



Sample: Philosophy - Phaedrus

Phaedrus

Plato's *Phaedrus* is written as a dialogue between Socrates, the main character of his dialogues, and Phaedrus, Socrates' partner in conversation. They discuss, among other subjects, the speech on love that Dionysian Lysias, a celebrated rhetorician, gave shortly before that. Phaedrus listened to it and recounts to Socrates, at the latter's request, its basic points. The key thesis of the speech may be seen as a paradox, for it is a statement "that the non-lover should be accepted rather than the lover", which was "ingeniously proved" by the speaker (Plato). Love is regarded as a kind of madness, and when it comes to its end, lovers "repent of the kindnesses... but to the non-lovers who are free and not under any compulsion, no time of repentance ever comes" (Plato). Non-lovers also have more freedom in other situations and, as a result, "freely do what will gratify the beloved" (Plato). Not being under the power of love means for an individual exercising his sound mind for his own and his beloved's benefit. Socrates joins the discussion and supports the idea that love founded on desire can do a lot of harm to the beloved, particularly when the two persons differ in age, and can lead to subordination and other biases of human relationships.

However, Socrates' final judgment counters both Lysias' position and his own views expressed previously. He claims that the lover should be accepted instead of the non-lover because the madness of the lover is a divine gift and adds to the human potential something that people cannot possess in their sanity. Socrates defines love as "the greatest of heaven's blessings". Relationships with lovers, according to Socrates, are divine while those with non-lovers are merely a cheap substitute devoid of its true meaning and gratifying neither to the body nor to the soul.

Works Cited

Plato. Phaedrus. Trans. B. Jowett. *Project Gutenberg EBook*. Web. 2 March 2014