

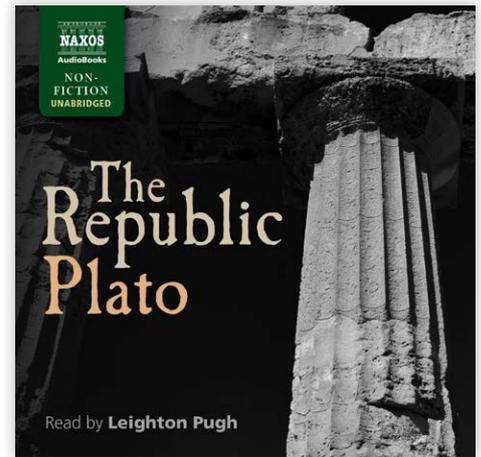
The Republic Plato

Read by **Leighton Pugh**

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In *The Republic* Socrates is asked the question 'What is justice?' And in order to answer it, he draws a long and detailed analogy between the individual and the city. Plato's work forms the foundation of Western philosophy and covers a wide range of topics including political theory and ethics, with extended digressions into artistic and literary criticism, the theory and practice of education as well as epistemology and metaphysics. Deploying straightforward language and metaphors drawn from everyday life, *The Republic* contains many key ideas including the theory of forms and the concept of the philosopher-king.

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Leighton Pugh trained at LAMDA, after studying Modern Languages at Queen's College, Oxford. Radio work includes the plays *Murder by the Book* and *Scenes from Provincial Life* for BBC Radio 4 and the voice of Heinrich von Kleist in the BBC Radio 3 documentary *The Tragical Adventure of Heinrich von Kleist*. Leighton has been in five productions for the National Theatre, most recently *The Lehman Trilogy* (NT Live 2018–19, New York, West End). For Naxos AudioBooks he has recorded, among other things, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, *Zola's Germinal*, *Nana* and *L'Assommoir*, and featured in Walton's *The Compleat Angler*.

1	The Republic	11:59	22	And perhaps the word 'guardian' in the fullest sense...	9:04
2	Well said, Cephalus, I replied...	11:46	23	Book 4	11:26
3	And will not men who are injured be deteriorated...	11:57	24	The regulations which we are prescribing...	11:55
4	Then justice, according to your argument, is not only...	10:46	25	And is not a similar method to be pursued...	10:45
5	What makes you say that? I replied.	11:34	26	And the citizens being thus agreed among themselves...	11:59
6	And for this reason, I said, money and honour...	12:06	27	Then let us now try and determine whether they are...	9:18
7	Then I will repeat the question which I asked before...	11:14	28	And might a man be thirsty, and yet unwilling to drink?	9:27
8	Book 2	10:14	29	And surely, I said, we have explained again and again...	8:42
9	Now, if we are to form a real judgement of the life...	11:31	30	Book 5	11:53
10	He proceeded: And now when the young hear all this...	12:03	31	'But if so, have you not fallen into a serious...'	11:33
11	But ought we to attempt to construct one? I said...	11:17	32	The law, I said, which is the sequel of this and of all...	12:38
12	Then we must enlarge our borders; for the original...	11:00	33	Such is the scheme, Glaucon, according to which...	11:42
13	You know also that the beginning is the most...	9:22	34	At the same time I ought here to repeat...	11:46
14	Let this then be one of our rules and principles...	9:07	35	Consider then, I said, when that which we have...	10:26
15	Book 3	12:12	36	Another person, I said, might fairly reply as you do...	8:33
16	But any deeds of endurance which are done or told...	11:58	37	Then let me tell you my view about them.	8:19
17	Then, Adeimantus, let me ask you whether our...	11:43	38	Book 6	10:41
18	In the next place, drunkenness and softness...	11:49	39	I perceive, I said, that you are vastly amused...	10:42
19	I perceive, I said, that you have or have had...	12:08	40	And our philosopher follows the same analogy...	11:41
20	But with the rich man this is otherwise...	10:42	41	Then, Adeimantus, I said, the worthy disciples...	11:06
21	On the other hand the philosopher will have...	9:58	42	And do you not also think, as I do, that the harsh...	11:30

43	The guardian then, I said, must be required to take...	10:03	57	Then comes the famous request for a body-guard...	9:19
44	And this is he whom I call the child of the good...	9:38	58	Book 9	12:37
45	Book 7	12:13	59	If the people yield, well and good; but if they resist...	11:44
46	But what if there had been a clipping of such natures...	12:30	60	Moreover, as we were saying before, he grows worse...	12:28
47	And therefore, I said, as we might expect...	10:30	61	Let us not, then, be induced to believe that pure...	10:07
48	I am amused, I said, at your fear of the world...	11:41	62	Or if some person begins at the other end...	11:47
49	And so, Glaucon, I said, we have at last arrived...	12:30	63	Book 10	11:17
50	And, therefore, calculation and geometry...	12:16	64	Then, I said, we must put a question to Homer...	11:59
51	Book 8	12:33	65	Do not rely, I said, on a probability derived from...	12:01
52	In the honour given to rulers, in the abstinence of...	11:04	66	Shall I propose, then, that she be allowed to return...	12:29
53	Another discreditable feature is, that, for a like reason...	11:53	67	And thus, I said, we have fulfilled the conditions of...	9:21
54	At present the governors, induced by the motives...	11:49	68	I need hardly repeat what he said concerning...	8:16
55	And so the young man returns into the country...	8:10	69	And of women likewise; there was not, however...	9:57
56	The last extreme of popular liberty is when the slave...	8:31			

The Republic

Plato

Plato and Socrates

Plato was an Athenian aristocrat, born around 429 BC, and in the normal course of events he might have expected to play a prominent part in Athenian political life. However, he grew up as Athens was losing the long Peloponnesian War against the Spartans – a defeat which provoked a civil war in which democrats were victorious, and aristocrats were largely discredited. Having also seen his friend and mentor Socrates put to death by the newly restored democracy, Plato for the most part avoided politics, and spent his time in philosophical enquiry. He founded one of the first schools of philosophy – the Academy – in Athens.

Socrates was born in 469 BC, and put to death in 399 BC. Sentencing him to death was, as he pointed out to the jury, a stupid thing to do. 'For just a small gain in time you will now have the reputation and responsibility... of having put to death Socrates, that wise man. They will say I am wise, the people who want to blame you, even though I am not. If you had waited a little, you could have had what you wanted without lifting a finger.'

It is a problem to know exactly what Socrates believed. He wrote nothing himself, and our picture of him comes almost in its entirety from Plato, who makes Socrates the mouthpiece for his most important views. So when the Socrates of a Platonic dialogue says something, we have no cast-iron way of knowing whether this is what the real-life Socrates believed, or whether it is an opinion of Plato's, attributed to Socrates as a mark of respect.

A commonly held view is that the short early dialogues give us an accurate picture of the historical Socrates, that the late dialogues are mostly Plato, and that the middle dialogues (of which *The Republic* is one) mark the point at which Plato's ideas begin to diverge from those of Socrates, as he begins to see more and more of the problems and complexities inherent in the views held by Socrates.

We can be fairly sure, however, that the real-life Socrates was an innovator in at least two ways. He was one of the first, if not the first, to maintain that a good man will never

do harm to anyone – not even to his enemies. And he more or less invented the technique of argument by agreed steps from agreed premises, most argument up to that time having consisted in the adversarial expression of conflicting views. Both these innovations are well exemplified in *The Republic*.

The Republic

In *The Republic* Socrates is asked the question 'What is justice?' And in order to answer it, he draws a long and detailed analogy between the individual and the city. If we can see what makes a just city, he says, we may find it easier to see what makes a just individual. Such an answer immediately leads him into the realms of political theory and ethics, with extended digressions into artistic and literary criticism, and the theory and practice of education. But there is more to *The Republic* than this. Since a city can only be just when it is ruled by those whose principal concern is wisdom and knowledge, Plato is necessarily drawn also into questions about the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and the nature of reality (metaphysics).

So *The Republic* compels our attention because it lays the foundation for the whole division of Western European philosophy (by Aristotle, a generation after Plato) into the categories of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and political theory. It does this without technical jargon, in clear simple language, using everyday examples and metaphors drawn from farming and seafaring, or from the making of shoes, weapons, musical instruments and music.

That is one reason why *The Republic* is better suited to being read aloud than any other work of Western philosophy. Another reason is that the arguments are for the most part cumulative, and not sequential. Plato does not repeat himself, but arguments produced in one place both rely on and support arguments used in another place. So if there is something you don't follow in Book 2, or if your attention wanders in Book 3, this won't stop you understanding and enjoying Book 4. The same arguments won't be used, but similar arguments will, and from those you can generally

reconstruct whatever it was you missed the first time.

A third – and the most powerful – reason lies in the power of the images Plato brings before us: of human life as imprisonment in a cave, watching a sequence of shadow-pictures on the wall opposite; of democracy as an unending squabble aboard a ship at sea over who is to take the tiller;

of souls after death, choosing the lives into which they will be reborn. Plato in his youth was a poet, and although in *The Republic* he declares war on poets, he can never rid himself of the poetry which pervades his own perception and portrayal of everything he sees.

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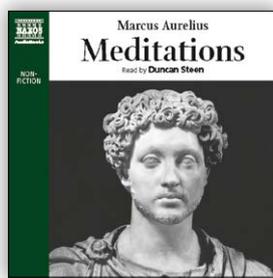
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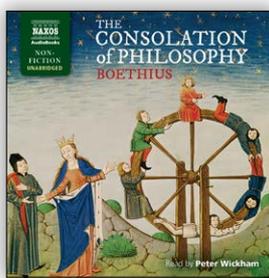
Catalogue no.: NA0517

ISBN: 978-1-78198-381-2

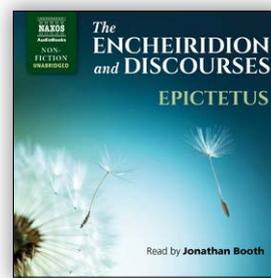
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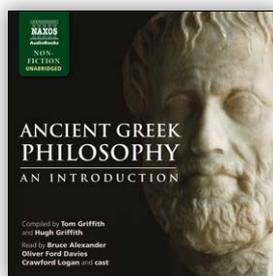
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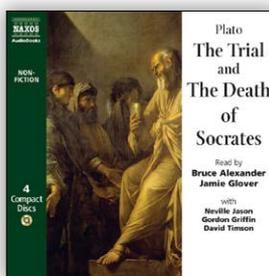
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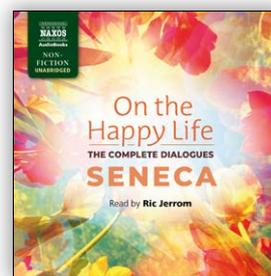
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