

**OUR PRE-MODERN HERITAGE:
PLATO, ARISTOTLE, AND CICERO**

The Greeks



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The Polis

The total
community
(social,
political, and
economic)

- Greek word for city-state
 - Made up of city and surrounding countryside
 - Controlled 50-500 sq miles of territory

The Polis



The City-State or Polis of Athens

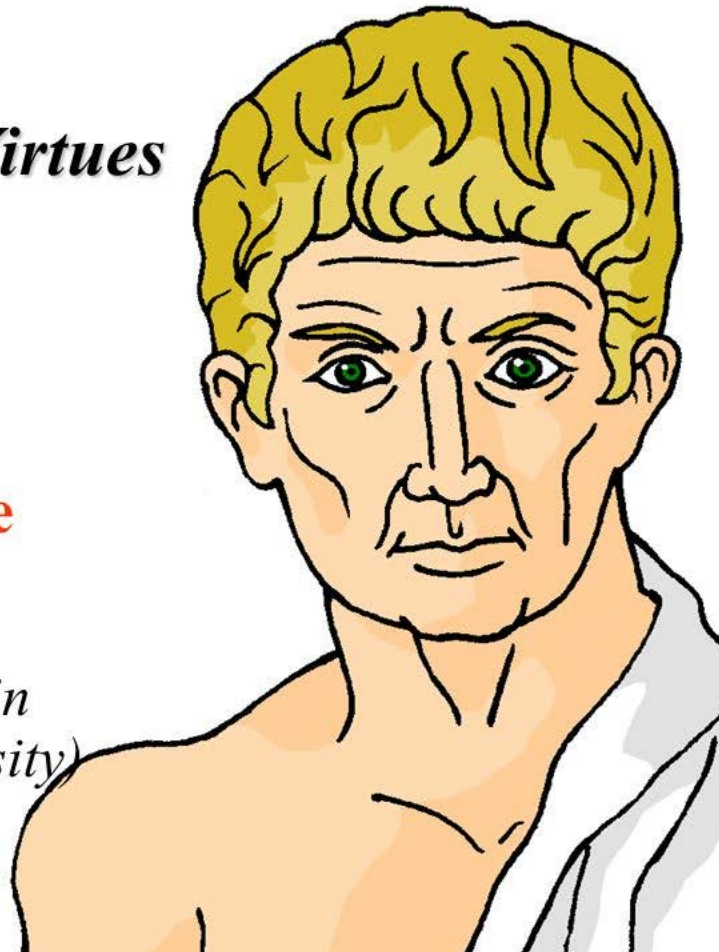
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4 Cardinal Virtues

Aristotle's Four Cardinal Virtues

- **Justice**
- **Prudence**
- **Temperance**
- **Fortitude**

*(Determination in
the face of adversity)*



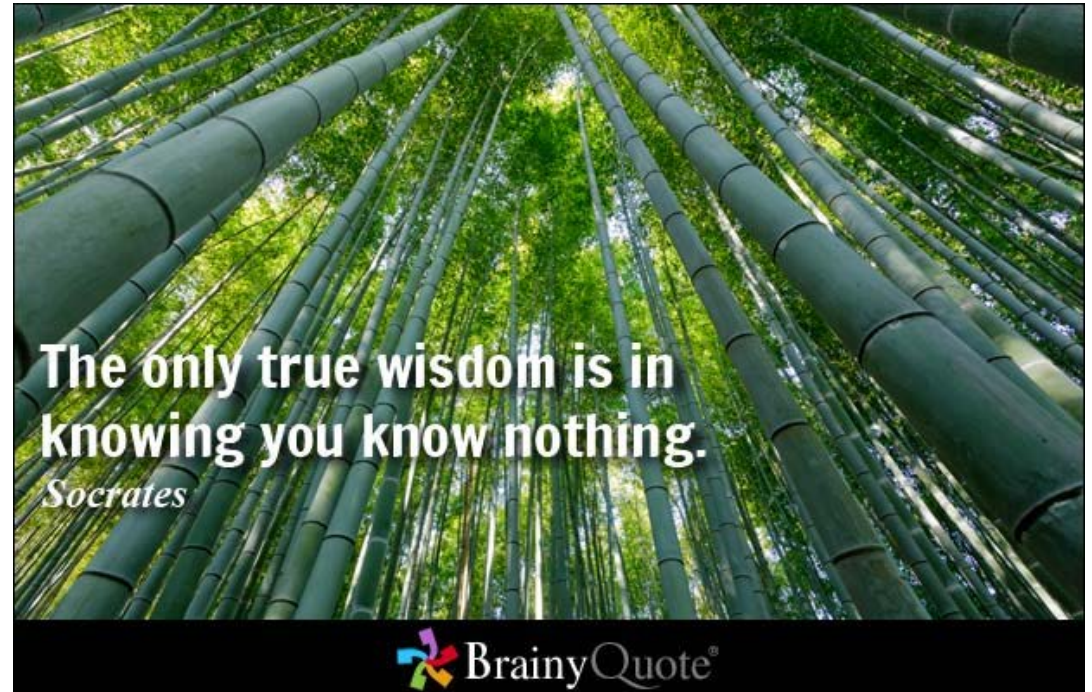
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1. Wisdom

Knowledge

Logic

Commonsense



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2. Courage

**Not necessarily
battlefield,
more mental /
emotional**

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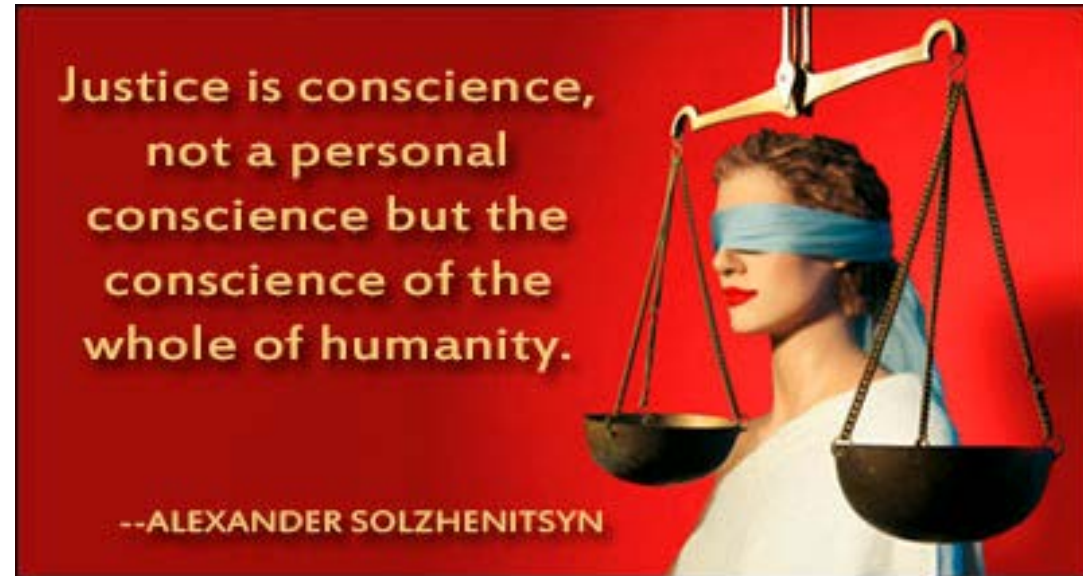
3. Temperance



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4. Justice

**This one is tricky.
Even today its
definition is
debated.**



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Who was Plato?



The price of
apathy towards
public affairs is
to be ruled by
evil men

- Plato

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1. *The Republic*

- a. What is justice?
- b. Who is a just man?

“No one is more hated
than he who speaks
the truth.”

— Plato



“ Under a
government
which imprisons
any unjustly, the
true place for
a just man is
also a prison. ”



Henry David Thoreau

(Civil Disobedience)

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2. The Just Republic

a. Each person doing what they are *expert* at.

b. 3 classes:

I. Guardians – headed by a philosopher-king; rational; intellectual

II. Auxiliaries – soldiers; not rational but spirited!

III. Citizens – normal working people with “desires”

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The Republic

The Republic concerns with the definition of justice, the order and character of the just city state and the just man.

Plato identifies Political Justice as harmony in structured political body (BOOK II, III, IV)

DEFINITION OF JUSTICE

PRODUCERS
(craftsmen,
farmers, artisans,
etc)

AUXILIARIES
(warriors)

GUARDIANS
(rulers)

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3. The Just Man

a. Guardians – must always use reason and rationality.

b. Auxiliaries – spirited following of orders.

c. Citizens – keep desires in check.

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Critiques of Plato



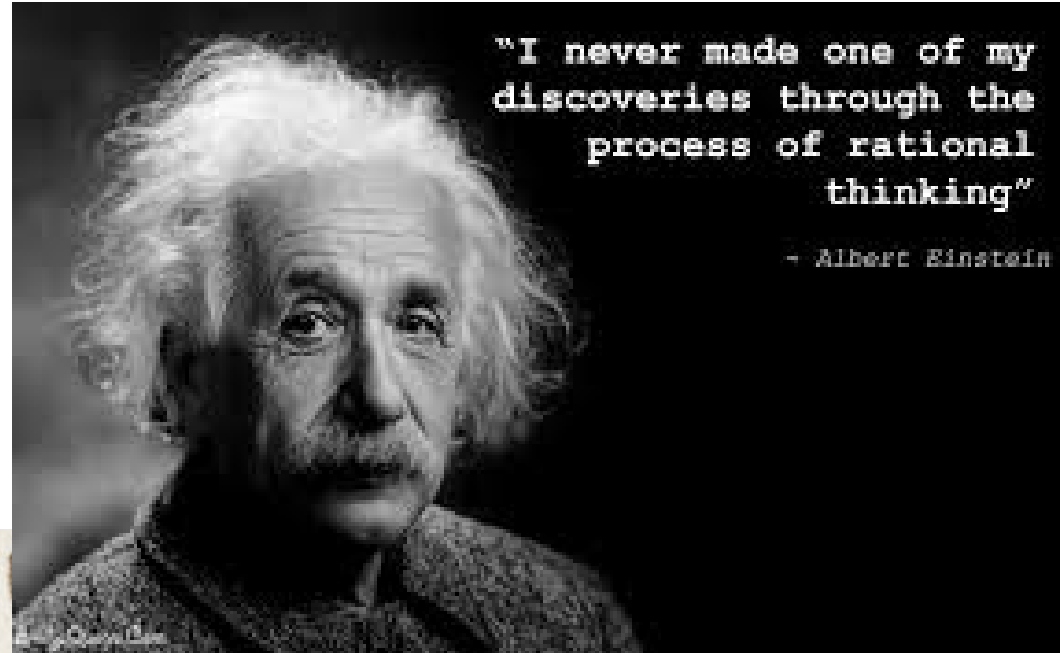
In general, I distrust philosophy.
Plato recommended chasing poets
from the city; the 'great' Heidegger
was a Nazi; Lukacs was a communist;
and J. P. Sartre wrote: 'Any
anti-communist is a dog.'

— *Claude Simon* —

AZ QUOTES

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1. Who defines what is rational?



ra-tional /
able to reason; h
sensible; that c
conduct/explana
/s/oloploty/ n

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Plato's Ideal State



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2. How can auxiliaries and citizens understand the rationality of the guardians?

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3. Who guards the guardians?



**WHO GUARDS THE
GUARDIANS?**

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4. Is the Republic the best type of community?

Plato's Republic: Critique

1. Is Plato's *Republic* totalitarian?
 - Karl Popper's (b. Austria, British 1902-1994) charge in *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945)
 - Popper argues that the *Republic* is the source of all totalitarian systems in the West
 - What features of the *Republic* might be regarded as totalitarian?

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Aristotle

2 Important Works:

1. Nicomachean Ethics
2. Politics

Aristotle of Stagira (384-22 BCE)



- student of Plato ("the mind of the Academy")
- tutor to Alexander the Great
- polymath, proto-scientist
- many extant works

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Contributions

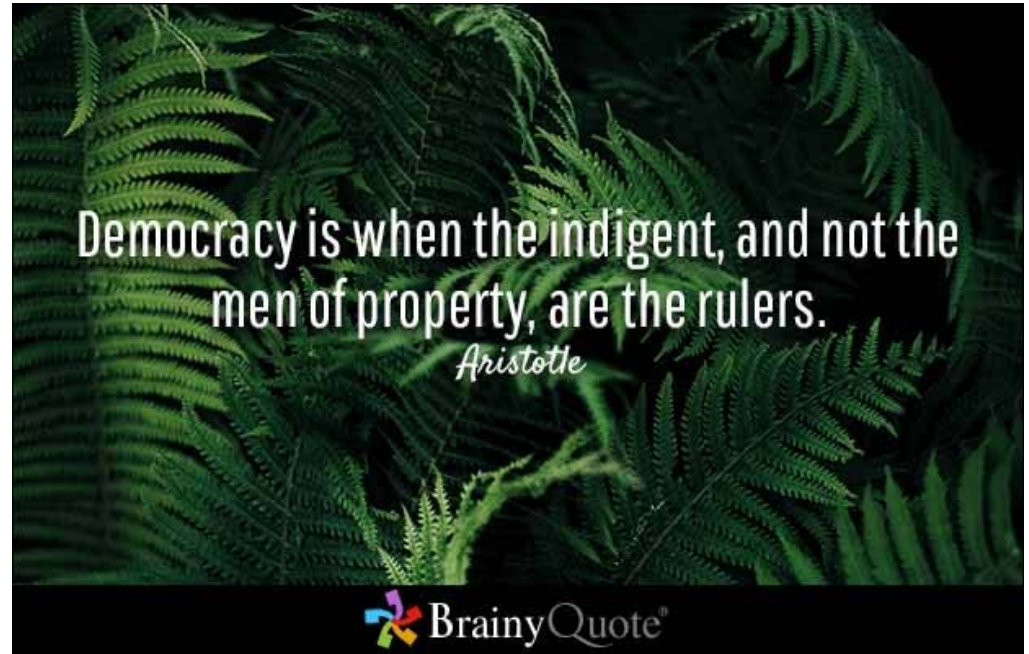
1. The first philosopher to imagine the state as an *organic* entity (the state was a natural community with attributes of a living being, as opposed to the *instrumentalist* view of the state which sees the state as an instrument/mechanism to be used for purposes and ends higher than itself).

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2. Two Important Ideas


a. The state is a community.

b. It is the highest of all communities.



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3. Aristotle's "forms of the state"

- a. Kingship (and its perversion, tyranny)**
 - b. Aristocracy (and its perversion, oligarchy)**
 - c. Constitutional Government (and its perversion, democracy or rule by the poor)**
- 

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4. Like Plato, Aristotle puts the consent of the rulers over the consent of the ruled.



So it is naturally with the male and the female; the one is superior, the other inferior; the one governs, the other is governed; and the same rule must necessarily hold good with respect to all mankind.

(Aristotle)

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5. He advocated “mixed constitutions” based on the two principles of wealth and numbers, but also understood that a mixed political system could work if backed by a stable society without extremes of wealth and poverty.

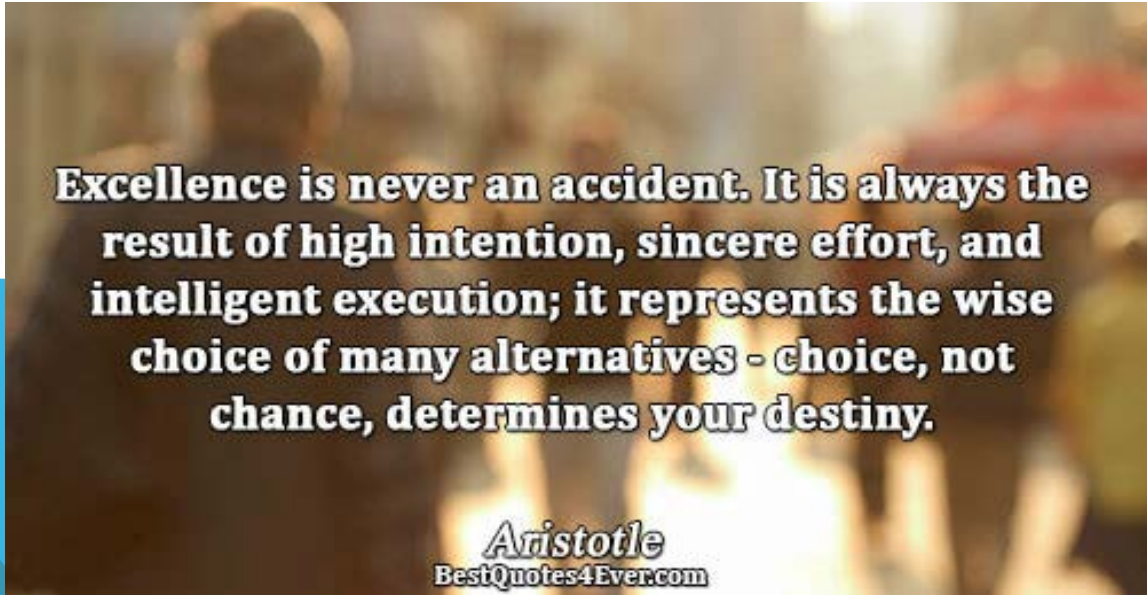
“The most perfect political community is one in which the middle class is in control, and outnumbers both of the other classes.”
~ Aristotle



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6. Aristotle's idea of citizenship is that of the economically independent gentleman who has enough experience, education, and leisure to devote himself to active citizenship ("citizens must not lead the life of mechanics or tradesmen, for such life is ignoble, and inimical to virtue").



Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives - choice, not chance, determines your destiny.

Aristotle
BestQuotes4Ever.com

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Cicero

Cicero

106 BCE - 43 BCE



Marcus Tullius Cicero, or also known simply as Cicero, was an Roman philosopher, orator and politician. He is widely considered to be one of Rome's greatest orators.

Notable Works

De Oratore
De Re Publica
De Legibus

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Because Roman political thought was not expressed in systematic philosophical works, it has been wrongly assumed by many not to have existed at all.



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Other forms of political ideas?

- 1. Not just works (books, treatises) from political philosophers.**
- 2. Law, lore, and literature are also important sources (i.e. some of the most enduring expressions of American political thought in the 20th century are judicial opinions from Supreme Court jurists.**

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The 4 principles of Roman law

- All citizens have the right to equal treatment under law
- Innocent until proven guilty
- The burden of proof rests with the accuser rather than the accused
- Any law that seems unreasonable or grossly unfair can be set aside

Law and administration are the two great contributions of Rome to the conceptions and practices of government and politics in the Western world.

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Cicero was the greatest contributor to this knowledge. A lawyer and statesman whose works are reflections on *politics* rather than political theory. His two main works on government are his *Republic* and *Laws*.

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He believed in moderation, agreement, and constitutionalism. As opposed to Plato and Aristotle, who concentrated primarily on the city-state, Cicero had a sense of the world. The rule of law was very important to him as evidenced by this quote:

“...since we cannot agree to equalize men’s wealth, and equality of innate ability is impossible, the legal rights at least of those who are citizens of the same commonwealth ought to be equal.”

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Plato's Politics

An Overview of Plato (427-347 b.c.e.)




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Why was he so important?

- 1. He was one of the first to argue that the open-minded but systematic use of our reason can show us the best way to live.**
- 2. The most famous student of Socrates.**

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**I. Theory of the
Universe
(Metaphysical
Background)**



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1. Plato uses the term “God” probably not in the biblical sense, but in a more abstract way (God is identified with *reason* in the universe)



The Idea of the Good

- To Plato, God is transcendent-the highest and most perfect being-and one who uses eternal ideas of perfection. The order and purpose he gives the physical world is limited by the imperfections.
- Flaws are therefore real and exist in the physical world. God is the idea of the Good within which Justice exists for itself and Equality exists by itself.
- The problem of evil emerges because of the imperfection of the physical world.
- God, being good, is also unchangeable. God must be a first cause and a self-moved mover otherwise there will be an infinite regress to causes of causes.
- Plato suggests for example that since planetary motion is uniform and circular, and since such motion is the motion of reason, then a planet must be driven by a rational soul



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Plato and the Forms



- According to Plato, common sense is wrong. We do not sense the world as it really is.
- The senses present the world in a confused way.
- The mind 'sees deeper'. It sees the true natures of things.
- Plato explained this with the Allegory of the Cave

2. More distinctive is his theory of *“forms,”* a complex and controversial theory since he did not elaborate on it in any systematic way.

Modern scholars see his ideas of *forms* as *concepts*.

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3. The four main forms are as follows:

- a. Logical / Semantic – meanings and concepts.**
- b. Metaphysical – ultimate reality.**
- c. Epistemological – what we can know.**
- d. Moral / Political – how we ought to live.**

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Plato's Theory of Forms

- The Theory of Forms maintains that two distinct levels of reality exist: the visible world of sights and sounds that we inhabit and the intelligible world of Forms that stands above the visible world and gives it being.
- For example, Plato maintains that in addition to being able to identify a beautiful person or a beautiful painting, we also have a general conception of Beauty itself, and we are able to identify the beauty in a person or a painting only because we have this conception of Beauty in the abstract.

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Only intellectual acquaintance with the *Forms* properly counts as *knowledge*. Only what fully and really exists can be fully or really known: perception of impermanent objects and events in the physical world is only belief or “opinion,” not knowledge.

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**II. Theory of
Human Nature**



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Qualities of Forms

The Forms are perfect/ **Ideal**=

- Everything we experience is imperfect, such as beauty.
- We never see perfect beauty in this world
- The form of beauty – beauty itself- is perfect.
- Each form is the **one and only** original perfect example.

The Forms are invisible=

- The perfect element of the Forms means they are invisible.

RPCorpusz 2013

Plato maintains a “dualist” view, according to which the human soul (or mind) is a nonmaterial entity that can exist apart from the body. Only the immaterial soul, not the bodily senses, attain knowledge of the *forms*.

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Plato's Dualism: Epistemological

Information comes from two sources

1. Sensed experience
 - ❖ Unreliable because of
 - ❖ the deceivability of the senses and
 - ❖ the impermanence of physical things
 - ❖ It can never result in anything but Opinion
2. Reason
 - ❖ Reliable because
 - ❖ it focuses on apprehending the Forms
 - ❖ It alone results in Knowledge



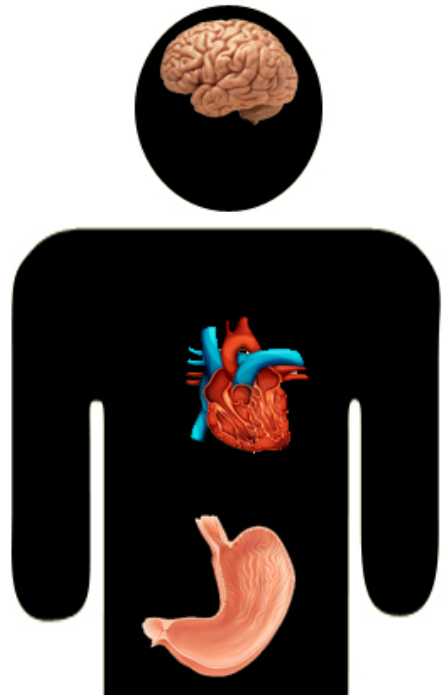
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For Plato, internal conflicts in humans contain three distinct elements.

Rational
(ruling class)

Spirited
(soldiers)

Appetitive
(working class)



1. Appetite: all physical urges

2. Reason: *intellectual* recognition of irrationality

3. Spirit or Passion: emotional recognition of the same.

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Humans are ineradicably social: to live in society is natural to human beings. Individuals are not self-sufficient; we each have many needs that we cannot meet by ourselves. As such, different people have different aptitudes and this division of labor is essential.

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III. Diagnosis



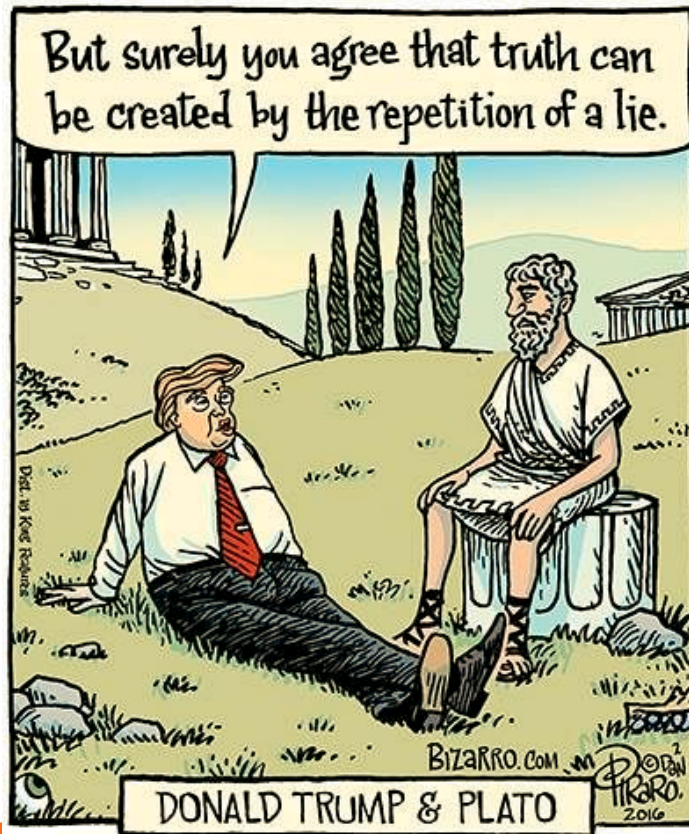
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Although Reason, Spirit, and Appetite are present in each person, he has a clear vision about which of these should rule:

VIRTUE	SOUL	CLASS
Wisdom	Rational	Rulers
Courage	Spirited	Soldiers
Temperance	Appetite	Artisans

Reason ought to control both Spirit and Appetite; human societies have not figured this out!

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Societies should be ruled by those who have the most developed sense of “reason” in the interests of everyone.

A truly well-ordered “just” society is one in which each class of person plays a distinctive role, in harmony with the other classes.

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Imperfect societies tend to produce flawed individuals, and troubled or poorly educated individuals contribute to social problems.

APPETITE:

This is man's desire for food, sex, shelter. It's basically encapsulates physical needs/urges, though those can be necessary desires (the desire to eat to stay alive), unnecessary desires (the desire to eat a 10 lb. steak 3 times a day), and unlawful desires (the desire to eat one's children).

In a just man, the appetite is strictly controlled by reason and reason's henchman, spirit.

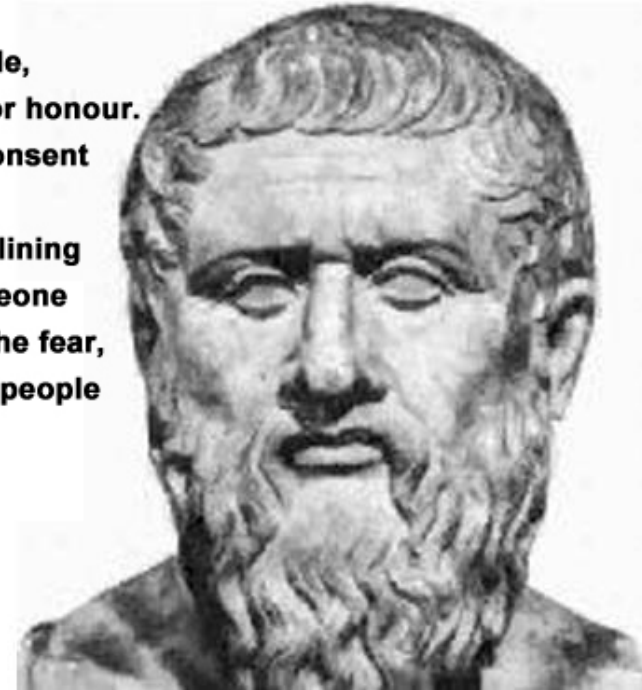
Plato considered the lowest class of society to be ruled by this aspect of the soul.

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“There should exist
among the citizens
neither extreme
poverty nor again
excessive wealth,
for both are productive
of great evil.”
- Plato

The good are unwilling to rule,
either for money's sake or for honour.
So they must be forced to consent
under threat of penalty.
The heaviest penalty for declining
to rule is to be ruled by someone
inferior to yourself. That is the fear,
I believe, that makes decent people
accept power.

Plato



Of the various types of “imperfect” societies, there are four: “timarchy,” “oligarchy,” “democracy,” and “tyranny,” each filled with its own unique type of defective individual.

Timarchy: in the philosophy of Plato, a form of government in which ambition for power and glory motivates the rulers; in the philosophy of Aristotle, a form of government in which political power is in direct proportion to property ownership

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IV. Prescription



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For Plato, “justice” is the same thing in both the individual and society – a smooth working together of the part within the soul or of the classes in the state; the lack of such harmony is injustice.

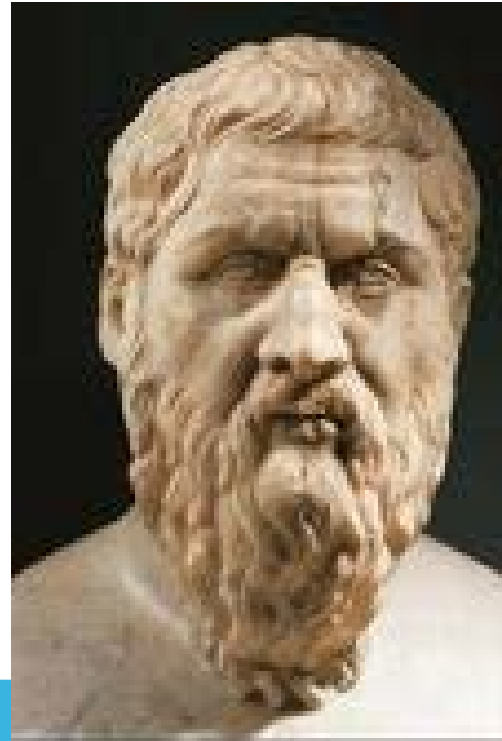


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“Justice in the life and conduct of the State is possible only as first it resides in the hearts and souls of the citizens.”

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TEACHING METHODS

- Plato wanted a place where children love to go and stay there and they play with things which enhance their education by playing.
- Plato gave importance to nursery education, as nursery education plays a vital role in the education of man and it helps to build his moral character and state of mind
"The most important part of education is proper training in the nursery."

There is great stress placed on the need for “appropriate” education as the most important way to produce virtuous, harmonious, well-balanced, “just” citizens.

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Since those who study philosophy are the most likely to have come to truly know the “forms,” it is obvious that only philosophers should be kings and rulers.

There will be no end to the troubles of states, or of humanity itself, till philosophers become kings in this world, or till those we now call kings and rulers really and truly become philosophers, and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands.



QuoteHD.com

Plato

Philosopher in Classical Greece

(427 BC - 347 BC)

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V. Critical Discussion



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- 1. Who defines what is rational?**
 - 2. How can auxiliaries and citizens understand the rationality of the guardians?**
 - 3. Who guards the guardians?**
 - 4. Is the Republic the best type of community?**
- 