

# On Plato's Symposium

The Symposium Plato's 'Symposium' Plato's Symposium Plato's Symposium Symposium Plato's Symposium Symposium An Analysis of Plato's Symposium Plato: The Symposium Symposium Symposium (Annotated) Symposium Plato's Symposium Symposium by Plato The Cambridge Companion to Plato The Deipnosophists The Arabic Influences on Early Modern Occult Philosophy The Symposium (Collins Classics) Leo Strauss on Religion The Myth of Sisyphus Plato Thomas L. Cooksey Richard L. Hunter Plato By Plato Stanley Rosen Plato Richard Ellis Frisbee C. C. Sheffield Plato Plato Plato James H. Lesher Plato Richard Kraut Athenaeus (of Naucratis.) Liana Saif Plato Svetozar Y. Minkov Elliott M. Simon

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throughout history some books have changed the world they have transformed the way we see ourselves and each other they have inspired debate dissent war and revolution they have enlightened outraged provoked and comforted they have enriched lives and destroyed them now penguin brings you the works of the great thinkers pioneers radicals and visionaries whose ideas shook civilization and helped make us who we are plato's retelling of the discourses between socrates and his friends on such subjects as love and desire truth and illusion spiritual transcendence and the qualities of a good ruler profoundly affected the ways in which we view human relationships society and leadership and shaped the whole tradition of western philosophy publisher's website

the symposium is one of plato's most sophisticated meditations on the practice of philosophy this book introduces the context of plato's work surveys and explains the

arguments and considers why plato has cast this work in a highly unusual narrative form

plato allan bloom wrote is the most erotic of philosophers and his symposium is one of the greatest works on the nature of love ever written this new edition brings together the english translation of the renowned plato scholar and translator seth benardete with two illuminating commentaries on it benardete's on plato's symposium and allan bloom's provocative essay the ladder of love in the symposium plato recounts a drinking party following an evening meal where the guests include the poet aristophanes the drunken alciabiades and of course the wise socrates the revelers give their views on the timeless topics of love and desire all the while addressing many of the major themes of platonic philosophy the relationship of philosophy and poetry the good and the beautiful

symposium is a philosophical text by plato it concerns itself at one level with the genesis purpose and nature of love and is the origin of the concept of platonic love love is examined in a sequence of speeches by men attending a symposium or drinking party each man must deliver an encomium a speech in praise of love eros the party takes place at the house of the tragedian agathon in athens socrates in his speech asserts that the highest purpose of love is to become a philosopher or literally a lover of wisdom the dialogue has been used as a source by social historians seeking to throw light on life in ancient athens in particular upon sexual behavior and the symposium as an institution

translated by jordan stump introduction by caleb carr and original illustrations by jules ferat

plato's symposium composed in the early fourth century bc demonstrates how powerful the skills of reasoning and evaluation can be known to philosophers for its seminal discussion of the relationship of love to knowledge it is also a classic text for demonstrating the two critical thinking skills that define plato's whole body of work plato's philosophical technique of dialogue is the perfect frame for producing arguments and presenting a persuasive case for a given point of view and at the same time judging the strength of arguments their relevance and their acceptability staging a fictional debate between characters wealthy athenians at a dinner party who must respond in turn to each others arguments and points of view means that at every stage plato evaluates the previous argument assesses its strength and relevance and then proceeds through the next character to reason out a new argument in response exerting unparalleled influence on the techniques of philosophical thought plato's use of dialogue is a supreme example

of these two crucial critical thinking skills

plato s symposium written in the early part of the 4th century bc is set at a drinking party symposium attended by some of the leading intellectuals of the day including aristophanes the comic dramatist socrates plato s mentor and alcibiades the brilliant but eventually treacherous politician each guest gives a speech in praise of the benefits of desire and its role in the good and happy human life at the core of the work stands socrates praise of philosophical desire and an argument for the superiority of the philosophical life as the best route to happiness this edition provides an accessible and engaging new translation by m c howatson and a substantial introduction by frisbee c c sheffield which guides the reader through the various parts of the dialogue and reflects on its central arguments a chronology and detailed notes on the participants help to set this enduring work in context

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of all the works of plato the symposium is the most perfect in form and may be truly thought to contain more than any commentator has ever dreamed of or as goethe said of one of his own writings more than the author himself knew for in philosophy as in prophecy glimpses of the future may often be conveyed in words which could hardly have been understood or interpreted at the time when they were uttered compare symp which were wiser than the writer of them meant and could not have been expressed by him if he had been interrogated about them

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in his symposium plato crafted speeches in praise of love that has influenced writers and artists from antiquity to the present but questions remain concerning the meaning of specific features the significance of the dialogue as a whole and the character of its influence here an international team of scholars addresses such questions

collectors edition it is rather difficult to review plato s symposium from a modern viewpoint the attempts by agathon s guests including socrates to define love are largely based on the love of boys rather than women while that is a difficult concept for me to ponder i recognize that such a social custom prevailed to some degree in ancient athens and will attempt to offer an unbiased view of the text basically partygoers celebrating agathon s first victory in a drama contest decide to do something besides drink themselves into a stupor because they are still paying for such activity the night before socrates joins the group on this second night and it is decided that each man in turn will offer his praises to love each of six men offer their interesting diverse thoughts on the matter ranging from the conventional to the socratic ideal phaedrus says that the greatest good a boy can have is a gentle lover and that the greatest good a lover can have is a boy to love he stresses self sacrifice and virtue as the kind of love the gods love most pausanias describes two kinds of love vulgar love is best explained as love for a woman in the interest of sexual satisfaction noble love is that concerned with bettering the soul of the object of love necessarily a young boy the doctor eryximachus explains love in terms of harmony and he goes so far as to credit the vague notion of love with accomplishing all kinds of things in a diverse set of subjects aristophanes begins by relating a myth about man s origins when man was created individuals were actually attached back to back the gods later split each human entity in half and love consists of each person s search for his missing half who can be of either sex even when two mates find one another their love is imperfect because they cannot become literally attached as they were originally agathon says that love is the youngest of the gods that he offers the means by which all disputes between the gods and between men are settled and emphasizes the beauty of love represented quite well by himself he seems to say

fourteen new essays discuss plato s views about knowledge reality mathematics politics ethics love poetry and religion in a convenient accessible guide that analyzes the intellectual and social background of his thought as well

athenaeus ad ca 170 ca 230 a greek of naucratis in egypt lived in rome and wrote a

historical work now lost of the fifteen books of his surviving deipnosophists sophists at dinner the first two and parts of the third eleventh and fifteenth exist only in summary the rest apparently complete in it he pretends to tell a friend about a banquet at a scholar s house whither the learned guests brought extracts from poetry for recitation and discussion much of the matter however concerns the food provided and accessories one learns about cooks strange dishes wines menu cards and countless other matters athenaeus was an antiquarian the whole work which mentions nearly eight hundred writers and two thousand five hundred writings is a large treasury of information not only about table matters but also music dances games and all sorts of literary subjects and it abounds in quotations mostly made direct by athenaeus himself from authors whose writings have not survived the loeb classical library edition of the deipnosophists is in seven volumes there is a comprehensive index in the final volume google books description

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the myth of sisyphus symbolizes the archetypal process of becoming without the consolation of absolute achievement it is both a poignant reflection of the human condition and a prominent framing text for classical medieval and renaissance theories of human perfectibility in this unique reading of the myth through classical philosophies

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