this was its first celebration. I thought
- b our own procession was a fine one and that which the Thracians had sent was no less outstanding. After we had said our prayer and witnessed the procession we started back toward the city. Polemarchus saw us from a distance as we were setting off for home and he told his slave to run and bid us wait for him. So the slave caught hold of my cloak from behind: Polemarchus, he said, bids you wait for him. I turned round and asked where Polemarchus was. There he is, coming up behind you, he said, please wait for him. And Glaucon said: All right, we'll wait.
- c Just then Polemarchus caught up with us. Adeimantus, the brother of Glaucon,\* was with him, and so were Niceratus, the son of Nicias, and some others, presumably on their way from the procession.
- Then Polemarchus said: Socrates, it looks to me as if you had started on your way back to the city.
- Quite right, said I.
- Do you see how many we are? he said.
- Of course I do.
- Well, he said, you must either be stronger than we are, or you must stay here.
- Is there not another alternative, said I, namely that we may persuade you to let us go?
- Could you, said he, persuade men who do not listen?
- Not possibly, said Glaucon.
- Well, you can take it that we are certainly not going to listen.

---

\*Glaucon and Adeimantus are the brothers of Plato, who is not present. They carry the main burden of the conversation with Socrates from the beginning of the second book to the end of the work. The scene is the house of old Cephalus, father of Polemarchus, Lysias, and Euthydemus. Lysias is a well-known writer of speeches of the late fifth century, and a number of them are extant. He later became the model of the simple style. He takes no part. We have a dialogue named after Euthydemus. Thrasymachus was a Sophist of the younger generation, known for his powerful emotional appeals. He is the main objector in the first book, but after that says very little. We have a short dialogue, the *Cleitophon*, which criticizes Socrates for his lack of positive teaching. The first book, like many early or "Socratic" dialogues, discusses several definitions of "justice" but comes to no conclusion. The whole discussion is probably supposed to have taken place about 411 B.C. —G.M.A. Grube.

Adeimantus intervened: Do you really not know that there is to be a torch race on horseback this evening in honour of the goddess? 328

On horseback? said I, that is a novelty. Are they going to race on horseback and hand the torches on in relays, or how do you mean?

That's it, said Polemarchus, and there will be an all night festival besides, which will be worth seeing, and which we intend to watch after dinner. We shall be joined by many of our young men here and talk with them. So please do stay. b

And Glaucon said: It seems that we'll have to stay.

If you think so, said I, then we must.

So we went to the home of Polemarchus, and there we found Lysias and Euthydemus, the brothers of Polemarchus, also Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, Charmantides of Paiania, and Cleitophon the son of Aristonymus. Polemarchus' father Cephalus was also in the house. I thought he looked quite old, as I had not seen him for some time. He was sitting on a seat with a cushion, a wreath on his head, for he had been offering a sacrifice in the courtyard. There was a circle of seats there, and we sat down by him. c

As soon as he saw me Cephalus welcomed me and said: Socrates, you don't often come down to the Piraeus to see us. You should. If it were still easy for me to walk to the city you would not need to come here, we would come to you, but now you should come more often. You should realize that, to the extent that my physical pleasures get feebler, my desire for conversation, and the pleasure I take in it, increase. So be sure to come more often and talk to these youngsters, as you would to good friends and relations. d

I replied: Indeed, Cephalus, I do enjoy conversing with men of advanced years. As from those who have travelled along a road which we too will probably have to follow, we should enquire from them what kind of a road it is, whether rough and difficult or smooth and easy, and I should gladly learn from you what you think about this, as you have reached the point in life which the poets call "the threshold of old age," whether it is a difficult part of life, or how your experience would describe it to us. e

Yes by Zeus, Socrates, he said, I will tell you what I think of old age. A number of us who are more or less the same age often get together in accordance with the old adage. When we meet, the majority of us bemoan their age: they miss the pleasures which were theirs in youth; they recall the pleasures of sex, drink, and feasts, and some other things that go with them, and they are angry as if they were deprived of important things, as if they then lived the good life and now were not living at all. Some others deplore the humiliations which old age suffers in the household, and because of this they repeat again and again that old age is the cause of many evils. However, Socrates, I do not think that they blame the real b 329

cause. For if old age were the cause, then I should have suffered in the same way, and so would all others who have reached my age. As it is, I have met other old men who do not feel like that, and indeed I was present at one time when someone asked the poet Sophocles: “How are you in regard to sex, Sophocles? Can you still make love to a woman?” “Hush man, the poet replied, I am very glad to have escaped from this, like a slave who has escaped from a mad and cruel master.” I thought then that he was right, and I still think so, for a great peace and freedom from these things come with old age: after the tension of one’s desires relaxes and ceases, then Sophocles’ words certainly apply, it is an escape from many mad masters. As regards both sex and relations in the household there is one cause, Socrates, not old age but the manner of one’s life: if it is moderate and contented, then old age too is but moderately burdensome; if it is not, then both old age and youth are hard to bear.

I wondered at his saying this and I wanted him to say more, so I urged him on by saying: Cephalus, when you say this, I don’t think most people would agree with you; they think you endure old age easily not because of your manner of life but because you are wealthy, for the wealthy, they say, have many things to encourage them.

What you say is true, he said. They would not agree. And there is something in what they say, but not as much as they think. What Themistocles said is quite right: when a man from Seriphus was insulting him by saying that his high reputation was due to his city and not to himself, he replied that, had he been a Seriphian, he would not be famous, but neither would the other had he been an Athenian. The same can be applied to those who are not rich and find old age hard to bear—namely that a good man would not very easily bear old age in poverty, nor would a bad man, even if wealthy, be at peace with himself.

Did you inherit most of your wealth, Cephalus, I asked, or did you acquire it?

How much did I acquire, Socrates? As a moneymaker I stand between my grandfather and my father. My grandfather and namesake inherited about the same amount of wealth which I possess but multiplied it many times. My father, Lysanias, however, diminished that amount to even less than I have now. As for me, I am satisfied to leave to my sons here no less but a little more than I inherited.

The reason I asked, said I, is that you did not seem to me to be overfond of money, and this is generally the case with those who have not made it themselves. Those who have acquired it by their own efforts are twice as fond of it as other men. Just as poets love their own poems and fathers love their children, so those who have made their money are attached to it as something they have made themselves, besides using it as other men do. This makes them poor company, for they are unwilling to give their approval to anything but money.

What you say is true, he said.

It surely is, said I. Now tell me this much more: What is the greatest benefit you have received from the enjoyment of wealth? d

I would probably not convince many people in saying this, Socrates, he said, but you must realize that when a man approaches the time when he thinks he will die, he becomes fearful and concerned about things which he did not fear before. It is then that the stories we are told about the underworld, which he ridiculed before—that the man who has sinned here will pay the penalty there—torture his mind lest they be true. Whether because of the weakness of old age, or because he is now closer to what happens there and has a clearer view, the man himself is filled with suspicion and fear, and he now takes account and examines whether he has wronged anyone. If he finds many sins in his own life, he awakes from sleep in terror, as children do, and he lives with the expectation of evil. However, the man who knows he has not sinned has a sweet and good hope as his constant companion, a nurse to his old age, as Pindar too puts it. The poet has expressed this charmingly, Socrates, that whoever lives a just and pious life e 331

Sweet is the hope that nurtures his heart,  
companion and nurse to his old age,  
a hope which governs the rapidly changing thoughts of mortals.

This is wonderfully well said. It is in this connection that I would say that wealth has its greatest value, not for everyone but for a good and well-balanced man. Not to have lied to or deceived anyone even unwillingly, not to depart yonder in fear, owing either sacrifices to a god or money to a man: to this wealth makes a great contribution. It has many other uses, but benefit for benefit I would say that its greatest usefulness lies in this for an intelligent man, Socrates. b

Beautifully spoken, Cephalus, said I, but are we to say that justice or right is simply to speak the truth and to pay back any debt one may have contracted? Or are these same actions sometimes right and sometimes wrong? I mean this sort of thing, for example: everyone would surely agree that if a friend has deposited weapons with you when he was sane, and he asks for them when he is out of his mind, you should not return them. The man who returns them is not doing right, nor is one who is willing to tell the whole truth to a man in such a state. c

What you say is correct, he answered. d

This then is not a definition of right or justice, namely to tell the truth and pay one's debts.

It certainly is, said Polemarchus interrupting, if we are to put any trust in Simonides.

And now, said Cephalus, I leave the argument to you, for I must go back and look after the sacrifice.



Do I then inherit your role? asked Polemarchus.

You certainly do, said Cephalus laughing, and as he said it he went off to sacrifice. . . .

*[Polemarchus enters the discussion by suggesting another definition: justice is that which benefits one's friends and harms one's enemies. Socrates confounds Polemarchus by pointing out that justice is not a list of duties nor is it a type of skill or craft used for friends and against enemies. —J.M.P.]*

*Thrasymachus: Justice as Advantage of the Stronger*

336b While we were speaking Thrasymachus often started to interrupt, but he was restrained by those who were sitting by him, for they wanted to hear the argument to the end. But when we paused after these last words of mine he could no longer keep quiet. He gathered himself together like a wild beast about to spring, and he came at us as if to tear us to pieces.

c Polemarchus and I were afraid and flustered as he roared into the middle of our company: What nonsense have you two been talking, Socrates? Why do you play the fool in thus giving way to each other? If you really want to know what justice is, don't only ask questions and then score off anyone who answers, and refute him. You know very well that it is  
d much easier to ask questions than to answer them. Give an answer yourself and tell us what you say justice is. And don't tell me that it is the needful, or the advantageous, or the beneficial, or the gainful, or the useful, but tell me clearly and precisely what you mean, for I will not accept it if you utter such rubbish.

His words startled me, and glancing at him I was afraid. I think if I had not looked at him before he looked at me, I should have been speechless.  
e As it was I had glanced at him first when our discussion began to exasperate him, so I was able to answer him and I said, trembling: do not be hard on us, Thrasymachus, if we have erred in our investigation, he and I; be sore that we err unwillingly. You surely do not believe that if we were searching for gold we would be unwilling to give way to each other and thus destroy our chance of finding it, but that when searching for justice, a thing more precious than much gold, we mindlessly give way to one another, and that we are not thoroughly in earnest about finding it. You  
337 must believe that, my friend, for I think we could not do it. So it is much more seemly that you clever people should pity us than that you should be angry with us.

When he heard that he gave a loud and bitter laugh and said: By Hercules, that is just Socrates' usual irony. I knew this, and I warned these men here before that you would not be willing to answer any questions but would pretend ignorance, and that you would do anything rather than give an answer, if anyone questioned you.