Reflection Paper #1

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My paper will argue why I believe Phaedrus’ speech from Symposium provides the best and most clear description of loves’ influence on people. Symposium is the retelling of a party hosted at a fellow Athenians house that gets out of hand as everyone starts drinking and gets drunk. Each member of the party gives a speech on the topic of love, and I believe that Phaedrus gives the best speech of them all.

Phaedrus’ speech does the best at describing the influence of love on people. He says that the influence of love is great. It gets people to do things with honor because they know that the eyes of their lover are upon them because they desire to have their lover put them on a metaphorical pedestal and worship them for the deeds they have done. “If only there were a way to start a city or an army made up of lovers and the boys they love! Theirs would be the best possible system of society, for they would hold back from all that is shameful, and seek honor in each other’s eyes.”[[1]](#footnote-1) As mentioned in the quote above, these lovers are also motivated by failures. They do not wish to be seen in the eyes of their lover doing any shameful acts. This motivation is so strong in fact that these lovers will do anything they can just to keep the one they love safe and in the right state of mind, as mentioned in Plato’s Symposium. “For a man in love would never allow his loved one, of all people, to see him leaving ranks or dropping weapons. He’d rather die a thousand deaths!”[[2]](#footnote-2) Another example for the above claim comes from a TV show on Netflix called *The Flash*. In an episode of *The Flash* one of the shows main characters (spoiler alert) Eddie Thawne kills himself to protect his fiancée, Iris West, from being killed along with most of Eddie’s friends by the Reverse-Flash / Eobard Thawne (Eddie does this because Eobard Thawne is his relative from the future, so if Eddie dies then Eobard will never exist). Some short dialogue from this scene stuck out to me: “(Eddie is laying on the ground after shooting himself) Iris: Eddie you’re my hero. Eddie: That’s all I’ve ever wanted to be. Your hero.”[[3]](#footnote-3) This stuck out to me because it almost word for word is exactly what kind of idea Phaedrus is trying to convey in this quote. “Besides, no one will die for you but a lover.”[[4]](#footnote-4) While writing this argument I often thought about a lot of different examples to use to better emphasize what Phaedrus is saying. And that’s the key point: a lot of different examples. To me, it seemed more and more like these ideas that these great philosophers thought of thousands of years ago are in our days thought of by people writing a TV show. They’ve almost faded out of “importance” and into common sense.

It is a fact that love can make us do evil or bad things as well as the good. I feel like these instances are sometimes more prevalent than the previous where love makes us do good things. An example to support yet again comes from *The Flash* TV Show on Netflix. In this episode a deal is struck between the seasons main villain, Zoom, and one of the good guys, Dr. Harrison Wells. Wells agrees to help Zoom steal the Flash’s speed (which involves draining The Flash of the thing that gives him his speed, the Speed Force and in turn injuring him) and give it back to Zoom in exchange for the life of Dr. Wells’ daughter, Jesse, who Zoom has in captivity. This specific dialogue explains it all: “Jesse: Please don’t let him [Zoom] take me back! Dr. Wells: I won’t! (The screen flashes and Zoom took Jesse back to her cell and back again) Zoom: Now decide. In return for your daughter’s life. Dr. Wells: I’ll do it. I will help you steal The Flash’s speed.”[[5]](#footnote-5) This scene could cause some controversy. Dr. Wells is injuring the Flash in turn for his daughter’s life, which does not seem right at all. Dr. Wells is in the show to help the Flash get faster and by doing this he is making him slower. One might presume his intentions are to hurt the Flash when they are in fact to save his daughter. Dr. Well’s daughter is the only thing he has left. He loves his daughter dearly and would do nearly anything for her, which ties us back to the earlier mention of doing anything for a lover, even though this relationship is more of a Companionate one rather than Romantic.

I strongly believe that the speech of Phaedrus in Plato’s Symposium offers the best description of loves influence on the actions and decisions of lovers.

Work Cited Page

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“Fast Enough.” *The Flash*, season 1, episode 23, The CW, 19 May. 2015. Netflix, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80057465?trackId=14277283&tctx=0%2C22%2C15134aea-b553-4a03-8621-e436f7952c0d-80228473>

“Running to Stand Still.” *The Flash*, season 2, episode 9, The CW, 8 Dec. 2015. Netflix, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80094342?trackId=14170289&tctx=0%2C8%2Ca73cc89c-5e3c-4554-8b80-dec2ec42fd1e-80052105>

1. Plato, *Symposium*. Indianapolis and Cambridge, 1989, 5th. 178E – 179A [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Plato, *Symposium.* Indianapolis and Cambridge, 1989, 5th. 179A [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Fast Enough.” *The Flash*. The CW. May 19th, 2015. TV. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Plato, *Symposium.* Indianapolis and Cambridge, 1989, 5th. 179B [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “Running to Stand Still.” *The Flash*. The CW. December 8th, 2015. TV. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)