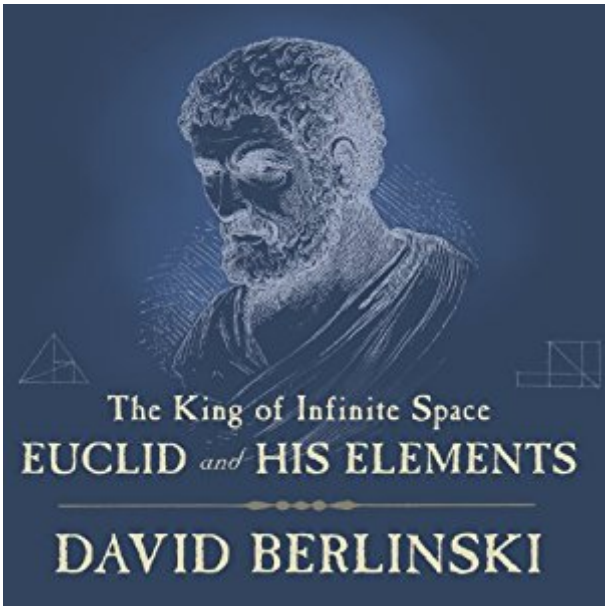
The King Of Infinite Space: Euclid And His Elements



Synopsis

Geometry defines the world around us, helping us make sense of everything from architecture to military science to fashion. And for over 2,000 years, geometry has been equated with Euclid’s Elements, arguably the most influential book in the history of mathematics. In The King of Infinite Space, renowned mathematics writer David Berlinski provides a concise homage to this elusive mathematician and his staggering achievements. Berlinski shows that, for centuries, scientists and thinkers from Copernicus to Newton to Einstein have relied on Euclid’s axiomatic system, a method of proof still taught in classrooms around the world. Euclid’s use of elemental logic - and the mathematical statements he and others built from it - have dramatically expanded the frontiers of human knowledge.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a fan of David Berlinski’s Devil’s Delusion, I found myself drawn to dip into this fascinating book om Euclid. I was rewarded with Berlinski’s clarity and wit, his elegant writing style. He converted me to a newfound interest in mathematics. Anyone would pick this book up with pleasure and leave it with regret. Mary Karr

This is not the book to learn Euclidean Geometry. It requires some basic knowledge of Mathematics; it is not a fast read. It is a good discussion of some of the assumptions and limitations of Euclidean Geometry. One of the points it makes is to show how, for all the reputation for being a logically rigorous system in which all assumptions are defined and justified; Euclidean Geometry

includes a good dose of plain "common sense" and "self-evident truths" baked into its foundations. The book also moves on to discussing other geometries, of which one gets a flavor, but not much more. The style is a bit quirky, the author often doesn't tell you where he is going; lets things be revealed. I am not a mathematician, so who knows whether I got the right message or not; I enjoyed it and consider it time well spent.

Reading Berlinski is like dining at a buffet of delicious ideas. The courses go quickly, but frequently one must pause in order to savor a particularly juicy bite--then perhaps go back for another helping before proceeding to the next course.I teach mathematics at a school for some of the most intellectually advanced students in the world. I am always looking for ways to help my students discover the world beyond their curriculum...to understand the *why* and the wonder of a particular subject. To ask the big questions. To inspire and nurture their love of mathematics. Berlinski's book fits the bill.Geometry is particularly useful for nurturing critical thinking and logic, and Euclid is its patriarch. In a Geometry class many years ago, I challenged my students with the notion that "there are no circles in the material universe." This intrigued one of my students in particular, and for weeks she was asking follow-up questions as the notions wrought her intellect. One profound notion, and she became a critical thinker. Now, she is an astrophysicist. Never underestimate the life-changing power of a big idea. And Geometry...particularly a la Euclid...is teeming with big morsels.Berlinski really gets this, and his own joy glows in his prose. Berlinski communicates about mathematics like Feynman communicates about physics. Both of them see the big picture, but relish in the details. In one portion Berlinski notes the connection between Platonic forms and Euclid's geometry:"Mathematicians often draw a distinction between concrete and abstract models of Euclidean geometry. In the abstract models of Euclidean geometry, shapes enjoy a pure Platonic existence. The concrete models are in the physical world. Freeways masquerade as straight lines, ink drops as points, amphitheaters as circles, and planetary orbits as ellipses."Berlinski also notes that Euclid not only systematized several key ideas...he also recognized that the ideas themselves *could* be organized. This has had a profound and foundational effect on the history of Western civilization. Of course, Berlinski is not the first to recognize this. But how refreshing and what a pleasure to read the prose of someone who thinks in big ideas and *also* write so wryly and skillfully about them.I agree with Berlinski that when it comes to geometry, no one does it better than Euclid. After all, the elements has remained vivid and relevant for over two millenia, with a profound effect on the Western world. Every literate thinker should spend some quality time in Euclid's classroom. From a modern classroom pedagogical point of view, I think Jacob's "Geometry" (ISBN-13:

978-0716717454) is also quite practical, basically following Euclid's methods. This year, my students will experience all three books. It's gonna be fun.Well done, Dr. Berlinski!

A beautifully written book. The highest mathematical treatment with a poetic sensibility. I enjoyed and learned.

If you are interested in how people think and in how ideas can shape civilizations, this is a fascinating book. Berlinski is not presenting a biography or even an explanation of Euclid's role in intellectual history. Rather this is an examination of how he thought and how a modern mind puzzles and prods the ancient mind. It is difficult going but worth the effort.

A great little book by a classic author. Book arrived just as described.

This is an esoteric work of philosophy, not the treatise on geometry that I expected. It was way over my head.

If you are already familiar with Euclid's work or if you really like math and geometry, then this book will be delightful and delicious. For those, who like me, shy away from math, it is a rather arduous process. And do not be fooled by the length of the book; there is a lot of condensed thought and reflection that have gone into it.I cannot say that I fully enjoyed this book, nor would I say that I disliked it. In fact, it made me think, and it awoke my curiosity not only for Euclid, the man and the work, but also for the field of geometry itself and that is quite a feat!Even if you do not like all the abstract language and the geometrical shapes and forms, there are some very interesting observations on time and space, including a chapter on paintings frozen both in time and space! It may not be an entertaining read, but it is educational and rewarding in the end.

and Math The Babylonian Theorem: The Mathematical Journey to Pythagoras and Euclid Computed Tomography: Physical Principles, Clinical Applications, and Quality Control, 3e (CONTEMPORARY IMAGING TECHNIQUES) 3rd (third) Edition by Seeram RT(R) BSc MSc FCAMRT, Euclid [2008] Cleveland Amusement Park Memories: A Nostalgic Look Back at Euclid Beach Park, Puritas Springs Park, Geauga Lake Park, and Other Classic Parks How To Be A Forex Trading King : FOREX Trade Like A King (How To Be A Trading King Book 2) Euclid's Window: The Story of Geometry from Parallel Lines to Hyperspace The Zoning of America: Euclid v. Ambler (Landmark Law Cases & American Society) Here's Looking at Euclid: A Surprising Excursion Through the Astonishing World of Math Here's Looking at Euclid: From Counting Ants to Games of Chance - An Awe-Inspiring Journey Through the World of Numbers Georg Cantor: His Mathematics and Philosophy of the Infinite The Boy's King Arthur: Sir Thomas Malory's History of King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table