Angelina Gerus, "Entry on: Socrates in Love [Socrate est amoureux] by Yann Le Bras, Salim Mokaddem ", peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1382. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

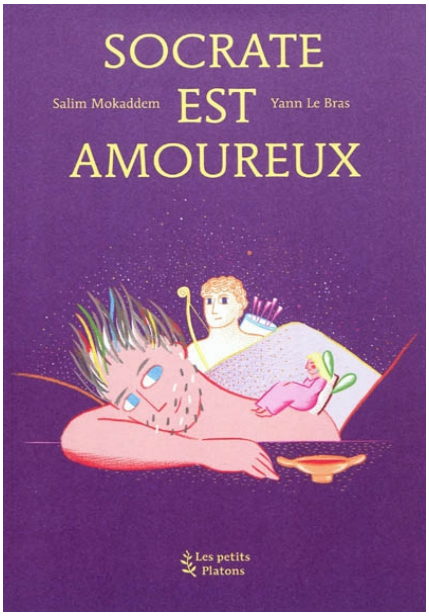
Yann Le Bras , Salim Mokaddem

Socrates in Love [Socrate est amoureux]

France (2011)

TAGS: Alcibiades Aristophanes Athens Eros Greece Greek Philosophy Plato Socrates Symposium





Courtesy of the Publisher.

General information	
Title of the work	Socrates in Love [Socrate est amoureux]
Country of the First Edition	France
Country/countries of popularity	worldwide
Original Language	French
First Edition Date	2011
First Edition Details	Salim Mokaddem, *Socrate est amoureux*. Paris: Les petits Platons, 2011, 64 pp.
ISBN	9782361650384
Official Website	The book's page on the official website of the publishing house (Accessed: November 5, 2021).
Available Onllne	Available for purchase on the official website of the publishing house (Accessed: November 5, 2021).
Genre	Adaptation of classical texts*, Adaptations, Fiction, Illustrated works, Philosophical fiction, Short stories
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Angelina Gerus, University of Warsaw, angelina.gerus@gmail.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Katarzyna Marciniak, University of Warsaw, kamar@al.uw.edu.pl Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com

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Creators



Yann Le Bras (Illustrator)

Yann Le Bras is an illustrator based in Strasbourg, France. He studied visual arts at Rennes II University. He now works as an illustrator with the educational department of the Tomi Ungerer Museum. The first book illustrated by Yann Le Bras was *La Mort du Divin Socrate* (*The Death of Divine Socrates*, 2010). Among his later works are *Le roi Midas et ses oreilles d'âne* (*Midas the King and His Donkey Ears*, 2012), *Socrate sort de l'Ombre* (*Socrates steps out of the Shadow*, 2012), and *Socrate Président !* (*Socrates the President !*, 2017).

Source:

Official website (accessed: December 2, 2021).

lespetitsplatons.com (accessed: December 2, 2021).

Bio prepared by Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk and Angelina Gerus, University of Warsaw, angelina.gerus@gmail.com



Courtesy of the Author.

Salim Mokaddem , b. 19..
(Author)

Salim Mokaddem is a contemporary French philosopher, writer, professor agrégé in philosophy, and former Presidential adviser of Niger. Having received his PhD and agrégation at the University Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, from 1995 to the present, he teaches philosophy at the University of Montpellier. He has a major interest inter alia in the history of philosophy (from antiquity to modern times),

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the philosophy and anthropology of education and childhood, in post-humanism et trans-humanism. His book for children *Socrate est amoureux* (Socrates in Love), an adaptation of Plato's *Symposium*, issued in 2011 by "Les Petits Platons" publishing house, was translated into 10 languages.

Sources:

linkedin.com profile (Accessed: November 5, 2021).

editions-harmattan.fr (Accessed: November 5, 2021).

lirdef.edu.umontpellier.fr (Accessed: November 2, 2021).

ORCID profile (Accessed: November 5, 2021).

Bio prepared by Angelina Gerus, University of Warsaw, angelina.gerus@gmail.com

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Additional information

Translation

Turkish: *Sokrates'in Aşkı*, trans. Haldun Bayrı, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2012, 64 pp.

Spanish: *Sócrates está enamorado*, trans. Gemma Rovira Ortega, Bogotá: Editorial Panamericana, 2014, 64 pp.

Russian: *Влюблённый Сократ* [Vlyublyonnyj Sokrat], trans. Aleksandra Sokolinskaya, Moskva: Ad Marginem, 2016, 64 pp.

Albanian: *Sokrati i dashuruar*, trans. Saverina Pasho, Tiranë: Papirus, 2017, 64 pp.

Summary

Socrates heads to Agathon's banquet on the occasion of the poet's victory in the city's competition. The guests eagerly await his arrival and begin a discussion on Eros, the god of Love. The artist Phaedrus calls him the oldest of the gods and notes that he inspires lovers to show courage, for example, on the battlefield, since nothing could shame more than to be seen as a coward in the eyes of a beloved one. The writer Pausanias specifies that there are two Erotes and two Aphrodites, which means that there are two kinds of love: terrestrial (sensual) and heavenly. Then, in contrast to Plato's dialogue, Agathon speaks, he describes this god as the most tender, awakening feelings in the hearts of mortals and gods alike and transforming a lover into a poet. After the applause, Eryximachus, the doctor, takes the floor, pointing out that love is a universal law and that Eros himself combines opposite characteristics – discord and harmony, need and prosperity. Comediographer Aristophanes recounts the Myth of the Androgynous, whereby love is understood to be the search for one's missing half and the happy reunion of these two pieces. After a short discussion, Socrates begins his speech, retelling the teaching of the priestess Diotima about the Ladder of Love, which is also a teaching about Beauty. Then, in a moment of common tension, Alcibiades appears, praising the philosopher so much that he seems akin to the god Eros. The feast continues, and before going home, Socrates confesses that the object of his love, which gives meaning to life, is no other than philosophy. A new day begins.

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Analysis

Based on a presentation by Angelina Gerus *"Socrates in Love": How to Introduce Plato to the Youngest* on the conference "Our Mythical History: Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to the Heritage of Ancient Greece and Rome" (May 22–26, 2019; Warsaw, Poland). Summary in the conference booklet is available online at omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl (Accessed: November 5, 2021).

Socrate est amoureux (Eng. *Socrates in Love*) by Salim Mokkadem is an adaptation of Plato's *Symposium* entertainingly recounted for young readers. It may serve as a primer engaging a child into philosophy and Platonic theory of Forms in particular. Moreover, regarding philosophy, the story brings to light the themes of love and sexuality, truth and wisdom, which are of great importance to young audiences.

The title shifts the focus from the banquet and its participants to Socrates and his mysterious object of love. Therefore, the philosopher's superiority over the others is emphasised clearly: he is expected to be the main character, whose figure is crucial for the storyline, and he is supposed to guide readers through the text.

Although the device enriches the story with explanations and comments, the omniscient narrator is not involved in the plot. Moreover, Plato's prologue is eliminated so that the text is no longer the story of Aristodemus being recounted by Apollodorus to his friend Glaucon. At the same time, all the discourses of Plato's *Symposium* (those of Phaedrus, Pausanias, Agathon, Eryximachus, Aristophanes, Socrates and Alcibiades) are present in Mokaddem's book, however, slightly reordered. Thereby it deprives itself of the philosophical significance of the original form (since each speech stands as a link in a chain of the concept of love, from its lowest to its highest level). As a result, such a series of orations, typical for the symposium as a prose genre in classical literature, is transformed into a short story with many dialogues.

The figure of Socrates, who is a protagonist of the book, dominates both verbal and visual narration (as the book is generous with illustrations). The story begins straight from the moment when the philosopher, "shaved, perfumed and wearing fancy slippers" (p. 7), heads to the banquet held by Agathon. This character also enables a chiastic compositional structure: as the text starts with his arrival, it

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ends when he's gone in the morning. Socrates is represented as a vivid, historical person more than it was in Plato's texts. This aspect is re-enforced not only by indicating the years of birth and death of the thinker placed on the front flip of the jacket and followed by a short anecdote by Diogenes Laertius (cf. D. L. II.5.36-37), but also by a remark of Aristophanes in the text itself. Interrupting Socrates' speech to compare his parents to the ones of Eros, the comic playwright stresses their resemblance, in this manner providing readers with some additional information from the philosopher's bio. In the children's book, biographical elements aim to show Socrates in a more realistic way that should bring him closer to the young reader.

Like in the Greek text, Socrates turns to be an intermediary for Plato's ideas, albeit to a lesser extent than in the dialogue. In simple terms, the famous Ladder of Love, referring to the mantineian prophetess Diotima, is set out explicitly: as a gradual progression up the ladder from love to the body, through love to all the beautiful bodies, through love to the soul, finally through love to Beauty. Thus, the speech of Socrates can also be considered an argument in favor of the doctrine of Forms. Although in this very book there is no purpose in introducing Plato's ontology to children in its entirety (since, for example, the Allegory of the Cave or the theory of soul are represented in another publication within "Les Petits Platons" series), it makes readers gain the knowledge and experience from interaction with the text and absorb the codes that will facilitate one's further access to Plato's doctrine and philosophy as a whole.

Besides being a stepping-stone to Plato's philosophy, the short story stands as a tribute to Socrates. The character is thoughtful, virtuous, ironic, more attractive and interesting than others; as Roland Barthes notes in "A Lover's Discourse", Socrates is *atopos* – atypical and unclassifiable in the eyes of a subject in love. Everybody, including a reader, eagerly looks forward to his arrival at Agathon's, to his speech as a culmination point. In the book, Socartes behaves in an emotive way: he comments on the discourses, smiles, laughs, raises his eyes to the heavens, shakes his head or expresses his delight listening to the interlocutors, which push the reader to reflection.

Mokaddem's book demonstrates distinctly and precisely both the ideas of Plato and the Socratic method, maieutics. The story itself ends on a truly Socratic note: "Life without love turns into suffering. Life without philosophy is lacking in the very substance. Yes, I'm in love. I love philosophy, as philosophy is the love to the genuine life"

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	(p. 61). The Socrates's figure continues its guidance further through other books of the series issued by "Les Petits Platons" publishing house, in the books *La Mort du divin Socrate* (*The Death of Socrates*, 2010) by Jean Paul Mongin, *Socrate sort de l'Ombre* (*Socrates comes out of the Shadows*, 2012) and *Socrate Président !* (*Socrates for President!*, 2017) by Yan Marchand.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Alcibiades Aristophanes Athens Eros Greece Greek Philosophy Plato Socrates Symposium
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Communication Desires Knowledge Learning Love Philosophy Relationships Romance Sexuality
Further Reading	Chiesa, Lorenzo, "Le Ressort de l'Amour: Lacan's theory of love in his reading of Plato's *Symposium*", *Angelaki* 11 (2006): 61–81. Lesher, James, Debra Nails et al., eds., *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006. Plato, *Lysis. Symposium. Gorgias*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library 166, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925. Strauss, Leo, *On Plato's Symposium*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
Addenda	This short story, issued by the French publishing house "Les Petits Platons" [The Tiny Platos], is part of the series adapting philosophical texts and ideas of all time for children and teenagers. Written in French, these books now are actively spreading worldwide, translated already into eleven languages. Along with *Socrate est amoureux*, the

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series presents various other books retelling classic philosophical texts or referring to ancient philosophy in another way.

Official website of the publishing house (Accessed: November 5, 2021).

Symposium facts for kids in Kids Encyclopedia Facts, available online at kids.kiddle.co (Accessed: November 5, 2021).

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