

# Plato's symposium essay sample

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Plato's Symposium is a discourse on the nature of love that happens in the house of Agathon. The discussion is among Plato and his companions regarding Eros. There has been a shift into ideas relating to almost every sphere of life but the opinions voiced in the Symposium seem to hold true to date. However, different discussions have been developed regarding the different views of love hence each person who contributes to the subject of Eros advances different thoughts. The thoughts of Aristophanes' in the discourse are most persuasive taking into consideration that his views on love represent most people's romantic wishes. However, it is the contribution of Diotima, a priestess who Socrates had encountered previously and who disclosed to him the secrets of love that Plato explains his own perception of love.

When Aristophanes explains his beliefs on the subject, he does so through a hilarious and intriguing myth concluding that love is a person's search for his alter ego. In this case, Aristophanes states that individuals are not complete without their other halves which were taken away from them by the gods because of their arrogance. According to Aristophanes we can never be complete until and unless we find that part that was taken away by the gods. Agathon speaks after Aristophanes and gives a speech which suggests that love is young, sensitive, beautiful, and wise. He also believes that love is responsible for instilling virtues in humans.

When Socrates speaks, he questions Agathon's philosophy of love by saying that Agathon does not speak about love itself but the object of love.

However, Socrates acknowledges Aristophanes' concept of love but also adds that people do not hunger for the half or even the whole unless that

half or whole is good. This addition changes everything because he then suggests that people do not just want completion but long for the goodness. Socrates therefore postulates that when people love, they are pursuing the goodness in a thing or person and seeks to possess the goodness permanently.

In Diotima's discourse Socrates states that love is neither beautiful nor wise but is the desire for beauty and wisdom. It is from this perspective that Plato provides his first definition of love when he states thus, " love is wanting to possess the good forever" (Plato 262). Socrates introduces love in a broader perspective by proposing that it is that which makes an individual happy hence people only long for good things. In the words of Diotima love is a spirit that is responsible for interceding between people and gods hence love is not a god. Plato therefore concludes that moderate living and the desire for beauty and wisdom is what true love is all about. This is a confirmation that Plato does not believe in love based on sex and his argument is in consonance with his search for the truth.

## **Work Cited**

Plato, Symposium. Web. 3 Oct. 2013. [http://archive.](http://archive.org/stream/PlatosSymposium/Plato-Symposiumbenardete#page/n27/mode/2up)

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