

Article

Plato: White and Non-white Love

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Plato's dialogues, the *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*, provide a reasonable explanation of love. G. Vlastos and M. Nussbaum do not share such an opinion. The former contends that Plato's view of love is about loving only a person's beauty, but not the entire person; thus, it falls short of an appropriate explanation of love. The latter holds that a theory of love should be complete, and that Plato's one is incomplete on the grounds that it does not account for personal love. These criticisms will be re-evaluated in light of the duality of love (the white and non-white horses—in *Phaedrus*) as well as participants' views in the *Symposium*; a re-assessment will weaken the mentioned objections. This paper contends that from the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, one can have a fruitful understanding of being in love, being out of love, falling in love, loving for its own sake and being erotically in love. In order to account for these related issues of love it is important to consider Plato's works in terms of his "official" and "unofficial" views. The former is construed as the doctrine of the lover or loving for its own sake: this is associated with Diotima's views which are repeated by Socrates. With reference to the latter, it is possible to explain what personal love or being in love, being out of love, falling in love, and being erotically in love involve. Erotic love will be interpreted as an extension of our philosophical conception of love, related to views of love that are mentioned in the *Symposium* other than Socrates' report of Diotima's conceptions. This paper is divided into two parts: the first one will show views of love in the *Symposium*. That is, being in love, being out of love, falling in love and loving for its own sake will be discussed. In addition, the forementioned criticisms will be re-evaluated. In the second section, we will show that Aristophanes' speech expresses erotic love, and then Kant's objections will be explained and discussed.

Part One: Unofficial notion of love and the concept of being in love

In the *Symposium*, Agathon invited Socrates and others to his banquet. Including the host, there were eleven of them, and the twelfth being drunk entered when the banquet was nearly finished. On that particular occasion,

each participant speaks about what love is. Sitting in a circle and speaking from left to right, the first speaker is Phaedrus.¹

Phaedrus presents an explanation of being in love in accordance with the origin of love: there was chaos and then the first god, Eros - the first-light, was born.² Eros (lust, love and sex) organizes everything in the universe according to his own nature. Phaedrus' notion of love suggests a conqueror of chaos, and that love is something good and honorable. If there were no love among human beings, we would live in a state of chaos. Harmony is insured by love among people which naturally lead to procreation. While it is not a necessary condition of love *per se*, Phaedrus' inclusion of procreation leads to a contextual import of sexual intercourse or carnal pleasure in the discourse. Meanwhile, interpreting love in terms of being in love follows the discussion of affection, friendship, cooperation, and mutual respect as contingents to personal love. As it is appropriate to hold that Phaedrus' view of love, being a cornerstone in our pursuit and life, involves the agreeable and passionate life with others; love then for Phaedrus is considered as personal and passionate – an intimate bond between lovers.

In proving that love is “the greatest good, Phaedrus proceeds by showing how lovers act in certain situations. Love inspires lovers to do exceptional things that are considered to be honorable and heroic: “Besides, no one will die for you but a lover, and a lover will do this even if she's a woman.”⁴ Being in love for Phaedrus is like being in an inspired state of madness; this is positive in terms of what a lover can do for his beloved. He adds: “If only there were a way to start a city or an army made up of lovers and the boys they love(,) (t)heirs would be the best possible system of society, for they would hold back from all that is shameful, and seek honor in each others' eyes(.) Even a few of them, in battle side by side, would conquer all the world, I'd say.”⁵ A lover is willing to sacrifice his own life for his beloved; lovers are the best people for protecting one another. All this does not only indicate an intense and intimate relationship between lovers, but it also shows that their relationship and affection toward one another are mutual. For instance, in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, both the lover and the beloved commit suicide because they are prevented from living their lives passionately and sexually together – sharing themselves equally.⁶ Provisionally, our discussion of being in love between lovers involves mutual attraction, affection, sexual intercourse, sensibility, and intellectual responses: all these sorts of sharing we usually consider as personal love. Although Phaedrus shows us what lovers

¹ *Great Dialogues of Plato*, trans. by W.H.D. Rouse and ed. by Eric H. Warmington and Philip G. Rouse (New York: A Mentor Book, 1956), 73.

² Plato, *Symposium*, trans. by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1989), 178B. Other references will be abbreviated as *Symposium*, followed by paragraphs numbers.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 179B.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 178E-179A.

⁶ W. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. by B.A Mowat and P. Werstine (New York: A Washington Square Press, 1992).

and beloved can do for each other in the *Symposium*, in the dialogue Phaedrus, he informs us about the consequences when the opposite occurs.

Phaedrus presents Lysias' concept of being out of love

Phaedrus, which is about making speech, Plato reports the dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus. Phaedrus accepts the content of the written speech from Lysias, the son of Cephalus, and reads it to Socrates. The script provides an eloquent analysis of the experiences of being out of love, of which interpretation provides us with Plato's unofficial view.

Lysias' letter, which can be summarized in three sentences, reveals that being in love does not always lead to a permanent commitment between lovers; there are negative consequences in being in love, and we should interpret them as leading up to a transition from being in love to being out of love. To say that being in love is in a transitional state is to also affirm that a lover suppresses his emotional, sensual, and sexual attraction from the beloved, and this kind of stagnated period can continue until a separation occurs between them – being out of love. Being out of love can occur in any of the following ways:

1. a dependable relation between people without carnal pleasure,
2. sexual intercourse without any emotional attachment, and
3. the absence of emotional and sexual relationship.

First, it generally refers to a person's relationship to beautiful things, people, as well as interpersonal relationships, friendship, the upholding of responsibilities, feeling duty bound, a tendency to be altruistic, etc. All these are considered as dependency relations without sex. Generally, a mutual desire of sexual intercourse is absent, acknowledging that one partner may desire carnal pleasure while the other does not. The first point does not exclude the following situation: one lover falls out while the beloved still loves the lover; this is considered as being out of love. In addition, dependency relations or secondary ones can be mutual, and they are about a lover's commitment and agreement to the beloved; they can be about formal or informal contracts or agreements between individuals. There can also be a unilateral decision and action from a particular partner to still desire the other without actually being in love with that person; in this case, the sexual component is not missing. Second, though personal love involves attraction, sensuality, and cognitive and sexual responses toward each other as reciprocal, it shows that sexual intercourse and causal sex without other components of personal love. The last point should be construed as another instance of being out of love, and it occurs if both lovers agree on a psychophysical separation from one another.

With being out of love, we do not deny that lovers can occasionally revamp their relationship to the level of being in love, but this depends on the participants themselves. With respect to the distinction between a lover and a

non-lover, Lysias writes: “You should know that a lover regrets the favours he does once his desire comes to an end, whereas it stands to reason that there is never a time when a non-lover will change his mind. For if he exerts himself to do a favour, he does so willingly (.)”⁷ Though there can be an abrupt or gradual transition from being in love to being out of love, Lysias writes that being passionately in love seems to be a temporary commitment, and he adds that when people are in love, they neglect their friends, families, properties, etc. They often try very hard to please one another, and while a lover realizes how little his world has become, his sensibility toward the beloved has drastically declined; hate, quarrel, jealousy, and anger surge up and undermine being in love. Accordingly, a lover might prefer someone else. Though this is the case, one may consider Phaedrus’ view as insufficient; within this context, Lysias’ contention should be seen as a development of Phaedrus’ one. In support of the concept of being out of love, Kierkegaard agrees that one cannot be in love with more than one person at a time because being in love involves an equally reciprocal participation between lovers.⁸ Lysias also points out that many young individuals fall in love without knowing their own characters very well, and some of them eventually fall out of love – being out of love.⁹

With respect to being out of love, Gass writes: “Love wears out like a suit of clothes. Love comes and goes like the cloud. Love is the lie of the lover and the belief of the beloved.”¹⁰ Today it is much easier to share one’s life with another without raising the issue of love between partners. Gass agrees with Phaedrus on ‘genuine’ lovers are rare; it is important to specify that Gass is referring to being in love which transforms to being out of love and contingent or dependent relations hold partners together; he also affirms Lysias’ view of temporary love. Generally, Gass and Lysias show us that Phaedrus’ conception of love is incomplete. We will look at other related views of love in the *Symposium*.

After Phaedrus’ explanation of personal love as an intense activity of being in love in the *Symposium*, the next speaker, Pausanias, expresses his view of love in terms of heavenly and common love.

Pausanias contributes to our understanding of love by expounding its duality and refining Phaedrus’ view. He is arguing for heavenly love and common love (being in love), which is spiritual and about the intellectual pursuit of justice, fairness, knowledge, companionship, beauty, societal health, and others. He furthers that one can love justice, beauty and health, but one cannot be in love with health or justice.

⁷ *Phaedrus*, trans. by Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 231a.

⁸ This position by Soren Kierkegaard can be found in both of his books *Either/Or*, Vol. 1, trans. by D. Swenson and L. Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959) and *Works of Love*, trans. by H. Hong and E. Hong (New York: Harper and Row, 1952).

⁹ *Phaedrus*, 231d.

¹⁰ W. Gass, “Throw the Emptiness out of Your Arms,” in *The Philosophy of Erotic Love*, ed. by Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 453.

Pausanias argues that bodily love suggests a temporal duration since the human body undergoes overt changes, and that it is that being pursued by the common people.¹¹ He is also concerned with humans' exploitation of and in love – with lovers taking advantage of the beloved as older men sexually abuse young boys, etc. (it is not possible to discuss pederasty in this paper). Pausanias holds that there should be laws in society to deter unjust relationships. He states: “As a matter of fact, there should be law forbidding affairs with young boys... Good men, of course, are willing to make a law like this for themselves, but those lovers, the vulgar ones, need external restraint. These vulgar lovers are the people who have given love such a bad reputation(.)”¹² Some old men do not only take young boys to educate them about society laws and politics, but they also make them their lovers; Pausanias forcefully objects to coercive sexual practices. Nonetheless, common love between people is beautiful when both parties benefit, and when the reward is not of mutual advantages, it is considered as ugly. Furthermore, Pausanias indicates that the sentiments that love produces in a person are themselves noble. Thus, personal love is said to be noble.

Falling in Love

Pausanias emphasizes the duality of love without showing how they are related, and the next speaker in the *Symposium*, is Eryximachos. Though his view is unofficial, we will examine this perspective in terms of falling in love.

Eryximachos argues for a balance between heavenly (spiritual) love and common (physical) love. He states: “Such is the power of love—so varied and great that in all cases it might be called absolute. Yet even so it is for greater when love is directed, in temperance and justice, toward the good, whether in heaven or on earth: happiness and good fortune, the bonds of human society, concord with the gods above—all these are among his gifts.”¹³ Though Phaedrus shows us the practical aspect of love, Eryximachos develops the mentioned point and further states that health is beautiful and that diseases are ugly, but they exist in the same body. Because we have practical knowledge, we can change one state to another in order to bring about a moderate state of affairs. In this context, a person is not only conceived physically, but his sense of justice, goodness, compassion, kindness is also valuable. If a person has certain undesirable attitudes or personalities, it is possible to change them, like curing a disease. Eryximachos contends that it is possible to teach a brute to love because he has the capacity to love and further holds that a good practitioner can cure a sick person: “In short, medicine is simply the science of the effects of love on repletion and depletion of the body, and the hallmark of the accomplished physicians is his ability to distinguish the love that is noble from the love that is ugly and disgraceful. A

¹¹ *Symposium*, 181B.

¹² *Ibid.*, 181E.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 188D-188E.

good practitioner knows how to affect the body and how to transform its desires; he can implant the proper species of love when it is absent and eliminate the other sort whenever it occurs.”¹⁴ This view suggests that psychiatrists, psychologists, and marriage counsels try to help people to deal with and to sort out their personal and interpersonal problems in order to live a ‘normal’ life in society with their partners, reviving love.

Eryximachos states that a patient can recover from an illness and then learns how to prevent certain sicknesses. This issue is related to education: a person can learn about justice, fairness, etc. Is it possible to really teach a person to love, say, another person sensually, emotionally, and passionately?

One may be inclined to argue that Eryximachos’ notion of teaching a person to love is suspicious, it is possible. In her book, *Erotic Morality*, Linda Holler reports two case studies of women who suffer from a form of autism, asperger syndrome: “...Asperger patients are socially insolated, cut off from the intersubjective world by an inability to perceive the subjective life of others.”¹⁵ These patients are prisoners of their own bodies because they lack the feeling capacities of their bodies, such as, sensory feelings, emotions, drives, and instincts.¹⁶ Being alienated from others emotionally, sensually, cognitively, and unable to recognize bodily changes, Grandin, a patient, learns to overcome her problems by squeezing herself on a squeeze machine – a device that is used to hold cattle in place for branding and castration. Eventually, the patient experiences sensations, tactile stimulations, emotions, and feelings. Holler argues: “Human cognition finds its evolutionary ground in our sensory-emotional life, and our emotions remain the first and still primary means by which we give material expression to our being in the world...Instead, cognition emerges in the totality that is the lived body, and organism in continual, reciprocal interaction with the world.”¹⁷ The crux of the matter is that cognition is not debarred from our emotions and sensibility. She adds: “The values of intimacy, relatedness, responsibility, caring, and compassion are erotic values arising from sensory feeling and emotional connectedness.”¹⁸ This claim suggests that from a person’s own sensibility she can discern love from hate, pain from pleasure, good from bad, etc. However, Holler does not deny that a person cannot have a rational conception of pain or pleasure; she shows that without having a receptive body that experiences pain or pleasure, a person will have an incomplete understanding of not only others but also of her own emotions and feelings. That is, a person must be consciously aware of her own body and that others are similar in order to develop subjective and intersubjective relationships. Her view shows that a sick body can be healed; after a healing process, the ability to love is possible. From one’s own sensibility, one learns caring, compassion, responsibility,

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 186E-186D.

¹⁵ L. Holler, *Erotic Morality* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

friendship, and emotional and sensual attachment. Thus, Holler's perspective shows us what the prerequisite of falling in love is.

The issue whether we can teach a person to fall in love with another can be answered affirmatively. In Saint Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, he shows how friendship can develop to love. The prince who is looking for friends meets the fox, and the fox says: "To me, you are still nothing more than a little boy who is just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need for you. And you, on your part, have no need for me. To you, I am nothing more than a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world."¹⁹ One may argue that there is a mutual attraction between the prince and the fox, and both of them want to know each other 'better'. The fox teaches the prince about cultural values and that one must be patient in taming: "First you will sit down at a little distance from me – like that – in the grass. I shall look at you out of the corner of my eye, and you will say nothing. Words are the source of misunderstanding. But you will sit a little closer to me, every day."²⁰ Physical attractions are the primary contact between individuals, and then they follow proper rites. Exupéry states: "If, for example, you come at four o'clock in the afternoon, ... I shall begin to be happy. I shall feel happier and happier as the hour advances. At four o'clock, I shall already worry and jumping about. I shall show you how happy I am. But if you come at just any time, I shall never know at what hour my heart is to be ready to greet you."²¹ Falling in love involves at least two persons who are physically attracted to one another; in most cases, such an attraction is emotional, sensual, and cognitive. Exupéry eloquently describes: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eyes."²² We are not alluding to the notion that there is a right or wrong way in falling in love which often leads to being in love. Accordingly to cultural values, falling in love usually takes one form as opposed to others, and it is possible to teach people cultural values in which personal love is endorsed.

In *The Little Prince*, the fox asks the prince to tame her. With respect to the situation and the type of love under consideration, namely falling in love, we are untamed; and yet, we are like an open book to others, revealing certain characteristics: height, eye color, complexion, weight, age, and other observable features. The fox insists that certain cultural rules should be followed in attracting another person, using body language. Holler also informs us that a person should tame himself first, experiencing his own sensibility, and from his affection and sensuality, he can share his feelings with others. In other words, a tamer firstly tames himself, so that others can infer from his behavior other qualities.

¹⁹ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince* (New York: Harbrace Paperbound Library, 1971), 84.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

²² *Ibid.*, 87.

Meanwhile, Socrates indicates that love is a creative force that pursues beautiful things, and each person is endeavor with the potential to love. His view also suggests that everyone chooses his love from the ranks of beauty according to his character, and this he makes his god, and fashions and adorns as a sort of image which he worships.²³ Each person carries a representation of an ideal person for him or her, and when someone comes along, nearly fitting his or her mental representation, there might be an attraction between both persons, granted that both of their representations generally match. Though they can be mental attraction (views, ideas, beliefs, etc.), the most common one is physical; in forming attachment, individuals are interested in sharing themselves. Thus, similarities are highly affirmed and dissimilarities often slip their attentions or are undermined. Since falling in love tends to involve mutual attraction, sensuality, etc., similarities among people can bring individuals together and then love can flourish among compatible partners. In addition, age plays an important role in attractions; for example, the young seek sexual partners and the old desire partnership and friendship. Thus, falling in love is not a quality of the white horse though both horses respond to beauty, the white horse represents a denial of a reciprocal relationship. All this we will examine in the forthcoming section.

Plato's view of Love

In the *Symposium*, Agathon, who spoke after Aristophanes, emphasizes on the beloved; accordingly, there are three central points to consider. First, he provides a dualistic conception of love and tries to identify the quality of love. Love is the youngest god who is beautiful and young. In human beings, love seeks moderation and it has a moral character. Unlike Plato's interpretation of cardinal virtues, Agathon conceives of justice, bravery, and wisdom as self-control, bravest, and artistic skills, respectively; he also holds that the desire to create or produce works of art is influenced by love. He further contends that love is drawn to beautiful things not ugly ones.²⁴ Second, Socrates rejects Agathon's argument of love. Third, after Socrates questions Agathon, certain premises about love seem to be clear, and Socrates uses them as his starting point about love. Agathon accepts the following

²³ *Phaedrus*, 252a – e.

²⁴ *Symposium*, 197C.

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premises.²⁵

1. Love is the love of something, and it desires that which it is the love of.
2. If love desires something it needs, there is a necessary relation between the desire and object of love.
3. Love is the preservation of what a person has and wants to have in the future.
4. Love is the love of beautiful and good things not ugly ones.

Though Agathon's perspective is considered as a transition to Plato's official view of love and his conception of reality, we will look at Socrates' notion of falling in love and being in love with respect to his simile, the two horses and charioteer.

In the dialogue, *Phaedrus*, Socrates explains the creation and reincarnation of the soul. In addition, he uses a simile to account for how the soul is moved: a charioteer with a pair of winged horses of which one of them is white and is of noble breed. This is an obedient horse which seeks wisdom, beauty, goodness, or the essence of external things – forms, goodness, and beauty. Thus, it is considered as the pilot of the soul, and it pursues beauty.²⁶ The other horse is dark, is of ignoble breed, and does not heed to the charioteer's whip. It seeks earthly pleasure. The non-white horse seeks physical pleasure, and Plato describes flattering love as falling in love and being in love for mortals in the lengthy forthcoming quote.

But when someone who has only recently been initiated, (251a) and who took in plenty of the sights to be seen then, sees a marvelous face or a bodily form which is a good reflection of beauty, at first he shivers and is gripped by something like the fear he felt then, and the sight also moves him to revere about being though completely insane that stops him from sacrificing to his beloved as if he were a cult-statute or a god. Following this sight, the kind of change comes over him that you would expect a shivering fit, and he begins to sweat and to run an unusually high fever, because the reception through his eyes of the effusion of beauty causes him to get hot... (In fact, (251c) the soul of someone who is beginning to grow wings experiences exactly the same sensations that children feel when they are teething, with their teeth just starting to grow, and they feel an itching and a soreness in their gums... It (251e) is too disturbed to sleep at night or stay still by day, and it rushes around

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 199E-201D.

²⁶ *Phaedrus*, 246a-246b.

to wherever it thinks it might see the boy who bears the beauty it longs for. The sight of him opens the irrigation channels of desire and frees the former blockage; it finds relief and an end to the stinging pain, and once more enjoys this, for the time being, as the most intense pleasure. This (252a) is not something it willingly does without, and it values no one more than the beautiful boy. It is oblivious to mothers, brothers, and its friends... Indeed, it is ready to play the part of a slave and to sleep wherever it is allowed to, as long as it is as close as possible to the object of its desire...(I)his (252b) is the experience men call love(.)²⁷

Since we are trying to understand the concept of *being in love*, the symbol of the non-white horse is of importance because it suggests how personal love manifests itself in terms of enjoying beauty, say, a person, and that love often has a temporal duration between lovers. The soul responds to beauty; as both the white and the dark horse are affected by the presence of beauty; we can interpret this as falling in love. The dark horse experiences beauty as being in love, and beauty, the object of love, is also attracted to the lover; thus, an intense emotional feeling with sexual attraction between a lover and the beloved emerges. We notice that in terms of being in love the entire person is affected because a lover desires the beloved as much as the beloved wants the lover. Moreover, because the dark horse seeks earthly pleasure, it can be in love with beauty; alternatively, this is considered as personal love but not as self-love.

The white one, on the other hand, cannot experience being in love with respect to having a mutual relationship; it can only love beauty and goodness, for it mostly reveals a lover's feelings and beliefs about the object of love. Furthermore, the white horse can suffer the consequences of the dark horse by making the soul descend to a lower level. If this is the case, Socrates cannot be in love as in being in love because he has ascended. Socrates' white horse is stronger than his dark one. All this shows that it is appropriate to hold in accordance with the nature of the dark horse, a person can be in love, being in love. Thus, Plato also explores lovers' emotional attachment, desires of sexual pleasure, and intellectual responses in terms of being in love. Physical attractions between lovers, emotional and sensual desires of each other, the need to be together, and a degree of madness are positive sentiments between lovers. All this shows an intense relationship and a continuation from falling in love to being in love. The dark horse seeks passionate love and wants to enjoy beauty sensually and emotionally; thus, it is appropriate to hold that sensuality and emotions are some characteristics of personal love. Since the dark horse is stubborn and does not always heed to the charioteer's whip, it desires beauty in the context of being in love. Thus, Plato shows us what is involved in being in

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 251a-252b.

love in terms of the dark horse; accordingly, his notion of personal love is unofficial.

In the *Symposium*, Plato's official view of love is expressed by Diotima – Socrates' mentor. Socrates accounts how she questions him and they agree on certain premises: In the questioning process, we learn about the quality of love: it is a great spirit that is between mortal and immortal; it is neither beautiful nor good, but it desires good and beautiful things as its object. The origin of love comes about from the union between a god and a mortal, and human beings desire immortality which can be attained through love.

According to Diotima, love gives birth in beauty, and this can occur in two ways: though the soul and body. The former is the most efficient mean for acquiring immortality: love desires beautiful and good things and is attracted to beautiful bodies. The latter involves giving birth. Through reproduction, a mortal strives for immortality. Socrates indicates that procreation involves both the soul and body, and it is a divine urge in mortal. The desire to procreate is evoked by beautiful things not ugly ones. Some people express their creative force through birthing; this is beautiful, and it is a process of immortality. For Plato, birthing is link to the spiritual world because it is a continuous process – not an end in itself. One may point out that birthing does not occur without any meaningful human relationships, such as affection, mutual respect, and trust. It seems that personal love is implicitly acknowledged in birthing because the concept of continuation presupposes certain fundamental requisites: living together, caring, education, etc. Partners are considered as a team, and this is inferred from the claim: birthing is not considered as an end but as a process which requires certain basic cooperation and caring between partners. One may argue that this is a very narrow conception of personal love. Though this may be the case, it gives a valuable reason why a man and woman want to live together. If there is no personal love, birthing is reduced to breeding; Plato's view suggests that caring and responsibility are included in birthing because it is a creative process. Thus, with respect to our interpretation of being in love, an affirmation of a mutual relationship between a lover and the beloved is established.

It is appropriate to hold that Socrates experiences being out of love. In the *Symposium*, an explicit distinction between the beloved and a lover or being a lover shows us that more emphasis is placed on the lover than on the object of love. The lover's pursuit and experience are of importance; Socrates indicates that a true lover seeks immortality and states: "...when he makes contact with someone beautiful and keeps company with him, he conceives and gives birth to what he has been carrying inside him for ages."²⁸ According to Plato's official view, a lover must nourish his soul, and by doing this, he nurtures human relationships without indulging in carnal pleasure. In addition, one should interpret how a lover devotes to beautiful bodies. Socrates states: "(B)eauty of all bodies is one and the same."²⁹ In the *Symposium*, Plato

²⁸ *Symposium*, 209C.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 210B.

expresses that a lover can freely move from one instance of beauty to another in order to ascent. He explains: “The result is that he will see the beauty of knowledge and be looking mainly not a beauty in a single example, ... but the lover is turned to the great sea of beauty... (H)e catches sight of such knowledge and it is the knowledge of such beauty.”³⁰ Accordingly, one tends to conceive of a philosopher as a lover of wisdom, for he is a seeker of immortality through his soul rather than through birthing or personal love. For Plato, love is one spirit among several which pursues goodness and beautiful things, and through the medium of love, a lover can arrive at the Highest Good – a mystical state of consciousness.

Since the objects of love are beautiful things, what are beautiful things? How should a person pursue beautiful things? In answering these questions, one will observe that it is possible to love beauty, a person, for its own sake and that it is possible to love several things simultaneously. This aspect of love is better understood in terms of the white horse, or being out of love. In *Phaedrus*, the white horse is of noble breed and it participates in beauty, goodness, and forms. The soul has a recollection of beautiful things and beauty is pursued through contemplation. Socrates states that a man must have intelligence of universals and be able to proceed from the many particulars of sense to one conception of reason; he relates this to the recollection of those things which our soul once saw while following god, and it strives toward its true nature.³¹ This fits in well with Plato’s view of reality as being dualistic. The world of becoming refers to the physical world that is available to our senses and we perceive changes; the other is the world of being which is the world of forms and ideas and they are absolute, independent, transcendent, and never change. The latter causes the world of becoming and the nature of things. The soul has a recollection of the world of being (universals) and (particulars) in the world of becoming which partakes in the world of being. Thus, when the soul perceives beauty, a person, it recognizes another is also beautiful, and so on. The soul ascends; that is, its wings swell in the presence of beauty. Accordingly, Socrates’ version of love is a lover of beautiful things, and beautiful things are perceived by the mind and propel the soul upward. In *Phaedrus*, Socrates reminds us that at the sight of beauty, the beloved, the dark horse wants to stop and enjoy it. Though it wants to obtain pleasure, the charioteer will try his best to refrain the dark horse from its goal. Moreover, Plato’s official view of love is shown by the white horse, pursuing the good through love.

Plato’s *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* explore the duality of love. Socrates prefers the highest order of love (being out of love) by explaining that love is a lover of beautiful things and lovers are inspired by beautiful things in order to ascent; he is not particularly concerned with personal love – the nature of the dark horse – because *Phaedrus* has already accounted for it. The white horse

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 210D.

³¹ *Phaedrus*, 247d, 249a – 250b.

reflects Socrates' nature in accordance with neither of them can experience being in love.

Socrates is explicit about what he means by the phrase 'the love of beauty', a person's beauty will not show itself to him like a face or hands or any bodily parts at all, nor as a discourse or a science, nor as residing in anything, but being by itself with itself always in simplicity; beginning from beautiful things, a lover mounts upwards.³² There are two related points; first, a person is a target of beauty which the mind grasps. Bodily beauty does not present itself in terms of physical parts; it partakes the entire person that the mind apprehends and contemplates. Second, we can neither being in love nor falling in love with a target of beauty; both activities involve a reciprocal interaction. On the other hand, Phaedrus' notion of personal love shows us that a person is attracted to those who closely match his view of an ideal person, and such an attraction tends to be visual, physical, erotic, emotional, sensual, etc.: all this can be inferred from the nature of the non-white horse. Eryximachos who insists on the balance between heavenly and common love suggests that falling in love mostly begins with physical attraction from which a lover infers that the beloved might be intelligent, honest, trustworthy, appealing, sensitive, and caring. If there are other undesirable qualities, it is possible to re-educate lovers. With respect to personal love, falling in love seems to be a natural response to beauty, a person. Once participants are attracted to one another, they are inspired in a positive manner to build an intimate relationship. Being attracted to someone is much more than a person's manner of speaking, buttock, eye color, muscles, face, simile, intelligence, breasts, height, legs, age, etc. Socrates, on the other hand, does not commit himself to naming bodily parts as a constituent of beauty. He uses ugly to show the opposite of beautiful, and it is an empty box in which bodily parts are excluded from its content. In the *Symposium*, Socrates implicitly endorses other speakers' views of personal love; for example, it is possible to heal an ailing body. In Phaedrus, the dark horse does not see bodily parts per se as beauty, but the whole person is seen as ravishing.

Alcibiades' comments and other criticisms

The last speaker in the circle is Alcibiades, who speaks about his personal love affair with Socrates, contends that he was treated indifferently. According to his discourse, it seems that he still loves Socrates and believes that Socrates loves Agathon. Alcibiades intends to disrupt the relationship between Socrates and Agathon. Socrates' relationship with Alcibiades is non-physical, and it is important to note that Alcibiades has practical knowledge about love and protests against being treated as an object that Socrates uses for his own ascend, using the victim as an instance of beauty in order to ascend to the form – the universal. Alcibiades expresses a 'simple truth' by comparing Socrates to a god statue. At the end of Alcibiades' speech, everyone laughs;

³² *Symposium*, 211B – C.

this suggests that the speaker's honesty is fully acknowledged; thus, nobody comments on it. – this is a dialectic jump, giving a courteous closure to your narrative on the Symposium.

Nussbaum's objection, meanwhile, is that a single person's love is essential and it should not be used as a mean for Socrates' ascent. Some philosophers use Alcibiades' discourse to raise objections against Plato's theory of love. Let us look at her arguments more closely. In Nussbaum's contention for personal love, she considers Alcibiades' poetic speech as being about a particular love, namely, it is a story of Alcibiades' own life which he acquires through his own experience. She states: "There are some truths about love that can be learned only through experience of a particular passion of one's own."³³ Unlike truth which is established through philosophical reasoning, Alcibiades wants to tell the truth: "... (the) story of Socrates and of the love of Alcibiades for Socrates."³⁴ Alcibiades uses a narrative technique to express his feelings and emotions of his love for Socrates in a vivid manner, using images: statues of the gods, stone statues, a crack, crown, and thunder bolt. Though Alcibiades' love for Socrates is mostly physical, Nussbaum contends: "... the lover's knowledge of a particular object which is gained through intimacy is unique and a valuable kind of practical knowledge."³⁵

According to Nussbaum, personal love involves practical knowledge. It appears that she is sympathetic to Alcibiades' story of his love for Socrates which is a particular love. She contends: "I can choose to follow Socrates, ascending to the vision of the beautiful. But I cannot take the first step on that ladder as long as I see Alcibiades. I can follow Socrates only if, like Socrates, I am persuaded of the truth of Diotima's account; and Alcibiades robs me of this conviction."³⁶ Accordingly, she believes that Alcibiades' story is about ordinary human beings who gain practical knowledge of love rather than having a definition or prescription of love given to them.

We will reevaluate some criticisms that are raised against Plato's view of love. Nussbaum provides a detail analysis of Alcibiades' revelation as being a particular case of a bitter lover, Socrates' lover, and she questions the ascent as being consequential because love has a practical role in everyone's life, for it is about humans' intimacy, emotion, and intellect values in the world.³⁷ She also analyzes Socrates' way of life as being alienated from everyday reality and that his inner world is impenetrable by others. Her evaluation and comment about Alcibiades' confession are pertinent on the grounds that she maintains that after reading a theory of love it should, at least, make one's life more meaningful with respect to improving one's intersubjective relationship. The

³³ M. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 186.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 186.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 190.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

³⁷ M. Nussbaum, "The Speech of Alcibiades," in *The Philosophy of Erotic Love* (1991), 279-316.

crux is that love should enhance one's happiness, and this is robbed from Alcibiades.

Let us construe her point of view in context. First, Socrates cannot be anything else than the white horse that can only love without being in love. Accordingly, he might still love Alcibiades as well as Agathon. Socrates is capable of loving several individuals at the same time; that is, we are alluding to a version of being out of love. Socrates clearly argues in *Phaedrus* that a lover will never forsake his beautiful one. Unfortunately, Alcibiades considers love like the non-white horse and forgets the doctrine of the dark horse: being in love requires a reciprocal sentiment, sexual attraction, and sensibility. Thus, under no circumstance, Alcibiades can be in love in terms of being in love with Socrates. This does not deny that Alcibiades actually loves Socrates, but it affirms that Socrates cannot experience being in love. Second, it is possible that the last speech is intended as a precaution to others about how Socrates practices love and what love signifies for him. With all of Alcibiades' charms, he cannot lure Socrates into the indulgence of carnal pleasure. Third, a Platonist might press the issue that Nussbaum's charges apply to Socrates' practice of love but not to Plato's conception of love which is dualistic: the white horse and non-white horse. The latter can be interpreted in terms of *Phaedrus*' version of personal love. One is aware of the fact that personal love has a temporal duration, for there is no explicit or implicit contract between lovers that their relationship will endure until one of them dies. Gass argues that love comes and goes like the cloud. If this is the case, Alcibiades should have known that the lifespan of being in love between individuals is temporal. In addition, Nussbaum reminds us that Alcibiades has practical knowledge of love; thus, it is evident that he abandons several lovers, and another separation should not be interpreted as a significant issue. We should compliment Socrates for practicing what he teaches. Fourth, from an existentialist point of view, Merleau-Ponty contends that a boy, for example, must be at the right age and maturity to fully experience the significance of sex.³⁸ According to Holler, bodily sensibility is a prerequisite for pleasure and pain. Thus, if Socrates is alienated from his body, he cannot experience being in love, and it is not possible that he deliberately uses any particular person, for his soul recognizes beauty and accents. Finally, the distinction among falling in love, being in love and being out of love requires additional elucidation in order to fully account for Nussbaum's remark and remove certain confusions which may arise from Socrates' discourse.

In most cases, falling in love leads to being in love, and when the later stage occurs, lovers intensively, emotionally, sensually, sexually, or intimately 'share' themselves in an ontological manner. That is, their attractions and affections are reciprocal. On the other hand, being out of love is distinguishable from falling in love and being in love; for example, 'Socrates loves Agathon' does not mean 'Agathon loves Socrates.' In this context,

³⁸ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 1991). This is a common point in his work.

Socrates loves Agathon, Alcibiades, justice, literature, etc. One may claim that being out of love constitutes an impersonal relationship to the extent that it is not equally reciprocal between individuals, and the sexual attraction and the desire to 'share' each other sexually and emotionally are absent. This interpretation seems appropriate with respect to Socrates' situation. Though there are several reasons why being out of love occurs, during an extensive period of living together, lovers switch from being in love to being out of love and vice versa. Gass acknowledges that love does not have a traditional significance: "Love is supposed to be a long-term proposition like loyalty, obedience, and trust(.)"³⁹ A lover is expected to be emotionally and sensually attached to the beloved and in the following ways: being (altruistic, dependable, reliable, responsible, sexy, obedient, just, trustworthy: stable, a caring person, a reliable friend, a calm person, able to practice equality, forgive mistake, support the beloved), and having intuitive knowledge about the beloved's feeling, behavior, and expectation. When being in love becomes stagnated, other relations usually hold individuals together, and certain dependency relations carry lovers onward. Though some dependency relations are related to being out of love, some lovers revolt against secondary relations in love. In a given context in which lovers drift apart, some older people might consider themselves as losers if they separate from their companion because they have intrinsically invested in various ways toward their partner, and a separation might lead them to a worse fate: loneliness.

In certain cases, if being out of love reaches a climax, some lovers try to renew their relationship by creating a romantic atmosphere in order to uplift themselves to a state of being in love. Solomon writes: "It is evident enough that one set of desires in romantic love is the desire to be with, the desire to touch, the desire to caress, and here we are immediately reminded of Aristophanes' lesson: that which manifests itself as a sexual urge in love is actually something much more, a desired to be reunited with, to be one with, one's love. From this, I want to suggest what I take to be the dominant conceptual ingredient in romantic love, which is just this urge for shared identity, a kind of ontological dependency."⁴⁰ Though an important disposition in being in love is sexual intercourse, the motive for a romantic evening can also involve changing the status of lovers' being out of love. Morgan argues against romantic love on the grounds that: "...it produces harmful consequences especially for women because the dependents are often women than men."⁴¹ Her remark is much more applicable to the concept of sharing identity because most dominant lovers believe that they can solve their problems by having sexual intercourse. On the other hand, if both parties take the initiative to re-establish their 'love relationship' to the status of being in love, I agree with the idea of the urge to share identity because a romantic

³⁹ W. Gass, "Throw the Emptiness out of Your Arms," in *The Philosophy of Erotic Love*, 453.

⁴⁰ R. Solomon C., "The Virtue of (Erotic) Love," in *The Philosophy of Erotic Love*, 492-518.

⁴¹ Kathayn Pauly Morgan, "Romantic Love, Altruism, and Self-Respect: An Analysis of Beauvoir," in *The Philosophy of Erotic Love*, 391-416.

evening suggests a mutual agreement between participants. Horney questions dependent relationships between lovers; she states: "Marriage and love have nothing in common. Marriage is primarily an economic arrangement..."⁴² Living with a stranger and having children with that person do not require being in love; love as being out of love binds individuals together with reference to certain shared values, and marriage is a formal dependency contract. Goldman agrees with Horney and argues: "Love, the strongest and deepest element is all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy; love, the defier of all laws, of all conventions; love, the freest, the most powerful molder of human destiny; how can such an all-compelling force be synonymous with the poor little State and Church – begotten weed, marriage."⁴³ It seems that she identifies the nature of personal love, for love suggests a phenomenal experience which surpasses any formal dependency relation, and with respect to Phaedrus' view, we should add that love overcomes chaos.

In our discussion of personal love as involving falling in love, being in love, and falling out of love, the latter shows us that dependencies are built around love and hold individuals together. In addition, it has more to do with a lover's relations than the beloved object; this does not restrict casual sex between individuals on the grounds that emotional attachment is sometimes unimportant. Though being out of love can be critical or non-critical for humans, Socrates neither abuses Alcibiades nor uses him, for there is a misunderstanding between Socrates and Alcibiades. The latter believes that he is in love (being in love) with Socrates and hopes that the other person feels the same way toward him. Unfortunately, Socrates is not sexually attracted to Alcibiades; this sort of misconception is common among people, especially when one person takes the other as a good friend, but the other party conceives of their relationship differently. Thus, Nussbaum's remarks about Socrates uses his love of Alcibiades to promote his own ascent should be taken in terms of Socrates is helpless whenever he confronts beautiful things, and he is a victim of the destiny of his own soul. Moreover, Gass seems to put the issue in perspective by arguing that personal love is not a lifelong commitment.

Vlastos also objects to Plato's theory of love and he writes:

We are to love the person so far, and only insofar, as they are good and beautiful. Now since all too few human beings are masterworks of excellence, and now even the best of those we have the chance to love are wholly free of streaks of the ugly, the mean, the commonplace, the ridiculous, if our love for them is to be only for their virtue and beauty, the individual, in the uniqueness and integrity of his or her individuality, will never be the object of our love. This seems to me the cardinal flaw of

⁴² K. Horney, "Love and Marriage," in *The Philosophy of Erotic Love*, 190-201.

⁴³ E. Goldman, "On the Tragedy of Women's Emancipation and Marriage and Love," *The Philosophy of Erotic Love*, 204-213.

Plato's theory of love. It does not provide for love of whole persons, but only for love of that abstract version of persons which consists of the complex of their best qualities. This is the reason why personal affection ranks so low in Plato's *scala amor* is... This high climatic moment of fulfillment – the peak achievement for which all lesser loves are to be used as steps – is the one farthest removed from affection for concrete human beings.⁴⁴

If human beings are not par-excellence, some of our qualities are not beautiful. If Plato's theory of love is about the whole person but not only about a person's beauty and goodness, Vlastos would accept it. On the other hand, Vlastos believes that Plato's version of love is specifically about a person's beauty not about the entire person. It is quite clear that the white and non-white horses respond to beauty. If the object (the entire object) of love is not beautiful, the horses will not be attracted by it. On the other hand, if Vlastos is arguing that everyone has some beautiful and ugly qualities, Plato provides a misconception of human beings. But Plato's thesis is about there are particular cases of beauty in the physical world. This is the issue not that a person is both beautiful and ugly.

It is important to consider the entire *Symposium* not only Socrates' view because it is relevant to our understanding of the different aspects of love, say, personal love. In *Phaedrus*, we learn that the non-white horse pursues pleasure. In other words, it enjoys beauty, a person, and Socrates does not refer to a person as composite. Socrates loves beauty as well as justice, fairness, the sunset, and knowledge; here we do not refer to, for example, fairness in terms of its composite. Furthermore, Eryximachos reminds us about the balance between heavenly love and common love, indicating that the whole person should be taken as the object of love. Socrates insists that the object of love is the entire person, and this view is supported by Exupéry who states that what is essential is not visible. Thus, Socrates denies reducing a person to composite. Although I sympathize with Vlastos' remark because the love of beauty and goodness seems suspicious, Socrates does not intend to express an ambiguous view. Price argues: "To infer that what I really love is not a person, but a complex of repeatable qualities and irrepeatable relations, seems a category-mistake: we must not confuse the object of emotion with its grounds – whether these are its reasons, citable by the subject, or its causes, perhaps hidden from him(.)"⁴⁵ A lover's relation to an object can be shown in terms of how he feels and thinks about that object, and his relation and feeling do not change the status of the object; another person might conceive of that object differently. Socrates loves beautiful things, and the sunset is beautiful; hence, he loves the sunset. Here, we can consider a lover's relation to the

⁴⁴ G. Vlastos, "The Individual as Object of Love in Plato's Dialogues," in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 1-34.

⁴⁵ A.W Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 98.

object, beauty or a person, but an object is taken as a unique entity; accordingly, we do not usually pick out the composite of the sunset. According to citation twenty-six, Socrates clearly indicates that a lover will never forsake a beautiful one. This suggests that he is alluding to the whole person.

With respect to the forementioned objection and the notion of personal love, Soble, who does not consider his own remark as an objection, states: “Plato’s view does not apply to personal love in exactly the way suggested by his formula – a person loves just and only the beauty and virtue X finds in the beloved Y... For Plato, we love the person’s courage and intelligence, but in no sense he, himself.”⁴⁶ I think that Soble is referring to Plato’s official view; this appears to be the case on the grounds that quote twenty-six and its ramifications have been neglected. In addition, personal love can be inferred from the nature of the non-white horse, and this point is well taken up in this paper. I should insist that if Phaedrus’ perspective of love is not considered as Plato’s one, Soble’s comments has some weight which merely scratches the surface of Plato’s general theory of love; in addition, Soble intends his view as a consolidated comment between Vlastos and Plato. According to the simile in Phaedrus, the white horse signifies the highest level of love; on the other hand, the non-white one suggests personal love between lovers, and it is about intense sexual attractions; the charioteer stands between both realms and he seems to find a compromise and endorses immorality through birthing.

Part Two

According to the nature of the non-white horse in Phaedrus there seems to be the ecstasy of love, a madness between lovers, which surpasses that which is involved in mere personal love and sexual pleasure. In the *Symposium*, Aristophanes’ discourse fills in the missing link about another aspect of love: erotic love. After his hiccup, Aristophanes glorifies the power of love and indicates that if we had known such power, we would have built sanctuaries and altars and scarified to it; his view, I argue, is about erotic love. He contends that human beings were hermaphrodite: “My second point is that the shape of each human being was completely round, with back and sides in a circle; they had four hands each, as many legs as hands, and two faces, exactly alike, on a round neck. Between the two faces, which were on opposite sides, was one head with four ears... In strength and power, therefore, they were terrible, and they had great ambitions. They made an attempt on the gods(.)”⁴⁷ Because of their attempt, Zeus has a scheme to remove ‘man’s wild way by making them weaker’, so he slices through the middle, turning the face of each half to face the cut and with a little touching up of the cut part; thus, we have a male half and a female one from a round person. Aristophanes states: “Now,

⁴⁶ A. Soble, *Philosophy of Sex and Love* (Minnesota: Paragon House, 1998), 117.

⁴⁷ *Symposium*, 189E – 190B.

since their natural form had been cut in two, each one longed for its own other half, and so they would throw their arms about each other, weaving themselves together, wanting to grow together... Love is born into every human being; it calls back the halves of our original nature together; it tries to make one out of two and heal the wound of human nature."⁴⁸ Love is ingrained in human beings and each person seeks his other half; the power of love resides in us and we crave for our other half. When one half meets the other one, they are overwhelmed with affection and passion and never wish to be apart – an ecstasy is found in the melting of themselves into one another: "The two are struck from their senses by love by a sense of belonging to one another, and by desire, and they don't want to be separated from one another, not even for a moment."⁴⁹ Aristophanes argues that if the god of fire, Hephaistos, offers lovers to melt and weld them together, they will accept it.

Aristophanes provides sufficient information about the nature of a 'complete' person as being wild and threatening the gods with their madness; the attachment of both halves constitutes a harmony because the melting effect overflows from each half in order to bring about a unity. This lays the foundation of how erotic love should be interpreted. Do we conceive of erotic love as involving only physical or sexual pleasure? Sexual intercourse is an important part of erotic love. What is erotic love? This is a central question, and we will try to answer it.

In other primates, sexual reproduction involves courtship behavior, and some animals' courtship displays are quite elaborated.⁵⁰ We consider mating behavior as largely motivated by hormones and instinct when animals reach maturity. After a male or female has been found, courtship may arouse sexual motivation, and their synchronized behavior is cues for copulation. Flamingoes display a ritual – their elaborated behavior is synchronized with head flogging, neck being erect, bill angling upward, head turning from side to side, and wings extending and retracting repeatedly. All this is like a harmonious dance between partners, and their movements are well synchronized and continue until the male mounts onto the female.

With the exception of being instinctive, erotic love in humans is mostly unfolded like courtship displays. This type of love is highly charged with bodily expressions – intensive caressing and bodily movements. It appears as though partners tangle each other like a snake, move effortlessly in bed in various positions, kiss each other overwhelmingly, and have intense bodily contact: these displays show an attempt to melt each other. For an observer, participants' behavior seems very passionate and romantic in bed, for bodily movements between individuals occur harmoniously as though each bodily part has a mind in itself; lovers behave as though they want to get under

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 191B – D.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 192C.

⁵⁰ R.B de Sousa and K. Morgan, "Philosophy, Sex and Feminism," in *Atlantis, A Journal of Women's Studies*, 13:2 (1988), 1-10. They stress that several unsuccessful attempts have been made to define erotic love. Nonetheless, we use the phrase 'erotic love' in a specific manner; see the text.

each other's skin – the melting phenomena. Loosing self-control over one's body is often displayed in terms of biting and scratching; this happens when their emotions and sensations become uncontrollable, and the urge to fuse the other to oneself is predominant. However, biting and scratching are unintentional actions. Partners' displays are synchronized until sexual intercourse; sexual intercourse is the climax – the welding phenomena. With respect to erotic love, both participants are highly stimulated and equally excited until the melting changes to welding.

Displays in erotic love are quite unique; each act occurs spontaneously, depending on participants' moods, physical and psychological states of affairs, situation, etc; thus, erotic dispositions are not repeatable on the grounds that a participant's subjectivity has a primary function in determining displays. Accordingly, erotic love is viewed as spontaneous courtship displays, and it has a temporal duration which is often dependent on participants' situations. Under no circumstances, it is suggested that in erotic love one person tries to demoralize the other. It is claimed that erotic love is unique with respect to a person's mood, emotional, sensual, and physical conditions. Because uniqueness and spontaneity are involved, erotic love is a creative act in which visual information is least important, but bodily sensations and expressions propel participants to a different state.

The melting and fusing in erotic love show us how partners act and feel toward one another, and their actions and feelings are very intense and are considered as wild because there are no predefined rules about partners' behavioral dispositions. This is distinguishable from sadomasochism which is a paraphilia, combining both sadistic and masochistic sexual behavioral patterns. Though the main characteristic of sadomasochism is the eroticizing of pain, at least, for an outsider, it is considered as mostly pleasurable and sexual arousing for a sadomasochist. The sadist is the person who inflicts the pain or punishment, and the masochist submits to such humiliation. In most cases, roles are exchanged. The central characteristic of sadomasochism is the interchanging roles of dominance and submissive behavior. Erotic love shares none of such characteristics, for participants' displays gear toward acquiring a higher state of pleasure through harmonious bodily and sensual movements. One may argue that there is a degree of risk in erotic love. This seems to be the case with qualifications; participants can accidentally get injury when physical movements do not occur harmoniously. Injuries are not inflicted intentionally. However, one should not confuse erotic love with gymnastic sexual positions which are often uncomfortable and offensive for one partner. Erotic love can be seen as a ritual with reference to synchronized behavior. Intensive pleasure is sought in the context of Aristophanes' notion of melting and welding of partners.

Though we regard erotic love as courtship displays, primates' courtship behavior is more aggressive in displaying strength with a final goal: sexual intercourse. Their displays are regular. Humans, on the other hand, display their passion and their time span is irregular. The final goal in this kind of love is also carnal pleasure, not procreation per se. Erotic love is generally

distinguishable from 'ordinary sex'. The former is considered as an elaborate display, resembling a dance in which partners try to 'melt' and 'weld' themselves together. Partners are in a state of readiness and participate equally; they do not refrain themselves in any particular manner – a degree of wildness is ingrained in erotic love. The latter is less extensive in terms of it often involves caressing, sexual stimulation and arousal prior to sexual intercourse; in most cases, the dominant partner tends to impose his sexual desire onto his partner through caressing, and stimulating the sexual organs of the other to a point of sexual arousal and then penetration. The submissive partner usually submits in order to avoid interpersonal conflict, anger, resentment, and hate; in addition, one partner tends to be rigid. In rare cases, there might be a very brief form of erotic love that is very pleasurable for both participants. Erotic love can lead to permanent relationship between partners, but this is not a requirement because it is much more dynamic and temporary.

Personal love and erotic love are themes in Plato's works. Though Socrates objects to Aristophanes' view that erotic love is not the highest level of love, he does not reject the doctrine of erotic love. Because we discuss personal love and erotic love, we should also account for Kant's criticism against sexual intercourse. Kant's second categorical imperative indicates that another person should be treated with dignity and respect, not as a mean or an object, but as an end in itself.⁵¹ In his *Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*, he denounces sexual intercourse: "There is no way in which a human being can be made an object of indulgence of another except through sexual impulse... Sexual love makes of the loved person an object of appetite... Sexual love... by itself and for itself... is nothing more than appetite. As an object of appetite for another person becomes a thing."⁵² Sex is morally wrong because a lover uses the beloved as an object to satisfy himself sexually. Holler comments: "Kant appears to have ordered all aspect of his life according to rigid schedules so as to eliminate any chance of spontaneity. He never had a lasting intimate relationship and is said to have lost the opportunity for marriage by thinking about it for too long... Kant seems to have made his body into a machine to avoid feeling."⁵³ There is a parallel between Kant's way of life and his view of sexual intercourse, and she also suggests that Kant is alienated from his bodily sensibility. Because human existence relies of procreation, Kant shows us a way out by permitting sex in marriage: "The sole condition on which we are free to make use of our sexual desire depends upon the right to dispose over the person as a whole...If I have the right over the whole person, I also have the right...to use that person...for the satisfaction of sexual desire. Only giving that person the same rights over the whole of myself – happens in marriage. Matrimony is an agreement between two persons by which they grant each other equal reciprocal right, each of them undertaking

⁵¹ I. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysical of Morals*, trans. by H. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 96.

⁵² I. Kant, *Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*, trans., James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 86.

⁵³ L. Holler, *Sexual Morality* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 66-67.

to surrender the whole of their person to the other with a complete right of disposal over it.”⁵⁴ In a marriage, a contract, the reciprocal transfer of a person’s rights to another overcomes using a partner as an object. Today, people living together without a marriage contract give their consent to equal participation in sexual intercourse; lovers are much more altruistic in which rights are reciprocally exchanged. Soble argues that causal sex, which is more or less spontaneous, does not permit partners to work out the necessary details of their rights, and that Kant’s view rejects causal sex, a one-night stand.⁵⁵ It is not a question whether it is causal sex; participants do not condone it because much of the details are already worked out prior to the actual act.

In conclusion, Jerome Neu considers the *Symposium* as one of the greatest works ever written about love.⁵⁶ I have shown in this paper we can have a reasonable understanding of falling in love, being in love, being out of love, erotic love, and love for its own sake. Plato’s works should be taken in terms of his official and unofficial views of love on the grounds that a lover ascends from personal love. The simile of the white and non-white horses with a charioteer is used quite effectively with respect to how a person responds to beautiful things. Erotic love shows us that love is like a flame, melting lovers together in their passions and sexual responsiveness. Several criticisms against Plato’s view of love occur on the grounds that philosophers do not attend to the concept of being in love and being out of love in Plato’s works.

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⁵⁴ Kant, *Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*, 85.

⁵⁵ Soble, *The Philosophy of Sex and Love*, 57.

⁵⁶ Jerome Neu, “Plato’s Homoerotic Symposium,” in *The Philosophy of Erotic Love*, 317-335.

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