

# Listening To The Cicadas A Study Of Plato S Phaedrus Cambridge Classical Studies

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phaedrus is widely recognized as one of plato s most profound and beautiful works it takes the form of a dialogue between socrates and phaedrus and its ostensible subject is love especially homoerotic love socrates reveals it to be a kind of divine madness that can allow our souls to grow wings and soar to their greatest heights then the conversation changes direction and turns to a discussion of rhetoric which must be based on truth passionately sought thus allying it to philosophy the dialogue closes by denigrating the value of the written word in any context compared to the living teaching of a socratic philosopher the shifts of topic and register have given rise to doubts about the unity of the dialogue doubts which are addressed in the introduction to this volume full explanatory notes also elucidate issues throughout the dialogue that might puzzle a modern reader jacket

the phaedrus is closely connected with the symposium and may be regarded either as introducing or following it the two dialogues together contain the whole philosophy of plato on the nature of love which in the republic and in the later writings of plato is only introduced playfully or as a figure of speech but in the phaedrus and symposium love and philosophy join hands and one is an aspect of the other the spiritual and emotional part is elevated into the ideal to which in the symposium mankind are described as looking forward and which in the phaedrus as well as in the phaedo they are seeking to recover from a former state of existence whether the chief subject of the dialogue is love or rhetoric or the union of the two or the relation of philosophy to love and to art in general and to the human soul will be hereafter considered aeterna press

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phaedrus plato translated with an introduction by benjamin jowett the phaedrus is closely connected with the symposium and may be regarded either as introducing or following it the two dialogues together contain the whole philosophy of plato on the nature of love which in the republic and in the later writings of plato is only introduced playfully or as a figure of speech but in the phaedrus and symposium love and philosophy join hands and one is an aspect of the other the spiritual and emotional part is elevated into the ideal to which in the symposium mankind are described as looking forward and which in the phaedrus as well as in the phaedo they are seeking to recover from a former state of existence whether the subject of the dialogue is love or rhetoric or the union of the two or the relation of philosophy to love and to art in general and to the human soul will be hereafter considered and perhaps we may arrive at some conclusion such as the following that the dialogue is not strictly confined to a

single subject but passes from one to another with the natural freedom of conversation

the phaedrus written by plato is a dialogue between plato s protagonist socrates and phaedrus an interlocutor in several dialogues the phaedrus was presumably composed around 370 bce about the same time as plato s republic and symposium although ostensibly about the topic of love the discussion in the dialogue revolves around the art of rhetoric and how it should be practiced and dwells on subjects as diverse as metempsychosis the greek tradition of reincarnation and erotic love one of the dialogue s central passages is the famous chariot allegory which presents the human soul as composed of a charioteer a good horse tending upward to the divine and a bad horse tending downward to material embodiment

with a masterful sense of the place of rhetoric in both thought and practice and an ear attuned to the clarity natural simplicity and charm of plato s greek prose james h nichols jr offers a precise yet unusually readable translation of one of the great platonic dialogues on rhetoric featuring some of plato s most soaringly lyrical passages the phaedrus investigates the soul s erotic longing and its relationship to the whole cosmos as well as inquiring into the nature of rhetoric and the problem of writing nichols s attention to dramatic detail brings this dialogue to life plato s striking variety in conversational address names and various terms of relative warmth and coolness is carefully reproduced as is alteration in tone and implication even in the short responses the translation renders references to the gods accurately and non monotheistically for the first time and includes a fascinating variety of oaths and invocations nichols believes that plato s thought on rhetoric has been largely misunderstood and he uses his translation as an opportunity to reconstruct the classical position on right relations between thought and public activity

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a translation with introduction and commentary of plato s phaedrus the dialogue begins with a playful discussion of erotic passion then extends the theme to consider the nature of inspiration love and knowledge the centrepiece is the myth of the charioteer the famous and moving account of the vision fall and incarnation of the soul professor hackforth here translates the dialogue for the student and general reader there is a running commentary on the course of the argument and the meaning of the key greek terms and a full introduction to explain the philosophical background and the place of this work among plato s writings

phaedrus

the phaedrus is well known for the splendid mythical panorama socrates develops in his

second speech and for its graphic descriptions of erotic behavior this book shows how the details of the myth and the accounts of interaction between lovers are based on a carefully articulated metaphysical structure it follows the dialogue as narrated showing how passages that may not appear relevant to metaphysics have been deployed to heighten the vision of reality that socrates develops in his second speech and concludes with an epilogue in which the metaphysical principles adumbrated in the dialogue are ordered and briefly developed this epilogue helps illustrate the continuity between the phaedrus and subsequent dialogues such as the parmenides sophist statesman and philebus in which methodological and metaphysical concerns are dominant for plato as a result new connections emerge between the metaphysical domain in plato s thought and the more visible and vibrant areas of the psychology of eros and practical rhetoric back cover

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this volume provides a comprehensive learned and lively presentation of the whole range of plato s thought but with a particular emphasis upon how plato developed his metaphysics with a view to supporting his deepest educational convictions the author explores the relation of plato s metaphysics to the epistemological ethical and political aspects of plato s theory of education and shows how plato s basic positions bear directly on the most fundamental questions faced by contemporary education

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this full length study of plato s dialogue phaedrus now in paperback is written in the belief that such concerted scrutiny of a single dialogue is an important part of the project of understanding plato so far as possible from the inside of gaining a feel for the man s philosophy the focus of this account is on how the resources both of persuasive myth and of formal argument for all that plato sets them in strong contrast nevertheless complement and reinforce each other in his philosophy not only is the dialogue in its formal structure a dovetail of myth and argument but the philosophic life that it praises is also shaped by an acknowledgement of the limitations of argument and the importance of mythical understanding by means of this correlation of form and content plato invites his readers through the very act of reading to take a first step along the path of the philosophical life

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