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### Chapter 2 : BBC Radio 4 - In Our Time, Plato's Republic

*The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic (Blackwell Guides to Great Works) - Kindle edition by Gerasimos Santas. Download it once and read it on your Kindle device, PC, phones or tablets.*

The essays shed new light on many central features and themes of the Republic including: Written clearly and simply, this volume is the ideal companion for readers coming to the Republic for the first time, and will also be of interest to those returning to this foundational work of the Western canon. Christopher Rowe University of Durham. Jonathan Lear The University of Chicago. Rachel Barney University of Toronto. Christopher Shields Oxford University. McPherran University of Maine. Plato on Learning to Love Beauty: Gerasimos Santas University of California, Irvine. Hendrik Lorenz Princeton University. Mariana Anagnostopoulos California State University. Plato and the Ship of State: David Keyt University of Washington. Terrence Penner University of Edinburgh. Singpurwalla Southern Illinois University. It should command a wide readership and be in every library. The contributors are not content with rehashing old material but demonstrate how it is still possible to engage with the Republic in new and philosophically stimulating ways. It provides a first-rate guide both to the Republic itself and to some of the most exciting developments in its interpretation. His previous publications include Socrates , Plato and Freud: Plato, Aristotle and the Moderns Blackwell,

**Chapter 3 : Project MUSE - Philosophers in the "Republic"**

*Blackwell Guides to Great Works Series Each volume in this series provides guidance to readers coming to a great work of the philosophical canon, whether for the first time or to gain new insight. Comprising specially commissioned contributions from the finest scholars, the books offer clear and authoritative accounts of the context, arguments.*

A Critical Guide Published: May 16, Mark L. This volume, a collection of papers that were mostly presented at a conference, is pitched to specialists slightly more than the other anthologies are; on the other hand, its selections are shorter, so even the difficult chapters feel more inviting than longer versions of them would have been. The first three chapters address the Republic as a whole. Ferrari analyzes the narrative movements in the Republic to spot where Socrates loses control over the conversation and Plato tightens his authorial grip, and to tell why this shift of control matters. Rachel Barney finds a pattern of ring-composition that frames the dialogue between themes and their resolutions, homing in on Book 10 to show how nuanced such "resolutions" can be. Rachana Kamtekar returns to an old question that has found new life: Nicholas Smith lays out the restrictions on explaining why philosophers will return to the cave until there seems to be no way of satisfying them all, then offers a new way out. Finally, Christopher Shields digs into the foundational argument for dividing the soul and clears away what he sees as accretions that have obscured that core argument. The topic shifts to theory of knowledge for the next three pieces. Reeve shows how much is entailed -- breeding, gymnastics, and dialectic -- in producing those special few who not only both contemplate the Forms and rule the city, but do the latter by virtue of having done the former. Going through all these articles with a few words of assessment for each would make for a tedious, uninformative review. Ferrari probes the "internal narration" found in the Republic and only two other dialogues Charmides, Lysis. Where the dialogue identifies no audience before whom one could imagine Socrates tailoring his story, he ceases to function as an unreliable narrator. He admits to losing control over the conversation; he freely improvises in sight of the reader, guessing what will convince his interlocutor. Book 2 does not replace the "early" disputatious Socrates with a positive theorist of Forms. It is the same Socrates throughout, only no longer hiding from the reader after Book 1. Socrates lays his cards on the table when he speaks of Forms and the best constitution; he improvises, sincerely trying to figure out what the Good is like. Meanwhile, his creator Plato hides more than ever. Ferrari believes that his analysis tells against three popular readings of Plato: But his approach is not likely to silence the other schools of thought, because the sine qua non of esotericist readings is authorial control, not the control that a character exercises. Transfer the power from Socrates to Plato if you like; there is still someone hiding, and an interpretive approach can still aim at disclosing what that someone has hidden. Socrates may be telling all he believes, but Plato behind the scenes holds a different doctrine. To address esotericist readings, Ferrari might augment his approach by consulting the Protagoras, whose stub of a prefatory framing dialogue is all that disqualifies it from counting as an internally-narrated work. There too Socrates scrambles to stay on top of the conversation. But in the Protagoras Plato depicts Socrates using dialectic to extract philosophical truths from a poem by Simonides. Could Ferrari incorporate this passage into his analysis? Socrates, out of control, wrests control away from an author: Annas comes at Plato the author by another route, as she links the Republic to the Timaeus and Critias. Why did Plato leave the story unfinished? Annas appeals to the Republic again. The bewitching Atlantis story still entices readers today, she says. Maybe Plato recognized the mimetic danger in his story and interrupted it before it could do more harm. This last sounds likely; I would only add that the Critias stops when Zeus resolves to ruin Atlantis, presumably by leading it into war. Zeus announces his will at an assembly of the gods. As one commentator writes, "the Critias breaks off exactly where a traditional epic poem should begin. Supplanting Homer is one thing, recapitulating his errors is something else. For if the Timaeus hides the greatness of old Athens inside a lost antiquity, it also dedicates itself to revealing that glory. The dialogue echoes Herodotus in numerous respects, including a nearly-direct quote about "great and wondrous deeds"; it

is Herodotean generally in combating the loss of historic memory. Virtue might still be worthy when no one knows about it, but the Timaeus nevertheless wants to spread the news of at least one great example. Staying entirely within the Republic, Smith takes up a central problem with the philosopher-kings. What makes philosophers virtuous rulers is the strength of their desire for knowledge, a desire that besides weakening anti-social appetites also leaves one reluctant to rule. On the other hand, the demand that they rule the city is a just demand, and their justice of character ought to leave the philosophers happy when they act rightly. Why this talk of compelling them? The thumoeides "spirited, angry" part of these kings-in-training prompts them to want the honor that comes with the responsibilities of rule even though their reason craves contemplation and knowledge. As they grow to be full philosophers they will adapt to the necessity to govern, until governing finally makes them happy. When those in power desire that power, as they do in existing societies, justice becomes what Thrasymachus calls the interest of the stronger. The good city was supposed to answer Thrasymachus, but here are the new philosopher-kings with a strong reason to rule and hence an individual interest in holding office. Smith uses "tyranny" to describe a soul whose yearning for contemplation dominates its other desires; that word implies that the desire proper to reason can act against the harmonious ordering of the soul. But this means that the philosophers are not the safe candidates for power that the Republic had promised. As it approaches its conclusion the Republic depicts the best soul and city degenerating through steadily worse forms to become tyrannies. Hitz looks, as scholars have largely not done, for a deep structure informing this decline. She argues that every stage features a battle between reason and the appetites; more remarkably she finds "shadow-virtues" in all cities but the worst. But reason weakens as the city worsens, and mere appearances of virtue emerge in the inferior regimes. As reason can achieve less, Hitz says, it contents itself with seeming temperance in oligarchy, seeming lawfulness in democracy. Hitz is surely right to look for explanatory principles at work in Platonic historiography. But speaking of "appearances" undoes the explanation she offers. The phrase is vague and amenable to more than one explication. Pinning it down as appearance makes the shadow a deception. His utter viciousness includes his possessing the appearance of justice. So if the shadow-virtues that Hitz sees in the degenerating cities are virtue-appearances, then she has found not would-be or etiolated virtues but canny vices. This is already the worst human experience and not a way station heading to the bottom. Hitz will need to cash out shadow-virtues in different language. But some scholars challenge the very idea of a tripartite soul in the Republic. Shields advances a strong version of psychological minimalism, leaving the "parts" of the soul no longer essential to its nature; no longer homunculi each functioning as a little person within; no longer even components, Shields finally says. Call reason and the rest "aspectual parts. Your hunger is a part of you only inasmuch as you are hungry. Shields attends to the different versions of the soul that surface in the various sections of the Republic, but his argument principally rests on his analysis of Book 4, pressing hard on the argument for divisions in the soul. How much does that argument entail, and what does it not entail? It is always bracing to take such pains with a familiar work; Shields argues cogently and is not easy to refute. Much turns on what a reader considers an adequate explanation. The argument in Plato requires that when you feel both inclined to eat and resolved not to, some source for each impulse must exist in your soul. Opposed forces are at work, and the argument in Book 4 calls for an explanatory origin behind each force. What cause will do? When we envision two little subjects within shouting "Eat! But the opposite extreme poses explanatory dangers too. If aspectual parts re-describe psychological phenomena, they will fail at the basic task that Socrates assigns to his psychology. How can it be that I want to eat but also want not to? In fact, when you want to explain why food is salty, you sometimes blame the soy sauce, never the salty aspect of the food. These are five selections, less than half of this rich assortment. Only space, not lack of interest or appreciation, prevents me from engaging with every contribution at the same length, for a wide spectrum of issues has been updated in this excellent book. Every philosopher who has thought about the Republic will find something here that illuminates an aspect of the dialogue; specialists will want to spend time with many of the twelve selections. Blackwell Publishing, ; G. Cambridge University Press, Philosophical Rhapsody in the Timaeus and Critias," in G. Plato and Hesiod

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Oxford: Oxford University Press, , p.

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### Chapter 4 : The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic by Gerasimos Xenophon Santas

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### Chapter 5 : Patrick J. Mooney, Plato, Republic Reviewed by - PhilPapers

*The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic (Blackwell Guides to Great Works)* by Editor-Gerasimos Santas. Wiley-Blackwell, Paperback. Good.

July 04, Gerasimos Santas ed. Reviewed by Richard Kraut, Northwestern University This is a valuable collection of thirteen new essays. At the risk of immodesty, but in the interest of full disclosure: How should we understand the relation between Book I and the apparently fresh start that is made in the opening lines of Book II? Rowe holds that Plato used the dialogue form because he took his philosophical doctrines to be remote from the starting points of his expected audience, and sought a way to mediate the distance between them. The stories they absorb have enormous staying power, but their deeper meanings cannot be grasped during childhood; they can at best be recovered in maturity. Cephalus, for example, has been spooked by tales about Hades. What we need, Plato proposes, is a healthy replacement for the myths that torment the likes of Cephalus -- namely, the tales of retribution and reward contained in the Myth of Er. In fact, as Lear emphasizes, a large portion of the Republic contains reflections on the role of myth in human experience. What the myth or noble falsehood of the metals is for citizens of kallipolis, the Cave is for readers of the dialogue: The arguments are somehow in need of repair: She is, to my mind, both insightful and generous in her analysis of their deficiencies. Even students reading this material for the first time protest, against Socrates, that some experts -- athletes, for example -- are inherently in competition with one another, and in this respect "pleonectic". She comes to the conclusion that Book I can and should be read both as a "trailer" and as a deliberate exercise in failure. The five arguments are programmed to fail because they do not teach us the essence of justice; even so, they are a "philosophically necessary preparation" that helps us "recognize justice when we encounter it" in Book IV p. The task of the dialogue, as he reads it, is to show both that justice is good in itself and also a component of the best life. His point here is that justice is not being commended on the basis of its effects -- neither its external rewards nor its internal mental consequences. That is, the story of the ring is meant to support a deep universal truth about human psychology, from which the merely instrumental value of justice follows. He takes Plato to equate piety with justice; so construed, piety is as much a cardinal virtue as justice. Platonic divinities, McPherran suggests, are of two kinds: She takes Plato to locate our sense of beauty in the spirited part of the soul, and therefore surprisingly the love of beauty is a manifestation of our innate competitiveness, our hunger for admiration, praise, and honor. So, the reason why a guardian must learn to recognize and love the beauty and not merely the goodness of justice lies in the need to orient the whole soul, and not merely reason, in the right direction. We must, in other words, react to justice with both admiration and something akin to sensual delight, and not merely with rational approval. First, there is the empirical method of Thrasymachus: Second, Glaucon proposes a contractual method: Here Santas draws upon the interpretation that he sets out more fully in his book, *Goodness and Justice: Plato, Aristotle, and the Moderns*. He emphasizes the point that Plato is not merely positing three tendencies or categories of motivational influences, but something stranger: As I understand her complex and difficult essay, it holds that, according to the Socrates of the Republic, every action -- but not every desire -- seeks its object on the assumption that it is good to attain. Keyt convincingly argues that this simile deserves as much careful attention from scholars and readers as has been given to the similes of sun, line, and cave. Two essays in the volume are devoted to the metaphysics and epistemology of the central Books. His controversial reply is that, for Plato, the acquisition of general concepts and mastery of general terms would not be possible for someone unless he had previously beheld the forms. On his reading, Plato holds that ethical expertise, and therefore a study of abstract entities, is a prerequisite of political leadership primarily because the ordinary acquaintance every language-speaker had with the forms underwrites the ability to make only the easiest among our decisions and practical classifications. Hard questions about what to do can be resolved only through philosophical inquiry. To defend his view, he proposes what might be called a "deflationary" reading of many

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familiar components of the dialogue; that is, he supplies a reading of the best known metaphysical passages of the Republic that requires no "self-predicational" assumptions, and no bizarre notion that there are degrees of existence or reality. A fine essay by Rachel G. She addresses herself to a problem raised by David Sachs more than forty years ago: Socrates affirms, in Books IV and throughout, the great value of a unified soul; but even if we accept that thesis, what has this kind of justice to do with commonplace acts of justice, which are undertaken for the good of others? Singpurwalla surveys two kinds of answers that other scholars have offered as solutions to this problem, and then proposes a new approach. On her reading, Plato posits a human need to live in unity with others. Goodness, in fact, is some kind of unification; and so, in making our own souls a unity, and thereby doing ourselves great good, we also become unified with others, and thus achieve a great social good. The Republic covers territory -- pleasure, gender, private property, the role of family life -- that are not examined in these essays. But there is a great deal to appreciate here.

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