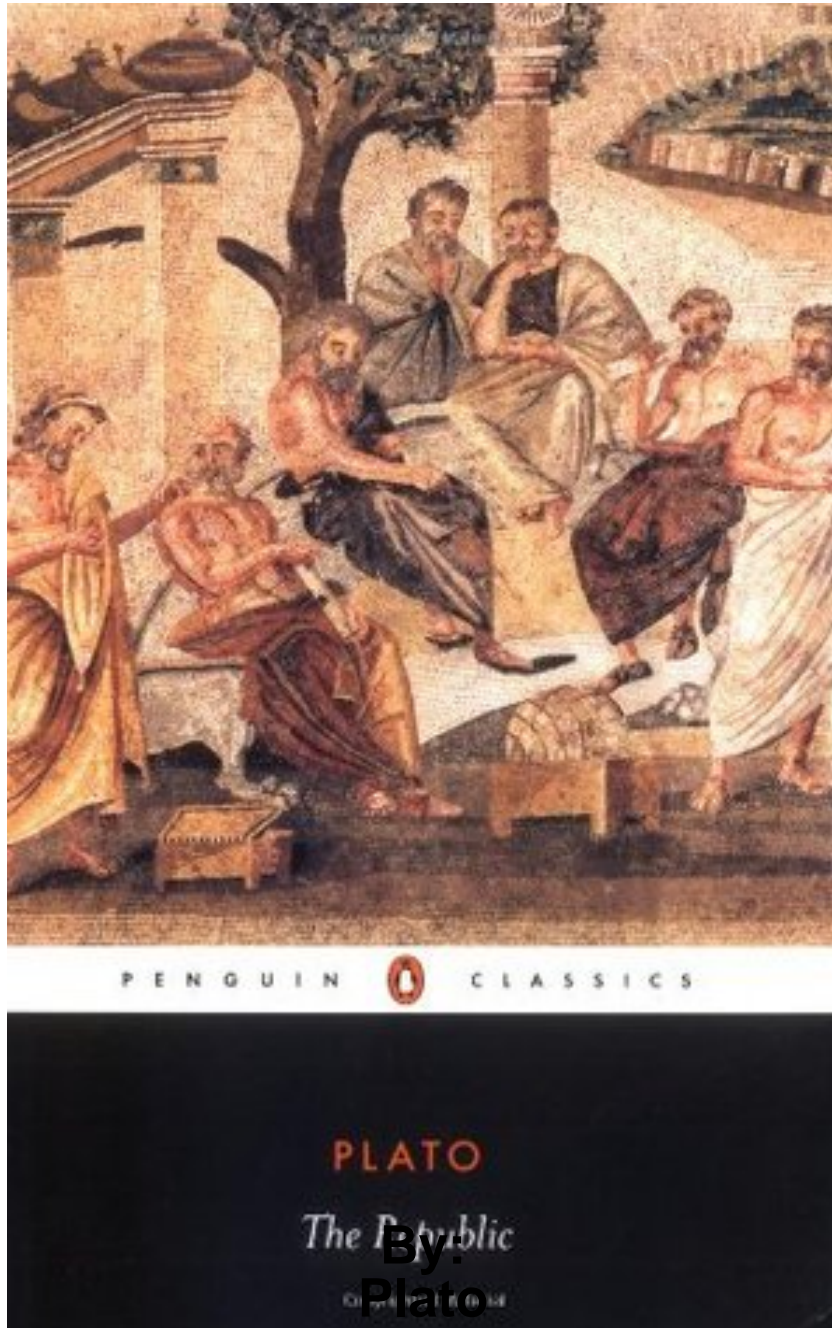


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What people Say:

Brendan

Let me explain why I'd recommend this book to everyone: Plato is stupid.

Seriously.

And it's important that you all understand that Western society is based on the fallacy-ridden ramblings of an idiot. Read this, understand that

, and understand that Plato is well and truly fucked in the head.

Every single one of his works goes like this:

SOCRATES: "Hello, I will now prove this theory!"

STRAWMAN: "Surely you are wrong!"

SOCRATES: "Nonsense. Listen, Strawman: can we agree to the follow

Let me explain why I'd recommend this book to everyone: Plato is stupid.

Seriously.

Everyman

All the criticisms of Plato are valid. He raises straw arguments. He manipulates discussions unfairly. He doesn't offer realistic solutions. And so on.

But he is still, and for very good reason, the most influential philosopher in Western civilization. He makes people think. Most authors we read today are trying to persuade us to agree with their point of view. Plato, not so. He wants you to disagree with him. He wants you to argue with him. He wants you to identify the fallacies in his arguments

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of view. Plato, not so. He wants you to disagree with him. He wants you to argue with him. He wants you to identify the fallacies in his arguments (and some are deliberately fallacious). In short, he wants you to do the most difficult intellectual exercise there is. He wants you to think, and to think deeply.

The other thing to realize about Plato is that he is an exquisite poet and craftsman. There is nothing accidental about what he writes; there is nothing superfluous. Even the most minute seeming points are there for good reason. Part of the joy of reading Plato for the third, fourth, fifth time is to see each time a bit more about what he is doing and why he is doing it, to come closer to appreciating his extraordinary genius and encountering ever more deeply this incredible mind.

Riku Sayuj

~ Alfred North Whitehead

'The Republic' is either revered, reviled or just plain ignored. Though it keeps resurfacing, it has been pushed back often, being accused of bigotry, racism, elitism, casteism, anti-democratic nature, the list is endless. But it is beyond doubt, one of the preeminent philosophical works and has been quoted, referenced or adapted by almost all of the major thinkers since.

The ideas of Socrates have had an afterlife that is as long and varied as the thousand year journey envisioned for souls in the famous

. It is impossible to catalogue the full list of impacts but Whitehead's quote (introductory to this review) gives adequate flavor. The practical influence of Republic is more difficult to gauge than its impact on the theorizing of later thinkers - over the centuries, individuals have discovered in Plato's works the inspiration for undertaking political or social or educational reform and have used it as the springboard for much revolutionary thought, and deeds.

Republic has inspired in addition to all the expository analysis, also countless creative interpretations, which have shaped our vision of future possibilities, limits and of extremities. Many

depictions of both utopian societies and their dystopian counterparts, ranging from Thomas More's

to Jonathan Swift's

to Aldous Huxley's

to George Orwell's

, have their roots in the ideal city brought to life by Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus.

Contemporary films such as

and

Henry Avila

Plato's "The Republic", is a great but flawed masterpiece of western literature, yes it makes sense, mostly, some of it. "I am the wisest man in the world because I know one thing, that I know nothing", said the smart man ... Socrates. Plato is writing for Socrates, his friend and teacher. Late teacher, since being forced to commit suicide by the uncomfortable citizens of Athens (the famous poisoned cup of hemlock), for corrupting the minds of youth. Socrates didn't believe books were as effective

Plato's "The Republic", is a great but flawed masterpiece of western literature, yes it makes sense, mostly, some of it. "I am the wisest man in the world because I know one thing, that I know nothing", said the smart man ... Socrates. Plato is writing for Socrates, his friend and teacher. Late teacher, since being forced to commit suicide by the uncomfortable citizens of Athens (the famous poisoned cup of hemlock), for corrupting the minds of youth. Socrates didn't believe books were as effective as lectures, big mistake. Socrates advocates complete state control of everything, land, schools , businesses, homes, and even children to be taken away from their parents and raised by the state. In other words, an early form of communism. Plato agreed but Aristotle didn't , he knew only parents would love their children , which kids need. Most of the book is dialogues between various men as how to establish a perfect state. Socrates / Plato wanted Greece ruled by philosopher kings. With a professional army to back them up. An unreachable goal, as 24 centuries later, has shown. Greed is the primary motivation of the human race, but people keep on trying to reach the elusive "Utopia", and failing forever? Socrates the wise man, was correct.

William1

Halfway through now and the ability to see the book as a metaphor for civic and personal moral development becomes difficult. The book is only useful if you are tracking the history of ideas, which I am not. The state Plato describes here is one that is highly prohibitive in almost every aspect. Arts and culture are severely controlled for propaganda purposes. There is a complete inability to view open, transparent government as an option. The guardians must be lied to and deceived constantly if

Halfway through now and the ability to see the book as a metaphor for civic and personal moral development becomes difficult. The book is only useful if you are tracking the history of ideas, which I am not. The state Plato describes here is one that is highly prohibitive in almost every aspect. Arts and culture are severely controlled for propaganda purposes. There is a complete inability to view open, transparent government as an option. The guardians must be lied to and deceived constantly if they are to develop correctly. Moreover, to establish what we might call a footing for his premises, there is an overwhelming amount of presumption on the part of the author. Much of the reasoning seems specious. It strikes this reader how Plato did not have a long and detailed historical record to call on as we do. There are many assumptions, for instance, with respect to the education of the guardians, that shows a weak grasp of human psychology. The guardians should, in effect, be shielded from badness and wrongdoing if they are to develop the appropriate appreciation for virtue. Well, if they're not exposed to badness, how will they know it when they see it? Other aspects of guardian nurturing and education, too, are severe if not totalitarian by today's standards. First, the very sick are to be left to die. This was of course a sign of the times. Medicine was primitive. But there is not an iota of compassion about those left to die. This, indeed, would connote "softness," something not wanted in our guardians, who are to be simultaneously brave and happy, not unlike the family dog. Plato actually says that. The overwhelming import of the reading so far has been to show me how very far we as a culture (western) have come in the more than 2,400 years since 's composition. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, and I paraphrase, the arc of history is long but it bends toward justice. I stopped on p. 134, unable to finish. To use a line from

, "the book fell from my hands."

(AC says I should not be reading this translation at all but G.M.A. Grube's. So I will.)