Understanding the Phenomenon of Love

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Abstract

The concept “love” can refer to different types of relationships. We use it when talking about our family, friends, romantic partners, pets, god(s), pieces of art, ideas, etc. and refer to love as if it happens to us, like a feeling, or as an action or behavior that we conduct, like an emotion or special deed, or even as a type of relationship that is had between two things. No matter what manifestation that love takes on or how it is described, the phenomenon that occurs is always the same. Of course we express love in different ways with different objects, like romantically with romantic partners and familially with family members, but the process for giving our husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, pets and everything else a special importance is the phenomenon of love.

My aim in this thesis is to explain the phenomenon of love. I will argue that love is a way of responding to an object through a process of appraising it for its subjective, intrinsic value and then bestowing the experience of that appraisal back onto the object as an extrinsic quality whereby the object becomes valuable and irreplaceably important. This way of looking at the phenomenon of love, through a value theory, is taken up as a compromise of the two popular value theories, The Appraisal View and The Bestowal View. Irving Singer makes arguments for uniting these actions of appraising and bestowing value into a theory of love however leaves much unexplained and thus comes under fire from his critics. My take on love will aim at explaining how a value theory that is a compromise between Appraisal and Bestowal can avoid the problems that are suggested by Singer’s critics and describe how love occurs.
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Introduction

The word "love" refers to a phenomenon that is very difficult to explain. Its difficulty lies in that love is manifested in different ways. Everyone experiences love differently and even the way we think of love differs among individuals. We believe it to be a way of thinking, a feeling, an emotion, a behavior, or a type of relationship. We experience it for different things in varying ways such as romantically for our partners, familiarly for our parents and children, neighborly for our fellow humans, etc. We even experience love for things like god(s), ideas, works of art, and other inanimate objects. As a word, we use “love” as a verb and a noun as well as an adjective, and experience the phenomenon in a multitude of degrees, loving some things more or less than others. Despite the versatility that is experienced with regard to love, there are common features that we will see link all of these differences together into a single phenomenon, love. My aim here will be to characterize the nature of love while also providing a conceptual, hence explanatory analysis of it. If we come to find that love truly is experienced in multiple ways as I have expressed above, then a theory of love must account for those differences as well as whether or not other popular beliefs about love accurately represent some aspect of the phenomenon.

I shall argue that the question: “What is love?” has a definitive answer that can explain all of these different experiences associated with it. In order to do this, I will be drawing on different philosophical methods such as traditional analytic analysis as well as a type of phenomenological reduction in order to uncover features of love that are necessary for building a theory around. The reason for basing my argument partly on the phenomenological reduction of love is because the subjective nature of the phenomenon lends itself to a wide variety of experiences and interpretations. As previously mentioned, some take love to be a type of emotion, for others it is a feeling, some people experience love more strongly for things like animals or god(s), while others experience it for people. Some people experience stronger correspondence than others to bodily changes such as sweaty palms when confronted by an object of romantic affection, or a guttural feeling of losing a loved one. Since love is experienced in different ways,
there is no standard behavior for a person in love or a verifiable way to know whether someone is in love or not. In order to therefore understand love, we will need to break love down into fundamental features that are necessary for all phenomenal experiences of love. By understanding fundamental features of love, I will have criteria on which to judge other theories of love, as well as, be able to put forth my own argument for the nature of love, concluding that love is the experience of creating a relationship in which the object is given a special significance.

To make this claim about love, I will be adopting a value theory of love, whereby the object of love (the beloved) becomes valuable in a special way to the subject of love (the lover), thus constituting love. Every instance of love involves this phenomenon of giving a special significance to the object. Love requires a value based theory to explain it, which I intend to defend and will promote in the third chapter as a combination of the two popular existing value theories, the appraisal theory of love and the bestowal theory of love, which will be explained in the second chapter. I intend to also examine other theories of love to show where they go wrong in explaining love, and also, how they all require the same process of giving an object a special significance. These theories will give us insights into potential problems a theory of love must overcome and show that even historic perspectives of love follow the same systematic process that I will describe is necessary for love to occur.

Moreover, love is a process in which the lover relates in a special way to the object of his/her love. At this point I do not want to make any claims about the workings of how the lover relates in this special way, only that love involves this general process of responding. It will not be until the third chapter that I begin to forge the inner workings and details associated with how love occurs, and is sustained. Because however love requires a response by the subject, we can say that love is a type of relationship, in that love can be manifested as a specific thing, just as we can have happy relationships or aggressive relationships, so can we have a loving relationship; and as a relationship, love depends on the response of the subject towards a given stimulus, the orientation between a subject and its object. To be in a love relationship, just like with any type of relationship, we must
respond in certain ways, towards our object of love for it to be classified as that specific type of relationship.

The way we act (our behavior, how we think, what we feel, the things we do) determine what type of relationship exists if any at all. These actions are conditioned by the world around us and our thoughts we have of our surroundings, which include other people, animals, things, and even ideas. These factors go into creating relationships and we will look at those factors as they appear in love-relationships (another point that will be discussed later). When I do mention it later though, we will see that relationships demand interaction with more than just the object of love but with our past as well.

Love is largely a product of our past. Our behavior is conditioned by our experiences in the world, our beliefs, emotions, feelings, and evaluations. What I learn about the world allows me to make decisions based on that information and disposes me to be a person that exhibits a certain behavior (as well as a person with a specific genetic makeup). The information I process therefore aids in the creation of my personality and behavioral tendencies. For example, from a young age, I have come to believe that seeing something die is sad and when I see that, my stomach feels empty, all because death, to me, is a troubling phenomenon. I am not sure even to this day how to reconcile death as a natural part of life. Given an instance of death, I behave in a certain way because it coincides with my thoughts and feelings about what happens when something dies. Loving something is no different. Love occurs in a similar way, just like almost every other type of behavior, in that our past influences our future. The kind of person I am affects the choices that I make. My beliefs and experiences from when I was young provide me with dispositions for behaving a certain way in the future. My behavior is causally determined by my past even though I continually make choices about my future, much like a compatibilist conception of how free will relates to causal determinations.
A compatibilist may suggest that our will is free, making us responsible for our actions, however, we are determined in regards to the choices that we make.\(^1\) So while a woman may be disposed to find a certain type of man attractive (based on her beliefs and past experiences of what it means to be attractive), her behavior of acting on that attraction is an act she can freely make. The same applies to love. A complete passivity in the matter of love might suggest that we have no choice as to who or what we love, as if we are shot by Cupid’s arrow and therefore must fall in romantic love with a random partner/object (the idea that love is determined). The idea of Cupid however, seems to better represent how falling in love feels. We may often feel as though we are completely passive when dealing in love, but we actually can take some control and freedom over the matter. We are not completely passive in our responses and behaviors therefore we are not passive in love.

When we reflect on our loving relationships we may think that the phenomenon of love has occurred suddenly and we are not in control, and even the notion of falling in love, gives the impression of being out of control and suggests our passivity in the matter; however I argue this is not the case. Our reluctance to thinking we play an active role in love is due to the fact that many of the motives of love happens unconsciously. Our subconscious builds up to love rather than love happening all at once in a surprising manner. The idea of unconscious behavior plays a role in love and when I refer to the subconscious or unconscious, I mean it to be taken as the phenomenon in which a part of consciousness is not present in our current awareness – meaning we are unaware of a set of thoughts, beliefs, behaviors, desires, etc.:\(^2\) Our capacity to love begins when we are young and learning how to relate to the world. Our beliefs about the world, which we will later see play a major part in love and the active role we can take, are altered constantly, refined, lost, gained, changed and experienced, and those beliefs partly determine our way of relating, just as with all other types of


relationships. We learn to act in different ways due to different objects from the time we are born. We begin to learn and desire things and form beliefs that direct the ways in which we relate and behave towards objects. Our beliefs are molded from birth by our experiences which lead us to behave in certain ways. We are creatures that assess the world based on reasoning, feeling, believing, etc., and our nature is one in which we react to objects in the world, such as people, animals, music, food and so on.

With love being a certain way in which we respond to an object, we are simply responding in a special way, just like I respond to the idea of death or how one might respond to being confronted by a polar bear, with fear. The response for love has its own features that make it different from other types of responses. While love in each of its forms expresses general features such that it is a positive response, and is an evocation of feelings, emotions, and beliefs, what separates love from other similar phenomena is the fact that love requires a specific process in order to give an importance and irreplaceability to the object of love; thereby making the object valuable extrinsically (valuable because the lover gives it the quality of being important and irreplaceable rather than it being important because of its intrinsic qualities). So whether we speak of familial love, erotic love, neighborly love..., we use the same word, “love,” not metaphorically, but because it is applicable for describing the essential process we go through when presented with a stimulus – the object of love.

The reason I say a stimulus and not a particular kind of stimulus is because along with my argument about the nature of love, I will show that anything can be the object of love. My claim about the possible objects of love is this: there are no restrictions on what kind of thing can be loved. As long as a subject can give an object this special value theory importance, that I will present, then that object can be the object of love. Similarly, the subject or person that loves can be anyone or anything that can function in a way that creates an importance and irreplaceability based on an object’s given, extrinsic value.

If my theory is correct, then an effect will be that we have the ability to alter our relationships – were we to become more aware of how love and relationships work and what we can do to effect change. Despite love often occurring on an
unconscious level, in that we find ourselves in a loving relationship, we are capable of exercising an ability to indirectly alter our unconscious beliefs, emotions, and feelings. We will therefore be able to create love and withdraw it and even control our likelihood of loving within a certain group of objects. For example, if a woman is prone to fall in love with men who possess a “bad-boy” persona, and her relationships always fall apart because of the men’s lack of caring, understanding, and desire to settle-down and get married (which is something she wants), she would be able to play an active role in making sure that her future romantic relationships exclude people who have that certain persona by not falling in love with them. Not that playing an active role in falling/not falling in love is easily altered, but since the process of loving is often done on an unconscious level, we can come to learn how to exercise choice in the matter (which will be the focus of chapter 4).

There are plenty of instances in which we play this type of active role when loving someone or something. We see examples of this all the time like when we force ourselves to enjoy something, such as the tastes of foods and drinks like beer or coffee, which can be considered “acquired tastes.” Acquiring a taste for something is an example of our ability to actively take part in altering our relationships with objects; in that, our continual choice to experience something such as beer or coffee provides us with the opportunity for our beliefs to change, our emotions to develop, and for us to feel a desire or liking for an object that began as something perhaps seemingly unpleasant. While of course this example just refers to a process of disliking and liking, love is very similar, only certain added conditions must be met beyond its mere enjoyment or the desire of it for love to occur. My explanation of the active role the subject can play when it comes to love will take place in the fourth chapter. Given the process that generates love, none of the necessary factors such as beliefs, emotions, feelings and values are unchangeable variables, at least not completely.

Each of these factors is capable of being altered and is unconsciously changed over time anyway, without our even realizing it. Some people are able to openly reflect on their beliefs, emotions, and feelings and can change them while others may need to practice or refine their ability to become explicitly aware of
them. This process of changing these factors is a common occurrence in psychological counseling. It seems to be the case that some people are better at accessing and altering their feelings, expressing emotion, and are able, and are not afraid, to reflect on their beliefs better and more than others. In the fourth chapter I will explain how psychological conditions of people affect their ability to love and relate to objects.

There is already a big push in the psychological therapy field to help alter certain subjective phenomena (beliefs, emotions, and feelings) in individuals. Moreover, with the capability of altering these experiences, we may have the potential to control the phenomenon of love (as well as all other ways of relating to objects). So if I fall in love with someone I ought not be in love with, because my love for that person is detrimental to my health, then I can choose to withdraw or fall out of love, or if I am put into an arranged marriage with someone I do not love, I can grow to love her based on beliefs about her that I come to have.

By more accurately understanding the phenomenon of love and accepting the fact that we actually have the power to develop and attach love to different objects, we can hopefully live more fruitful lives, be happier, more peaceful and understanding. We will be more equipped to dealing with heartbreak, withdrawing our love from harmful partners, creating love in healthy relationships, and developing our ability to make it through the world easier and more pleasantly, however we determine that is.

My method for examining love in this work will consist of four chapters (ch. 1 the features of love, ch. 2 the history of love, ch. 3 a unified value theory of love, and ch. 4 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and love as valuing). Through these four chapters I will be able to look at love phenomenologically so that I can create premises on which my argument will be based, assess other theories for strengths and weaknesses that might help by understanding love from different perspectives, construct a theory of love, and finally to link that theory with love from a psychological perspective.

The first chapter will aim at identifying the features that must be true of the phenomenon of love in order to accommodate different theories of love that I will introduce in the second chapter – as if each theory of love that will be presented is
a genuine experience of the phenomenon of love and therefore expresses an experience of the phenomenon. There are four features in particular that I will highlight in order to account for the historical theories that we will look at and they will help me to both critique the theories as well as provide as the foundation to which I will construct my theory around. They are: 1) Love is manifested in a variety of ways, such that we experience love as being something like an action that we perform (we love something), a description or phenomenon that happens to us (we feel loved) or as a thing like a type of relationship (we are in love), 2) Love is relationship based and therefore intentionality between the two things exist (a subject and an object) as either love or the conditions of love (which will be developed in the first chapter), 3) Love consists of the object(s) in a relationship becoming irreplacably significant to the subject, and lastly, 4) love takes on different forms for different objects. The phenomenon exists between romantic partners, family members, friends, pets and owners, etc. and each of these relationships is different however we often experience love in each of these different relationships.

These four features will be the starting point for my theory of love. They will enable me to draw a distinction between love and what falsely appears to be love. I will use them as a means of critiquing the previous theories that I will go over in the second chapter while also salvaging parts of their mistaken accounts of the nature of love. Once I am able to extract ideas from the previous theories of love, I will be armed to develop a theory of love that not only incorporates the features that we experience but can also account for why the previous theories aimed at explaining love in the way that they did.

The Second chapter will introduce the current and historic theories of love that I will be critiquing using the features from the first chapter. Each theory will be a brief outline of the historical viewpoint in order to express a differing perspective on love than what I will be taking, and will eventually aid me in showing how despite being conceptually different than my proposed theory of love, each historical account is directed at explaining the same range of phenomena. By looking at other theories, we will begin to understand many of the ideas and beliefs that have been associated with love. Even though the belief of what love is has
changed throughout history, this does not mean that people were wrong about all of the features people believed it to have. By accepting many ideas of love from the different theories rather than just relying on my own experiences, I can develop a theory that does not disregard experiences of love that are had by others (a common problem with many historical theories of love – not everyone experiences love in the same way and many theories only account for a specific experience).

Since all average biologically developed humans can experience love, the different perceptions people have should be accounted for in a theory that explains love’s nature; therefore, examining other philosophies of love will be at the forefront of this work in order to show us what the phenomenon of love must include.

Every theory that we will look at has something to offer to my philosophic endeavor to create a new theory of love. Since each theory accounts for certain ideas about love, any theory of love must explain why the experience of love was perceived in a way that led to those ideas. For instance one of the theories that we will be looking at is love as a quest for Truth (as put forth by Plato in the Symposium).³ Therefore any theory of love has to accommodate the perception that led to that idea as it was experienced, otherwise the theory would overlook an experience of love; which, experiences of love are necessary for uncovering the nature of love.

In addition, most of the theories of love (which I will be looking at in the second chapter) are focused primarily on romantic love or other specific types of love (such as the love of God). Theories that only describe a particular aspect of love, such as the nature of a specific form, like romantic love, exclude the notion that love can be experienced in different ways toward different objects, such as the love between two brothers, or the love between mother and child. Because we love different people in different ways as well as animals and other things, focusing on a specific form of love will not allow me to produce a theory for the nature of love but the nature of the relationship instead. For instance if I were to only focus on poems written in iambic pentameter, I would not be able to fully explain the nature of poetry. I would see lines of a poem written in ten syllables

and would have no reason to suggest that poetry can be written in any other way. As for love, in order for it to exist among different types of relationships it must be understood as happening generally between subject and object instead of within a specific relationship. Some of the theories that we will look at later explain love in the general sense of responding to an object, which is also the position that I will take, however, the theories either fail by eventually excluding specific types of relationships or explain some features of love rather than its essential properties – the whole phenomenon in its entirety.

The different theories of love that we will look at, do however tell us something informative about love. They tell us that the experience of love happens in different ways. These experiences show us that the process for creating love is the same regardless of the object or the type of relationship to an object. Love may be expressed and felt in different ways, occur for different reasons, yet the process that occurs in us when we love is identical no matter what manifestation our love takes. Whether it takes the form of romantic love, familial love, or the love of a pet, these different forms which are all expressed and felt differently, follow the same process of responding to an object. Again, there are different objects to be loved and different forms of loving them; however, each theory relies on the same value theory process, regardless of what is loved - which will be described in the third chapter. The general concept “love” is a word that can relate each form of love no matter what the object is or how it is experienced.

After examining the different perspectives on love I will be able construct my theory on the nature of love, what makes us experience the phenomenon the way that we do and what conditions enable such a phenomenon. In the third chapter I will thus put forth my own theory of the nature of love. By looking at the process of what creates the phenomenon of love we will be able to understand why there are different theories about what love is. In addition I will take a look back at the previous theories of love and explain why the experiences of love may have led to those theories. By developing a theory that incorporates the experiences they sought to explain, I will hopefully strengthen my case for the nature of love that intertwines multiple experiences and perceptions of love.
In addition to putting forth my own theory in chapter three, I will need to defend it against not only the problems that plague the other theories, but problems with explaining some of our current perceptions and ideas of love, like love at first sight, loving things over time, the difference between loving and liking something very much, etc. There are a number of perceptions and experiences we have in regards to love that must be acknowledged and once my theory is explained, I can work to do just that.

Once a clear picture of the phenomenon of love has been painted, I can help to illustrate and corroborate my theory by incorporating ideas and concepts from the field of psychology – which will occur in chapter four. I will add support by explaining how current uses of empirically tested psychotherapies utilize the same process I associate with creating love to affecting relationships (which includes loving relationships) pragmatically. These different types of therapies help my theory in two ways. First, they show how the process of love can work by explaining the process in which we respond to objects; and second, they illustrate that people have the potential to play an active role in love. A theory that is able to identify conditions of love may be weakened by not coinciding with the practices of psychotherapies that focus on how people relate, so it will be helpful for the philosophical theory to be supported by psychological practices. Similarly, we can compare the theory of love that will be presented in the third chapter with the current manner in which we conduct our relationships.

Again, the concept of “love” refers to a lot of things, such as feelings, emotions, relationships, etc. Its object is sometimes mothers, brothers, romantic partners, pets, and yet, the framework is similar across the board. The process of loving is always the same because the ways in which we relate have the same steps/process; so “Love,” when used properly, always refers to the same thing, and describes the same fundamental response of a subject to its object of love.

Whether we love our mothers, wives, husbands, daughters, etc., our bodies function according to the same process. Despite the fact that some instances of love incorporate sexual attraction or a desire to nurture the love object, the lover nevertheless always has the same process of responding, and that method, that process, is what creates love. The only differences are the reasons and behaviors
that lead to love – the way we conduct ourselves given the form that love takes on. Such is the fact that I do not act romantically with my family. I act romantically with my romantic partner and familial with my family, etc. and do so for different reasons.\textsuperscript{4} It is not directed at one object specifically or used to represent only one type of relationship, such as a familial relationship or romantic relationships. Anything can be an object of love because love is a process of responding to an object in a special way; and any object can be the object that is responded to according to that process – every form of which has requirements that make it a specific form of love.

“Love,” in a general sense however, explains the process that eventually creates an importance in the object of love, and other requirements determine only then what type of love is present. As an experience, love occurs as a form directed at a specific object. These forms include romantic love, familial love, erotic love, and brotherly love. While these are not the only types of love, they are perhaps the most common. Since I will argue that “love” refers to a process of relating to an object, aspects like reciprocity, sexual intimacy, a blood-line, etc. are merely the reasons or factors that determine which form love takes. These factors are rather the criteria for the value theory that I will promote in the third chapter which will account for love’s features. With love being a general process of relating to an object, any object can be loved. Some often controversial things that can be objects of love are things like inanimate objects, ideas, animals, and gods, because they can be responded to in the same way that a person can be. This, although just a short list, shows the various arrays of objects that can be loved. The relationship of love does not dictate a necessary type of object because the process is based on responding in a specific way. Love, thus, can be experienced towards anything as long as the lover relates to the object in the right way – the way in which the subject engages the object in the specific reactive process of love.

\textsuperscript{4} This is not to say that some people do not have a parent or child that is an object of romantic love. Multiple types of love can occur for the same object; however this is generally not the case. For the majority of people, parents are not the object of romantic love for their child, and children are not romantic partners of their parents.
While love can occur for any object, the process of love is a phenomenon in which specific conditions must be met for it to occur. Once the conditions of love are met, and a loving relationship occurs, further conditions allow for the type of love to be identified, such that make love romantic or sexual or familial, etc. While this process is not exactly a step by step procedure for loving, it does give an idea of the conditions that are required to form a type of loving relationship. This includes emotions, feelings, beliefs and values. When put together in a specific process such as the appraisal and then bestowal of value as briefly stated before and will be examined in length later, they give rise to the loving behavior, which will also be expanded on in detail later. As well as giving conditions for the process of love, my explanation will include other behaviors such as hating, liking and disliking, admire, and others. These, as well as most other behaviors or ways of responding to an object, occur in a similar fashion to love – as a way of relating to an object. While explaining the details of love specifically, I will also address these similar behaviors and relationships in order to establish how love differs from similar phenomenon, such as liking, admiring, etc. It is necessary that love should be distinguished from these phenomena because as well as providing a theory of what love is, we should also require that a theory of love can distinguish the phenomenon from other phenomena that have similar overlapping features. This way we can identify what makes love distinct and to help guard against criticisms that have challenged other theories of love that may render love as being indistinguishable from phenomena such as respect and admiration.

Furthermore, the distinction between liking and loving an object does not depend on there being a greater significance for the object that is loved than for an object that is not. Even though the love object is often more significant than an object that is liked, the reason the love object is loved is because it is responded to in a different way. Love objects are therefore not necessarily more significant than other objects; they are just significant in a different way – because they are responded to in the special, loving way. So just because I love my parents, does not mean that I cannot love a friend as well, since I may prefer one over the other. It may be the case that I love my friend more or less than my parents or I love my wife more than my parents, or my brother more than my friend, etc. My love for
one object does not affect my ability to love other objects. Loving something does not mean that I like that object the most and therefore love it and all other objects I like to a lesser degree. I can love many things at the same time; I can love certain things more than others or certain people more than others. So if a little girl goes into a pound to look for a dog and likes ten of the dogs, the dog that she likes most does not necessarily become the object of love to her. In addition, she can love five of the dogs but prefer one over the others. Love is not synonymous with prefers most or likes the best. She may not love the dog at the top of her list of dogs she likes, because for love to occur, the relationship between the girl and the dog must consist of the specific process of love. Love is not the significance over the rest, even though the love object has a special significance; it is the process by which the subject attributes an extrinsic quality of being irreplaceably valuable to an object. Furthermore I can love as many things as I can create this special type of relationship with. This notion again will be explained in much more detail in chapter three, as it is the main claim about love that I will try to prove.

To recap, the method for this work is four fold: 1) explore features of love that are necessary to construct a theory of love, 2) examine multiple theories of love in order to identify love’s features so as to devise a theory for the conditions that lead to love, 3) form a theory of love and defend it against any prominent objections, and 4) compare the philosophical theory of love with the social science of psychology in order to corroborate the theory while explaining the validity of the theory with examples in which we put the theory of love to practice.
Chapter 1
Features of Love

Introduction

To understand the nature of love we must look at it phenomenologically. Love is not something that can be sensed directly like a physical object in the world. To understand love we must understand relationships and behavior because this is the realm (social behavior) in which love begins to exist. Love is not an inanimate object that can be studied through a microscope, but a phenomenon that occurs when people relate to one another in a certain way. Through relationships, people behave in a certain way which gives rise to conditions for love to exist. In order to understand love and its conditions we must start by establishing a set of features that are phenomenologically relevant to every experience of love. Since our love for objects can be phenomenologically experienced so differently among people, we cannot settle with a theory of love that explains the nature of it as something uncommon to token subjects that nevertheless do experience love. Given that there is no objective external standpoint from which to judge if someone experiences love, then there is no alternative to taking someone’s sincere avowal of having the experience.

This chapter will focus on four phenomenological features of love that must be recognized by any theory of love. It will be the foundation for my argument in later chapters and will serve to provide me with premises that I can use to evaluate prior theories of love. By phenomenologically reducing love to these four essential features that are unique to the experience of love, I will be able to create a theory of my own that accounts for the variety of ways that love is experienced, and thereby producing an accurate account of the phenomenon of love. Reducing a phenomenon to its essential features is a useful way of recognizing what a phenomenon consists of and what must be acknowledged of a phenomenon for it to be understood.5

The features that I will be focusing on to aid in my examination into the nature of love are constant and unchanging, unlike many other features of love.

that only help to confuse us by being present in our experiences of the phenomenon. For instance, specific emotions and feelings we have for objects. When we experience love, we are undoubtedly struck my many emotions and feelings. Everyone’s experience of love is different however. Emotions vary from person to person, as well as feelings, bodily changes, and desires that we have for our love-object. Some people get very excited when they see their love-object, and other do not. To therefore suggest that love can be explained in terms of certain emotions, feelings, desires, etc. is problematic. We must begin to understand love through what does not change, what is constant, and experienced objectively.

There are four main features of love that require investigation that will help me to construct a theory that explains the phenomenon of love. The first feature that we will look at is that our experience of love is manifested in different ways. A theory of love should therefore be consistent with the different ways we can experience love, while still referring to the same phenomenon. The next feature is that love is intentional. Love is relationship based and therefore requires a subject and an object. The third feature of love that we will look at is the significance of the beloved for the lover. We often recognize love when we reflect on the specialness and importance of the object of our love. Lastly is the feature that love is a first-person perspective phenomenon, in that a person who experiences love is the only one that can know for sure whether what he/she is experiencing is really love and not some other type of response. Love is not something that can be tested for or witnessed by an outside party because as a response to an object, love is based on the subject’s perception of that object, and to know whether a person loves an object is to know what a person perceives. We may be able to suggest that someone is in love but it is only a guess based on the person’s perceived behavior (which we will see later in this work is not a factor in determining whether love exists, only what manifestation love takes).

These four features of love will allow us to consider what love is, and what it is not. I will use them to critique past theories of love and then to develop a stronger more comprehensive theory that captures the ideas of previous theories, but that better explains the phenomenon of love. Some of the features are explained in much lengthier sections than others because of related elements that
need addressing; however, each feature is just as important to our understanding of love and all are intertwined with one another.

1.1 Love is Manifested in Different Ways

The first feature of love that we experience that is important to consider, is that love is manifested in different ways. To explain this we must focus on the language that we use when we speak of love. When confronted with the phenomenon of love we tend to speak of it as if it is a relationship, “That couple looks like they are in love,” as if it is an action, “My darling, I love you so much,” and even refer to it as a description, “I feel so loved when he buys me flowers.” Each of these phrases considers love to be manifested in a certain way. In the first phrase, love is a thing, a relationship in particular. The second phrase treats love not as a thing, but as an action performed by a subject towards an object. The third phrase considers love as a description, like a feeling such as happiness, fear, anger, etc. – something that describes our attitudinal state in the world. In the scenarios where each of these phrases are uttered (or thought), love is taken to be something different from the other two scenarios. So which scenario accurately depicts what love is?

The answer is: all of them. A theory of love should to be able to account for each manifestation since we have different experiences of love. If however it were one scenario and not the others, we would have to explain what makes that specific manifestation of love the correct one, and there is not enough evidence for there being only one because our phenomenological account of love extends to each manifestation. For example, we might believe that love is a thing, like a relationship. The evidence to support the idea that love is a type of relationship occurs when two people interact in a specific way, therefore creating a loving relationship (a thing). While this may sound right to some, and experiences of ours can be supported by this claim, there is also evidence (which is produced by our experiences of love) that suggests that love is an action, like an emotion. For instance when we utter the phrase, “I love her or him or it” we are suggesting that love is a kind of thing that we do – an action – and is therefore not a type of relationship. Both arguments, as well as arguments that treat love as a description,
such as a feeling,\textsuperscript{6} revolves around how we experience love; and, since we experience love differently and can even experience love in all three of these ways simultaneously, love must be thought of and explained in each way.

Phenomenologically it makes sense to express our thoughts of love in phrases that were expressed earlier as being different manifestations of love, because these are the experiences we have when confronted with love – we feel it, we express it, we recognize it. We therefore must accept that love has different manifestations in the way we think and experience it. Love, while having a certain nature, creates different situations that get us to experience it in different ways. Many of the experiences we have of love is the base of historical theories of love, like the theory that states that love is having a robust concern for another, or love is the union of two creatures (we will look at these and other theories in the next chapter of this thesis). What I can say at this moment about love however, is that our use of the concept “love” suggests that love can be thought of in different capacities and a theory of love ought to be able to account for each (a relationship, an emotion, a feeling, a type of behavior, etc.).

\textbf{1.2 Love is Intentional}

The second feature of love that will help us to understand its nature phenomenologically is that a subject must relate to an object for love to occur. Despite the different manifestation of love, there must always be a subject and object of some kind. It would seem odd to hear someone state “I love” and not say what or whom he/she loves. Franz Brentano, in his book, \textit{Psychology From an

\textsuperscript{6} Here I begin to refer to emotions and feelings as being distinct from one another. For the purpose of this thesis it will be unnecessary to delve too much into the nature of both however I will constantly be referring to both and will make brief explanations about the two along the way when it is necessary. While the role of emotions and feelings are an important aspect of this work, their importance lies in the fact that our feelings and emotions play a major role in our experience, not how emotions and feelings are related to one another. That being said, the position that I will take towards emotions and feelings is that of emotions as cognitive expressions and feelings as internal sensations. Again these Ideas will be explained later however will not sway my argument in any one direction.
Empirical Standpoint,\(^7\) introduces the concept of intentionality whereby mental phenomena has a reference to a content. So when we say “I love,” (using the manifestation of love as a verb) I (the subject) must be referring to some content (such as the object of my love); therefore the phrase “I love” must include an object to make the phrase complete.

My purpose for this discussion is not to debate the nature of intentionality but to draw on a principle regarding intentionality that I argue is a necessary feature of love, which is that love requires a subject/object relation; and, explaining how the subject relates to an object will help me uncover the nature of what love essentially is. The way we experience the phenomenon of love depends on love being about something – a subject, relating to an object. So if I love, then I must love something. If I feel loved, I feel loved because of something. If love is a relationship, love is a relationship because a subject has related to an object in a specific way.

John Searle however has stated that some mental states are not intentional,\(^8\) and if love is one of those non-intentional mental states, then it does not require a subject/object relation. For instance, if we take love as a description of the state we are in for example, “I am loved,” what I am saying is that I feel a certain way and that feeling has no object. It is merely a description of the state I am in. The love is not about anything. For John Searle, intentional states have to be about something and any undirected mental states such as anxiety, depression, and possibly even love could be classified as, “not being about something.” Searle states, “only some, not all, mental states and events have intentionality. Beliefs, fears, hopes, and desires are intentional; but there are forms of nervousness, elation, and undirected anxiety that are not intentional…my beliefs and desires must always be about something. But my nervousness and undirected anxiety need not in that way be about anything.”\(^9\) To then think of love as being a

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\(^9\) Ibid.
mental state such as a feeling or mood, we could suggest that love may not be intentional and therefore the feature of love being intentional would be inaccurate.

William C. Fish on the other hand rebuts this claim of Searle’s by suggesting that mental states that Searle says are non-intentional, such as moods, do have intentionality. For Fish, moods may not seem to have a specific subject/object relationship like that of desires (such as the thought “I want to sleep” – I being the subject and sleep being the object of what the thought is directed towards; however, moods have a subject that is the broader world in general. He suggests, “If I am anxious, then the world appears disturbing or threatening; if I am irritated then the world is given to me as annoying and provocative; if I am elated then the world just appears to me to be a wonderful place to be.”

By Fish’s account, even mental states that do not seem to have an object associated with it are in fact about something. To say then that “I feel loved,” is to mean that my feeling of being loved is due to some object, be it a person, a pet, God, etc. loving me.

Despite Fish’s and Searle’s conclusions about what is intentional and what is not, Peter Goldie, in his explanation of intentional and non-intentional states, clearly explains what I take to be the decisive point about intentionality for the purpose of explaining love, and that is that a mental state or event can have a “borrowed intentionality.” Borrowed intentionality is the intentionality of the mental state that is coupled with its cause. So as Fish states, “If I am elated, then the world just appears to me to be a wonderful place to be.” I therefore feel, or am described as being, elated, which seems not to be directed at an object, as Searle suggests, however what causes me to be elated is a belief about something that is directed at an object, which is Fish’s point.

Moreover, if we take for instance the manifestations we discussed earlier, that love is a thing, such as a relationship, or is a description of a mental state, such as a feeling, or is an action, such as an emotion or type of behavior, there is

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at least an element of intentionality. As a relationship, the phenomenon of love requires a subject to relate to an object for there to be a relationship and if love describes a mental state, then the cause of that mental state is indirectly about an object, creating a borrowed intentionality. Love as an action describes how we relate to an object, be it a family member or the world in general and therefore has intentionality. Each manifestation of love requires some level of intentionality in that there is always a subject/object element.

1.3 Love Objects are Irreplaceably Significant

In order to address the question: “what is it about relating to something that gets us to experience love?” we must continue to phenomenologically uncover features of love that will help us identify the conditions of love. The next feature to therefore introduce is one in which an object, in a relationship where love is present, is something that has a significance to the subject that separates it from all other objects. We tend to think of our parents, wives, husbands, children, friends, etc. as being more important to us than others in the world. More than just being important though, the significance of the love object is special in another way. Water and food is important. Sex, shelter and other necessities are important, but the object of a loving relationship is important in a different way. The object of love becomes important to the subject in an irreplaceable way because of the way the subject responds to it, not because of its necessity to the subject.

I may need water to survive and therefore it is essential and important to me, however a glass of water is not significant to me. That glass of water can be replaced by other glasses of water or fruit or melon that contains water. Unlike a glass of water, my loved ones cannot be replaced. I cannot just trade in a loved one for someone else and expect life to continue on as if nothing changed. The feelings, emotions, and beliefs about the newcomers in my life would be different than the feelings, emotions, and beliefs I have for my original loved ones. This of course does not mean that the role a loved one plays cannot be filled by another person, such as the case when we remarry, get another pet, make new friends, etc. The irreplaceability of a loved one is due to the intricacies of the relationship
which provide the subject with reasons for loving (which will be explained in detail in the second and third chapters).

So in the case of a loved one dying (in this case a wife or husband) and the widow(er) remarries or falls in love with someone else, the deceased partner cannot be replaced by the new partner as if he/she could have been exchanged for the deceased partner when the deceased partner was alive. The new partner may replace the role of being a husband or wife, however the new partner’s qualities are different from the old partner and the relationship that he/she has with the widow(er) is different too. Even though a study conducted by The University of California, San Diego suggests that people have an ability to be resilient in the face of bereavement, avoiding a state of depression or even subsyndromal depression, thus having a keen ability to “move-on,” it does not suggest that a deceased loved one can be replaced by a new partner in the sense that the deceased partner is interchangeable with another person who can fulfil the same role. In his paper, Love and Death, Dan Moller explores people’s ability to heal from a loved one’s passing and the likelihood of remarrying or finding a new partner. While this may seem as if the first spouse/partner is replaceable, he/she is not. Moller explains that despite falling in love with someone else after a loved one’s (partner) death, the only thing to be replaced is the functional role of the beloved. Moller states:

Both people and the specific contours of their relationships are unique and will never be wholly mimicked by successor-relationships. But the same is true of baseball players and Congressmen: a team will function somewhat differently once it loses a wily southpaw, and Congress will never be quite the same without Preston Brooks and his cane. The reason the operations of these organizations are not substantially impeded by such losses is that the differences that matter to organizations are determined by their overall goals and functioning (winning ball games and legislating effectively), and these are not much affected by mere idiosyncrasies.

So while a functioning role may be replaceable, the person and relationship with that person cannot be. A mother therefore cannot be replaced by someone who performs the job better or a child or husband replaced by someone who is

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15. Ibid., 310.
different. For instance, suppose I have a younger sister that dies at a young age and my parents go on to have another child who happens to be a girl as well. She would not be a *replacement* for my deceased sister. She would have different qualities, I would be different, and our relationship would not be the same. She would still be my sister and I would still love her and relate to her; however, she would not be someone that could be placed in the position of being my deceased sister. Her idiosyncrasies would be different. The same goes for husbands, wives, parents, children, etc. The people whom we love are irreplaceable.

Importance and value are not the same as irreplaceably significant. Not all things that are important and valuable to us are things that are loved, for instance a great political or cultural hero. Because these peoples’ value lies in their functional role, they are replaceable and are not people who I would consider to love. My respect and admiration for people like Martin Luther King Jr. or The Dali Lama is not special to those people. If anyone would have stood up for equal rights and made such an impact on race relations as did Martin Luther King Jr. then I might also value him/her and believe him/her to be an important person in world history. Similarly, people who preach happiness and have overcome the difficulties faced with having to flee from a country and still impact the world with a message of life and happiness, like the Dali Lama has, then they would be important and valuable to me too. Just like a stranger who looks at my parents and believes that they could have been replaced by two equally kind-hearted people who would have raised me the same as I was. The stranger does not love my parents, because the qualities of my parents that are respected by others are purely intrinsic character traits – they raised happy, healthy boys. Many people raise happy and healthy children and so the people like my parents who could be seen as being important and valuable for raising two healthy, happy boys that add to the goodness of this world (hopefully that is how people see me and my brother) are replaceable. However, to me and my brother, our parents are not replaceable.

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16. Of course these people are loved by their family and friends and many others however I refer here to an average person who knows of the political or cultural hero through his/her impact on politics or culture.
We experience our love objects as not being replaceable for the reasons why we find them important and valuable. My parents are loved by me and my brother because they are important and valuable to us in a different way than they are to strangers. This suggests that love is a way in which we respond to objects and therefore given our understanding of how we respond, there are no limits on what we can and cannot love. If a schizophrenic woman believes a stuffed animal is her best friend and she loves it, by responding in the same way that a person who is not schizophrenic responds to her friends (in a friendship loving way), then surely she will love the stuffed animal because she will have responded applicably. People experience love differently but assuming they experience specific features, such as viewing their object of love as irreplaceably important and valuable, then it would be very difficult to deny that person is in fact in love. It seems to follow then, that by discovering what these different reasons for loving are, I may explain not only what love is, but why we often consider things that are not people or animals as being objects of love (which is incorporated in the fourth feature).

Co-workers and acquaintances do not have this irreplaceable quality, and neither do many other people in the world. If my relationship with someone is purely functional, then they can be replaced. What this tells us about the nature of love is that the irreplaceable nature of being a love object is bound in the relationship. Something about the way we relate to someone’s idiosyncrasies or qualities is what makes the person significantly irreplaceable. Functional roles do not provide this. In order to therefore find out what conditions need to be met for love to exist, I have to focus on what makes the object in a relationship, irreplaceably significant.

1.4 Love has Different Forms

Up until now, I have written about the significance of a relationship in regards to love; however, the experience of an object having an irreplaceable significance to us does not only happen in one type of relationship, but many types. We romantically love our husbands and wives, or we love our mothers and fathers and children in a type of familial love. We have loving relationships with friends, pets, God, etc. We relate to all of these objects differently, but are
nonetheless objects of love. Of course my relationship with my parents is not the same as my relationship with my dog or girlfriend; however, in each case where love is present, there is a common, unifying feature in that the object is irreplaceably significant because of something having to do with the way the lover (subject) relates with the beloved (object). The last feature we will look at is that love occurs in different forms (for different types of relationships).

Love is expressed in different ways for different objects; all of the relationships associated with love are conducted in different ways and for different reasons. We use the same term, “love” because, in most cases (exceptions being when the term, “love” is used metaphorically which I will discuss later), we believe that “love” expresses our feelings, emotions, beliefs, relationships, etc. for our family members and romantic partners and our friends, pets, etc. in terms of the significance they have to us. Each type of relationship has this irreplaceable significance which gets us to experience love. The conduct within that relationship however merely determines what type of relationship it is or the form that love takes.

The different forms of love therefore have different behaviors, beliefs, emotions, feelings, etc. that go along with them. Romantic love has a sexual, exciting element that generally gets us to have sweaty palms and a higher heart rate, while familial love has the elements of a similar bloodline and respect and authority, love of a pet requires, at least, a person to have a pet, etc. Of course these are just general elements of these types of relationships. Each relationship has certain elements that make it a specific type of relationship. As we will see later though, these types of elements are not what create love, only its form. Love on the other hand has to do with the object becoming significantly irreplaceable, and any object can be that.

Regardless of what form love takes, love in general, is based heavily on the culture in which we are raised. The cultural, or social, influence of love is a major part of the phenomenon, which is why I will go into it in more depth later in this work. Culture often dictates who and what we ought to love and the culturally acceptable forms of love. With loving being a relational process made up of beliefs, feelings, and emotions, a society has the ability to instill and mold these
phenomena in people. As with the example I used earlier about being sad when confronted with death, I feel that way because I have come to believe that dying is a sad occurrence. This is because I believe that the loss of a living thing is a negative aspect of life. Perhaps if I lived in a society that celebrated death more, or was raised to think that way, I would be more inclined to not be sad when confronted with death. Societies and cultures play a large role in our behavior and relationships and since love is a type of relationship, our society plays a major role in love (as well as all other types of relationships).

For instance in the United States and many other western countries, it is customary to love your family, grow up, find a partner of the opposite sex to romantically love, have children and love them and perhaps love pets along the way as well as possibly God. This example of different objects of love, and the forms of love between them, portrays a social norm in today’s time. We are influenced by our society to have certain values and are instilled with the desire to do so through television, books, and many other forms of subliminal pressures as well as through family, friends, and teachers. For instance, two hundred years ago, women were not looked upon, in America, as having the same rights as men. Treating women differently by not allowing them to vote for instance, was acceptable and part of the culture of that time. Fast-forward to now, and we see that females and males are equals, or at least more so. Because the culture has changed to be more equal, people’s beliefs and feelings have changed about women and men. The relationship between men and women has followed from how the society as a whole began understanding equality between women and men. The point that I would like to get across here though, is that the way society and culture is, affects the upcoming generations of people. So for this instance, culture does affect beliefs, values, feelings, etc., maybe not for the present generation but for the younger generations to come.

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17. I am aware that for a culture’s perspective of a situation to change, it means that the beliefs of that culture must change first. The point that I would like to get across here though, is that the way society and culture is, affects the upcoming generations of people. So for this instance, culture does affect beliefs, values, feelings, etc., maybe not for the present generation but for the younger generations to come.
individuals as the common values of the society. So whatever the society believes, those beliefs get passed down to the next generation in that society. A child’s perspective of the world is largely affected by the culture that he or she is brought up in; thus, if a society is more accepting of homosexual relationships, then the message taught to children that shape their perspective on homosexuality will be positive. In many western countries, people are beginning to be much more favorable to the idea of homosexuality which is why many societies are dealing with the issue of same-sex marriage. Homosexual romantic love is more accepted now than in the past just as it seems the social belief and love for God is becoming less popular with the developments of a science minded culture. The beliefs of a culture influence further beliefs of newer generations, which is why laws in many countries that have prohibited same-sex marriage are being overturned.

Assuming our societies had different values than they do now, the individual perspective about issues associated with those values would also be different. So if our culture as a whole believed homosexuality was wrong, then the message taught to future generations would be negative and laws would not be changing in favor of same-sex marriage. With more and more individuals becoming more accepting of homosexuality though, the future generations are being brought up with the perspective that same-sex marriage is just as acceptable as traditional marriage. Furthermore, by altering a society’s values we may change the way people in that society look at relationships and therefore different love objects.

In terms of cultural values associated with love, it would seem as though the objects of love are often what is significant to a culture at a given time; which may explain why during the medieval times, God was a major object of love, or why the quest for truth was at the heart of love during the time of the ancient Greeks, and why now, family, friends, and romantic partners are the object of love. Because love is a way of relating, society plays a large role in the things we love through its influence, and by understanding a culture, we are provided insight into love. If it is common practice to love your family, friends, and somewhere along the road, find a romantic partner and love him/her, then those will most likely become

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the objects of our love. While family and friends may be the significance holders in one society, all humankind, or nature, or romantic partners may be in another.

This explains why, throughout history, there have been different love objects. We have focused on the love of God, the love of ideas such as Truth, romantic partners, material possessions, and this trend of changing love objects is due to the social values that we push on each other and future generations. While social influence and a culture may determine love objects, the phenomenon of love always remains the same and my aim in this work is to explain what that is – what has stayed the same despite the fluctuating objects of our love. Regardless of culture, or societies’ influence, love is a process of relating to an object. This is what I intend to show however in doing so, I will have to address social issues, which will be looked at in the later stages of this work and will include the different ways we as a society use the word “love” and the influence society has in terms of our love objects.

Saying that love has different forms for different objects, like romantic love with our partners or brotherly love for humanity, is not consistently agreed upon. Some societies for instance do not acknowledge the translation of the word “love” as having different forms. In Italy, the Italian translation of “love” is “amore,” which is only used to refer to the love between romantic partners. “Amore” would be inappropriately used if someone was referring to a family member or God. Since “love” (or “amore” in this case) is used only to refer to one type of relationship, the term “amore” does not consist of different forms. The difference then, between “amore” and “love” is that one culture uses the word very specifically (referring to one type of relationship), while the other uses it more generally (referring to multiple types of relationships). The English equivalent of “amore” is more accurately represented as being, “romantic love,” because the English equivalent is such that “romantic love” and “amore” both only refer to this type of romantic relationship. Furthermore, “amore’s” non-association with the forms of love delineates the specific type of relationship opposed to other forms such as family and friend relationships, and as I have expressed earlier, the elements that give the relationship the form that it has, is not love and do not exist as conditions for love.
When a loving relationship begins, it does so in a specific form. These forms of love do not denote superiority. Familial love is not a stronger type of love than romantic love, or if someone has a sexual lover, then they are not required to hold a person that he/she has as a familial love with any higher in status or rank. Wives and husbands are not more important love objects than parents or children, or more important than pets. The importance of the type of relationship is subjective to the lover. Popular American culture as represented in movies, television and books often deems a specific hierarchy of love such that family trumps friendship, romantic partners trump family, and children trump romantic partners; however, this is not the case for everyone, which I will argue in the third chapter. Perhaps we watch movies where the characters make a comment about blood being thicker than water when referring to friends and family, or see a television show where the husband sits in the hospital and tells the doctor to save the child over the mother because only one can live, and even teenagers deserting their families so that they can run away with their romantic partners, but these representations do not accurately represent the phenomenon of love in general but a subjective view of the hierarchy of love objects – which is different among individuals. There are also many other types of love that exist in addition to the few that have been previously mentioned like the love of objects, religious love, or brotherly love. The different forms of love only express the added prerequisites or reasons for understanding the types of relationships we have, and types of objects that we love. Every form however shares the foundational conditions that make the relationship one of love.

So regardless of the translation, the relationship between family members, romantic partners, friends, etc. all have a common theme, and that theme is what we generally refer to in English as “love” which consists of the four features I am laying out here. If for instance we have different instances of love, meaning that we have different experiences of loving different things in different ways for different reasons, the concept “love” should represent the phenomenon to which it refers. “Love” refers to a specific phenomenon that occurs in the world and if the concept does not match up to the phenomenon, then the concept is problematic. If therefore we were to think of love only being romantic love (“amore” for instance),
then our concept of “love” would be misused in all other instances in which we use it. Perhaps then the different forms of love I have alluded to are not the same or we constantly misuse the term that explains these phenomena. Maybe we are using the term “love” correctly in the sense of romantic love but are using it metaphorically in other situations, such as the relationship for family members or pets. While this may be the case, if there is a way to link the different forms of love and attitudes that are expressed whereby defining the concept so that it explains the phenomena, then perhaps that would be a better solution than assuming the misrepresentation of a concept. Again, our knowledge of love is based on the features that are mentioned here – experiencing a relationship to an object in which the object is irreplaceably significant. Any mention of love being only a specific form of those features, such as romantic love, would require an explanation as to why it and not other forms count as being love, which would most likely be too excluding since we experience, behave, feel and emote so differently to similar phenomena. For instance, we often experience sadness in different ways. Some of us cry, some of us laugh or make jokes, we become silent and mask our sadness by ignoring it and dedicating ourselves to tasks. To then suggest that only crying exemplifies sadness is to misrepresent the phenomenon just as referring to love as “romantic love,” or “parental love.”

As I will cover later, basing a phenomenon like love on the idea of specific behavior and actions, feelings, etc. cannot get us to uncover the nature of love because we often react to phenomena differently. Love must be uncovered by our phenomenological experience of it with our ability to extract a common theme from those varying experiences. Because of the varying experiences, we cannot take every piece of information from every experience of love as a feature of love; otherwise, we would have too much contradicting information to construct a theory of anything. For example, if a mother experiences unconditional concern for her child, but another mother does not, we would not be able to suggest that unconditional concern is a feature of the phenomenon of love; because, both women may experience love, but opposite features and a phenomenon ought not elicit contradictory features, only contradictory experiences of the phenomenon’s features (which will be explained further in chapter three). Instead, a theory of love
should refer only to the commonalities of the experiences of the phenomenon, which will tell us what the nature of the phenomenon is. We can then use their commonality to group them together and refer the concept, “love” (in this case) to the phenomenon.

The concepts that we use to refer to a group of phenomena ought to therefore, either explain some fundamental principle within those phenomena or be willing to exclude some of the phenomena. For instance, when we look at Wittgenstein’s explanation of games and “family resemblances,” since words that we typically use to characterize games such as “competition,” “playing,” “activity,” etc., do not link all of the things that we consider as games, then there is either one of two possibilities: 1) these concepts are not adequate descriptions of what a game is and we should continue to examine the phenomenon of games for a definition that captures their nature, like how Bernard Suits defines games or 2) re-conceptualize “games” so that the concept has a specific meaning and definition and excludes phenomena that does not fall within that definition. The problem with possibility 1 is that it can sometimes be difficult to construct a conceptual analysis of phenomena. The problem with possibility 2 is that we ought to provide reasons and justification for excluding certain phenomena from the definition of “games.” In some instances both actions need to be done, like with what I am attempting to do in this thesis with “love.” By suggesting an answer to the problem of having concepts with no clear reference to phenomena such as overlapping similarities, we create a wide divide between concepts and phenomena.

Surely just by looking for similarities between phenomena we can manage to group any phenomena in almost any concept that refers to those phenomena, such as the case with Wittgenstein’s, “family resemblances.” I could suggest that building a house is a game because it is an activity and games are activities or playing drums is a game because games are played, or my trying to publish this

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philosophical work so I can get a job is a game because I am competing against other philosophers and games are a type of *competition*. We would not consider writing a thesis or any of these as playing a game though because writing a thesis and playing a game have commonalities that might suggest they are part of the same “family.” Games and writing a thesis are both challenging, require a certain amount of thought and ability, take a certain amount of time, etc. We can compare two things together in any number of ways so to suggest that the forms of love are not grounded by some uniting feature, and are merely just “family resemblances” of one another is to suggest nothing about the forms of love. Like games, something specific makes games, games. Otherwise we can say that anything that exists is a game.

Furthermore if we have different instances of a phenomenon, like love, and we do (family love, romantic love, love of pets, friends, ideas, etc.), then an explanation of those phenomena should capture their nature – what binds them together – or the explanation is simply unsatisfactory. In addition to explaining what binds the forms of love together I will also explain why instances that we often believe to be love (because of their resemblance to love) are not examples of love.

**Summary**

I have now revealed information that will aid in uncovering the nature of the phenomenon of love. By acknowledging features of love, I will be able to devise a theory that accounts for the multitude of experiences that occur with love. To do this, I will build on the grounds that love is exhibited in different forms, is subject/object dependent, that it can be expressed in different ways, and the object of love is irreplaceably significant, which will give me a way to verify previous theories of love. From there I will investigate prominent theories of love and begin my analytical work – deducing what creates our experiences of the phenomenon of love and what conditions must be met for a relationship to be one of love. In the next chapter I will argue that among the many theories of love that we will look at, none are able to capture all of the features that I have expressed in this chapter as being phenomenologically vital for a theory of love. The features
that have been mentioned will help us to both critique the previous theories as well as help explain what conditions must be met for love to occur.
Chapter 2
Theories of Love

Introduction

In this chapter I will focus on briefly examining prior theories of the philosophy of love in order that I can later go on to show how they are equivalent phenomenologically, despite their explanatory differences. The chapter is divided into sections for each theory that we will look at (six theories, six sections). Each section will consist of an exposition of the theory as well as a critique of it. My intention with this investigation will be to gain a general understanding of how love has been perceived by different groups of people throughout history and whether or not the theories that come out of those groups can account for the features that are currently at the forefront of our experience of the phenomenon of love. The features that were discussed in the last chapter will serve as the point of reference by which to assess prior theories of love because if the prior theories that we will look at in this chapter are expressed according to the experiences of the theorists, then any new theory of love must account for the variety of different experiences of the different theorists. So whether we refer to the phenomenon of love as it was experienced thousands of years ago or love as it is experienced now, an exposition into its nature should acknowledge and account for any differences in experiencing an object that is irreplaceably significant to the subject.

If for instance a person experiences love for a romantic partner and another person experiences love for a cat, an investigation into the nature of love should acknowledge that both a romantic partner and a cat can be objects of love. If a theory of love then states that either romantic partners or pets cannot be objects of love, then that theory would not account for a person’s experience of love; and people’s experience of love are the necessary basis for understanding the phenomenon. To then disregard an experience of an object being irreplaceably significant to a subject would be counterproductive for devising a theory that uncovers the phenomenon of love. The features of love that I identified in the previous chapter are therefore either common to the multiple theories of love that I will examine in this chapter or express the idea that the phenomenon of love can be experienced differently – as we will see by looking at different theories.
I will conclude in this chapter that none of the theories that we will be looking at are capable of fully explaining the phenomenon of love. Each theory however provides me with an account of the experiences that other theorists and societies have had of love so that I can compile those experiences and incorporate them into my own theory of love – constructing a theory of love that recognizes different experiences. I therefore want to incorporate other theories into my exposition on love because each theory of love that we will look at in this chapter (as well as other theories of love) expresses different aspects of the same phenomenon. Thus, a theory of love should acknowledge that any experience of love is accounted for as being a potential, genuine experience of love; otherwise the theory would inadequately explain the phenomenon.

The theories of love that I will examine in this chapter have been selected because they aim at trying to understand the nature of love – by asking the question: “what is love?” Many other theories that have been put forth by philosophers focused on different questions about love that I am not concerned with in this thesis. For example, some philosophers try to understand love in terms of its teleological function rather than what it is. Schopenhauer suggests the reason we love is because of our psychological urge to procreate, for Nietzsche love affirms life, while Proust suggests that love is a relationship based ultimately on loss and fear.22 These are just a few examples of the kinds of philosophical questions that I do not aim to address, however these, along with other similar theories, do not explain what love is. They do not explore why love is a relationship or an urge or whatever it may be and what conditions need to be met for that type of urge or relationship to occur apart from other urges and relationships. Furthermore, these types of theories pose a different question than the one I am concerned with here. Regardless of why love exists, my efforts here are to theorize about what the phenomenon of love essentially is and what are its

conditions of existence. In order to understand this phenomenon I will focus on specific philosophies of love that help us to see what are the central features of love based on how it is experienced – which will allow us to understand the phenomenon.

This chapter is organized into six parts, each of which exposit a different theory of love. The purpose of examining these theories is to look at love from a perspective which will provide us with a means of comparing one theory to another. Within each exposition, I will make note of love’s features based on the way that the phenomenon is experienced. At the end of each section I will then compare the theory with the other theories that I will mention in this chapter as well as with our current phenomenological experiences in order to better understand themes which overlap among these theories. These common themes will refer to some of the features that we examined in the last chapter such as the object of love being irreplaceably significant and the need for a subject/object relationship as well as conditions that must be met for these features to occur. These themes will also help me in the next chapter construct a theory that can explain the different experiences of love and avoid the problems that are objected to in the theories examined in this chapter.

The history of love has produced many different theories of love. Philosophers, novelists, and poets have examined the phenomenon of love and have explained it in their own particular way. In the Symposium, Plato defines love, through a dialogue, as a quest for ultimate Truth and Goodness. Love thus, for Plato, amounts to a process of attempting to obtain Truth, and for Plato, Truth was of major importance. Trying to acquire knowledge and obtain truths was to see the beauty in those truths, which was the ultimate good. Love for Plato was therefore the process that led to Beauty and Truth.23 Another theory of love is that, love is God, which was put forth by St. Augustine, in the Medieval Era as well as later in the nineteenth century by Kierkegaard24 and many other theologians. For them, God created everything and is the source of everything, therefore He is love.

[23] Plato, Symposium.
Other historical theories of love, including the prominent ones today, are defined in terms of companionship or a type of social connection we have with others – an entanglement of desires and concerns for another person.

One such theory defines love as a union, connecting two people, while another defines it as having a robust concern for another. There are also value theories of love, in which love is either recognizing value in another or giving value to the other. Each of these theories tells a story about the phenomenon of love, why we experience the things we do when we are in love, and what the defining characteristics or conditions are for love to occur. More to the point, these theories are attempts at telling us what love is.

None of these theories however, get it right. Is love a process of obtaining truth? Is it God? Is it the coming together of two people or souls? Is it an emotion, a feeling? Is it an attitude or action of caring? These have all been questions regarding the nature of love throughout history and each question has failed to produce and answer that can fully capture the different experiences of love. They do however express an experience of love and taken together with the other theories and the experiences they express, I will be able to devise a theory of the conditions underlying all love-experiences and can capture what the phenomenon of love is.

The theories of love that we will look at in this chapter pinpoint certain experiences of love rather than an explanation of what love is. They all have something to offer to our understanding of love because each theory expresses an experience in that the object of love is something that is held to the highest regard in its importance. That object is held to be valuable, irreplaceable, and can be consuming for our desires and concerns. These theories describe certain instances of love rather than its nature. They describe conditions; they describe effects, but do not explain love itself in a way that can accommodate different experiences that we have come to believe are genuine experiences of love. Love, as a whole, under these theories is unexplained because of the fact that a theory of love is weakened when focused on only one kind of object or experience.

The trouble with focusing on one specific object or experience of love is that experiences outside of those instances are unexplained phenomena and therefore
the theory fails to capture an aspect of what love includes. As a quick example, let us consider the idea that love is the desire that makes us want to procreate (as expressed by Schopenhauer).\(^{25}\) If this were the case, then anyone who does not want to procreate could not be in love. We therefore would not love our parents or children, pets, god(s), etc. In addition, romantic relationships where the participants do not want to have children would also cease to be relationships of love, which would be an absurd claim to make. Since in our current society there are situations where people love one another and do not want children or we express love for our family and friends, then a theory of love that only focuses on sexual couples of the opposite sex cannot fully capture the nature of love. To deny the existence of love in these relationships would be troublesome for a philosophy of love. One would have to defend why these scenarios do not count as love and thus deny experiences that we hold to be examples of love. While this example does not do justice to the theories that will be mentioned, and is quite simplified, the theories that will be examined in this chapter have the same shortcomings. They focus on a specific experience, usually much broader than the one I have provided, but then do not account for all the different experiences of love. Because our understanding of love comes from the experiences we have of it, it is essential for a theory of love to account for all the different experiences. This of course brings into question: “what if some people are mistaken about whether or not what they are experiencing is love?” How do we know we are in love? What is the criterion for love?

To answer these questions, all we need to do is look at a specific feature of love – experiencing an object that is irreplaceably significant. All of the theories of love express a specialness of the beloved. As I mentioned earlier, objects that are loved cannot just be replaced by different objects and the relationship be expected to stay the same. The intricacies of the relationship change even if the functional role of the relationship does not. But saying this, how do we know if something is irreplaceably significant or not? We unfortunately do not know. It is a question that has a first person subjectivity to it, like that of having a headache or a belief about something. We may be unsure about our beliefs or whether an object is

\(^{25}\) Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation 2.*
irreplaceably significant however once we believe that an object is irreplaceably significant, than it is. This means that if a person believes that something is irreplaceably significant to him/her, then we ought to accept it as being so, and if a person is unsure if something is irreplaceably significant than it may or may not be.

Either way, we have a very subjective experience of the matter that cannot be verified, except by the subject that perceives the object as irreplaceably significant. Love is a first person experience and as such, we must acknowledge and take account of any experience that is had of it. So if someone believes that he/she is in love, in that an object has this irreplaceable significance, then we have to acknowledge that they are indeed experiencing love. I will come back to this issue later which will also include a brief discussion of infatuation; but for now, all that is require is that we accept that individual understandings about the experience of love are genuine, like the fact that we feel love, we express it, we love different objects and react differently to being in love, some people become happy, others scared, and many other things.

The historical theories that we will soon look at do explain certain features and experiences, however they do not seem to be able to explain love completely in terms of an over-arching phenomenon that is common for all the forms of love and the behaviors and experiences that occur as a result. Since love has different forms, it cannot be explained by specific experiences or instances. “Love” refers to a general phenomenon that includes multiple forms and can be directed at different types of objects. Love is a process that allows us to experience the versatility of the phenomenon.

Each of the theories that I will look at explain aspects of love\textsuperscript{26} and help to uncover problems that arise in theorizing about what love is. Despite not fully capturing ‘what love is,’ each of the theories show us a way of experiencing love, an effect of love, what causes love. Love is not solely an emotion or a feeling. It is not just a quest for truth or just having robust concern for another person. Love

\textsuperscript{26} The section on God is used to explain a compromise between my theory and the existence of God and does not undermine either my theory or the Judeo-Christian doctrine. Whether we believe God to exist or not, neither confirm nor deny the experiences of love. Love for God is either taken as the love of an actual being, or an idea depending on one’s beliefs; plus if God does not exist, His love for humankind is irrelevant.
may often include these things but they are not intrinsic to its nature. Love is a process of relating, a relationship between subject and object. It is a combination of some of the things these theories identify, particularly the value theories. The value theories provide the greatest influence for my theory, so as well as explaining them later in this chapter, I will also be revisiting them in the third chapter where I will rigorously describe the processes of the value theories (Appraisal and Bestowal), which I will argue must be incorporated as fundamental conditions for an adequate theory of love.

The theories of love that I will be looking at include examples of different types of objects that can be loved and the types of experiences love typically causes. We may think that love as a quest for ultimate Truth or that love is God is a strange idea, but these ideas are examples of love. The quest for Truth can be an object of love, and God may in fact be the source of love. The problem with these theories is that they do not explain our experience of love. They do not capture the phenomenon. God may in fact be love or more accurately the source of love, but that does not explain how I relate to my parents or romantic partners – why they are the people I love rather than others. Similarly, people may love the idea of truth and ultimate knowledge, but they do not seek Truth by loving their dogs or pets. They love their pets because they relate to them in a special way that makes their pets irreplaceably significant to them.

The expositions of the theories that follow provide an understanding of how love has been viewed over time and examples of love’s features, namely that it is a process between subject and object, it can be directed at different objects, it creates a sense of importance of an object, and many other things that we will look at in more detail later. We would be mistaken to think that previous theories of love have had nothing to contribute to this understanding of love and its features. If the Ancient Greeks believed that love was a quest for the ultimate Truth, then perhaps an explanation of love ought to explain why that was the case. If people today believe that love consists in recognizing specific qualities in another person that makes a relationship with them desirable, then an explanation of love will need to incorporate that. A theory of love needs to explain the different experiences we have when in love. Therefore, it needs to agree with our present understanding of
the features of love, such that believing an object is irreplaceably significant can affect our bodies and the way we think and feel, just as it ought to be able to incorporate any other theories of love. With love being an experience that we have, it is no doubt subjective, meaning that we perceive it differently from one another and any theory of love should account for the different experiences that occur, the different objects that can be loved, and so on. That being said, we must try to reconcile the theory of love with previous theories of love in order to acknowledge that each theory sought to explain a genuine experience of love.

In the third chapter of this thesis, I will revisit all the theories of love that feature in this chapter in order to explain how a comprehensive theory of love is able to incorporate them under a general understanding of love. Despite the varying claims about love that are made in the numerous theories, the nature of love is always the same. Each culture or individual may experience the phenomenon differently from others, yet what gets us to respond, what gets us to experience the phenomenon of love is constant. For love to occur, we must respond to an object in a specific way that follows the conditions for what it takes for the phenomenon of love to occur. The historical and current theories of love that will be the focus of this chapter are no exception. Each theory exhibits the specific response to an object that creates love; thus, all follow the same conditions of love. After examining each of these theories of love, I will show how each falls short of capturing the nature of love. Later, in the following chapter, once I have expounded my theory of love, I will revisit each of the theories that I cover here so as to contextualize them according to my theory of love, to show how my theory can incorporate the different theories that have come before it.

2.1 Love as the Quest for Truth

Around 400 BCE, Plato wrote about love, describing it as the quest for Truth. Of his works that discuss love in detail, the *Symposium* is perhaps the most famous. In the *Symposium*, Plato explains his theory of love through different characters’ stories of what they believe love to be. The different stories the characters tell, act as a functional process of love. Each story explains a piece of the process which begins with physical beauty and ends in *Truth*. The last of the
characters to speak on love is Socrates, who gives a complete analysis of the process in his story. Socrates’ story of what love is comes by way of a conversation he had with Diotima, a wisdom-filled woman. Diotima tells Socrates that love is the desiring of the good and that which is good is beautiful; therefore, love is to be understood as the desiring of beauty. Not only does one desire the good, or beauty, but one should aim at attaining it forever. Diotima states, “In a word, then, love is wanting to possess the good forever . . . . This, then, is the object of love. [And Lovers pursue it by] giving birth in beauty, whether in body or soul.” She goes on to conclude that giving birth is the only act by which humans can become immortal and that immortality is what is most beautiful in the world. Through the process of reproduction, our desire for immortality is recognized, thus constituting beauty, and therefore the object of love. By creating offspring, the parent is replaced by the child, preserving life. Once again, Diotima explains the process of immortality to Socrates, this time in terms of knowledge:

And what is still far stranger than that is that not only does one branch of knowledge come to be in us while another passes away and that we are never the same in respect of our knowledge, but that each single piece of knowledge has the same fate. For what we call studying exists because knowledge is leaving us, because forgetting is the departure of knowledge, while studying puts back a fresh memory in place of what went away, thereby preserving a piece of knowledge, so that it seems to be the same. And in that way everything mortal is preserved, not, like the divine, by always being the same in every way, but because what is departing and aging leaves behind something new, something such as it had been. By the device . . . what is mortal shares in immortality, whether it is a body or anything else, while the immortal has another way. So don’t be surprised if everything naturally values its own offspring, because it is for the sake of immortality that everything shows this zeal, which is love. Through Diotima’s analogy of the immortality of knowledge, she describes the beauty of reproduction. New pieces of knowledge replace those forgotten like children who replace elders who pass. Life becomes everlasting through the reproduction of life, and knowledge becomes everlasting by generations continually learning new things.

In the Symposium, Plato uses man-boy love and the passing of ideas and knowledge as the theme of immortality. Man-boy relationships would produce high

27. Plato, Symposium, 489.
28. Ibid., 490-91.
levels of engaged thinking and conversation that often led to great things such as poetry, philosophy, science, theater, etc. With these great accomplishments, knowledge would become immortal in the rebirth of the boy’s ideas, which would then be transferred to the next generation and so on, creating an immortal chain of rebirth through knowledge.\textsuperscript{29} Diotima discusses how this process of immortality works with the soul. She states that this form of rebirth begins with a man’s finding beauty (goodness), physically, in an adolescent. She goes on to make the final point with regards to love as this:

After this he must think that the beauty of people’s souls is more valuable than the beauty of their bodies, so that if someone is decent in his soul, even though he is scarcely blooming in his body, our lover must be content to love and care for him and to seek to give birth to such ideas as will make young men better. The result is that our lover will be forced to gaze at the beauty of activities and laws and to see that all this is akin to itself, with the result that he will think that the beauty of bodies is a thing of no importance. After customs he must move on to various kinds of knowledge. The result is that he will see the beauty of knowledge and be looking mainly not at beauty in a single example—as a servant would who favor the beauty of a little boy or a man or a single custom (being a slave, of course, he’s low and small-minded)—but the lover is turned to many gloriously beautiful ideas and theories in unstinting love of wisdom, until, having grown and been strengthened there, he catches sight of such knowledge, and it is the knowledge of such beauty.\textsuperscript{30} Moreover, Diotima concludes that love is the desire for knowledge or Truth. Truth is therefore the source of unqualified beauty, and is the ultimate good. Though Plato goes through a lengthy story of multiple discourses to explain, at the end, that the source of love is the desire for Truth, the beginning of the story is not

\textsuperscript{29} Diane Ackerman, \textit{A Natural History of Love} (New York: Random House, 1994), 21-23. Cf. Morton M. Hunt, \textit{The Natural History of Love} (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1959), 42. It was not unusual for a teenage boy and an older man of society to become sexually engaged. Their relationship was considered ideal for the education of the boy and gratification of the elder. The boy could provide a level of thinking and communication that was not common among girls, and the elder would see the boy’s beauty in his potential and adolescent face. This relationship between the boy and elder was not merely one of sexual interaction. The elder would become a role-model to the boy, teaching him about philosophy and art, instructing the boy how to become a man, through lessons in politics and mannerisms. The boy’s acceptance and appreciation of being taken in by the elder would consist in sexual deeds until the time when the boy became a man. Then, if it were his place, he would take on a pupil just as his elder did with him.

\textsuperscript{30} Plato, \textit{Symposium}, 493.
wasted dialogue. In fact, all of the stories about love, told by the men at the party, contribute to Plato’s theory of love, being that of desiring Truth. Before Socrates’ speech, five others produce accounts of what they believe love to be. In these five speeches, the characters present different pieces of the process of love that Plato describes through Socrates and Diotima. The first speech, for instance, is told by Phaedrus and focuses mainly on man-boy love. He periodically refers to male superiority over women and states that “those who are inspired by her [Aphrodite’s] Love are attracted to the male: they find pleasure in what is by nature stronger and more intelligent.” He then goes on to give examples of feeling ashamed if the beloved (boy) were to see the lover (elder) doing something shameful and vice versa. Phaedrus’ philosophy of love is built upon by the rest of the party speakers. Pausanias adds to Phaedrus’ story by adding the love of the soul to his, more or less, physical theory of love. The speakers at the party continue to build upon one another’s philosophies; Eryximachus adding a theory of love of all things such as gods, plants, and animals; Aristophanes contributing with the gods’ reason for creating love; and finally Agathon’s addition of beauty and celebration to the gods for such a gift as love. Collectively, all of the speakers unknowingly touch on a piece of Socrates’ speech, which ties into the whole of Plato’s philosophy of love. Plato strategically uses each of the character’s stories to slowly build up the process, a complete philosophy of love, beginning with physical love and ending in Truth.

The main problem with Plato’s theory of love is that it does not contain all of love’s core features that were set out in the previous chapter. Love is, to reiterate, a subjectively experienced phenomenon with different objects and forms to which the lover perceives the object of love as being irreplaceably significant. Plato’s theory seems to acknowledge the need for an irreplaceably significant object of love, which covers two of love’s core features; however, the problem arises when we compare Plato’s theory of love to a modern theory. Theories of love in the 21st

century do not describe a phenomenon that exists because of a quest for Truth. They tend to describe love as a way of relating to an object, such as a person or a pet. Plato’s theory does not address the multiple, possible objects of love. For Plato, love is directed at this abstract idea of Truth. According to Plato’s theory, love does not have different forms such as romantic love or brotherly love; it consists only in our particular response to one specific object, namely, Truth.

Furthermore, restricting love to only one specifying object leaves out the many different experiences that people have had in other cultures throughout history. By defining love as the search for Truth and goodness, Plato does not account for the experience of love we find familiar in the present day. Nowadays we typically think the concept of “love” refers more to a type of feeling or an emotion directed at another person, or thing. It is also often thought of as a type of relationship or connection between individuals. Whatever we experience love to be, it seems a bit odd to think of it in today’s times as a quest for absolute knowledge and goodness. Perhaps in Plato’s time the object of love was something different than people and pets. Maybe Plato was right when describing Phaedrus’ story of love (the one most like the type of love we experience now) in that it is only the beginning to what love actually is. By that token however, this type of love we experience today is not real love at all. It is merely the beginning of a process of obtaining love that western culture has ignored. Again though, this is inaccurate. This process would make those that we think we love, such as parents, children, romantic partners, and so on, into means rather than ends. To see the beauty in them would be the means to see the beauty in all of society, which in turn would be the means to see the beauty in God(s) and eventually Truth and Knowledge. This however is not how we experience love. I do not try to obtain a greater understanding of the world and Truth by loving my dog. I do not use my loved ones as means to obtaining Truth. Even if it were the case that love in modern society was just the path of obtaining Truth through Knowledge, Plato does not tell us why this would be the case or offer any proof for it. Plato suggests that the love we experience with a husband or child gets us to open our minds to the possibility of a greater understanding of knowledge, thus taking the first step in
the process of love; but this does not accord with how we in the 21st Century experience love.

If we accept Plato’s theory of love, we would have to acknowledge a very definitive stance on love that most of us do not seem to hold. The love we have for our mothers, fathers, children, husbands, wives, etc. would not be love at all. Or perhaps Plato would think of these relationships as lesser forms of love, consisting in the process of obtaining Truth. The love shared between partners or family members is the stepping stone to Love – obtaining Truth and Beauty. The kind of love people have for one another or even the love that people have for god(s) would not be as complete or as pure as the love a person has for Truth. If taken as a lesser form of love, the relationships we form with other people would not be an end in itself. Instead the love that a person has for another person would be a means to loving Truth; and therefore, any lover that loves another person and believes that his/her love is an end in itself would be mistaken. This idea of loving in a lesser form to love in a complete form seems to not only leave out the experience and phenomenon of love, but it expresses a type of circular argument: we need love in our relationships to Love. If this were the case, then we would be using love in two different ways and we would need to explain the phenomena of both love in the lesser sense, and love in the greater sense, because it would be fallacious to think of both forms of love as the same and then use one to get to the other. A phenomenon cannot be the same as the phenomenon that it causes.

In addition, Plato’s theory would have difficulty in accounting for how love might be thought to be God, as was common in the medieval times by philosophers like St. Augustine, St. Aquinas, and later Kierkegaard. The case could be made that the idea that love is God is the same as that of love being Truth because God could perhaps be considered to be Truth as well. However, Plato’s theory would still not be able to acknowledge love as we presently understand it, as being a type of emotion or feeling or relationship with another person or thing. Even if Plato was right and love consists of this process of obtaining Truth and the relationships we have in the world are just lesser forms of love, he still does not explain why we have the experience of love that we do.
In any case, Plato does not provide convincing reasons why it should be the case that the love I have for my parents, friends, and dog is really just a piece of my trying to obtain some ultimate understanding about the world. Plato’s theory does not explain why we love certain objects rather than others or why we love in different ways, like familiarly or romantically. A comprehensive theory of love has to address these issues. It must explain the experience of love throughout history, which means accounting for different experiences that have been had of love.

There are however two important aspects of Plato’s theory that I would like to keep. First, the object of love for Plato is an object other than a person or animal. Plato seems to hold up this notion of Truth and Knowledge as the most important things in life. It is important to him like our husbands and wives or parents and children are important to us today; thus, Plato’s theory of love provides a feature to remember, which is that a theory of love may need to consider that ideas or objects apart from people and animals can be objects of love. In the next chapter I will argue that ideas can be just as much an object of love as other people can. The second aspect about Plato’s theory that I would like to keep is that Plato describes coming to love through a process. I will show in the next chapter that love requires the subject to act according to a specific process for it to occur. The process is very different from that suggested by Plato; however, as with Plato’s theory, the process serves as conditions that must be met for love to occur. These two aspects of love will be considered in my examination in the next chapter in order to show how a theory of love can encompass a variety of experiences, so they will be important to remember.

2.2 Love as God

God has also been a major object when speaking of love and still is to this day among many committed Judeo-Christians. During the Medieval Age especially, God was the object of love, as both the object of love and the source of love. Rather than Plato’s “truth is love” theory, the Judeo-Christian population believes that God is Love.34 According to Irving Singer, “Christianity . . . is the only

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34. The God referred to in this section is the Judeo-Christian God.
faith in which God and love are the same."\(^{35}\) In Christianity, all love comes from God. God creates the world from love, and in our acceptance of him, we reciprocate the love provided to us by God. Singer goes on to say:

The Christian God . . . draws everything to himself by being loved. But also he is a lover; indeed all love originates with him, inasmuch as nothing could love unless he loved it first. Through this kind of idealization the Christians could see in the cosmos a meaning and a purposefulness that no one else had ever found. Their God takes a personal interest in whatever nature produces. He himself contains the highest Platonic form, the very essence of goodness or beauty. At the same time, he is infinitely powerful, authoritative, wise. He is a great benefactor who always arranges for the best. And, finally, none of the love he generates is ever wasted; eventually it all comes back to him. However circuitously, God always loves himself. In being love, he constantly descends into his creatures; yet they too have ultimately no object but the Godhead. He is therefore both alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the apotheosis or eros, the perfection of purposive self-love.\(^{36}\)

Love and God become a circle in that, because of God’s love, humanity can love, and therefore love God, which contributes to God’s glory\(^ {37}\) and the existence of life. God creates everything in the world, including love, creates humans in his image, and gives them the capability to love. Those that believe in and desire God, direct their love towards Him making Him the recipient of the love that He created. Before going any further though, I should clarify what type of love I am talking about here because there are potentially four different kinds of love in the Judeo-Christian religion. Each word gets its reference from the Greek language.

The Greek words “eros,” “agape,” “philia,” and “nomos” are used to refer to four types of Christian love.\(^ {38}\) Of these four types of love, we need to go in

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\(^{35}\) Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love* 1,159.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 162-63.

\(^{37}\) John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994). Cf. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994). The Protestant view of Christianity and God is the position that I have adopted for this thesis. Moreover, I will occasionally refer to God’s glory as being the reason for creation as cited in Fame’s, *Apologetics to the Glory of God* because God is both the source and object of love. What is important to us for the understanding of the position of God as love is the belief that God created and loves humanity and through that love, humans are given the ability to love God, by desiring him.

\(^{38}\) Irving Singer, *Nature of Love* 1, 160.
depth into the definitions of “eros” and “agape” a little more than “nomos” and “philia” because the ideas of nomos and philia can be expressed through agape and eros. Agape and eros are the types of love that are the focus of the philosophy of love – eros being human love (for God) and agape, God’s love (for humanity).

Before jumping into eros (the love of humanity for God), we can quickly mention philia and nomos, since they are not entirely irrelevant. Philia comes from Aristotle and is his term for perfect friendship.39 The Christian interpretation of philia can be referred to as the love people have for each other. This is expressed by the relationship that a spouse has in marriage or a person amongst friends.40 Nomos, on the other hand, according to Singer, “is the idea of love as righteousness, acceptance of God’s law, humble submission to his will.”41 Nomos comes into play when we accept God’s power over us. While this type of love plays a significant role in becoming close to God, the point of human love for God can be similarly expressed through the discussion of eros.

Eros’ role in the love of God by humanity provides the ability for humans to love. Through eros, a person can understand love. By working to discover the love of God, or love for God, one sets forth on a life-long journey for good, because loving God (submitting oneself to God and obeying God’s laws) creates goodness. Since God is assumed to be omnibenevolent, his love and the love of himself constitute life. Singer speaks of Augustine who describes love as the reasoning force within the world,42 meaning that since God is all-good, he loves all people and gives them the ability to be good (by loving God, because goodness is to love and follow God). If God is therefore the highest good, by loving God, people are

40. This type of love will make an appearance later in the paper because of its importance in love of companions. At that point, however, there will be no reference to God, only Aristotle’s “Perfect Friendship.”
42. Ibid., 165.
doing the most good they can. God’s initial love is thus the reason for creation and humanity and is what brings God glory (which again is the purpose of creation).  

_Agape_ differs in that it is the love that God has for humanity. By loving humans, God allows humans to achieve the highest good, that being to love God. “Agape is God suffusing all things with spontaneous, unbounded love. It may possess a man, but it cannot be possessed by him. In varying degrees, _agape_ sustains the being of everything. Without it, nothing could have existed at all. The concept of _agape_ . . . divinizes love.” In creating humans, God bestows value on them by giving them the chance to love God. Loving God is humanity’s ultimate good because God is the ultimate good. According to Singer:

Agape does more than just idealize bestowal. Agape is not human love. It is God’s love, and for the Christian, God himself. Bestowal is just a category of valuation: a way of responding, an attitude that gives to objects value they would not have apart from the lover. To some extent, _agape_ does the same. It is God’s way of responding, and apart from his response nothing could have value at all. But when the Christian says this, he means that God makes value in the same objective sense that he makes reality. _Agape creates_ goodness. Values exist only in relation to God’s will, whether or not human beings recognize them. God gives humans an importance (the ability to choose to glorify God) by placing value on them that would not have existed without God. People therefore have the option, through free will, to love God and provide glory to God.

Under the Judeo-Christian view, God’s glory is important in love because essentially every action performed by people is done for the purpose of glorifying God; and therefore, since humans have a part in glorifying God, they can feel the ultimate good of God’s goodness. Furthermore, God creates humans to love Him, and through loving God, humans glorify God and play a role in God’s glory which He then praises humanity for loving Him and taking part in the ultimate good (loving and glorifying God).

This theory of love runs into many problems. The first that comes to mind is the very existence of God. If God does not exist then the theory that love is God is surely wrong. There are more people in the world that do not believe in the Judeo-

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44. Irving Singer, _Nature of Love 1_, 270.
45. Ibid., 307-308.
Christian God than there are that do, which means a major population in the world does not agree with the theory that love is God. While just because a minority – that is continuing to shrink even smaller – holds the belief that Love is God, does not necessarily mean that the theory is wrong. The problem lies in the fact that the shrinking minority of Judeo-Christian believers have no way of providing evidence for their belief in God, let alone the theory that God is love.

This brings me to another problem with the idea that love is God, in that our experience provides no evidence for the theory. Our experience of love today, seems more like the idea of philia that is put forth by Aristotle. Love is not an object, but a way of relating to something, as we typically relate to our parents and husbands and wives and children and so on. In the Judeo-Christian texts we are never explicitly given an explanation of love. Instead we are provided with features and characteristics that may or may not be true. Paul, in Corinthians, writes about love and God as being kind, patient and enduring; however these features still do not explain how we love, why certain things receive our love and others do not, and what exactly the phenomenon of love is. If however these features are meant to be conditions of love, the problem of pinpointing specific features does not apply; however, all instances of love would have to exemplify these conditions.

This however, seems to fail to incorporate our present notion of falling out of love. If love were enduring then it could not cease. Falling out of love however is a very common occurrence. Most people fall out of love numerous times in their life. When we are teenagers we typically have romances that do not last or we grow up to have marriages that die out. While it can be that teenagers do not actually experience love and that their relationships are more like infatuation because they typically start and stop so abruptly, I will make the case in the next chapter that this is not so. Later in this thesis I will refer back to this section in which I will conclude that love must not endure to be love. I will argue that infatuation is often wrongly attributed to teenage relationships and that infatuation is really just a type of obsessive desire or liking of something. Love is very

different; which again I will compare and contrast with infatuation in the second chapter.

Furthermore, the idea of God as love seems to go against what the popular belief nowadays of what love is. While God may have been the creator of love, and have love for humanity himself, there seems to be a missing explanation of the feelings, and emotions that are possessed when people experience love. Love can be God, but how does that love relate to our experiences of what we deem love to be like now? Surely my love for my partner exists (perhaps through philia, because of God), but how can we reconcile the phenomenon of love as we experience it with its metaphysical origin – why/how it was created?

The theory of God as love is very enigmatic. The theory is difficult to disprove because it is based on faith rather than evidence but is also difficult to prove because of the same reason. Again, the questions that arise for the theory that God is love do not necessarily pose it to be an insoluble problem. I think at most however, the existence of love can be explained through God, but that explanation will not fully capture the workings of the phenomenon. In the next chapter I will try to show how my theory of love does not negate the idea that God is love, but explains the phenomenon of love in a way that whether or not God is love, the theory will account for the experience of love as expressed according to the Judeo-Christian faith. Without this explanation of the phenomenon, the notion that God is love, similarly to Plato’s definition that love is the quest for ultimate truth and goodness, is one in which there is little evidence to support it. They are both ideas based on faith alone rather than theories backed by evidence.

Nevertheless, there are features of the theory that God is love that we can examine further that will help us with an understanding of love. Before addressing them however, I will quickly mention that the idea that God is love is a proposition that regardless of its truth, will only really tell us about the origin of love – where love comes from, rather than what it means to relate to certain objects and not others in a loving way. That is to say it tells us about what creates (God) but not what love is. The phenomenon that we experience, that we refer to as “love” however is something much different than the being that created it; it is the metaphysics of love that I am concerned with here. For the purposes of
understanding the phenomenon that we refer to as “love,” we need to look at God’s love for humans and human’s love for God (agape and eros) – meaning the examination of the relation that exists between subject and object.

What we can take away from the theory that God is love is that firstly, love can exist in a single direction, in that love does not need to be reciprocal. I can love an object without the object loving me. The reason for this is due to the possible outcomes of relationships. If God exists as the Judeo-Christian faith suggests, then God loves humans, but not every human loves God. If God does not exist then He does not love humans, but there are people that love God (the idea of Him). What we can conclude is that the experience of love can be one directional and does not require reciprocity. The second thing that we can take away is that we can experience love for different objects. We would, if God is love, possess the ability to experience love without truly knowing the object of that love. God is not known to people in the same way their parents or partner is known. God is known through faith and belief, in a removed sense. Without scriptures telling us about God, we may know very little if anything at all about Him. What this means for the philosophy of love then, is that love can potentially be had for ideas (or ideas of people/gods/things) just as was the case with Plato and Truth.

A suggestion could be made that the love God has for humanity is the only genuine form of love, and the love of people for God or between people and other people is a lesser or derivative kind of love. However if that were the case, then we would wind up with the same problem we had with Plato and the idea of lesser forms of love. Also if there are different kinds of love, then we would still need to explain what about them is different and what love (between people, as well as the love of God) is. Instead, we can accept that love is experienced for different types of objects. Whether a person claims to love God or his/her partner, we ought to accept his/her testimony as referring to a genuine experience of love, thus love can be had for different types of objects.

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48. Without scripture or stories that have been passed down, we may know nothing of God. We may possibly have some feeling or knowledge based on our souls if God is the Judeo-Christian God and we actually do possess such substance however our knowledge of God is given to us by a second party.
For Christianity, the significant object is God (or humankind if we are talking about God’s love for people) while for Plato, the significant object of love was Truth. In these two theories, different objects have been the object of the phenomenon of love. In both instances however, the objects have been specific rather than general, therefore the theories ignore experiences of love that have different objects. If God is the object of love, then I could not love my spouse, or if humankind is the object of love then I could not love God; and, even if these objects are just representatives of the multiple things that can be loved, we still do not have an explanation of the conditions for our responding to these objects in a way that makes them objects of love.

2.3 Love as a Union

The union view of love is a type of companionship love that we are more familiar with today. The companionship idea of love also became popular in the Middle Age, with the idea of courtly and romantic love. While the writings that primarily focus on union love explain it in terms of romantic love (sexual, romantic partners) the idea can easily be extended to other types of relationships such as between parents and children, friends, siblings, etc. By applying the theory of love as a union to other types of relationships rather than just romantic relationships, we can make a stronger case for the union view being an accurate account of love. We still however have to note that the union view may run into problems when it comes to the union between humans and animals and other objects like art or nature, but I will discuss those objections at the end of this section. Meanwhile, examples I provide in this section will be heavily based on romantic love between men and women, yet by no means is romantic love between men and women the only form of love that applies to the union view. To be charitable to the union view, we can assume that love can occur between people of any combination of sex and across multiple types of relationships (i.e. family, friends, siblings, etc.).

The union theory of love became popular in the middle ages and then later in the Romantic Era. The idea that love is a union between people is not just a view that has been held by philosophers; novelists, poets, and playwrights have also held this view, with such notable characters as Romeo and Juliet, and Catherine and Heathcliff. In addition, philosophers such as Kant and more recently, Robert Solomon and Robert Nozick have advanced the idea that love is a union, a coming together of two autonomous beings in order to create a single couple. The independence of one person combined with the independence of another person creates a unity in which they become a unit, a couple. As a couple the individuals act as a team, and as a team each person considers what is in the best interest of both participants rather than just him/her.

Under the union view, the participants form a bond, linking them together, creating a ‘we’ or ‘us’, a team. Whether the ‘we’ that is formed is a new entity in itself or the ‘we’ is merely a metaphoric connection between partners is irrelevant to the argument at hand. With the united couple, any problems that face one are problems that face both. Each person concerns him/herself with the concerns and cares of the other. Since the partners act out of concern for each other’s interests, they cease to be autonomous beings that act for his/her own self, and become part of a team that act for each other, so what happens to one, happens to both. Robert Nozick expresses this clearly by stating, “[y]our own well-being is tied up with that of someone (or something) you love.”

Nozick’s use of ‘well-being’ is expressed in a set of criteria that he sets out in the footnotes of *The Examined Life*. The list is as follows:

1. You say and believe your well-being is affected by significant changes in hers;  
2. your well-being is affected in the same direction as hers, an improvement in her well-being producing an improvement in your own, a decrease, a decrease;  
3. you not only judge yourself worse off, but feel some emotion appropriate to that state;  
4. you are affected by the change in her well-being directly, merely through knowing about it, and not because

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50 There is much disagreement among philosophers whether the union between couples is actual or metaphorical, and while later I will briefly refer to the notion of a metaphoric and actual connection, the differences serves no influential purpose for the paper. The only importance is that the union theory suggests a bond or desire to bond between partners.

it symbolically represents to you something else about yourself, a childhood situation or whatever; (5) (and this condition is especially diagnostic) your mood changes: you now have different occurent feelings and changed dispositions to have particular other emotions; and (6) this change in mood is somewhat enduring. Moreover, (7) you have this general tendency or disposition toward a person or object, to be thus affected; you tend to be thus affected by changes in that person’s well-being.52

Each of these alterations signifies the togetherness of the couple. When in love, changes in the beloved’s well-being, causes a change in the lover. These points can be acknowledged for other forms of love as well and not just romantic love. For instance parents often feel this way with regards to their children, and friends feel this way about other friends. Given that the relationship is a loving one, parents will be affected by what happens to their children and friends will be affected by what happens to their friends. All six of the criteria seem to explain a very important aspect of what love is traditionally (in western culture) supposed to involve. Each participant reacts similarly to the other’s ‘mood’; when one is sad, the other is sad (as if whatever made one sad also makes the other sad). It would seem quite un-loving for a man to be happy when he comes home to find his wife sad; or, upon seeing his wife happy, because she just sold a painting she had been working on for a long time, becomes depressed and upset. These scenarios in which the lover and beloved are not intertwined become somewhat questionable if we are supposed to think of love as a coming together. Love is the reason why the points made by Nozick occur, because as a unified entity, both the man and woman act in harmony with one another (as one entity). The union that is created in this case is metaphorical; however the implications of the alignment of emotions and feelings make the experience seem as if both participants are connected. This of course does not necessarily mean that when the husband sees the wife sad and needing comfort, that he begins to feel sad and needing comfort identically. Typically upon seeing the wife sad when coming home, the husband will, although feeling sad, try to be strong and cheer up the wife, which will in turn, lift his mood as well. This typical type of behavior would represent more of a metaphorical approach to the union view.

52 Ibid., 69.
Solomon’s perspective on love as a union is slightly different, assuming that the union that is created by the participants is not metaphoric, but real. Love is a process of identifying one’s self, with another. Through affection, the lover becomes identified (becomes complete, whole, defined) with his/her partner. In *About Love*, Solomon explains the union of love in terms of the self and its identity by stating:

“Our selves are underdetermined by the facts about us – our appearance, our physical and mental abilities, our past history of accomplishments – and they are mutually rather than individually defined, defined with and through others….Love is the concentration and the intensive focus of mutual definition on a single individual, subjecting virtually every personal aspect of one’s self to this process.”

He also states that:

“[L]ove is not a mysterious “union” of two otherwise separate and isolated selves but rather a special instance of the mutually defined creation of selves. Who and how we love ultimately determines what we are. It is, accordingly, primarily a theory of the self, but a *shared self*, a self mutually defined and possessed by two people.”

Under this view of love as an actual union, the identity of each person becomes the identity of the relationship, as each of the partners identifies him/herself in terms of their union. So rather than each partner identifying him/herself as an individual, both identify themselves as being a *unit*. From this, the participants in the relationship would act similarly to how the metaphorical view says they would, such that their moods would often synchronize so that when one feels happy, the other does too. With the actual union however, the two participants would act as one by making decisions on behalf of both rather than for oneself and concerning themselves with each other’s well-being because as a mutually defined entity, each person is shaped by the relationship, so that when one person’s well-being is affected, the relationship and therefore the other is affected. Take for instance a similar scenario as above in that a man comes home to find his wife in an ecstatic mood. He would also become ecstatic (or exhibit some similar emotion/behavior) because the wife’s mood affects the way she is in the relationship, her behavior towards him. Each of the partners makes up the relationship so alterations in one

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54 Ibid.
alter the relationship which brings about alteration in the other. Through this phenomenon of altering each other, both participants begin to develop similar interests, beliefs, behaviors, etc.

Again, this union theory can also potentially be extended to non-romantic relationships. We could suggest that families love each other by the creation of their bond, the union as family members. They act in each other’s interest and are connected to each other through moods and dispositions to take care of one another. The same goes with friends and the unity of people as part of the same species. As humans we can love other humans because we share in the bond of a common humanity. So an example of love under the union view that takes the form of humanity love could be when natural disasters pull people together to work for the common good. A bond is formed in which a union type behavior is exhibited. While I do not intend to argue that this example of coming together is in fact an example of a different form of love under the union view, I believe that we must try to provide charitable interpretations of all theories in general.

In addition to looking at love as a union, metaphorically or actually (in a behavioral sense), some popular writers have often thought of love’s union in a spiritual sense. The notion of ‘soul mates’ has played a very philosophically interesting part in literature and the philosophy of love. One instance of this is described in Wuthering Heights. In Emily Bronte’s famous novel, Catherine marries Edgar Linton despite being soul mates with Heathcliff. For the characters in the story, the efficacy of a union (marriage) was much more important than actual feelings and emotions, toward the other. Catherine therefore decides to marry Linton because of his wealth, status, looks and the security that he can provide her with. Despite their being well suited for each other, Heathcliff is the one that Catherine actually loves, because it is Heathcliff’s soul that she feels hers is united and connected with, meaning that her being/essence is one with Heathcliff’s. Catherine explains this form of love for Heathcliff while talking to Nelly about her marriage proposal with Linton. She says: “I love him [Heathcliff]: and that, not because he’s handsome, Nelly, but because he’s more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton’s is as
different as the moonbeam from lighting, or frost from fire.”⁵⁵ She goes on to say, “I am Heathcliff! He’s always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, anymore than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being.”⁵⁶ Catherine suggests that the love for Linton, the love of him being a good man, handsome, wealthy, and kind, is nothing compared to the way she feels for Heathcliff. Catherine’s love for Heathcliff transcends the reducible characteristics of a person and prophesies a spiritual, emotional, physical, mystic bond that ends up being unbreakable, even in death. Once dead, Catherine and Heathcliff’s spirits are still heard around the moors, together, always united, for better or worse.

Even though Catherine and Heathcliff cannot manage to make each other happy and while Catherine marries and spends her life with Linton, Heathcliff is the man she loves. Heathcliff is the one united with Catherine, despite the fact that they make each other unhappy. By never pursuing one another, for the social reasons of that time (whether because Heathcliff was orphaned and thought to be destined to a life of poverty or Catherine’s commitment of marriage with Linton), Catherine and Heathcliff make each other’s lives miserable as well as everyone around them.⁵⁷

The thought of being destined to be with another or having one soul possessing two bodies, or two halves of a soul searching for each other seems like the plot of a fantasy story. Emmanuel Kant, however, takes on the task of uniting the lover and beloved in a similar yet more rational way. Kant’s philosophy with regard to sex and possessing the other shows an example of how the union theory of love can be rationalized. For Kant, sex, taken by itself, is immoral due to treating the other (object) as a means to the subject’s ends (i.e., his/her pleasure). By doing this, the subject uses the object as a tool and not like an end in

⁵⁶. Ibid., 42.
⁵⁷. This version of the union view (a more spiritual version) is different from those of Nozick and Solomon. In Nozick and Solomon’s view, behavior and the relationship plays a role in the uniting of partners, where the idea of soul mates in *Wuthering Heights* does not necessitate certain behavioral tendencies and just is the case. Moreover, Catherine and Heathcliff are often upset with each other, separated, and even enter into marriages with other partners, but, are still in love, due to the union of their souls.
him/herself that he/she is. The object becomes the “object of appetite.”\textsuperscript{58} The subject does not respect the object’s autonomy and therefore acts immorally, casting the object into a life in which he/she is “a thing and can be treated and used as such by everyone.”\textsuperscript{59} Singer explains Kant’s position with regard to sex as an analogy of love in which he states:

The lover and beloved must enter into a contract that allows each to treat each other as a means. By entering into a contract, like a marriage, the lover and beloved are able to relinquish their autonomy to the other, thus gaining the other’s permission and independence. In the act of gaining the other, each regains him/herself in the other. Since both the lover and beloved gain themselves back from one another, they never lose their autonomy and therefore cannot be merely used for the selfish pleasure of intimacy. Furthermore, both parties become one, combining their being with the other. They both control the fate of the other yet do so together in accordance with their contractual agreement.\textsuperscript{60}

This line of reasoning coincides with the union view and the sharing and/or the uniting of souls. Catherine’s claim that she is Heathcliff then makes sense, in the sense that Catherine believes she has given her being, her soul, to Heathcliff and feels that he has done the same to her. Even though there is no binding contract, Catherine and Heathcliff can be seen to exhibit what one can imagine as a slightly varied form of Kant’s sexual morality but applied to love (as Singer does). They give themselves to each other and know that the other has given him/herself in return. While this typically makes for a comforting feeling, both Catherine and Heathcliff are driven mad by the knowledge that they love one another and yet their characters and circumstances keep them from being together.

Whether we take the metaphorical interpretation or the actual interpretation of love as a union, we run into problems. Bennet Helm suggests that an actual interpretation of the union view does not work because of the problem of autonomy.\textsuperscript{61} If I am an autonomous being with certain characteristics that excludes anyone else, then my connection with another person means that those

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
characteristics no longer exist and my autonomy is lost. Moreover, I am a person free from others; I am not my father or mother or brother of friend or partner. They are all independent like me. If I were to enter into a loving relationship with a partner however, I as a self-determining being would have to become part of an “us” where my autonomy becomes connected to another and is therefore lost. Is my autonomy lost when in a loving relationship? Is a new autonomy created, the “us?” Is a new autonomy created but my original autonomy and my partner’s autonomy are preserved so that there are three beings, me, my partner, and “us?” These questions make the actual interpretation of the union view difficult to work out. It would seem that our individuality is not lost or given up when in love so the union that is created must be metaphoric. Only if the union view is metaphoric does it escape the problem of a person keeping or losing his/her autonomy.

The problem that occurs however when thinking of the union view as a metaphor for caring about the other as if he/she were part of oneself is blurring the line between caring for a person’s interests for his or her own sake and caring for a person’s interests for one’s own sake. Since both the lover and beloved are unionized any care that is given to the beloved is also given to the lover so that it would seem that any action or concern is done so selfishly, and the modern day conception of love is that it is selfless.

Along with these two arguments, the union view assumes that the object of love is restricted to humans and perhaps some animals. If the union view suggests that my being is connected with another being then it will limit the objects that can be loved. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, under the union view of love, the idea that we love art or god(s) will not be recognized as love. The union view thus excludes the feature of love that suggests that different objects can be the object of love. Can we therefore not love God? Was Plato’s experience of Love not genuine because the object was Truth? Perhaps we can limit the union view of love to romantic love, but then we would need an explanation of the differences between that and the love for our parents and children and pets. By accepting the union view, we would need to explain why Plato and Kierkegaard and St.

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62. Ibid.
Augustine got love so wrong. And what about my love for a painting or a song, can I not genuinely love them?

For instance my love of a painting does not create a type of union that the union view specifies. I do not exhibit a desire to be together with a painting like I would with my mother or father and surely the painting and myself would not become an “us” or “we.” For example, my love of the painting, Princess Diaries II by Fabian Perez does not require me to unite myself with it and therefore concern myself for its well-being, and it cannot concern itself with my well-being. I will care for it of course in that I do not want to see it destroyed so I can continue to look at it and admire it; however later we will see why concern for an object does not make it an object of love. Since I therefore do not create a union with the painting actually or metaphorically, I would, under the theory, not be able to love it, although I do. I experience many of the phenomena associated with love such as an increased heart rate, the desire to own and look at the painting and the belief that the painting is extremely important to me. It is not difficult to think of situations in which people save precious paintings or pictures, or even artifacts and other inanimate objects from a burning building and do so not because their monetary or cultural value, but because they have an attachment to the item that is a love-attachment. Some supporters of the union theory might suggest that I do not actually love the painting; however, if that is the case, then many people would have relationships with objects or ideas that are more significant to them than their love relationships with people. Would it make sense for Plato to love his wife but place Truth on a higher pedestal? Socrates could have been said to have died for Truth, but would he have died for his wife? Can I love my family but given a fire in our house, save a painting before I save them? A common experience of love is that the object of love is more significant than objects that are not loved, not the other way around. So if God is more significant to me than my wife, and I love my wife, then why does it make sense that God is more significant to me in my life other than that I love God?

Later I intend to argue that loving inanimate objects is a form of love and we love them in a similar way that in which we love anything else. To suggest otherwise, a theory must state why my love for a painting or other inanimate object.
is not really love, even when I care so dearly for it. Furthermore, the union view does not explain what love is but describes an aspect of love. A union may be able to explain an aspect about a type of relationship between romantic partners but on a general scale of loving in all forms, the union view does not succeed. The union view does not acknowledge the need to account for all the objects that I insist are genuine objects of love because just like the first two theories, the union view is focused on a specific aspect of love rather than explaining the nature of the phenomenon itself.

Moreover, what is important about the union view is that love involves a coming together of subject and object. Something binds the lover and beloved and that bond is the relationship that is formed. In order for the phenomenon of love to occur, there must be a subject and an object that relate in some way. So while in the first two theories we can see that love can be had for objects other than people, the union view helps us to understand that the phenomenon of love is experienced as relating to an object, uniting them in some way. While this could possibly have been deduced from the previous theories of responding to Truth and God, the idea that will be important in the next chapter is that we feel as though we are connected to the objects that we love. In the next chapter when I refer back to the union view I will provide an explanation of why we may experience love in this way, which is very different from what is promoted by those theories we have looked at in this section.

2.4 Love as Robust Concern

The theory of love as robust concern often resembles the union view. It suggests that love is the act of caring for another’s well-being and treating the concerns of the beloved as if they are the lover’s own. The lover shows care and sympathy for the beloved’s endeavors, concerning him/herself, selflessly with the beloved’s life. This view of love is promoted strongly by Harry Frankfurt.

The Robust concern view, differs from the union view in terms of the ‘we’ that it says is established. Under the robust concern view, love does not depend on whether or not there is a union between the subject and object, only that the subject concerns him/herself with the object for the object’s sake. The subject
loves the object because he/she cares for the object’s well-being and acts in its best interest. Frankfurt characterizes love as “a disinterested concern for the existence of what is loved, and for what is good for it. The lover desires that his beloved flourish and not be harmed; and he does not desire this just for the sake of promoting some other goal.” For instance, if a child wishes well for his parent, hoping that his father receives a pay-raise at work, the robust concern view would suggest that if he loved his father, his concern for his father’s pay-raise would be simply that his father gets the pay-raise because it will make him happy. If however the child was only concerned about his father getting the raise because his getting the pay-raise meant that he would buy him toys, then the concern the child had for the father would not be the loving concern as described in this theory. The concern has to be disinterested and selfless.

According to Frankfurt, there is a feature of love that supports his theory that love is a specialized concern for the object of love. The feature is that, when we love something, it means the thing we love is important to us because it gives our lives meaning and purpose (to concern ourselves for its well-being). I consider this feature of love to be why I have classified the concern one has for one’s object as ‘specialized.’ As Frankfurt states in his book, *The Reasons of Love*:

[Love] has to do with the particular status of the value that is accorded to its objects. Insofar as we care about something at all, we regard it as important to ourselves; but we may consider it to have that importance only because we regard it as a means to something else. When we love something, however, we go further. We care about it not as merely a means, but as an end. It is in the nature of loving that we consider its objects to be valuable in themselves and to be important to us for their own sakes. He then goes on to add:

Loving something has less to do with what a person believes, or with how he feels, than with a configuration of the will that consists in a practical concern for what is good for the beloved. This volitional configuration shapes the dispositions and conduct of the lover with respect to what he loves, by guiding him in the design and ordering of his relevant purposes and priorities.

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64. Ibid.
65. Ibid., 42-43.
Frankfurt seems to suggest that in loving someone (or something) our will dictates a level of concern that is more than just beliefs and feelings about an object. Love transcends our ability to give reasons why we have the level of concern we do. What gets us to care for the well-being of another is that the beloved must have some value in him/her/itself that makes itself important to us for its own sake. Furthermore, the object is valuable to us, and because of its value, we show robust concern for it. The examination of this idea that something is valuable in itself is not fully expressed under the robust concern view, which makes me question the causes and existence of this supposedly special value. Under this view however, there are no set beliefs a person should have for his/her object of love nor are there any feelings that are typically felt towards the object other than that he/she cares for it in this disinterested way.

Apart from love being this “disinterested concern for the existence of what is loved,” a feature of the love as robust concern is “that [love] is not under our direct and immediate voluntary control…a person may discover that he cannot affect whether or how much he cares about [his object] merely by his own decision.” I thus, cannot help being in love with a parent or partner in the way that I can calm myself down from being angry. When I get frustrated or anxious I am able to take deep breaths, rationalize the circumstances that have left me in this state, and work to relax and not be frustrated. While these tactics may not work for everyone, I am merely trying to show that under the robust concern view, love as a phenomenon cannot be controlled. Again, love or the amount of concern a person has for his/her object is not determined by his/her beliefs about his/her situation or feelings. Love cannot be given and withdrawn at will or based on fleeting feelings and beliefs (which often lead to infatuation, lust, obsession, and a list of similar states). Love is natural and is expressed most clearly in the relationship between parents and their children. For Frankfurt, the concern of a parent for his/her child “offer[s] recognizably pure instances of love.”

Of the features that are essential to a theory of love, the robust concern view fails to acknowledge the love-object as standing apart, as being more

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66. Ibid., 42.
67. Ibid., 44.
68. Ibid., 43.
significant to the subject, from other objects that are concerned for but not loved. For instance, I recently showed concern for a seagull that was injured and in need of medical attention. I took care of the seagull, protecting it by making sure it did not run into the road where it could be hit by a car or disturbed by people passing by until animal welfare could come and take the seagull to a veterinary clinic. Even though I showed concern for the bird and had a desire to protect it, I did not love it. I was merely helping an animal that was in danger. If a person I loved was in danger I would also have helped and showed concern for him/her too. So what makes the people I love any different than the seagull I helped? Under the robust concern view, nothing; yet, I do not love the seagull.

An object having irreplaceable significance makes it stand out among other objects. The things that we love cannot just be replaced and our relationship with them to continue on as if nothing has changed. This is because loving relationships are made from the intricacies of relating to an object within a specific type of relationship. Under the robust concern view of love, the object fails to have this level of significance. I therefore can relate to things in different ways and as long as my concern for them is selfless (concern for its own sake), then I will exhibit love for them. The problem with this claim is that we often give selfless concern to people that we are not in love with, such as people we like, people we admire, respect, etc. We may have concern for these people for their endeavors or for their own sakes and yet do not love them.

Conversely, we may love certain people that we do not have robust concern for. J. David Velleman’s paper, “Love as a Moral Emotion” provides multiple examples of cases in which a person may experience love for someone, yet fails to show the kind of concern for him/her that the robust concern view requires for love; for example when a person love’s a partner he/she has divorced. While the couple may love one another, they cannot continue to interact together, showing a lack of desire to be with or robust concern for the other for his/her own sake. Similarly Velleman says:

Certainly, love for my children leads me to promote their interests almost daily; yet when I think of other people I love – parents, brothers, friends,

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former teachers and students – I do not think of myself as an agent of their interests. I would of course do them a favor if asked, but in the absence of some such occasion for benefiting them, I have no continuing or recurring desire to do so.70

So even in instances when we believe we have love for a person, we do not necessarily have robust concern for him/her.

The robust concern view of love also seems to run into trouble by suggesting that the concern for a person is selfless for the person’s or thing’s own sake. By stipulating that the concern for the object of love is for its own sake, this theory excludes objects of love that are not living (i.e. have no self-interest or well-being). If for instance we assume inanimate objects or ideas do not have these properties, then acting for them cannot be selfless and therefore we could not love them. It would seem erroneous to have robust concern for an idea (perhaps God or Truth) or something like a painting. Likewise, loved ones that have died may not have a self-interest past their death either. If not, the body of the loved one simply becomes an inanimate object and the memory of the person is merely an idea. Our concern therefore is something that exists for our own sake rather than for the sake of a body that has no subjective experience. If someone I love dies, my concern for him/her no longer would make sense unless my beliefs suggest that dead people still have a well-being. If I believed that some form of him/her was living, then I could treat the dead as having a self-interest.

Even with a painting however, surely we can suggest that a painting should not be ruined or left out in the rain. This is an interest that we give to it, though not an interest of the painting. Meanwhile, there may be an interest for the painter who painted it, not to wreck his/her work because it will make him/her upset (among many other things probably), but in terms of that specific piece, there is no interest it has for itself because it would have to be something that has some form of a self-maintenance.71 If we go on to suggest that perhaps the selfless concern aspect of the robust concern theory is simply the regular concern we have for an objects continued existence then we will have lessened the meaning of love to something

70. Ibid.
that certainly does not possess the feature of an object having significant value. For instance I have concern for the books in my house. I aim to keep them orderly and try not to damage them; however, I do not love my books. They are a possession of mine and as such I take care of them, but they are not an object that I find to be irreplaceably significant.

The robust concern view of love, like the union view of love aids our understanding of love because unlike the theories of Plato and the Christians, they express the idea that love is a way of relating to an object. Even though the robust concern view has problems, the method of trying to discern the nature of love through conditions in which a subject relates to an object in a certain way moves us closer to a plausible theory of love. To understand the nature of love we must understand what it is about relating to an object that creates love. What conditions need to be met for love to occur, and why do those conditions give us the experience of love?

2.5 Love as an Appraisal of Value

The idea of love as a way of valuing an object consists of two separate theories that both use the idea of value as the foundation for the theory of love. First, is the appraisal view (also referred to as the erosic form of love or property-based love as coined by Alan Soble),\textsuperscript{72} in which the subject values the object because of particular characteristics that the object has. If the lover desires certain qualities in order to be in a certain type of relationship, than whomever or whatever possesses that set of qualities should be an object of love. The object would become important because of the fact that it has valuable qualities for the subject. For instance, if a woman is in a sexual relationship, her partner will hopefully possess the qualities that she finds valuable in a person she wants to relate with sexually (the quality of sexuality). These qualities could be that the person is attractive, good at giving her pleasure, has a similar sex drive, etc. These qualities that she values would make her partner important, therefore becoming her object.

\textsuperscript{72} Alan Soble, \textit{The Structure of Love} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).
for sexual intimacy. Like this example of sex, lovers love their beloved because of some certain set of preferred qualities that he/she possesses.

At first glance, the appraisal theory of Love is heavily exemplified by examples of romantic relationships, as is the case with the robust concern theory of love. As with the robust concern view, the appraisal view can easily fit into a general theory of love, meaning that just because examples are often given of romantic partners, the same principles apply for other forms of love too. Throughout this chapter I will try to provide examples in which the view highlights multiple forms of love and later in the third chapter, I will explain how a theory of value can apply to the phenomenon of love throughout its different experiences.

Among those who hold this appraisal view of love, we will look at the theories of Alan Soble, Niko Kolodny, Kate Abramson and Adam Leite, who have advanced the theory. This appraisal view is more of an attempt to generalize the phenomenon of love than the other theories we have looked at so far, although there are a few problems that cause me to suggest that there is more to love than just the appraisal of value.

To begin analyzing this theory of love, I draw attention to Alan Soble’s exposition of the appraisal view:

When x loves y, this can be explained as the result of y’s having, or x’s perceiving that y has, some set S of attractive, admirable, or valuable properties; x loves y because y has S or because x perceives or believes that y has S. These properties of y are the basis or ground of X’s love and hence...love is “object-centric.”

He later goes on to say:

The central claim of the [appraisal view] is that something about y is central in accounting for x’s love for y; the emphasis is on the perceived merit of the objet as the ground of love.

According to the appraisal view, love is the result of subjectively perceiving value in another. This means that when I say I love my brother, I perceive him as having valuable characteristics, such as sense of humor, intelligence, and a pleasant attitude. Because I believe that he possess these qualities, I love him. For many siblings and family relationships however, these are not the kinds of qualities that are appraised for love. In many cases, siblings (or family members) do not love
one another because of character traits, but because they simply are family – which would still consist of subjectively valuing the characteristic “of being family.” The shared bloodline, the fact that they have been looked after and brought up together, etc. is the factor in which there is an importance about them that is valuable. Because of this specific trait, of being family, we see our family as being important to us and therefore love them, despite other character traits.

Not all families positively appraise the trait of “being family” though. Since the appraisal view looks at the subjective perception of qualities, some individuals may not view “being family” as warranting love and value, and looks at personality qualities instead, like generosity, sense of humor, kindness, etc. Plenty of brothers do not love each other and there are mothers who do not love their children; there are children who do no love their parents, etc. Thus family relations do not by themselves constitute sufficient conditions for love. Just because a person is family, does not mean he/she necessarily has to be loved. Perhaps a son who has committed a terrible atrocity is no longer loved by his parents because they believe him to be a horrible person. In an instance like this, the parents would not solely appraise their son on the basis that he is “their son,” they would instead appraise him on the basis of his moral character. The subject appraises the object subjectively and therefore creates his/her own reason as to what values the object possesses – what the object has that is worthy of the response of love.

One way to look at the theory of love as appraisal is through the Christian view of humanity’s love for God, that is, Erosic love. Man love’s God because God is The Supreme Being. He is omnibenevolent, omniscient, and omnipotent. Under the appraisal theory of love then, God is the ultimate object of love because of His perfect qualities. His qualities epitomize perfection making Him the most important, valuable thing in existence. Soble writes, “God has no defects that interfere with His attractiveness. God does not change or lose His perfections, and He is always available as an object of love.” This Christian view of appraisal or Erosic Love is an important concept that will be revisited in the next chapter.

This view of love as the appraisal of value that the object has can however be objected to in multiple ways which all stem from the same basic problem,

75. Ibid., 19.
namely that if love is a matter of appraising an object for its value, then any object that has the same qualities ought to be appraised and valued equivalently. Similarly, if an object has the same qualities as an object that is loved, then theoretically the love-object should be replaceable by the object with the same qualities without causing unease. This contradicts the feature of love that suggests that the love object is irreplaceably significant. We would not be inclined to trade-in our loved ones for others that had the same or better qualities. Loved ones are special and significant for the reason that they are not fungible. For instance, if I were to be in possession of a cloning booth that would clone anyone that stepped into it, but also added qualities to the clone that I valued in a person, making the clone a slightly better version of the original person, and then I imagine my brother were to step into the machine. I would not love the clone in a familial way like I love my brother. Despite the clone having all my brother’s valued qualities, and some even more valued qualities (by me), I still would not love the clone or would want it to replace my brother. This is because my brother is irreplaceable regardless of his flaws.

To therefore suggest that love-objects are those objects that we appraise as being most valuable for their qualities misses out on a fundamental feature of love – that our love-objects possess an irreplaceable significance to us. They cannot be replaced, copied, or exchanged for anything else, and this is what makes them special. The process of appraising an object for its value does however have merit in that there has to be reasons for why we love some things and not others, and those reasons need to pertain to how we perceive objects. Perceiving objects and responding to them in a way that they become love-objects requires our appraisal and valuation of them; however, appraising objects and simply valuing them from that appraisal requires something more for the phenomenon of love to occur.

Niko Kolodny promotes the appraisal view of love but does so in a slightly different way. Kolodny believes that love is valuing the relationship that is had between the lover and beloved rather than valuing the qualities of the beloved.

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Love is a kind of value where the lover values the object by seeing it as the source of his reasons for being emotionally vulnerable to it. Kolodny goes on to give a list of necessary requirements for a person to love the beloved. He states:

A’s loving B consists (at least) in A’s:

i. believing that A has an instance, r, of a finally valuable type of relationship, R, to person B (in a first-personal way – that is, where A identifies himself as A);

ii. being emotionally vulnerable to B (in ways that are appropriate to R), and believing that r is a noninstrumental reason for being so;

iii. being emotionally vulnerable to r (in ways that are appropriate to R), and believing that r is a noninstrumental reason for being so;

iv. believing that r is a noninstrumental reason for A to act in B’s interest (in ways that are appropriate to R), and having, on that basis, a standing intention to do so;

v. believing that r is a noninstrumental reason for A to act in r’s interest (in ways that are appropriate to R), and having on that basis, a standing intention to do so; and

vi. believing that any instance, r* of type R provides (a) anyone who has r* to some B* with similar reasons for emotion and action toward B* and r*, and (b) anyone who is not a participant in r* with different reasons for action (and emotion?) regarding r*.

With this list of criteria, the lover sees the beloved as the cause and reasons for loving. Kolodny’s theory applies to appraisal love not in terms of finding value in the beloved, but in loving the beloved because of the value in the relationship and its components, such as responding to the object by being emotionally vulnerable and desiring to act in the beloved’s best interest. So in the case of my loving my brother, I would love him because what is valuable to me, is the relationship that we share and not his specific characteristics. Our relationship is pleasant, we laugh together, enjoy the same activities, and it is these things that make me value the way we relate to one another. Furthermore, since he is the other participant in this brotherly relationship that I value, he is the source of that relationship and therefore he becomes the object of my love. Our relationship may exist the way that it does because of his characteristics, however they are not what I value. What I value is the type of relationship that we have formed. I would love my

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77. Ibid., 150-151.
78. This is very similar to the view that I will choose to adopt in the next chapter. I will explain the phenomenon of love slightly different which will account for a variance of implications that are not suggested under Kolodny’s view.
brother because our relationship has been pleasant and meaningful and because I value that type of relationship.

To explain Kolodny’s view further, we can use an example in which a mother loves her child before the child has even been born. Kolodny would suggest that this is possible because the relationship and shared history that exists between the mother and the fetus/child is one in which the mother is emotionally affected by the child, cares for it, looks out for its interests and over that period of time, sees the child as the reasons (because of the relationship’s effect on her) for loving the child, or soon-to-be child. Love is thus, not valuing qualities in another person, but valuing the relationship and therefore valuing the beloved for his/her part in constituting that relationship.

In the next chapter I will espouse a similar relationship focused theory of love; meaning that I take love to be a relationship and way of responding to an object rather than love being a feeling or emotion or concern for the beloved. Even though my theory of love is similar to Kolodny's, there are still problems with the way that Kolodny goes about explaining love on the appraisal view. One of the problems Kolodny faces, as do other appraisal theorists such as Soble, is the problem of the love object’s fungibility or the doppelganger problem. This is the problem when the theory does not recognize irreplaceable significance in the object of love. According to the appraisal view of love, any objects that have identical characteristics to the beloved should also be loved for the same reasons. So if there is a duplicate of a woman’s husband, the wife would have no reason to love the doppelganger any less than she does her husband. She would be able to trade partners without loss because if their qualities were the same, they would be interchangeable. She could have a partner with the same qualities as her husband and have the same relationship with both so there would be nothing that separated her husband from the doppelganger.

By loving someone based on qualities that they have, anyone with the same qualities should to be loved equally. Kolodny tries to get around this problem by using the history of the relationship as a reason for the wife loving the husband more than his doppelganger. What therefore would separate the husband from his doppelganger is that the husband has memories of their relationship and the times
they shared together. He admits however, that if the doppelganger had the same “shared history,” meaning that the doppelganger had the same memories of relating to the wife, than she would have to love him as well. Kolodny acknowledges there is a fungibility problem but does not think the problem affects his theory. Instead, he avoids the problem by giving an example of acceptable fungible situations in which loving a doppelganger is common practice. For this, he uses the example of parents that have two or more children. Kolodny suggests that the second child (and third and fourth, etc.) is a child doppelganger of the first, and in this situation, the parents are expected to love each child in the same way.

While it makes sense for parents to love their children equally, classifying children as doppelgangers evades the fungibility problem. Having a second or third child is not a doppelganger of the first. They are different people that have a different history and relationship despite playing the functional role of “child.” The reasons for loving them would be different because their relationships are different in that since the children are different from one another, the parent behaves differently with each child. A parent may encourage one son to play sports and then interact with the child through sports while at the same time encouraging another son to learn music and connect and interact with him through music. So while a parent may love his/her children because they are both his/her children, the relationships between the parent and children are completely different and so it would not make sense to explain children as doppelgangers.

For example, my family consists of myself, my mother, my father, and my brother. Since I am one of two children - the younger one - I would be the doppelganger of my older brother according to Kolodny. Even though we are both our parents’ children and they love us both, we have very different relationships with our parents. He is much more open with them and tells them things about his personal life, talks to them like a friend, argues with them, and seems to have a more emotional relationship with them. My relationship with them however is one in which we rarely argue. I am very emotionally closed around my parents and do not like talking about my personal life. Furthermore, there are qualities of both our relationships that our parents find valuable/important, and qualities that they do not like. For instance, both of my parents would prefer to not argue as much with my
brother; however they greatly appreciate that he tells them things about his personal life and confides in them because it makes them feel closer to him. With me on the other hand, my parents value my behavior in that we do not argue, although they feel regret that I do not share details about my life with them. So both my brother and I have very different relationships with our parents and possess different valuable qualities which show that, despite us both being loved by them, we are not fungible and I am not a child doppelganger.

Kate Abramson and Adam Leite note another problem with Kolodny’s theory in that they think he has got the theory of love backwards. Love is not created by the relationship as Kolodny suggests, but the relationship is created because of the love. They explain, using reference to the characters Edward and Elinor from *Sense and Sensibility*, “It is not that Elinor’s reason for loving Edward is that she has a relationship with him (or even a relationship of a certain kind); the relationship is rather the context in which, as Elinor herself says, she has come to ‘know him so well’ as to appreciate how his abilities, manner and person all ‘improve upon acquaintance.’” Abramson and Leite suggest that love is the reactive attitude of the lover given the beloved’s “morally significant character traits.” Because Elinor experiences the moral worth of Edward’s traits, she can respond to him with love, which creates the relationship rather than love being the appraisal of value from the relationship as Kolodny maintains.

For Abramson and Leite, the “morally significant character traits” are things like “interpersonal warmth, forthrightness and sincerity, compassion, considerateness, steadfastness and loyalty.” Love is not grounded in qualities like beauty or a sense of humor under Abramson’s and Leite’s view, which it could be for Soble. Abramson and Leite explain the reactive theory of love consists in as follows:

[L]ove is familiar in everyday life and qualifies in every reasonable sense as a reactive attitude. ‘Reactive love’ is paradigmatically (a) an affectionate attachment to another person, (b) appropriately felt as a non-self-interested response to particular kinds of morally laudable features of character

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80. Ibid., 674.
81. Ibid.
expressed by the loved one in interaction with the lover, and (c) paradigmatically manifested in certain kinds of acts of goodwill and characteristic affective, desiderative and other motivational responses (including other-regarding concern and a desire to be with the beloved). ‘Virtues of intimacy’ as expressed in interaction with the lover are agent-relative reasons for reactive love, and like other reactive attitudes, reactive love generates reasons in its own right. Within a broad conception of the virtues, reactive love sheds light on the reactive attitudes more generally.\textsuperscript{82} So by saying that love is a reactive attitude, Abramson and Leite claim that character traits like a person’s eyes are not a reason for love, but the way a person communicates with his/her eyes could be.\textsuperscript{83} This is because love requires the reactive attitude of the lover. The lover responds to the beloved with affectionate attachment, desire and concern, and other appropriate non-self-interested responses to the beloved's characteristics. Love is therefore a reaction between lover and beloved.

By suggesting that love is a reactive attitude, Abramson and Leite maneuver around the problem of fungibility that threatens other appraisal theories. While a doppelganger can cause problems for Soble’s and Kolodny’s view, it does not for Abramson’s, Leite’s, and Jollimore’s. The reason for this is that, if love is a reactive attitude, then the lover’s reaction to a certain situation or character trait is always different, even if only slightly. For instance, if a woman is sick and nursed back to health by a man who is sincere with her, considerate, and all of the other morally worthy ways of acting, then the woman may react to those traits of the person as being reasons to love him. Later however if she is presented with a man with those same exact character traits, she may not love him as she does the man who nursed her back to health. The reason for this is that her response, the way she reacts to the man with similar character traits will not be the same because her situation in life is not the same. She may not be sick and vulnerable now, she may not be single (because she’s married to the first man), she may have a different outlook on life, and all of these factors will cause her to react in a different way.

This can be further illustrated by the case of me and spiders and other insects. When I am home alone at night and feeling quite tired I am particularly

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 673.  
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 676.
scared of spiders and other insects. I have been known to scream and shriek if any insects are in my general vicinity. My reaction then to spiders and other insects is to be terrified; but, if it is the middle of the day and I am feeling awake and strong, or if there happens to be people or especially a woman with me, I am not scared of spiders or other insects. In this situation, because my circumstances are different (i.e. I do want to be seen as weak or a person who is irrationally scared of spiders and other insects commonly found in homes) I act calmly and capture the spider or other insect without fear or worry and gracefully place it outside in the garden. This is an example of how reactive attitudes are not grounded in the problem of fungibility. A doppelganger with all of the same traits would not appear and receive the same love from a person because the person would not be in the receptive mode for responding to the doppelganger in the way required for love.

Abramson and Leite are on the right track in understanding love as a reactive attitude. I will take a very similar stance for my account of love which will also draw on Kolodny’s and Singer’s theories. Despite my endorsing a reactive-attitude type theory of love, I think that Abramson and Leite are mistaken when they come to define what reactive love consists in. The first problem is that Abramson and Leite’s theory is missing elements that are needed to understand the phenomenon of love as we experience it. For instance, an account of how reactive love generates reasons in its own right is needed. What does this mean, and how does reactive love do this? Secondly, the question may also be raised about Abramson’s and Leite’s theory in regards to the use of the phrase “morally laudable features of character.” Why are morally laudable features of character needed for a subject to react to an object with love? By characterizing some traits as being acceptable to count as reasons to love rather than other traits, Abramson and Leite exclude many instances of love. If there needs to be personal interaction between two people then instances of love at first sight would not exist, unless both people saw each other at the exact same moment so that their love would be communicatively reactive. While for some this may seem fine because they

84. Ibid., 673.
may not believe that there is any such thing as love at first sight, a theory of love should once again not exclude an experience that people actually attest to, such as falling in love at the sight of a partner or pet, a piece of art work or something else – more examples of which I will provide in the next chapter.

What is also troublesome about Abramson’s and Leite’s theory is that it does not recognize the love for God or of any religious deity because without the interaction between a subject and an object, the theory says that love cannot exist. Love is communicable and without being able to communicate with the object, we cannot love. So if we cannot communicate directly with our god, then we cannot love him/her/it. In addition, if love requires a certain interaction between objects, having love for something like an idea or nature or mankind would not be possible either.

Once again a theory has not been able to account for the different features of love that we actually experience. While Soble and Kolodny were able to account for the different forms of love and the intentionality of love (which incorporates different manifestations of love), they were unable to explain how the love-object becomes irreplaceable to the lover. Abramson and Leite however show how an object becomes irreplaceably significant to the lover based on the reaction of the lover, but fail to address the different forms of love that are non-communicative.

These theories will become the basis for my joint value theory (appraisal and bestowal) in the next chapter. I will then expand on Abramson and Leite’s thesis by changing parts, and connecting their theory with Soble’s, and Kolodny’s as well as Singer’s bestowal theory. Regardless of the problems that these appraisal views of love face, the idea that love is bound up in the value of an object for the lover is part of the theory that I will propound in the next chapter of this thesis. I believe that given more examination and a synthesis with the bestowal theory (which we are about to look at), the appraisal view will help us understand the conditions and process of love.

2.6 Love as the Bestowal of Value
The second value theory of love is the bestowal view of Irving Singer. Singer’s bestowal theory describes love as the process of creating value in an object rather than the appraisal view, which describes love as recognizing the intrinsic value of the object. So while the appraisal view is about valuing the subjectively significant qualities of an object, the bestowal view describes love as the creation of value in the object. The bestowal view is therefore not based on the object’s inherent characteristics but on the subject giving the object an importance that it does not in itself possess because of how the subject relates to it. What we see with this view is very similar to Kolodny’s view; however, love, under this view, comes from the subject’s bestowal of value, rather than the value appraised of the relationship. The value that is given by the subject to the object is not intrinsic in the object – unlike the appraised value Soble’s theory states the object has. This value that is given to the object cannot be reduced to specific characteristics of the object.

According to Singer, “love is a way of valuing something. It is a positive response toward the ‘object of love’—which is to say, anyone or anything that is loved. In a manner quite special to itself, love affirms the goodness of this object.”85 Rather than subjectively recognizing the value an object has, as with the appraisal view, a person bestows value on the beloved and creates a quality that is otherwise not present. Singer explains the act of bestowal thus:

Love creates a new value, one that is not reducible to the individual or objective value that something may also have . . . . Individual and objective value depend upon an object’s ability to satisfy prior interests—the needs, the desires, the wants, or whatever it is that motivates us toward one object and not another. Bestowed value is different. It is created by the affirmative relationship itself, by the very act of responding favorably, giving an object emotional and pervasive importance regardless of its capacity to satisfy interests. Here it makes no sense to speak of verifiability; and though bestowing may often be injurious, unwise, even immoral, it can’t be erroneous in the way that an appraisal might be.86 The bestowal creates a kind of value that is specialized in that it cannot be reduced to the value an object has intrinsically. Apart from being something of use, gratification, etc., the object is given meaning by the subject, in that it becomes a focus of his, something that he cares about and gives attention and his

85. Irving Singer, Nature of Love 1, 3.  
86. Ibid.
commitment to.\textsuperscript{87} For example, a husband in a marriage does not love his wife because she is pretty or funny. These are qualities that can change or easily be instilled by someone else. He loves her because he has bestowed value on her, which makes her important.

I once asked my coworker and friend why he loves his wife, I was curious as to the qualities that she had that were valuable to him. He looked at me as if I were crazy and told me that he loves her because she is \textit{his} wife. His reply was a representation of the bestowal view. What I took from his answer was that his love for his wife is not determined by the qualities that he finds valuable. It is not because they get along well together or that she is cute, kind, and sincere (which is how he describes her/the relationship) He loves her because she is \textit{his} wife, her significance to him is bound up in his response to her. She is important to him because of the value that he places on her.

The problem with this theory of love is that it is underdeveloped and many of the ideas in it are vague. For example, as one of the aspects of love, Singer states that it affirms goodness.\textsuperscript{88} He distinguishes between liking something very much – which does not affirm goodness in an object, and loving something – which does bring out the good in an object; however, according to the bestowal theory, love cannot bring out the good in an object because goodness does not reside as a quality in the beloved. If every object had a good that was waiting for a lover to bring it out, then the bestowal theory would be reduced to the appraisal theory of love – recognizing value (goodness) in an object. If however, we take the phrase “affirming goodness,” to mean that by creating value in the object, the object becomes important and good to us, then we can avoid reverting to the appraisal view of love.

Moreover, the same object can be seen as being good to two different people for different reasons, not because it has a goodness about it, but because of the importance that the lover gives to it thereby making it good. This makes sense when we think about objects being loved by one person and hated by another. The person who loves the object, gives it an importance, affirming its

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 3.
goodness, while the person who hates it, probably affirms some negative characteristic. This is also problematic though because by merely taking goodness to mean that the object gains an importance, then the distinction between liking and loving and other similar ways of responding to an object like with admiration or respect becomes vague. Something must distinguish these phenomena, but under the bestowal view it is unclear what that is. Singer cannot have meant that the goodness of an object is equivalent to its importance. If he had, then there would need to be a more critical explanation of why that type of response separates an object of love from an object that is liked, admired, respected, etc., a problem that also plagues Troy Jollimore in his book, Love’s Vision.

Jollimore describes love in terms of it being a process in which a subject appraises the value of an object and then bestows on that object, “generous attention.” The love from the subject comes from appreciating what value is appraised in the object. The lover therefore responds similarly to how Kolodny described, responding to the object by being emotionally vulnerable and desiring to act in the beloved’s best interest, or at the very least, perceiving the beloved as being valuable for his/her valuable qualities.

What Jollimore fails to express however is the way in which a bestowal of appreciation of the value of an object create a response that distinguishes love from related phenomena that are not love. With phenomena such as infatuation and admiration both exhibiting a subject’s appraisal and appreciation of the values that make the object valuable, it would seem that love is not a phenomenon that can be distinguished from kindred phenomena. Jollimore’s theory relies heavily on the appraisal of value without clearly explaining why “generous concern” is unique to the phenomenon of love, ultimately erring in the opposite way to Singer, but with the same result – not fully explaining the nature in which appraisal and bestowal

92 This is very similar to the view that I will choose to adopt in the next chapter. I will explain the phenomenon of love slightly different which will account for a variance of implications that are not suggested under Kolodny’s view.
work together to create the phenomenon of love and how they differentiate love from other similar phenomena.

Max Scheler however, in his book, *The Nature of Sympathy*, is able to avert this problem of distinguishing love from phenomena such as respect and admiration by explaining the phenomenological difference of loving something, from judging it with respect, admiration, etc. In so doing, Scheler questions all appraisal theories because of the procedural way in which an object is appraised and judged for its value before it is loved. He suggest that love and appraisal occur the other way around and that the emotional response of love occurs, which then lead to the positive appraisal and judgment of the beloved as being valuable. He explains the occurrence of love thus:

There may be emotional acts which presuppose the passing of a judgment (or rather, an evaluation). Respect, for instance, seems to me to be one of these. It presupposes that initial detachment from the object, which alone makes it possible for a value-judgment to precede the onset of the emotional act; and it also requires a specific awareness of the presence of the value by which it is evoked. But this detachment is just what is lacking in love and hatred. They are entirely primitive and immediate modes of emotional response to the value-content itself; so much so that, phenomenologically speaking, they do not even disclose a process of apprehending value (e.g. feeling, preference, etc.), let alone the making of a value-judgment. In particular, the value in question is not specifically envisaged beforehand, as it is in the case of respect. The lover therefore does not appraise an object, judging it for its valuable qualities then proceed to deem the object as something worth loving. The lover simply responds with love to the object, creating the value in it. We can thus say that the value of the object is bestowed into it, by the lover – just as in the case of Singer’s theory of love.

Scheler fails to explain exactly how it is possible for a person to respond lovingly (bestowing value) to an object, without reducing that bestowal to any type of appraised characteristics for their subjective value to the lover. Scheler may maneuver around the problems of fungibility and distinguishing between love and other phenomena such as respect and admiration, however, by not being able to explain the process of how the initial response of love to the

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94. Ibid., 149.
object occurs, it becomes unclear why some objects receive our love rather than others and why love is not a randomly occurring phenomenon.

Singer’s theory is open to the same criticism by his claiming that the idea of *bestowal* does not recognize any prior interest the lover may have for the beloved. He states that “Bestowed value . . . is created by the affirmative relationship *itself*, by the very act of responding favorably, giving an object emotional and pervasive importance regardless of its capacity to satisfy interests.” Furthermore, love is the act of responding favorably to an object regardless of any satisfied interests. But if our interests in an object do not necessitate our giving it emotional or pervasive importance, then what does? Does love just occur magically? Surely there have to be reasons for love. Singer nonetheless draws the distinction between appraising something to bestowing value on it by stating:

> We are means to each other’s satisfactions, and we constantly evaluate one another on the basis of our individual interests [by appraising]. However subtly, we are always setting prices on the other people, and ourselves. But we also bestow value in the manner of love. We then respond to another as something that cannot be reduced to *any* system of appraisal. The lover takes an interest in the beloved as a *person*, not merely as a commodity [which Singer would suggest the appraisal view does].

Thus, in the case of love, the reasons for bestowing value on a love-object become irreducible. This account of love does not provide evidence for why a person bestows value in an object and therefore the theory is unsupported. For instance if we refer back to the conversation that I had with my friend at work, he stated that he loved his wife because she was *his* wife, but the reason for marriage, typically (beyond any social expectations), is that my friend and his wife are in love. A vicious circle arises in that my friend loves his wife because she is *his* wife, but she is his wife because he loves her. This is a problem that occurs when love is said to be irreducible under the bestowal theory. If love were irreducible, then the question, “how does love (the bestowing of value) occur?” would be enigmatic, which leaves the theory unsupported. So if the bestowal view of love states that the conditions that create a bestowal of value cannot be

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96. Ibid.
reduced in any meaningful way, how can we understand the nature of love if we cannot understand the process that creates it?

There must be conditions for love to occur that can be explained in terms of how we relate to our object of love. Love requires reasons, because if love is a way of relating than there has to be a reason for relating in the loving manner rather than relating in some other way. For instance when responding to an object with fear, our reason for being afraid may include believing that an object poses a threat to our health, social status, a loved one, etc. It therefore makes no sense to speak of love as if it cannot be reduced to reasons and is therefore a special phenomenon, different from fear and all others without explaining why and how this is so. I contend that it makes more sense to conceive of love as a natural phenomenon like other types of responses which can be explained by experiences and the reasons that create them. Similarly, love requires more than perceiving value in an object. A love object needs to be differentiated from objects that are merely respected, admired, liked, etc. The subject must perceive the object as being valuable but also respond to the object in a way in which the object becomes irreplaceably significant.

**Summary**

By looking at the forgoing theories of love, the *features* that were laid out in the first chapter become much clearer. The reason for us to think that love has different forms and objects is due to the fact that throughout history, people have experienced this phenomenon of being emotionally, mentally, and physically attached to different objects that have a special meaning. That special meaning consists of the objects being irreplaceably significant to the lover. The intricacies and relationship make the object stand out from all other objects. This phenomenon is expressed by us through different manifestations depending on the aspects that we experience. We feel it, give it, recognize it, etc. and yet to experience it we must respond to an object in a specific way.

In the next chapter I will devise a joint theory of the appraisal and bestowal views. By combining these two value theories of love, I can account for not only each feature of love, but I will be able to explain how an appraisal/bestowal theory
fits into each experience of love that was mentioned in this chapter. While there are problems that face both the appraisal and bestowal theories, by incorporating them together, I can paint a more accurate picture of love that comprises our experiences of it and explains its nature.
Chapter 3

Unifying Appraisal and Bestowal: A Cohesive Theory of Love

Introduction

In this chapter I will develop my own theory of love which consists of a unification of the two value theories that were examined in the previous chapter. While each of these value theories does not fully capture the nature of love by itself, I believe that by combining them, I can begin to develop a more complete explanation of what love is, that coincides with the features of it that we experience. It is important that a theory of love incorporates the features that were laid out in the first chapter because they highlight the way we experience love. Each value theory identifies and overcomes the problems faced by the other. By combining them, I can maximize their strengths into a coherent theory while casting out their weaknesses. An appraisal view of love explains the intricacies of how we relate to and experience objects while a bestowal view explains the attribution of value onto a love-object, making that object irreplaceably significant. Together they explain what love is, how it comes about (its conditions) and is sustained, and the role that it plays in our lives.

It helps to look at appraisal and bestowal as two parts of the same process rather than two separate processes. Appraisal is the first part, and without bestowal the relationships that are formed cannot amount to love because the object’s value is something that can be replaced by objects that have similar characteristics and play the same functional role in the subject’s life. Love objects however are irreplaceable to the lover regardless of other objects having better or more favorable qualities. In addition, similarly functioning relationships based on respect or admiration boast overlapping behaviors which may make differentiating between them and love difficult. The theory of bestowal however, can overcome these obstacles by showing that the love-object has attributed to it a type of value that makes it stand out from all other objects of interest to the lover because of its significance and irreplaceability. If we explain love as a bestowal of value without incorporating the appraisal of value, the bestowal of value will lack sufficient reasoning – evidence for what causes the bestowal of value. Analyzing the phenomenon of love therefore requires that the processes of appraising and
bestowing value be inseparably entwined. By analyzing the appraisal and bestowal of value, in terms of combining the processes, I can explain love’s nature in a complete way. Through my analysis of this combined process, I can account for the experiences and features that are the basis of the theories of love, such as the object becoming irreplaceably significant to the subject, that love can be manifested in multiple ways and has multiple forms and that love is intentional.

In Irving Singer’s three part series: The Nature of Love, 97 he undertakes the project of combining these two theories, but fails to explain the extent to which appraisal and bestowal work together. Singer ultimately relies on the theory of bestowal to carry the weight of explaining love and does not fully explain where and how the appraisal theory fits into his bestowal view of love – only that it occurs but not for a specific purpose that affects the bestowal of value. While I agree with Singer, that the phenomenon of love requires the lover to bestow a special type of Value on the object, he/she must first appraise the value of its properties; this makes the appraisal of value in an object just as important in the process as the bestowal of value on the object.

Jollimore however errs in the opposite way, not fully explaining how the phenomenon of bestowing appreciation and concern for the object make it any more valuable (loved) than objects that are merely respected or admired. Jollimore’s theory therefore is really no more than a type of appraisal theory whereby the love of the object occurs upon the lover appraising it of its value, but not necessarily requiring a bestowal of anything unique to the phenomenon of love. The object is therefore loved because of some particular way in which it is appraised, similarly to Soble’s and Kolodny’s theories – which is problematic for the same reasons.

Both Singer and Jollimore are right however in that appraisal and bestowal are necessary processes for the phenomenon of love. Again, without the bestowal

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98. For the rest of this thesis, my use of the word “Value” with a capital “V” will be the irreplaceably significant value that is created in an object upon bestowal and required for love. So an object that has Value has the quality of being irreplaceably significant, to bestow Value is to bestow a quality in the object of being irreplaceably significant, and an object that is loved has irreplaceable significance bestowed upon it, and so on.
process, the subject’s response to an object is valuable based on the qualities the object has which are either replaceable or similar to the qualities that are valued in instances of admiring, respecting or having some other type of response to the object. Similarly, differentiating between liking something very much and loving it would cause problems to the theory if merely appraising the valuable qualities in an object were conducive to love – what qualities in an object are the qualities of love? What are the qualities of liking something or being infatuated with it? If the value the object has, because of its qualities, overlap in loving and liking relationships, then what distinguishes the two?

Without the appraisal process however, a bestowal that projects the value of irreplaceable significance onto an object of love would lack a basis in reason. What then would make that object significant and irreplaceable? A person cannot bestow value on something without having first appraised it. The appraisal identifies the relevant properties that connect with the lover’s scheme of values and beliefs; therefore, without an appraisal, the lover would not be able to have an experience of the object and therefore would have nothing to bestow on it. It would be like if a person thought an animal was dangerous that he/she knew nothing about. Without knowing any of the animal’s properties, he/she could not make an appraisal of it and therefore could not judge it in any way. Moreover, it is this process of appraising and bestowing Value on an object that I will tackle in this chapter – explaining where Singer goes wrong and how I can fix the problem.

Both the appraisal and bestowal are necessary for the phenomenon of love. The appraisal creates the relationship between the subject and love-object, allowing the lover to respond to his/her subjective perception of the object. Once the appraisal is made, the subject is equipped to bestow Value, projecting an importance onto the object and making it irreplaceably significant. In this chapter I will explain the process of appraisal and bestowal in further detail and show why they account for our experiences of love. I will therefore work to show that love is a process in which a person perceives the qualities of an object and projects his/her response of the object onto the object, deeming it Valuable beyond its objective qualities because its Value, to the lover, is due to how he/she appraises the object. By explaining love in terms of appraisal and bestowal, I can unify the theories of
love as the quest for Truth, love as God, love as a union, and love as robust concern under a single explanation that accounts for love's features (e.g. the vast array of objects that can be loved, the different ways in which we love them and express that love, and the irreplaceable significance that a love object has for its lover).

A combined appraisal/bestowal (A/B) theory can make sense of why love seems like a union between two objects and it can explain why people have robust concern for a love object. A/B is the reason for obtaining or trying to obtain Truth, Beauty and Goodness, and can even explain the notion of God as love. Through the two value theories, the phenomenon of love can be explained in terms of how a subject relates to any object, whether it is a romantic partner, God, or even the quest for Truth. Love is something that can be directed at all objects, including ideas, animals, inanimate objects, nature and anything else. Love is not an exclusive phenomenon that only occurs between romantic partners or family members, etc. It is entirely inclusive of everything because of the fact that it is a way of responding to an object which makes that object irreplaceably significant. As long as an object can have this Value projected onto it, then it can be an object of love.

A subject has to be able to love any object because any object can be subjected to an appraisal, and anything that can be appraised can be the object of bestowed Value. Since love is a way of responding to an object, no matter what the object is, as long as the subject responds to it by appraising and bestowing Value on it, it can be a love-object. There are no exceptions as to the objects that can be loved. The idea that love is an appraisal and bestowal of Value requires that the term “love,” be able to refer to any type of object, as well as to unite all of the forms under the same process of making it irreplaceably significant. We will see that love is a general type of response, and from love, come the different forms such as romantic love, familial love, etc. Furthermore, any subject that is capable of appraising and bestowing Value is capable of loving; and the factors and relationship roles that are present determine the form of love – I am romantically involved with my love object, romantic love, I have the same blood line as my love object, familial love, etc. Different factors and relationship roles go
into determining the different types of love such as the behavior towards an object and the type of object the beloved is. This thesis is not concerned with the distinction between these types; only that every type, in order to be loved, has to be subjected to the A/B process.

These two ways of valuing an object (Appraisal: perceiving an object’s value, Bestowal: creating Value in the object) create the phenomenon of love in the specific type of relationship. Both appraisal and bestowal must occur for love to exist. The absence of appraisal, and there could be no reasons to love. The absence of bestowal and the object of love could not be separated from other valuable things as being special (set apart by significance and irreplaceability). By not recognizing both the appraisal and bestowal of Value, a theory of love misses-out on key features of love; such that it involves a relationship between subject and object, and that it makes things irreplaceably significant to the lover. Both are necessary for love.

While this seems to be what Singer advocates in his theory, some of his explanations become vague with the limited evidence he provides, such as when he states that love is irreducible to any system of appraisal or why that is the case.99 This makes love seem as if it cannot be understood fully because it occurs without justification. According to Singer’s theory, love looks to happen spontaneously and magically. Given a few alterations and explanation into the details of what appraising and bestowing Value entail, I believe I can develop a theory that accurately explains love using Singer’s combination of appraising and bestowing value which accounts for all of love’s forms.100 To begin this explanation we must first be clear as to what Singer means when he uses the concepts of “appraisal” and “bestowal” and what they ought to mean.

Once I have explained the process of appraising and bestowing, we can revisit the other theories mentioned in the previous chapter in order to show that the experience of love has been the same phenomenon throughout western history, despite it seeming different. So while people may have explained love in terms of specific objects such as romantic partners, or a quest for Truth, or God, or

have explained it in terms of how we act towards a love-object, each theory expressing what love is has been partially correct. People have expressed ideas about love that account for how we experience love, such that it involves a form of coming together, or that the effect of love is typically concern, that love is determined by value, and that it is a process. Love, nonetheless is the same phenomenon despite different theoretical perspectives. Plato had the same response to Truth and Beauty as Heathcliff did for Catherine, and the person who loves God does so according to the same conditions that Frankfurt suggests that love occurs when caring about someone robustly. These examples of love exhibit the same reactive process despite the different behaviors associated with the different forms of love. These theories can tell us about love and have provided an account of the multiple features of the phenomenon of love. The theories are important to us because they all share the fundamental process of responding to a love-object and show a different aspect of love and the diversity of love as it is expressed and experienced.

My method in this chapter is to explain the appraisal and bestowal process, first explaining what an appraisal is and then what a bestowal is. Then I can explain how they work together in creating the phenomenon that we recognize as being love. By developing analyses of these two processes (appraisal and bestowal), I will develop a theory that accounts for the different features that occur as a result of love and will be able to phenomenologically examine the thoughts and behavior that make up these processes (appraisal and bestowal). With both a phenomenological reflection and the analysis of the process of appraising and bestowing Value, we can account for love on two fronts that will coincide with the different ways we experience love and the practicality of how we play an active role in choosing who and what we love – which will be developed in the next chapter in order support my theory of love with psychological studies of how we relate to objects.

Even though the A/B process is able to account for multiple other theories of love, we still often misuse the concept “love” in certain situations. We often use the word metaphorically or to express a great liking for something, such as when we say “I love those shoes” or I “love soda,” in which case, love is not actually
present. This does not mean that we cannot love shoes or soda, however not every utterance of the term “love” expresses a genuine case of love. While this may complicate our vocal expression of love, it does not mean that the A/B theory cannot explain certain instances of love, like that if it were not to account for familial love. As well as having the potential to be misused, the word “love” is often referred to in awkward ways, such as when we say that “I am in love with you” as opposed to “I love you.” These phrases simply follow social conventions that we use in order to express a belief or attitude about love or the love-object. By understanding love as the appraisal and bestowal of Value however, we can get around problems that face the previous theories mentioned as well as explaining love over time, love at first sight, whether or not there are pathological cases of love, and other dilemmas and popular misconceptions about love. Before any of this can be done however, we must look again at appraisal and bestowal. We must first understand the components of the process of love in order to account for the features of love that we experience. It is thus essential that we examine exactly what is involved in the appraisal and bestowal of Value.

3.1 Appraisal

The role of appraising in love is similar to the act of appraising anything else – it is to place a value on an object. The appraisal process of love does the same thing, but when a person appraises an object in regards to love, the appraisal is made subjectively, rather than objectively. A subjective appraisal is the action of creating a relationship with an object. The subject appraises the object whereby he/she finds it to be personally appealing and valuable, while an objective appraisal aims at making a neutral, detached valuation. Irving Singer gives an example of subjective and objective appraisals through a man who is looking to purchase a home.\footnote{101} The man may seek out someone that objectively appraises houses such as a surveyor or appraiser. The appraiser will give the man a price that she thinks the house is worth based on certain qualities. As Singer describes it:

\footnote{101. Irving Singer, \textit{The Nature of Love} 1, 4.}
[An appraiser] seeks to find an objective value that things have in relation to one or another community of human interests...although [the objective value] exists only insofar as there are people who want the house, the estimate is open to public verification. As long as they agree about the circumstances – what the house is like and what a relevant group of buyers prefer – all fair-minded appraisers should reach a similar appraisal, regardless of their own feelings about [a] particular house.\textsuperscript{102}

The appraiser will therefore look for qualities in the house such as the condition it is in, the neighborhood where the house is located, the size of the house and other qualities that give a house a generally agreed upon value.

The man who is buying the house however appraises the house subjectively in terms of what the house’s value is to him. He will therefore look for certain characteristics of the home that are personally important to him. While everyone would look for a house in good condition with working utilities, etc., the home buyer will also look for qualities in the house that are more fitting for his needs and desires. He will determine whether the house is close enough to a freeway so that he can easily travel to work, whether the house is close enough to schools for his children to get there easily, whether or not the house is one story, because he may have a poor back and the act of walking up steps is painful and inconvenient, or the layout of the house, whether the windows in the master bedroom face east or west because he does not like to be woken up by the sun shining directly into his room in the morning. These are all qualities of the house that are valued differently among different individuals and therefore the man’s appraisal of these qualities is subjective to his scheme of values. They are requisites for his interest in buying a particular house – he may objectively need to buy some house, but subjectively chooses the particular one he wants. They are a part of his reasons, just as in love. The appraisal gives a person reason to love the beloved.

The role of appraising in love is therefore to gain a subjective vision of how valuable a particular object is. This subjective vision is the way that the subject perceives the object, meaning that the object becomes valuable to him/her because it satisfies his/her interests and desires. Of course not all appraisals lead to positively valuing a person or object. Some lead to disliking things; however for

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
the purpose of this section we will only concentrate on positive appraisals that lead to an object’s becoming valuable to the subject – later we will discuss negative appraisals. In romantic relationship for instance, our subjective appraisals usually include qualities like beauty, a sense of humor, religious practices, trustworthiness, etc. We value different partners for different qualities because of their meaningfulness to us for that specific relationship.  

By subjectively appraising an object, the subject sees value in it which creates an experience of the object which includes emotions and feelings that lead to beliefs and attitudes about or towards the object. If for instance a woman is confronted by a man at a baseball game, she may subjectively appraise him on his looks, the way he carries himself, etc. She may think he is extremely handsome, confident, as well as many other things. Her appraisal of perceiving these qualities in the man may affect her by causing her to have feelings, emotions, judgments, desires, and beliefs about this man. These effects are an experience that she has of appraising him. Based on her subjective appraisal of the man, the woman may become aroused and desire the man as a sexual-love partner, or possibly just enjoy spending time with him – to which they may become friends or romantic partners. Regardless of their future involvement, the woman upon meeting and subjectively appraising the man will experience him based on his qualities and their meaningfulness to her in light of her emotions, beliefs, feelings, desires, etc. that result.

Of course not every evaluation is evoked by emotions and feelings, beliefs, and desires – often we simply do not experience emotions or feelings or desires about an object and are therefore apathetic towards it, such is the case when we objectively appraise/evaluate something. In addition, sometimes our evaluations are negative – however for the purpose of love, we will only be concerned about positive evaluations that are subjective and experienced through having emotions, feelings, beliefs, desires, etc. This process of appraising an object based on the

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103. In this section I will elaborate and refer to the love between humans or between a human and animal (pet). Because the love of objects may be controversial, I will make a separate argument for the inclusion of inanimate objects, ideas and other things in a later section.

104. These instances of negative and non-appraisals will be examined in a later of the thesis.
experience (having emotions, feelings, desires, and further beliefs) of it is the first part of the process of love.

It is important to mention that the types of emotions and feelings, desires and beliefs about or in regard to an object are not important for the general understanding of love – which is what I am concerned with in this thesis. The above example about the woman and man at the baseball game is of course only referring to a sexual/romantic/friendship type of relationship, of which some of the emotions and feelings that a person may have because of/for an object will overlap with emotions and feelings that a person may have for a family member or pet. The focus then is not on the specific emotions, feelings, desires, and beliefs in regard to the object, but that feelings, emotions, desires and beliefs create an experience of an object which makes it valuable to the subject. Whether certain emotions and feelings and beliefs lead to a specific form of love is for another work. I am not concerned with what makes romantic love, romantic or what makes familial love, familial, but about the necessary conditions for making a positive, subjective appraisal of value.

During this appraisal stage of the loving process, the object is fungible – able to be replaced. The object’s value is based on its qualities and so it is interchangeable with any object that has the same if not more attractive qualities. The object’s value during the appraisal is only ever just a meaningful reaction to a group of qualities that elicit significance to the subject. The subject could therefore just switch attention to another object with similar qualities. For an example, suppose I am presented with a woman from a distance. She looks beautiful to me and I appraise her based on her physical qualities. I could then assume that if she had an identical twin sister, I would think that she is also beautiful and would hold her in equal regard. The first sister I saw would therefore be replaceable to me because her value is quality dependent. She is either valuable or not valuable to me based on my perception of her qualities; and since I perceive her twin sister as having the same qualities I would value her equally. Upon meeting both sisters I will quickly discover that they are not identical in every aspect and value one over the other. At that point I would be making another appraisal based on their personality rather than their physical beauty. I would continually appraise the
sisters and the accumulation of these appraisals would further distinguish one
sister from the other. While making appraisals about their qualities, I would be
separating one sister from the other based solely on my perception of their
qualities.

The more appraisals I make, the more I come to value one sister over the
other. This process of appraising over and over like this makes the sister I value
harder to be replaced. It would be simple to replace one black haired, thin woman
with another woman who has the same features, although it becomes a little more
difficult to replace a black haired, thin woman, who is of similar age to me and
enjoys the same activities as me. It then becomes even more difficult to replace a
woman that has black hair, is thin, who is of similar age, enjoys the activities I
enjoy, has a similar sense of humor to me and who has similar plans for the future
that will take her to a similar place as me. The more of these appraisals I make,
the more the one sister stands out – becoming more and more significant and
valuable. This of course is not just based on the number of attractive qualities I
perceive her to have but the importance of those qualities to me.

Again, not all appraisals are positive. For instance when appraising my
parents I often find that I am doing so negatively. They not only possess qualities
that I do not value, but have qualities that make me angry, frustrated and annoyed.
For example, I get extremely irritated due to the loudness in which my father
chews his food. On the other hand, I believe my father to be a very kindhearted
person. Furthermore, my appraisals are both positive and negative. It thus
becomes a weighing game, such that appraisals can be good and bad and some
can be more meaningful and significant than others. Moreover the fact that I make
negative appraisals of him because of the loudness of which he chews food is
easily outweighed by the appraisal that he is kindhearted.

Going back to the example of the sisters, regardless of how much they are
differentiated from each other by my appraisals, the sister that I appraise as being
more valuable is still only valuable because she has more qualities or qualities that
that are more important to me, making her more valuable to me than her sister
overall. She is quantitatively (as well as qualitatively) the most valuable of the two
to me. No matter what qualities an object has though, anything that possesses
those same qualities is equally valued because the object’s qualities are what determine its value. The sister I appraise as being more valuable may have more/better qualities than her sister (to me); however, there may be many people that have those qualities if not more/better qualities of which I would value them more if I met them.

Every appraisal gives the subject an experience of the object— the subject experiences emotions, feelings, desires, and further beliefs based on prior beliefs and judgments about the object. As an example, my friend is a good person; she is trustworthy, nice, funny, and honest. These are the qualities that make a person valuable in my eyes. Once we met and I appraised her, I realized that she had these qualities. Before I met her I had an idea of what makes a good friend, what qualities a person would have to have for me to want to be his/her friend. When I met her the appraisals began. Through our conversations I realized that she was funny and we had a very similar sense of humor. We laughed together that day with other mutual friends and I noticed the way she interacted with everyone else who was with us at the time. She came across as nice and kind. She seemed to be an honest person who was not afraid of embarrassing herself in public and I admired that. I enjoyed being in her company. She listened as I told her jokes, told jokes of her own which made me laugh, and engaged me in our discussions. I made judgments about her and the kind of person I thought she was— likewise she was doing the same. During the day I had many positive emotions and feelings. I felt happy and comfortable, expressed pleasure and joy, all of which led me to judge her as a good person that I could enjoy myself with. I appraised her based on all of the information that I gathered about her. I judged her as being valuable based on her qualities that I experienced as being meaningful— based on the kind of person that I took her to be. Just as with the appraisal view of love, I liked her because she had value (she possessed the qualities and characteristics that I subjectively deemed valuable for a friendship).

My appraisal of her was subjective in the sense that I found importance in her qualities. The qualities that she presented that day were all objective qualities— i.e. were open to be objectively perceivable by anyone who was there. The fact that she made me and others in the group laugh suggested she was funny, she
possessed good communication skills such as listening and engagement in conversations, and she was not afraid to speak her mind and be honest about questions that she was asked. These qualities were open for anyone to notice but the meaningfulness of them was subjective to me, just as the house was meaningful for the homebuyer. I find these particular qualities to be valuable in a person just like someone else may find different qualities in a person valuable. Appraisals work on the basis that objective qualities of an object are perceived subjectively by the subject, causing the subject to have certain emotions, feelings and further beliefs about the object that create significance, meaning value.

The process of creating love (appraising and bestowing), is often done unconsciously. This is because appraisals are often made unconsciously when interacting with an object. While interacting, our focus is not on the emotions and feelings and desires we are having but on the exchange between oneself and the object. I therefore am not always aware of qualities that I appraise. In the previous example with my friend, I did not have a checklist of the qualities that the people that I met that day would be judged on. I was not thinking that hanging out with people that I have never met before at the beach was going to consist of friendship interviews. I merely met a group of people that I did not know and one of them stood out as someone that I wanted to spend time with again. Upon reflection I can pinpoint the qualities of her that I enjoy and dismiss the qualities that I may not care for. Overall the good qualities outweighed the bad qualities and we became best friends.105 During that day and the days that followed I was not thinking about why I should hang out with her more. I merely enjoyed the day we met, enjoyed being around her, and enjoyed the other times that we spent together afterwards.

In many cases like this, even upon reflection we can be unaware of why we like someone. If I am unaware of my original beliefs on a matter like: what is a

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105 Relationships involve a system of weighing costs and benefits. My friend is funny, nice, and honest which are benefits, however she lived an hour away from me, which meant that anytime I wanted to hang out with her I had to drive to see her; which of course is not a quality of hers but a factor that affects the future of our relationship which is an appraised quality as well, and was not pleasant and was a cost. In that situation I felt that the cost was nothing compared to the benefits of such a good friend so we ended up hanging out quite a bit and became best friends.
friend, or what qualities should a person have for me to want to be his/her friend, etc., then I may not be aware of why I enjoy being in someone’s company other than the fact I just do enjoy being with him/her. In addition, when I meet new people I do not directly try to find out if the person that I meet possesses the qualities that I desire, from a friend, checking to see if they have certain qualities or asking them upon meeting them if they are nice, funny, honest, etc. I simply go about the day and either enjoy myself or do not. Some people may ask direct questions to people they meet, for instance potential romantic partners may be bombarded with questions about their qualities, tendencies, hopes, dreams, etc.; however, people differ in terms of how they appraise people. Appraisals of different types of relationships like familial relationships or relationships with inanimate objects also differ, and I will explain how later.

Regardless of our awareness about why we like other people’s company more than others, we constantly appraise the objects, including people, around us. For instance one of my old friends from college who did not possess many favorable qualities in my eyes was my friend nonetheless. When wondering why we were friends at all I think back to the times we were together and all I can remember is being in a constant state of laughter. He was funny, and I enjoyed being around him because he made me laugh like no one else could. At the time I did not care about wondering why some people were my friends and others were not, I did not analyze my relationships with friends. Nevertheless I still had to have made the appraisals of people because I had opinions, and beliefs about people. I had a friend who always made me laugh; I valued him for his sense of humor. I made judgments and had relationships, all of which required appraisals. For that particular friend and the level of friendship we had, I felt that his sense of humor outweighed his negative qualities.

The appraisal step of the process is the same for all other emotions and behaviors where a relationship is established. If I were to hate someone, I would be forced to appraise them in the same way as I would in love; however, the difference is that rather than subjectively appraising the object positively, I would do so negatively. The phenomenon of hate will be discussed later in this chapter as well as other character traits that negative appraisals issue in such as jealousy,
envy, and traits like admiration, etc. For any of these phenomena to occur however there must be an intake of information about the object by the subject; the object must be appraised.

Without appraising an object, a person cannot judge it because he/she will be unaware of any of its qualities. This goes back to the idea of love’s intentionality. Love must take the form of a subject/object relationship. In order to hold a belief about something I must know something about it, even if the object is fictional, for instance a unicorn. My appraisal of a unicorn would consist of me knowing something about it, like that it is a horse with a horn on its head and possesses mystical powers. Without an appraisal, no opinions, judgments or beliefs about an object can be made. Just as propositions have to be about something (in virtue of which the proposition is either true or false); an appraisal has to have an object in order for the subject to have a subjective perception of what he/she thinks its qualities are.

Once an object is appraised, we have a perception of it even if that perception does not accurately match up to the object (which I will explain shortly). By appraising an object, an experience occurs of the subject relating to that object. For example, a woman is hungry and thinks about a box of cookies that are in her cupboard. Before she thinks of those cookies and before she is hungry, she has the belief that cookies are delicious. Upon thinking of the cookies in her cupboard she begins to have further beliefs about her going to get the cookies from the cupboard. She begins to have feelings, emotions, desires, and more beliefs about what it will take to get the cookies and eat them, i.e. getting out of bed, walking down the steps, hopes about the satisfaction she will receive from eating the cookies etc. This consortium of things is an experience she has about the cookies that are in her cupboard. She can later express what it felt like to desire the cookies in her cupboard as if her emotions, feelings, behavior, actions, etc. were compiled into an experience of desiring and appraising the cookies.

In order for the subject to have an experience of the object, he/she must first appraise it. The accumulation of one’s beliefs, feelings, emotions, etc., constitutes the appraisal which leads to the experience of an object. The subject’s beliefs about whether an object fits his/her desires affect his/her emotions and
feelings. So the belief of the woman that cookies are delicious and she wants cookies, coupled with her appraisal of the cookies in her cupboard – there are cookies in the cupboard, they have a specific taste that she wants to enjoy – creates an experience of anticipation for satisfying her desire, and the cookies become valuable to her.

The same type of appraisal process could be said about fear. The subject becomes fearful of an object when he/she appraises that object as being something that is fearful. For example, when a person confronts a polar bear, his/her beliefs about polar bears are what elicit fear. If the person either did not know what polar bears are or that the object in front of him/her is a polar bear, or if he/she appraised the polar bear as being a cuddly, friendly animal, then he/she would not be fearful. The belief that polar bears are dangerous, vicious, possesses great strength and speed is generally what elicits the emotions and feelings of fear and anxiety. So just like all other appraisals, beliefs, feelings, and emotions create an experience of reacting to an object.

Appraisals are based on beliefs and desires we have about the world before we confront the object of appraisal. These desires and beliefs are caused by the experiences that we have in the world. By adhering to norms of rationality, experimentation, empirical data collecting and any other means of information gathering, we acquire beliefs about the world. This is why love is a process that begins when we are born – we learn about the world, form beliefs, opinions, desires, all of which enter into our appraisals of objects. By taking in information, we learn about and adapt to the world. The beliefs that we form when we are young either consciously or unconsciously determine how we go about appraising objects in the future. We experience emotions and learn to recognize feelings based on the experiences that we have. So if I were a child coming into contact with a polar bear cub and I did not know what kind of creature it was, the experience of that polar bear cub would begin. I would analyze it by recognizing colors, shapes, sounds, smells, feels, and would begin to perhaps compare it to other similar creatures I have come into contact with or that I have learned about.

Perhaps I would interact with it and find that it is playful like a dog and huggable like a stuffed animal. My experience of the polar bear cub would allow me to form beliefs about it which would therefore shape my future appraisals of polar bear cubs.\textsuperscript{107}

If that happened to be my only experience with polar bear cubs and I were, from that point on, to never learn anything else about polar bear cubs, it is likely that if I did come across another polar bear cub later in life, then I would appraise it based on the information that I gathered as a child. My beliefs about the polar bear cub would allow me to access emotions and feelings based on the information and experience from my first encounter. My appraisal would therefore be based on my knowledge and experience of my original encounter with the polar bear cub.

By learning about things and experiencing them, we are able to use the information gained in later appraisals. Those appraisals create further beliefs, emotions and feelings that make up an experience that can lead to the bestowal of Value and creating the phenomenon of love. We encounter, learn, form beliefs, and have emotions and feelings about objects in the world, then based on the experience that those things elicit, we appraise later objects and form new beliefs that cause emotions and feelings for them which make up new experiences and is how we subjectively appraise the value of objects.

Thus far, I have focused on appraising objects in a very static way to show how appraising an object for its value works. The qualities of an object are often more complicatedly perceived and valued than by just encountering an object briefly. Subjective appraisals are fluid. While the process of the appraisal stays the same, how we appraise objects and what objects are appraised are always changing. As Abramson and Leite suggest, appraisals are based on our reaction

to objects.\textsuperscript{108} For instance I may appraise an object in one instance as being valuable for a certain reason but in another instance, appraise that same object as being not valuable for different reasons. This is a familiar occurrence because our circumstances in the world are always changing. A man may appraise the government action of giving subsidies to large corporations as being harmful to the nation because he himself is in the lower income bracket and believes that the economic principle of the trickle-up effect is a better way to boost the economy. Later in life however, the man may appraise the government action of giving subsidies to large corporations as being helpful to the country because he has become the owner of a large corporation and now believes that the best way to help the economy is through the trickle-down effect. The same government action of proving subsidies to large corporations is therefore appraised differently because the circumstances of the individual changed. What once was a negative appraisal of an economic policy became a positive appraisal in a different circumstance.

Mood may also affect our appraisals. For example, a teacher might (but should not) grade students’ papers more generously when in a good mood than when in a bad mood. The qualities of an object are therefore not the only factor when a subject appraises it. Appraisals are heavily reliant on the circumstance of the subject. When appraising an object, we appraise the qualities that we perceive the object to have; however, our circumstance when appraising an object may skew our perception of it from how we might perceive it given different circumstances. Some appraisals for instance can occur immediately with little interaction between subject and object, like appraisals of physical qualities, whereas other appraisals require time and effort on the subject’s part. It may take a person hours or days and numerous encounters to appraise someone or something, just like as some people need to hear a song a hundred times before they come to like it. Sometimes, the attitude and behavior of the subject brings out qualities in the object for the subject to appraise. For example, a person who has an understanding and empathetic personality may encourage another person to

\textsuperscript{108} Kate Abramson and Adam Leite, "Love as a Reactive Emotion," 676 - 678.
divulge qualities about him/herself by getting the person to express his/her personality – something that the subject may not have had the pleasure to perceive if it were not for the subject encouraging the person to express him/herself.

The circumstances of the subject play an important role when appraising an object because the subject’s circumstances may alter the outcome of his/her appraisal. Suppose for instance I have had a rough week at work and am desperate for a relaxing night at home on the couch with a book in an attempt to avoid other people, and lose myself in the story. Suppose my best friend is going through a divorce or break-up and calls me and asks me to meet him at a club to party and get his ex-partner off his mind. Despite desperately wanting to sit at home, alone and read my book, I feel obliged to help my friend through a rough time. I get dressed and head out to meet my friend, all the while silently wishing I was at home with my book. We enter the club and are surrounded by people (exactly what I wanted to avoid that night). My mood is negative and even though I pretend to be having fun for my friend’s sake, I am constantly thinking about how nice it would be to be at home relaxing. Now suppose we find our way to a group of people and a woman begins to flirt with me and rather than flirt back, I brush her off because I am not in the mood to flirt or for that matter, talk to or be around anyone. Perhaps months later I run into that same woman that was flirting with me in the club and come to find that she is an incredibly charming woman. She expresses her interest in things that interest me, has a great sense of humor, and is a great person – an ideal romantic partner. I then come to find out that shortly after the night I met her in the club she met someone and then later got engaged. I missed my chance to have a romantic relationship with her because having brushed her off that night in the club I failed to notice her charming personality.

Romantic relationships are not the only types of relationships that are affected by the subject’s circumstances. Perhaps I get fired from my job; I am sad, frustrated, and lethargic about my future. I get home, turn on the television and begin flipping through the channels, looking for something to watch. I come across a program and watch the first ten minutes. The show seems silly, poorly made, and the story is too slow for me to enjoy. My bad mood makes me impatient and
negative towards everything. Skip ahead three years and I get offered an opportunity from my current job to travel to a foreign country I have always wanted to go. I drive home, excited for my adventure, happy with my future prospects, feeling adventurous, and constantly thinking about what life will be like in a foreign country. I have no plans that night so I get home and turn on the television. The show that I found dull three years ago comes on the television, however this time, being in a more adventurous mood, I watch the whole thing, for the purpose of experiencing and giving new things a chance. When the program is over I am struck by how entertaining it is. Whereas it was tedious before, now it is pleasant entertainment.

In both of these scenarios and many others like it, the way we appraise things is affected by our circumstances. Any distractions can affect my appraisal of things. For instance if I go out with some friends after doing poorly on a test or maybe I get reprimanded at work, my foul mood that evening may prohibit me from interacting with someone that is perfect for me, as in the example of my going to the club with my friend. Perhaps I am stressed because of an upcoming deadline and when interacting with an associate that I do not talk to much, he makes a few jokes that I would under normal circumstances find funny, but because I am only half paying attention (because my mind is on my upcoming deadline) I brush him off, not experiencing his sense of humor and therefore not desiring to spend more time with him. Just as Abramson and Leite suggest, the qualities of the object often come about through interaction.\textsuperscript{109}

It is not just negative moods that affect the way we appraise objects though. Positive circumstances in our life may get us to appraise objects more optimistically than we would otherwise have done. Even desperately desiring to form a positive appraisal may make us appraise objects differently than if we do not desperately desire to do so. Perhaps a woman goes out desperately looking for a romantic partner. Her desperation may influence her to appraise a potential partner positively despite his negative qualities because her desire to find a romantic partner has caused her to overlook or discount his negative qualities and focus only on his positive qualities.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 675.
Of course, I do not only want my analysis to be restricted to romantic or friendship types of relationships only. Appraisals of all objects happen in this same way. While moods may not play a large role in the appraisals of family members or some other objects (because the constant interaction with family persists throughout many different moods), we appraise objects for their value in the same way.

Appraisals however do not constitute love on their own; they are just the first part of the process. Loving an object is solely based on the intrinsic qualities of an object. If it were, our love objects would be replaceable by anything else that possesses the same or better qualities. But a core feature of love is that the beloved is irreplaceable and love requires more than a subjective appraisal to make the object irreplaceable. If the people and things we love are truly irreplaceable, then a theory of love ought to account for that feature. That being said, subjective appraisals alone do not give us the experience of our love object being irreplaceably significant. They are purely a way of experiencing an object and valuing it based on its qualities.

3.2 Bestowal

While the appraisal part of love is object-centric in that the subject values the object because of the qualities it is perceived of having, the bestowal part of the process focuses on value that is given to the object in the form of an attitudinal response to the experience that the appraisal of the object causes the subject to have. Bestowing Value is the act of attributing irreplaceable significance (Value) to the object in virtue of which the object is perceived as possessing the quality of representing the experience of the subject’s relating to it. The Value attributed to the object is a projection of the subject’s experience of relating to the object’s perceived qualities. When the subject perceives the object’s qualities and appraises the object, he/she has certain emotions, feelings, beliefs, and desires about the object that make it valuable. The value of having those emotions, feelings, beliefs and desires is then projected by the subject onto the object so that the object represents the value of the subject’s experience of responding to it – which makes the object irreplaceable and significant. Once Value is bestowed by
the subject, he/she perceives the object as possessing this Value, just as it possesses the qualities of beauty and a sense of humor. The subject perceives the object as being trustworthy, sincere, having dark hair, and as representing the Valuable experience of his/her response to it. For instance a man may not only perceive his long-time pet cat’s personality and looks, he may also perceive its specialness of being irreplaceably significant, unlike other cats. The Value of the cat becomes a quality to the subject that consists of the experience the subject has of her. This quality makes the cat stand out from other cats as being special.

Love occurs when the bestowal consists of Value – an irreplaceable significance of the object. By bestowing Value onto an object, we attribute to it a quality that is not intrinsic to it – it is subject dependent. This value is dependent on the subject’s attribution of irreplaceable significance through his/her experiential reaction to his/her subjective appraisal. Once the Value is attributed to the object, the subject perceives the object as having this Value. To the subject, Value becomes a quality of the object.

The idea of a subject projecting a quality onto an object is not peculiar to love. Only when Value is projected does the subject love the object. Some projections however do not attribute significance or value to an object, or create a negative value instead. As an example we can look at how we can bestow qualities that are not intrinsic to an object and are not qualities of Value either. Suppose a woman is unfaithful to her husband and has sex with another man. The husband then comes to find that she had had sex with the man in a motel located on his route to work. Every day he drives by that motel. At first he may think to himself when driving past it, “That is where my wife cheated on me.” He may imagine what happened between his wife and her lover, get angry, frustrated, sad, and have many other negative emotions. After a while, if he continues having the same negative emotions every time he passes the motel, he may eventually associate that motel with the feeling of being sad and aggravated. Then, when he drives past the motel, he may no longer have the specific thought “that is where my wife cheated on me,” but simply becomes automatically sad and upset. The motel would become a direct representation of his experience with it – being sad and aggravated when he sees the motel. He will have bestowed his experience on
the motel as a quality that is not intrinsic to it. He responds to the motel without even thinking of his wife’s infidelity or the experience that he has associated with it. He thus projects the negative experience (the emotions, feelings, and beliefs) he has of the motel on the motel, and that experience becomes a quality of it – to the husband. It becomes a representation of his negative experiences, a quality that he bestowed on the motel.

A bestowal of Value occurs in the same way, only with the projection of irreplaceable significance on the object to which the object represents the experience the subject has of it. We bestow Value on an object which is made up of the experience of our response to it. The object becomes a representation of that experience and therefore significant and irreplaceable. If the object does not become significant and irreplaceable then a bestowal of Value would not have been made, but instead a value of different sorts, perhaps a negative value as in the example of the man and the motel. Further appraisals of an object after a bestowal of Value may consist of the object’s possessing the quality of being special (significant in an irreplaceable way) in addition to its other subjective qualities. So after the initial bestowal of Value, the subject’s future appraisals include the Value that was previously bestowed on the object and therefore the experience that the object represents is reinforced (or possibly diminished which will be addressed later in this chapter), making the object more significant.

Bestowing Value is the response of the subject based on the subjective valuation resulting from appraisals. The appraisal view states that the subject deems the object valuable because of the desirable qualities it has. For instance, I believe my dog is beautiful because she has certain, intrinsic qualities that I value as being beautiful; under a bestowal view however, the value comes from the subject ‘creating a quality’ in the object that is not intrinsic to it, i.e. the projection of my experience of it (the way in which I respond to it). I therefore make my dog valuable to me by attributing Value (the quality of irreplaceable significance) to her because I perceive her qualities and evaluate them as being important to me.

The act of bestowal, like appraisal, often occurs unconsciously without our awareness; which is why we often wrestle with the idea of whether we love (Value) something or just value it for its qualities. Since we attribute various degrees of
importance short of irreplaceable significance to objects, knowing whether the object has had Value bestowed upon it and is irreplaceably significant to us is not always straightforward. We may often feel as if love grows gradually so we do not realize it the second it comes to exist – we value the object one day, thinking it is significant because of its qualities; then, at a subsequent time, we bestow Value on it, making it the object of our love; all the while, we are not sure when we switched from merely valuing it, to Valuing (loving) it. It is not necessary for a person to know that he/she is bestowing Value on an object for love to occur, just as long as the object becomes irreplaceably significant to the subject. Since we experience our emotions, feelings, beliefs, desires, etc. differently from one another, we should accept that the experience of bestowing Value onto an object (i.e. loving something) can occur without our being aware that it is/has happened.

Regardless of when exactly the bestowal of Value occurs or whether the subject realizes that he/she Values the object, the object gains the quality of being irreplaceably significant to the subject. It becomes more than just a set of qualities to the subject though; the object becomes a representation of the experience the subject has of it – and whether we know what conditions to look for to know whether we are in love, we can often feel and experience the beloved’s irreplaceable significance, even if we do not realize that perceiving an object in such a way is what love is.

For a more in depth example as to how the bestowal of Value works, I will use the relationship I have with my father. My father is important to me, not solely because of his qualities (because many people possess the same qualities as him), but because of the Value that I have bestowed on him. His Value is not just based on the fact that he has raised me to be understanding, intelligent, hardworking, or honest. He does not just have Value because he bought me things and tried to provide me with all of the opportunities that he could. His Value does not even solely stem from the fact that he made life enjoyable for me, was fun to play sports with and made me laugh with his antics on the golf course where we would bond each weekend. Even though these are qualities of his that I value, I would similarly value anyone who does these things. The difference between my father and anyone else who possess these same qualities is that my experience of
those qualities was with him and not with anyone else. Since he was the one that I experienced life with (which has been positive, significant and meaningful), I created Value in him based on the experience of appraising him. I project the Value of my experience of how I respond to him (my beliefs, emotions and feelings) onto him. I love him (bestow Value on him) because he represents my feelings of happiness for succeeding at things I did that made him proud and the warmth and comfort I felt when he took care of me when I got hurt. He represents all of those things he did for me (taught me to be the person that I am, provided for me, and took care of me) and the meaningfulness of experiencing them. He represents my belief that he would do anything for me (even though he would complain about it every step of the way). He represents my emotions, memories, beliefs, feelings and desires. This is the significance that I bestow on him that makes him irreplaceable to me. He becomes a representation of my experience with him. He becomes significantly important and irreplaceable because I have bestowed the Value of the experiences that I have of relating to him.

Kolodny makes a similar point of the object representing the experience of the relationship when he states that the subject “makes the object the source of value.”\(^{110}\) It is not merely the relationship that provides the reasons for love however, as it is with Kolodny’s appraisal view. Instead, the qualities of the object combined with the experiences of the subject make up the experience that is projected onto the object. Furthermore, contrary to Singer’s bestowal view, love is reducible to the appraisal which generates desires, beliefs, emotions, and feelings. The appraisal gives us an experience of the object that is then projected onto the object as a quality of representing that experience which makes the object irreplaceably significant – the Value of the object. We can thus avoid the problem of a bestowal view (not explaining where the Value that is bestowed comes from) by reducing it to its appraised elements. It does not happen magically or by a mysterious cause. The bestowal of Value can be reduced to the experiences of the subject and the qualities of the object that are combined and projected onto the object as a given quality.

\(^{110}\) Niko Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 150.
What distinguishes love from other attitudinal responses is the bestowal of Value. When we bestow Value for love, we conduct the same process of appraising as the woman did with the cookies in the example in the last section. The difference however comes when we bestow the Value of our experience of responding to the object onto the object – creating the quality of irreplaceable significance that is special to that object, separating it from any other objects regardless of their similarities. I project the experience of my appraisal onto the object, giving it a quality that it did not possess, a representational quality. So when I appraise it after that, my appraisal takes into account that quality of my experience just as my initial appraisal was a response to the quality of say taste in a cookie or in a romantic relationship how an appraisal accounts for a sense of humor or trustworthiness. By projecting the experience I have of appraising the object, it gains a quality that is personal and private. No one else can appraise the object for the quality that I have given it because no one can experience the experience that I had when appraising it. For instance, if I explained to someone why I loved my mother, told them about all the kind things she has done, the memories I have of her, etc., I would still have an experience of those instances that include my feelings from times we shared together, emotions I had when I was with her, worries of losing her, etc. I would have a unique experience that no one could experience themselves. The experience would be organized a specific way and feel a specific way, just as a piece of writing can be unique because of the style and organization of how it is written. The content may be similar to other pieces, but the intricacies are different.

The bestowed quality that is given to an object in love is not a verifiable quality like having a specific eye color or a sense of humor. The quality is one that only I can perceive because only I have experienced it. Even if two women love the same man, the experience that they bestow upon him is different and individual to each of them. If we were to ask both women why they love him and both were to give identical accounts of his valuable qualities, their love would still be different because of the way in which they experience those qualities. Even if both women only experienced the man at the exact same times during the same dates, they would still have a different experience of him because of the way they
subjectively appraise him. This would happen because the women themselves are different. They have different relationship role models, different experiences about relationships, different attitudes, expectations, beliefs, etc. As I mentioned earlier, love is a process, and that process begins to develop in childhood because learning how to relate to the world and to others shapes our experience of the world and others. We have experiences and ways of thinking that influence how we appraise. So with the two women who both love the same man, their bestowal of Value onto the man stems from their experiences rather than his perceivable qualities. The qualities of the man help create the experience the women have – having beliefs, feelings, emotions, desires, etc. – and those different experiences are projected onto the man, bestowing onto him the Value of being irreplaceably significant to each woman.

Experiences form the basis of the quality that is bestowed on the love object. Instead of citing qualities of the object that are meaningful and valuable like his/her trustworthiness, understandingness, nuturingness etc., which are replaceable qualities, a person’s bestowal of Value can be explained with reference to particular instances of experiences or merely an overall experience of relating to the object. The intricacies of how a person relates to an object, creates an experience of that object being irreplaceable. While it may sound odd that a person is capable of eloquently listing reasons for why they love things, it is not hard to believe that the object that is loved has a phenomenological quality that separates it from other similar objects for the subject – that quality being the representational Value of the experience that has been bestowed upon it by the subject. So while many of us cannot verbally explain our love for an object, our experience of love will have come from perceiving an object as being irreplaceably significant, because the object represents an experience of relating to it that is valuable because of its intrinsic qualities. In other words, an object’s Value consists of its qualities and how we react to those qualities which create an experience for the subject. That experience is then bestowed on the object as being a quality (the object becomes a representation of Value – the experience the subject had) which affords the object significance and makes it irreplaceable.
I therefore do not love my mother because she simply played kickball with me in the street when I was young or because she got me ready for school every morning, rain or shine – the value of doing these things is something that is replaceable. I love my mother because of my experience of all those things – how I have felt and thought about her during and after those experiences and what they meant to me (their meaningfulness). They were subjective experiences to me and me alone, making them irreplaceable. Again however, it may often be difficult for people to explain why they love their mothers. One might say “I love my mother because she is my mother,” however there is an experience that underlies that saying. If I loved her just because she is my mother then anyone who happened to be my mother is someone I would love, however this may not be the case if my mother was someone who beat me and treated me poorly. I love her because I have a favorable experience of Value that I have bestowed on her – the experience of my knowing she is my mother and believing that she has been a good mother and the emotions and feelings that she represents from those past and current experiences of her doing those motherly things. Her Value to me not only relies on the fact that she is my mother, but that being my mother is a quality that I value.

So if two women were presented to me, one of them being my mother and the other being an equally good mother, and I was asked which mother is more significant to me, I would choose my mother. The reason is because my mother has something that the other woman does not have. Solomon may suggest that I chose my mother because of the qualities that she has, Kolodny might suggest that I chose my mother because of the relationship I have with her, Abramson and Leite may suggest that I chose my mother because of my reactive attitude toward her and not the other woman, and Singer may suggest it is because my mother has an irreducible value that the other woman does not have. I would agree with each of them. My mother does have something that the other woman does not (Solomon); it would be a quality that I have bestowed on her (Singer); that quality would be my reaction to her qualities (Abramson and Leite), and would consist of the experience and relationship I have with her (Kolodny). My mother would represent something to me that the other woman does not. She would represent
my childhood, my emotions and feelings of growing up, the habits and qualities of my mother – an experience of my relating to her that is irreplaceable.

The experience is what is represented by the bestowal of Value. The Value becomes a new quality of the object that is created by the subject, and that value represents the experience I had of the object. The object becomes an image for that experience as a result of the bestowal. It becomes the object of love – an object that is irreplaceably significant. By loving an object, the lover projects his/her beliefs, feelings and emotions (experience) onto the beloved as a quality (a representational quality). Since the emotions, feelings, and beliefs can only be experienced by the person having them, the projection is original and creates the Value in the object that afterwards can be perceived by the subject that bestows it as a quality of the object.

3.3 Appraisal and Bestowal as Conditions of Love

The act of appraising and bestowing Value is the process that creates the phenomenon of love. Within the process we experience feelings, emotions, beliefs and desires; we make judgments, have opinions, act certain ways, etc. Love is a way of responding to an object. By subjectively valuing an object’s qualities and then bestowing irreplaceable significance on the object once that appraisal is made, the object is given a quality that it did not previously have. By bestowing a piece of oneself (the experience – emotions, feelings, beliefs, etc.) onto an object, it becomes the object of love. Bestowing that representational quality onto the object makes it Valuable and special because of the significance that no one but the person appraising and bestowing can elicit. The object becomes irreplaceably significant because of the experience that it represents – a representation that only exists through the person who projects it. This is why love is often portrayed in poems and novels as being special, magical, a phenomenon to strive for and worth sacrificing everything for. We would give our lives to protect our partners, children, parents, friends, and even our pets and our nation. While the action of protecting these things does not necessarily mean that we love them and our love for them does not necessitate our disposition to give our lives to protect them, the
things that we love hold a specialness, a Value that makes them more significant to us than other objects and often worth sacrificing for.

In this section I will focus on the phenomenon of love in regards to relationships and the different ways that love can be expressed as well as outlining how an A/B theory captures the behaviors and experiences of love. Any theory of love ought to be able to address why and how we experience the phenomenon of love in different ways and exhibit different behaviors despite the same underlying A/B process; because again, there are innumerable different ways of experiencing love and even the way we think about it differs among individuals. In addition I will focus on notions such as infatuation, love over time, arranged marriages, pathological love, and the different objects that can be loved.

Throughout this thesis I have used examples about people who appraise other people, inanimate objects, animals, and ideas and have done so in the context of different types of relationships, whether it is romantic relationships, familial relationships, relationships of friendships, relationships between people and inanimate objects, pets, and other things. Similarly, I have tried to provide different examples of people bestowing Value on different things. The reason for doing this is because all objects can be objects of love, in some form. One of the features of love I laid out in the first chapter was that it has different forms, such as familial love, romantic love, love of friends, love of gods, etc. Because we express our love for different things the A/B theory of love accounts for the different objects that can be loved in different ways. It therefore follows from the A/B theory that anything can be the object of love.

In addition, the reasons of love – what counts as a meaningful experience of subjectively appraising an object’s value, differs from person to person. And since we create meaningfulness and the Value that is bestowed on an object is also done differently among people, there is no set type of experience to create love. People do not need to be flushed, and have sweaty palms to love an object, they do not need to feel that they need to protect and look after the object. People do not need to know every detail about the object. While there may be social guidelines as to the forms of love, for instance familial love may require the lover and beloved to have the same bloodline or romantic love may require some sort of
sexual intimacy, loving an object (creating Value in it), has no experiential requirements. Whether a person creates Value in a person who has deceived the subject about his/her qualities or creates Value in an object that is harmful to him/her does not matter. Just as it would be odd to suggest that a person who is scared of something is not really scared because he/she is not scared for the right reasons or of a legitimate object, so the same is the case with love.

There are no limits to what can and cannot be loved and for what reasons, just as long as the A/B process occurs through which the lover creates Value in the beloved. This is because any object can be appraised by the subject. An object must have qualities, even if the object and qualities are unreal, like a unicorn. Regardless of the real-world existence of a unicorn, we are capable of appraising it for the qualities that we take it to have. Those qualities can cause us to have an experience of the object and therefore have the tools for making a bestowal of Value. By placing a Value on the object it becomes a beloved – an object of love.

It may sound odd to love something like a wardrobe for instance, but we cannot exclude the possibility of someone to do so. Of course it would be silly to think of loving something like an old wardrobe in the same way that a person loves his wife or husband, but that is because these are examples of two different forms of love. Even familial love and romantic love are different and exhibit different behaviors, thoughts, feelings, emotions and desires. Perhaps it is not difficult to see why romantic and familial love can be examples of love since the object in both forms are people. But surely people are not the only thing that can be loved. Once we begin thinking about other objects besides people that can be loved, we will soon realize that excluding anything will cause major problems for a theory of love. For instance suppose we were to believe that only objects that could relate with us in a specific, let us say, “loving” way can be the objects of love. Then we might have to exclude people that cannot respond in this “loving” way, like mentally handicapped people or babies. Denying that we can have love for babies and mentally handicapped people just because they do not relate “properly” to us is ridiculous.
The reason someone could love objects like babies, food, art, romantic partners, etc. is because love is a way of responding to an object. It is a way of creating Value in an object by bestowing a quality on it that represents the experience a person has with it. We therefore must accept that a person can perform this type of response toward anything that can be appraised. For example, suppose a schizophrenic man believes that a book is a person. In the man’s head he may believe the book is communicating with him and having a relationship like most people have with friends. The schizophrenic man appraises the book for its qualities, has beliefs that the book is of value for those qualities and thus has emotions and feelings that are associated with his beliefs about the book to the point that he bestows that experience on the book, like a mother bestows her experiences of her child. The schizophrenic man may bestow the quality of being a representation of his experiences with it, just like a person who loves another person. The man would see the book as being an object of Value that he created, deeming it significantly irreplaceable. He would protect the book from harm, look after the book, etc. In this instance it would be plausible that the man does in fact love the book, regardless of his believing that the book communicates to him or has a human persona.

Of course we might think this to be a pathological case in which the man and the book are not actually friends so his friendship love of the book cannot be genuine; however that does not mean that the man does not love the book. We might accept that the love is not friendship love because certain factors need to go into what it means to be a friendship, but that does not negate the possibility that he loves the book in some specific form of love. There would be no difference between the man loving his book and an artist loving her painting. Again if we were to think that loving a painting is different because the qualities of the painting exist objectively in contrast to the illusory qualities that the schizophrenic man perceives in the book, then we would also have to deny Plato’s love for Truth or a Christian’s love for God. In both of these instances Plato and Christians perceive qualities that are not objectively present in their object, and to deny them the experience of love would demolish our experience of understanding the phenomenon of love. If we cannot include the experiences of the Greeks or
Christians as legitimate experiences of love, also on the grounds of pathology, why could someone not maintain that actually their (Greeks or Christians) experience of love was genuine, and that our experience of loving our family and friends is fallacious?

If love is fundamentally a relation, then how can we put limits on the kinds of objects that we can relate to lovingly? For another example, take a game puck that was kept as a trophy by a hockey player who scored with it, setting a world record. That puck, like a loved one, may be Valuable because of the experience that is bestowed on it. The puck may even be treated better than some of the hockey player’s loved ones. He could constantly dote over it, clean the case that it is held in, refuse to let people touch it because they might lose it or scuff it and may even talk to it. The hockey player’s relationship with the puck would be one in which he appraises it based on the quality of the puck (it being the puck he used to score the world record goal with), causing him to have emotions and feelings and beliefs about the puck that he then bestows onto the puck, making it Valuable for its representational quality. The experience that he bestows on the puck may be the memories of scoring the record breaking goal, the excitement of the game, and the feel of his skates on the ice. These experiences are his that he projects onto the puck so that the puck becomes more than the puck he scored the record breaking goal with. It is his life as a hockey player and he creates Value in the puck that is specialized and unique to him.

This of course does not mean that every game puck or ball that athletes keep is an object of love. Some are mere symbols or items of remembrance that are kept as an object of value. In the instance of a game ball that is not an object of love, it would simply be valuable based on its appraisal – its objective qualities. The athlete may keep the ball that she used to score the game winning basket because it is the ball that was used to score the game winning basket. When people buy these types of items at auctions, they are buying the object because it is valuable in itself – in that a quality of the puck makes it valuable to others for the same reason. The value is the type of value that is perceived by simply appraising the object. It does not have a bestowed value like the game puck that the hockey player creates for it. It is objectively valuable. This does not mean that the person
buying the ball at an auction cannot love it however. If of course the person who
buys the ball relates to it in the right way, than it can become an object of love for
him/her just like the puck did for the hockey player in the above example.

A similar type of value is given to objects like wedding rings. Rings are no
doubt valuable objects, usually exceeding their monetary value. They are valuable
because they are symbols of love, commitment, togetherness, etc. Just because
they are valuable though does not mean that those wearing them love them.
Wedding rings remind the people wearing them of the actual beloved (the romantic
partner), they symbolize the marriage; they represent a union. These however are
qualities that are appraised values, and appraised values alone do not create love.
In addition to making an appraisal, a bestowal of Value is also needed for love.
Without the bestowal of Value, we run into the problems that the Appraisal View
faced, such as the problem of fungibility. Bestowal is what gives specialness to the
object which stimulates the experience of love. Appraisal on the other hand
creates a relationship with an object and gives the subject something to relate to.
Only with both the appraisal and bestowal of Value can love occur.

So while relationships can spawn love, any object with which a subject can
form a relationship can be an object of love. This is why there are different forms
of love. Not all love relationships are the same. Romantic love is different from
familial love; familial love is different from the love of an idea like truth or
happiness. All the forms differ in ways that represent the type of love instantiated;
therefore the love of objects should not to be dismissed as inappropriate,
metaphorical, or as a pathological form or object of love. Again, love is a
phenomenon that consists of relating to an object by the process of appraising and
bestowing Value onto it.

Even though any object can be an object of love, this does not mean that
our use of the term “love” always denotes an actual case of love. For much of the
time, we use the word “love” metaphorically. For example when we eat a good
meal, drink an ice cold soda on a warm day, suggest that we love playing with a
frisbee on the beach, we most likely are expressing a strong desire or liking of
these things. As much as I may claim that I love soda, I do not actually love it.
Soda is delicious and thinking of soda makes my mouth water however one can of
soda can be easily replaced by another one. I appraise the objective qualities of soda and have a subjective experience of it. I do not bestow anything on a can of soda, although that does not mean that someone in the world cannot love a specific can of soda or perhaps the idea of soda, only that we often use the word “love” metaphorically or inappropriately. Because of this, our use of the word “love” does not always refer to the actual phenomenon of love. I may love a can of soda, I may not. If I respond to an object by appraising it and bestowing Value on it, then the object is loved by me. If I do not bestow that Value on it, then my use of the word “love” would be metaphorical.

Because love requires the subject to have an experience of the object, some love relationships may take some time to develop. Arranged marriages are a perfect example of time’s inclusion into love. In an arranged marriage, the husband and wife often have not met and know little about each other before getting married. Love is not their reason for getting married, but it often comes later. Once the couple spends time together even if they initially dislike one another, they may experience emotions and feelings and form beliefs about one another – emotions, beliefs, and feelings that would not have existed without their spending time together. After spending so much time together they can become comfortable with the other and in their living situation. They go through sicknesses together, raising children together, happy times together, all of which provide each person with beliefs and experiences about the other. Since they spend so much time together, they invariably become open to one another and after some time, they may begin to see the experiences they have had together represented in the other. They will have bestowed this representational quality on one another, which gives the partner a value that he/she did not possess before the other started seeing him/her as a representation of the experiences they have had. They have shared their lives together, the ups the downs. They become valuable and important to one another for the quality that each has created in the other. They are the husband or wife that has been by each other’s side. Unlike when they first met and got married, they appraise one another on traits that they may not have liked previously but do now because those traits evoke pleasant feelings and emotions which provide an experience that is valuable and can be bestowed on
one another, making each other irreplaceably significant to one another – because of their having to spend time together.

The creation of love in an arranged marriage is in fact very similar to finding love through the conventional western dating game. It seems odd to think that every time a single adult goes out on the town, they are looking for love. While people often say and think that love might happen, what they really do is go out looking for a relationship and through that relationship hope to find (create) love. We look for someone who has certain qualities and characteristics that we can appraise and through that appraisal we can enter into a relationship, where we become susceptible to falling in love. So just as with arranged marriage, love is often not the first objective when considering romantic partners or friends in similar forms of love. Creating the relationship is the primary goal, while beginning to love a person may come later. This however does not mean that love cannot be created quickly in a relationship.

Let us consider the notion and experience of love at first sight, a phenomenon which my Appraisal/Bestowal view recognizes; notwithstanding the rarity of this ‘Romeo and Juliet’ type of love. But just because love at first sight may be uncommon, a theory of love ought to be able to recognize its possibility because of the reports of people who do actually experience it. In *Romeo and Juliet*, upon entering the ball, Romeo spots Juliet from across the room and with that first glance, without ever having spoken to her and knowing nothing about her other than the few physical qualities that he visually perceives, he falls madly in love with her, and her with him.¹¹¹ This idea of love may be thought of as some kind of fictional romantic story that is not real love and does not accurately account for how love in the real world happens; however, who is to say that love at first sight does not or cannot actually occur? An explanation of love ought to allow for such a phenomenon since it seems reasonable to assume that somewhere in the world, at some point, two people saw each other for the first time, and created a similar bond to that represented by Romeo and Juliet. Again, suppose for instance love can only occur after a certain period of acquaintanceship; but then what is the

cutoff point between an adequate period of acquaintance and one that is too short? Why could love not occur for some people after a period slightly shorter than the stipulated adequate period of acquaintance, and so on? So a theory would seem much stronger if it not only recognizes as a possibility this phenomenon of love at first sight, but can also explain it.

Under the Appraisal/Bestowal theory, love at first sight is possible because the two main requirements can be met (appraising and bestowing Value). Upon seeing someone we are able to appraise him/her on his/her physical qualities. This may be the person’s looks or their actions or mannerisms. An appraisal on just the physical qualities of another may match up to an idea of a romantic partner in the lover’s imagination. For example, if Romeo desired a lover and envisioned himself in a relationship with a woman, thinking of all the grandiose experiences that being in love would create, then upon seeing someone who fits this image, he would be able to bestow the experiences that she evokes of that desired relationship and he would have the experience that would allow him to bestow Value on her. His appraisal of her would induce his beliefs, emotions, and feelings which he could experience as being that imagined relationship and would therefore bestow upon her, the sense of Value and importance that was elicited by her physical qualities in interaction with his imagination.

Similarly, this could be the cause of how we begin to love in what is known as rebound relationships. A rebound relationship is a relationship that happens shortly after the end of the previous relationship in which the lover transfers feelings and emotions that he/she had with the previous beloved and bestows those experiences on the new beloved. This is a phenomenon that happens quite frequently in order for people to deal with the failure of the previous relationship. It is a way of not having to feel lonely after getting out of a relationship and to not have to cope to adjusting to a change in one’s lifestyle. Regardless of the reason, rebound relationships occur very similarly to relationships that are based on love at first sight. Suppose a woman gets left by her girlfriend of three years and then, a day later, she meets another woman who seems attractive and nice and after only one or two dates, she falls in love with her. It may be the case that her past feelings of being with her ex-girlfriend, the emotions that she experienced with her
and the beliefs that she has about an ideal partner were transferred to her new girlfriend, thus bestowing onto her a representative quality of her experience with her new girlfriend that the appraisal of her stimulates.

It is quite easy to see what is not good about a rebound relationship from the above example. Since the woman transfers feelings, beliefs, and emotions from the ex-girlfriend to the new-girlfriend, she misleads herself into believing that the new-girlfriend represents the experience of the ex-girlfriend. As the relationship develops, her appraisal of her new-girlfriend will change and alter as appraisals do (since we grow and change, so does our desires and interests). Perhaps when she becomes more stable in terms of not being scared by the idea of being lonely (which is why she originally turned to the new-girlfriend), she may reappraise the woman’s qualities as not being what she wants her romantic partner to have. Then of course her future appraisals may become negative until she begins to resent or just lose interest in her new partner, in which case the relationship would be doomed. Of course, if she was to keep her original mindset of positively appraising the new-girlfriend and continues to always bestow Value onto her, than they could live happily ever after (although this seems to be an unlikely outcome).

Even if the woman did “rebound” with the new-girlfriend, this does not mean that she never loved her, which brings me to my next point in that, even if a relationship does not last or if a person falls out of love with someone (or something) that does not mean that they never loved him/her/it in the first place. There is no required period of temporal duration for love. It can last a minute or it can last a lifetime. We generally refer to these quick ephemerals of love as infatuation. Infatuation however is not just a short-lived love – a relationship that ends briefly after it begins. Infatuation is an appraisal without the bestowal.

As with appraisal, in the case of infatuation, the subject perceives the value of an object and deems that object important for the qualities that make it valuable to the subject. The subject then fixates on, obsesses over, desires, holds beliefs about, has emotions and feelings for the object but does not love it. The object is fungible (it is replaceable). Because infatuation is only an appraisal without the bestowal of Value, it is different from love. Relationships of infatuation often end after a short period of time (although do not have to), cannot overcome obstacles
that loving relationships can overcome and often come and go frequently because the subject does not perceive the object to be irreplaceably significant, and therefore is easily replaced by other objects. The object fails to represent the experience of the subject in a significant way, like a love-object and is therefore prone to being replaced as soon as the subject's desires change. Because, however, infatuation is a way of relating to an object through appraising, it has similar features and aspects to love, but is not love. Infatuation is not distinguished from love because of its often short duration; but because it is a form of appraisal, so when the desires that leads a person to positively valuing the object ends, so too will the relationship.

This is similar to how Aristotle describes friendships of pleasure and utility.\textsuperscript{112} Friendships of pleasure exist among people who form a union for the sake of receiving a pleasure from the friend. These types of relationships are fairly common. One group particularly subjected to these types of relationships is young people and children. As children, we typically pick friends and associate ourselves with others that provide a pleasurable experience or fun time. This seems to be why different personality traits do not show themselves as predominantly as they do when we get into middle school, high school, and adulthood. During grade school, children seem to have similar interests in that they enjoy playing games. Games for children provide a pleasurable experience in which children can befriend other children as long as the games they are playing continue to be entertaining and fun. When the games begin to lose their appeal, the children will often separate and put an end to the relationship with one another. Usually this occurs around middle or high school. Children begin to take pleasure in other activities from when they were younger and therefore begin to make new friends or keep friends whose interests coincide with their own. There are plenty of cases of children who grow up and stay friends through their lives; however, in situations like this, either the individuals continue to gain pleasure from one another, or their friendship is based on more than just pleasure. Friendships of pleasure, however, only last inasmuch as the individuals take pleasure in each other. When the pleasure stops, so does the relationship.

\textsuperscript{112} Aristotle, \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, 1827.
Friendships of utility are similar to friendships of pleasure. This type of friendship also exists in so far as the individuals receive some sort of benefit from the relationship. Aristotle claims that friends of utility usually exist among older people.\textsuperscript{113} For example, if an old man has lost his long-range sight, he may be unable to drive a car. It would therefore be advantageous for him to make friends with someone who could see well and has her license. Perhaps we can add that the woman that could see and had her license also had a disability that prevented her from walking that the man who could not see did not have. In this situation, the friendship between these two people would exist out of the utilities that they could provide each other. The friend that could drive could often take the man to run errands while the man who could not see as well could provide some service for the friend that could not walk. Again, as with the friendship of pleasure, we can see that friendships between two people would only exist while they required assistance from the other. If perhaps the man who could not see miraculously got his sight back, he would no longer need the woman to take him to run errands and therefore the relationship may not continue.

Infatuation works in the same way. When the usefulness of the object ceases to be useful or the object is no longer pleasurable, the relationship ceases. Depending on the desires of the subject, the infatuation relationship can end shortly after it begins, or perhaps endure for longer. Either way, infatuation is not time limited, but process based. If the relationship only exists as the appraisal of an object's value – with the elements of fixation or obsession, then it is infatuation; but if the subject actually bestows Value on the object, then it is love. Infatuation is therefore not time sensitive, but rather sensitive to how a person responds to his/her object.

In the case of Romeo and Juliet, some may think that they were only infatuated with each other because of the brief passionate time that they were acquainted; however the point of the story is that they are in love. If they were only infatuated with one another we can imagine that if they had successfully run away together then they may not have lived happily ever after and may have divorced and went their own separate ways when they realized that what they had for each

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
other was not love. Of course the story could be taken that way, but I am inclined to think that they were actually in love. If they were not in love, the story would be much less moving than if Romeo and Juliet were just infatuated with one another and acting out of normal teenage behavior.

Children are often told that their love for the girl/boy next door is just infatuation – that it is a temporary phase and is not really love. Children object greatly and while their feelings, beliefs, and emotions about their supposed love-object may not last a month, week, or even a day, this does not mean their love for the other is not genuine. While children are usually just infatuated with each other, this does not mean that there are not some instances of love among school children, regardless of how long the relationship endures. Infatuation would thus be better explained as being just an obsession, i.e. an appraisal without the bestowal. Timeframes cannot be placed on love because love is how we respond to an object and responses are not bound by time. As a child I would have been thought to be infatuated with a girl who sat opposite me in fifth grade. We became boyfriend and girlfriend and a week later, we broke up. I was heartbroken for a couple of days until a new girl caught my eye. Maybe I loved her, and maybe I did not.

Let us now look at an example of a relationship in which a couple was married for twenty five years and then got a divorce. During that time the couple had three children, relocated twice, took vacations every year and had one career change each. After the twentieth year the couple began to fight, stopped going on vacations, their children moved out, and after the twenty fifth year of marriage, they got a divorce. Four years later, they both found new partners and remarried. It would seem silly to think that the couple who had been married for twenty five years were just infatuated with each other. I think it is safe to assume that the couple would have probably been in love at some point, and then may have fallen out of love; however, why could it not have been the case that they were infatuated with one another? Perhaps they were just obsessed with each other sexually and it was not until they stopped finding each other sexually attractive that they started to fight.
In each of the stories (my relationship in the fifth grade and the twenty five year married couple), the relationships had the same structure, we were together, we split up, and we found another partner. While there are a few differences, such as the length of time of the relationship and the experiences that were had during the period we were together, neither of these are distinguishing factors of love. Can love only exist after being in a relationship for eight months, or five years, or does it have to last a lifetime? Surely that cannot be the case. If there exists some timeframe on love, then how could we acknowledge being in love before the allotted timeframe? Would that mean that as a child I did not love my mother? Can people not love their pets before a certain amount of time? Do couples who are in arranged marriages have to wait a certain length of time to fall in love? What if it happens shortly after they meet and get married? The idea that love has a set time is rather silly. Did Romeo and Juliet not love each other because they only spent a few times together and died shortly after meeting one another?

All of this brings sharply into focus the question: “Can there be love at first sight?” If time does not affect love, and love is appraising an object, of which an experience is created and then bestowed on that object, giving it Value that it did not previously have, then why can we not perceive an object and then immediately bestow Value on it? By perceiving it we will have an experience of it, and if we have an experience we are in a position to bestow Value. Take the example of Romeo and Juliet again. Of course this is a fictional story but that does not mean that the experience they were said to have had upon seeing each other is not a possible experience of love. It may also be the case that love at first sight happens between mothers and their children. What is wrong with the common belief that a woman upon finding out that she is pregnant begins to love the child that is growing inside her? While a mother may be disposed to love her child and therefore have ideas that when she has a child she will love it, this does not make loving the child shortly after realizing she’s pregnant any less of an instance of love at first sight. The mother does not have to wait until the third trimester of her pregnancy or until the child is born to love it. Upon realizing that there is a baby in her womb the mother can begin to love it straight away. A woman does not have to be pregnant for a certain number of days or weeks before she can love the child
inside her, nor does a person have to be in a relationship for X amount of time to love his/her partner, a piece of art, humanity, etc.

As well as not being bound by time, love cannot be bound by specific events or experiences that occur or are had during the relationship. We could not therefore suggest that a subject loves and object because the subject has a child with or is married to the object. The experiences of having children, taking vacations, and sticking by each other during professional changes does not account for love because there are many couples that have not experienced any of those things but still love each other. The idea of marriage creating love is equally trivial. I again expect that there are many couples in the world that are not married that happen to love each other. Perhaps enduring good times as well as bad times is the necessary factor for love; but then again, Romeo and Juliet did not endure very many good or bad times together. Or if they did (the dying of Tybalt and Mercutio), perhaps I could make the same argument for my girlfriend in fifth grade. What if she became really sad that she received a failing grade on a homework assignment and I was by her side to cheer her up through that dark time? And of course we had good times, the two or three times we played footsies under the table and laughed as if we had no cares in the world.

The idea that love requires a specific set of events or experiences for the subject to endure or requires that the relationship endure a certain period of time cannot adequately determine whether love exists nor can they hamper a theory’s ability to explain what love is. If either of these ideas were true, than an argument would have to be made as to why that event or experience, apart from others, is a requirement of love; or why this time period and not a shorter or longer one is required for love. In addition, the idea of denying that a person experiences love is as irrational as the suggestion that a person does not have a headache when they say that they do. Love is based on the perspective of the subject and is not something that can be diagnosed more accurately by other parties. Perhaps this is where our frustration occurs when we are young and some adults underappreciate the sincerity of our feelings, emotions, and beliefs about love objects.

Just as no particular specifiable events or experiences are sufficient for love, they are also not necessary. I do not expect to have to bring my future wife
flowers each month in order for my love for her to persist. I do not need to send my mother and father birthday cards every year in order to love them. These are expressions that may show love in some instances but are not what love is. In the same way that I do not need to perform any particular actions in order to have love for something, actions cannot take away my love for something. Actions such as taking care of something or trying to help someone do not prove love or the absence of it. Take for instance a man who continually beats his wife and children. Under the circumstance, some may say that he does not love his wife or children because physically harming them is unacceptable behavior. Love is thought to be a phenomenon that as Frankfurt suggests, is the robust concern for the individual, and physically harming a wife, child, pet, husband or anyone, manifests great lack of concern for him/her/it.

Doing so however does not mean that the violated party is not loved by the assailant/perpetrator. The man who beats his wife and children may love them very much, although the way he conducts himself in relationships is counter to how most people believe a healthy relationship should be lived. Perhaps the man is trying to teach his wife and children lessons and to do so he believes that extreme negative reinforcement is necessary to get them to learn. Perhaps he is addicted to drugs and when he comes home he continually mistakes his wife and children for threatening creatures. It does not matter what the excuse is (of course I do not mean to defend these behaviors at all), the problem that the husband and father has is with dealing with relationships, not with not having love. Perhaps he does not love them; however it is possible that he does and physically or mentally harming his wife and children do not change that. Again, maybe the husband grew up in an abusive household himself so his only experience of dealing with conflict is through violence. Regardless, the issue in cases like these is with the individual’s ability to deal with situations rather than the non-existence of love. So just because a person is physically violent with someone, this does not entail that he/she does not love that person. I maintain that it is safe to assume that somewhere in the world there is a person who is aggressively violent towards a person or animal that he or she really does love, and with that we must conclude that these types of physical actions do not undermine love. No particular actions or
set of actions are incompatible with love. What does constitute love is the process in which a person responds to and creates Value in an object.

3.4 Understanding Previous Theories through the Appraisal and Bestowal of Value

Many of the theories that we looked at in the previous chapter focused on an aspect of love in order to reveal the essential nature of love, such as the way we concern ourselves with our love-objects’ wellbeing, or the feeling of creating a life united with the object. These aspects of love, e.g. being a robust concern, or a union, only apply to certain experiences of love and do not capture love across its many forms. Because we experience different aspects of love, such as how it feels or how we behave when in a loving relationship, a theory of love should be able to account for the different features that match all of our experiences, rather than just certain selected experiences whilst leaving out others. Throughout this thesis we have seen different experiences of love such as experiencing love for ideas such as Truth, or love for god(s). We have looked at theories of love as a union of two people, as well as theories solely based on the appraisal of value and solely based on the bestowal of value. An overarching theory of love however should account for each of the different ways we experience love and for the variety of things that we love.

This section will focus on the theories that were presented in the second chapter, explaining their inclusion into an A/B theory. Each theory from chapter two, as well as theories that have not been mentioned, can be rectified by the A/B theory in order to explain all of love’s forms. By being able to account for all the other main contending theories, an A/B theory does not exclude experiences that are taken to be everyday examples of love, such as how we relate to god(s) the behaviors we express in different relationships, the feelings and emotions that accompany love, etc. Again, the experiences of love that we have provides us with features of the phenomenon that are our only means of understanding what love is; so for an experience to be excluded from explanatory view means that the theory in question does not accurately portray the whole phenomenon. I will begin with the Appraisal and Bestowal views of love since they are the main focus of an
Appraisal/Bestowal joint view. I will then systematically go through the other theories that we looked at in the second chapter to show their relevance to an A/B view of love.

The two value theories, the Appraisal and Bestowal theory, clearly play a role in the A/B view. They make up the two parts of the theory and without either part, the theory does not work. As outlined in the second chapter of this thesis, the appraisal view by itself runs into the problem of fungibility while the bestowal view becomes difficult to explain since according to it, love is not reason based. When put together however, these two theories make up a comprehensive view of love that not only solves the problems that other theories fall victim to, but explains love in a way that accounts for how it is experienced in our everyday lives.

The Robust Concern Theory does not play as big a role in an A/B theory of love but is a feature of most love relationships. In most relationships where love is present, there is the experience of robust concern (this of course excludes violent behavior as expressed in the previous section of people beating their family and partners). In fact with loving relationships, a robust concern is often the type of behavior that is predominantly expressed which may be the reason why some philosophers, like Frankfurt, believe that love just is the robust concern for another. Under the Appraisal/Bestowal view the object is given an importance by the lover that is based on the qualities and characteristics of the object, along with the response that is created within the lover (the experience). Since the object becomes something that is believed to be especially valuable, the lover typically cherishes and shows robust concern for the object. Robust concern is therefore just an effect of love rather than love itself.

As for the Union Theory of Love, although I have previously mentioned its problems, there still is some truth to the view that love is the union between two ‘people’.\(^{114}\) I had earlier stated that the union between two people is neither a metaphorical nor an actual fusing of selves. There is however a union process that occurs with love that consists of the combination of objective and subjective qualities that becomes the experience that the lover bestows on the object. Love

\(^{114}\) As well as people this includes animals and the relationships between people and things.
requires a subject and an object in order to fulfill the conditions of appraisal and bestowal. The subject appraises an object based on its objective qualities, creating a subjective appraisal of beliefs, emotions and feelings that makes up the experience (subjective quality) that is bestowed onto the object as a representational quality of Value. Without this combination of the objects qualities (even the perceived qualities of an imaginary object or one that is mistakenly appraised) and the experiences of the subject, the phenomenon of love will not occur. This process requires the combination of both a subject and an object, so it could be said that love is in fact a union – a combination of subject and object. Again, the coming together of subject and object does not require some union of physicality nor is it merely a metaphor. The union that occurs is in fact a coming together of subject and object in order for the subject to ultimately bestow the representational value.

The Union Theory of love therefore is an accurate account of what occurs in order for the phenomenon of love to be created; however, the theory has been slightly misconstrued as to what is that is united when speaking of love. By treating the union as the combination of qualities taken from the object and experiences (beliefs, emotions, and feelings) from the subject, we can account for love occurring between people and animals, people and art and other inanimate objects, ideas, and anything else. No matter what the object is, even if our love object is ourselves (self-love), we perceive the object as having certain qualities and from that we appraise those qualities and are able to have experiences that can later be bestowed onto the object.

Another theory that we looked at was love as the quest for Truth. The A/B theory would suggest that this view is an example of the phenomenon of love rather than a general theory of what love consists in. Under the A/B theory we might instead suggest that for Plato the idea of Truth (and attaining it) is a love object instead of love itself. Plato treats Truth as his object of love, appraising his idea of Truth, Knowledge, Beauty and Goodness, and bestowing his beliefs and his philosophy on this idea, making it uniquely Valuable. He gives Truth a value beyond that which it already has for others. By appraising the idea of Truth and then bestowing on it Value that partly comes from Plato himself (his experience of
the appraisal), Truth, or Plato’s idea of Truth becomes a love object for Plato (and others that think the same way).

Plato’s theory does not explain love, but it does teach us that not just people or living things can be and have been the focus of our love. Love can be directed at ideas, inanimate objects, gods, people, or anything else. Furthermore, there can be cases of odd sounding love relationships like Plato’s love for Truth or a schizophrenic person’s love for someone or something that does not actually exist. However, in these instances, the lover believes that the object exists, and that belief is amenable to appraisal and then it (the object of the belief) can be subject to the bestowal of Value – just as one does with a mother, father, friend, partner, or pet.

There is one more theory that we looked at in the second chapter of this work and it is by far the most difficult to make sense of – the theory that love is God. The theory that love is God is different from the other theories that we have looked at because its truth depends on the powers of a transcendent being that many believe exists. Nonetheless, this is a theory of love that is put forth by the followers of Judeo-Christian religion and should be accounted for just as much as any other theory. So if God exists, then a theory of love should account for the experience that is described in the teachings of Him. As with the other theories, I aim to show that the theory of God as love can be incorporated into the A/B theory. God may be the source of all love in the universe, or it may be the case that God does not even exist. Either way, the A/B theory of love neither negates nor affirms the existence of God’s love and therefore makes an even stronger case that love is in fact the appraisal and bestowal of Value.

To begin to understand how an A/B theory accounts for God as love, we must look back at the two types of love that were discussed in the God section of the first chapter according to Soble, namely, agapic love (subject-dependent) and erosic love (object-dependent). Agapic love is the love that is referred to as the love of God for humans and erosic love is the love of humans for God. These two types of love are historically differentiated, but I claim that the types of their differentiation are misleading when looking at the nature of love. Love, according to the A/B theory cannot be separated into two different ways of loving. There is no
difference between the love of God for humans and the love of humans for God as if God loves in a subject-dependent way and humans love in an object-dependent way, nor is there a difference between the love of humans for humans. Love may be expressed differently between God and humans because everyone is different in the way they feel, believe, act, emote, etc., including God. Love is both agapic and erosic—it is neither just one nor just the other. It is both, just as our modern theory of love is neither appraisal by itself nor is it bestowal. Love consists of agapic love and erosic love because appraisal and bestowal are combined. The phenomenon of love should not be different for the love of God or God’s love than it is for humans just as if we created robots that were capable of loving (appraising and bestowing Value on an object), our love would be the same as theirs. The phenomenon does not change, only the individual (or deity or animal, etc.) that experiences it.

To elaborate, Erosic Love is the love of humans for God. This is like the Appraisal View of Love. We love God because God is valuable. In fact God is the most valuable, because he is perfect. Anders Nygren states that, “God [is] love’s only suitable object.” Because God is perfect He possesses the qualities which we deem most valuable just like a man or woman would look for the best qualities that he/she could find in a partner. In this way, erosic love is reason based (consisting in the perception of an object’s beneficial qualities) just as the appraisal theory of love is. This however falls into problems like the fungibility problem. Perhaps we might think that since we are human and not God-like, our love is somewhat not as pure or infallible as God’s, in that we have to accept that fungibility is a weakness that we suffer with regard to love. I do not believe this is the case however. Erosic or appraisal love cannot rest on the notion that God’s love is perfect and humans are susceptible to fungibility because we know that our love is not fungible. I do not love people who have better qualities than my girlfriend and we, typically, do not love one of our children more than another based on their merit. The appraisal view does not work and we should not have to

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accept the notion that fungibility is a part of love. Erosic love does not adequately explain humans’ love for God or each other.

Agapic love however is thought of as being God’s love for humans because God bestows value on humans. Bestowal and agapic love are synonymous. God creates humans and therefore the love for them comes from God without reason, just like the Bestowal Theory. With the Bestowal Theory, value is bestowed on an object without reason. God does not need to look out over His creation and think about our friendliness or kindness and think, “They are so good. I really love them.” God does not need to see the valuable qualities in humans to have love; just as the bestowal view resists reduction to reasons that create the bestowal. Love comes from the subject, in this case God, without reason, and while this seems inadequate for our understanding of love in humans, God plays by different rules. We can conceive that God has this ability to create without reason because He is God. We, as humans, do not share that capability. This seems to account for the love of God for humans better than erosic/appraisal love accounts for the love of humans for God, but is it right?

The answer is no. While again these ideas are quite speculative, I can assume that God does not love humans in a different way than humans love God because God is confined to the same phenomenon of love that we are. While God is the source of all things, he still requires virtues in humans in order to love. While God already has knowledge of the universe and is both the beginning and end of time, humans do provide God with an experience. Humans submit to God and in doing so give God glory. The glory of God could then be thought of as a quality that we possess that provides God with an experience. If He desires glory and we are the ones that give it to Him, then our ability to provide God with that glory gives Him reasons for us to be the objects of His love.

Just like Plato who may have had a love for Truth (an idea), God can love humans, as an idea so long that there exists a quality in God’s idea of humans that allows for God to appraise them and then bestow a special importance onto them. We may think of God as not needing to appraise anything because he is the

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117. Being capable of giving God glory.
source of everything; however the reason for all of creation is inevitably for God’s glory. Just like an idea that originates in a person’s head, humans originate within God. People appraise ideas for an importance and that importance combined with the experience that it sparks is projected on the object, even if the object is only an idea, making it the object of love. The same would have to apply for God. He creates an idea (that of the existence of humans) and from that idea, appraises some quality of them. They can provide glory, and that, mixed with the experience of receiving glory is projected onto humans by God as love.

So while love may first originate in God, because all things do (under the Judeo-Christian religion), we can assume a situation in which even the love that God is and creates, is based on appraising and bestowing Value. And if God must appraise humans to love, than our ideas about erosic and agapic love are nothing but concepts that refer to different parts of love rather than being two different types of love. Again, even with this exploration of love and the idea of God being speculative at best, we can still make a consistent story with the A/B theory of love that works, even if God is love. And if God does not exist, then the A/B theory still applies. Moreover, even with the premise that “God is love,” the Appraisal Theory and Bestowal Theory do not need to be at odds with each other and can both work together to accommodate love in a manner that is consistent with the Judeo-Christian religion.

3.5 Criticisms of an A/B Theory

Despite the potential for the A/B theory to more comprehensively explain the phenomenon of love, there have been arguments that have been put forth against a joint value theory. Alan Soble suggests that a joint theory just reduces to an appraisal theory of love, leaving out the necessity for the bestowal of Value. He also criticizes a joint theory on the basis that the bestowal of Value is an act that only God can perform. Soble alleges that since humans cannot love how God loves, the idea that the phenomenon of love requires the bestowal of Value is mistaken.\textsuperscript{118} As we saw in the previous section, God’s love may in fact be both appraisal and bestowal together. We can therefore conjecture that even God’s

\textsuperscript{118} Alan Soble, \textit{The Structure of Love}, 18-28.
ability to love is not much different from that of humans; however, the objection that God loves in a different way than humans will be briefly mentioned, as well as other objections that have plagued other theories. I will also look at further objections to a joint A/B theory and show why they are ineffective arguments against this joint value theory of love.

Soble attacks the idea of appraisal and bestowal joint theories with two arguments. One of the arguments that we discussed at the end of the previous section refers to God’s love for humans. Soble suggests that God is the only being that is capable of bestowing Value to create love because of his omnipotence in creating humans and the qualities that they possess. God creates humans and by their nature of being one of His creations, are Valuable. God therefore does not need to appraise the qualities of humans to love them. Humans do not create the world or others like God so they cannot bestow Value the way God does. Humans need to appraise objects to love them according to Soble. The problem with his critique however is that even God may not be able to bestow Value on an object without first appraising it. As we saw in the previous section, God may need to appraise the qualities of humans in order to bestow Value on them. Since humans are the purveyors of the glorification of God, they possess a subjectively valuable quality for Him that He can then use to bestow Value onto humans. Love that is created by anyone or anything would need to be able to both appraise and bestow Value in order to love. While again we are speculating on God’s powers, the idea that a joint A/B theory applies to God’s love for humans is not contradictory to the way in which God and love in the Judeo-Christian teachings are explained.

Soble’s second criticism of joint appraisal/bestowal theories is that they inevitably lead to, or essentially are, just appraisal theories of love. He argues that even if we do bestow some kind of representative, experiential quality onto an object, we will still need to recognize that the quality exists in the object; thus appraising the object for its value – even if the value is subjective and created as a projected quality. So for example, I may appraise a friend for his sense of humor and honesty which creates beliefs, emotions and feelings (an experience) that I

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120. Ibid., 25
121. Ibid.
then bestow on him as a phenomenological quality that represents that experience so that my perception of him in addition to his sense of humor and other qualities, includes the representation of my experience of and with him. My further interaction with him consists of me re-appraising him for his new representative quality that I have bestowed on him – unlike his sense of humor and trustworthiness which are qualities that I do not create. Even though I have bestowed Value onto him, I am still required to re-appraise him in order for the phenomenon of love to occur (to have the features of love such as deeming his significance to be that of irreplaceableness).

This objection to joint theories only strengthens my position and it does so in two ways. First, even if we are forced to re-appraise in order to experience the phenomenon of love, recognizing the significance that we have created in an object, we still have to appraise and bestow value. Regardless of whether or not a re-appraisal is the final step to experiencing love, that does not undermine the A/B theory. The phenomenon of love can be created by the bestowal of Value or the re-appraisal of that Value once it has been bestowed just as long as the beloved becomes irreplaceably significant to the lover through the process of appraising and bestowing Value. Secondly, The A/B process of love is cyclical in that appraisals and bestowals continually happen over and over. We appraise an object, bestow our experience on that object, re-appraise the object which gives us more/different experiences to bestow, which leads to another appraisal and more Bestowals. This is how we experience love over time – and thus accounts for the continuation of love despite the changes that relationships undergo.

The phenomenon of love is not sustained by just one appraisal and bestowal of Value. We appraise and bestow value on an object over and over again. As time goes on, the love that a person has for an object adapts and changes. Sometimes it gets stronger and sometimes it gets weaker and also changes in other ways too. The experience that the subject has of the object continues to change, incorporating more events and experiences into the original experiences that were bestowed on the beloved. The expansion of the experiences can often lead to the ending of a relationship rather than strengthening it. Perhaps friends or family love each other at one time but upon
discovering new qualities or characteristics about the person that are negative, a negative appraisal is made and the bestowal is withdrawn. If for example a mother’s son murders children and commits other heinous crimes, the mother may appraise her son negatively and withdraw her bestowal or possibly create a new negative bestowal of disgust. The experience the mother has of her son is overrun with negativity and the valuable qualities she perceives him to have are overshadowed by negative qualities and a burdensome experience of him. Many situations in which this type of situation occurs may not lead to a bestowal withdraw or a new negative bestowal; however, that does not show that appraisals and bestowals of Value do not change. In the news we often hear about parents who still love their delinquent children despite their crimes, however new appraisals and bestowals occur all the time. When partners separate (if they had been in love) they do so because they become unable to or choose not to continue positively appraising and bestowing Value in the other.

Furthermore, a joint A/B theory of love depicts a continual process of appraising and then bestowing value. The A/B theory does not end with bestowal, nor does it end with appraisal. Love occurs when the response of the subject creates something new in the object that makes the object irreplaceably significant. It is a process that requires valuing an object for its qualities, experiencing that value subjectively, and bestowing irreplaceable significance onto the object. Should we say that love occurs once the bestowal is made or once the bestowal is recognized by the subject? Surely a case can be made either way. We can imagine a person being in love with a friend, partner, pet, etc. and not realize it, in which case perceiving the bestowed quality of Value is done unconsciously by the lover just as we can argue that love requires a realization on the part of the subject as a form of verifying that Value was bestowed. Either way, the process that creates the phenomenon of love includes both appraising an objects value and bestowing Value on it.

Another objection to appraisal/bestowal theories of love is that they do not differentiate between attitudes such as liking, respect, admiration, etc.122 While these similar phenomena seemed to plague both the bestowal and appraisal

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122 Bennet Helm, “Love.”
theories of love on their own, they can be explained under a joint theory. By having a theory that requires both appraising and bestowing value, similar phenomena like admiration and respect only occur on the level of appraisal. As with liking, these phenomena are the subject’s recognizing value in an object without bestowing Value on it. Because there is no bestowal of Value, the object is not irreplaceably significant therefore does not reach the stage of love. This relates back to the earlier discussion on infatuation. Moreover, a joint A/B theory separates love from other similar phenomena by the object standing out in virtue of having Value, which other objects do not have for the subject. For instance if we look at the phenomenon of hate (or a phenomenon similar to hate) we will see that hate may be similar to love because of the similar process of appraising and bestowing but the bestowal of Value that the love object receives is different from the bestowal that the hated object receives.

The process of appraising and bestowing also occurs by recognizing and creating negative value for an object. The idea of hating someone is similar to love because the subject must appraise the qualities of the object – the object is mean, dishonest, vindictive, etc. (having an experience of the object), and then bestow the negative experience (beliefs about the object, emotions and feelings) on the object. If for instance a man murder’s another man’s daughter, the man whose daughter died may negatively appraise the murderer as the man who killed his daughter and then bestow the negative experience of that appraisal on the murderer, creating a type of negative value on him. That value will not be the same Value that is given to an object of love. The object of love is significant and valuable in an irreplaceable way because of the process that made the object significant. The phenomenon of hate would however fall on the opposite side of the significant spectrum in terms of the hate object, which then makes the object stand out from other disliked objects because of the A/B process and its negative significance.

The last critique that I will defend the joint A/B theory from is the problem of pinpointing how the bestowal of value originates out of the appraisal of value. Why do Bestowals occur? Do appraisals of certain qualities or an X number of appraisal cause Bestowals? For instance Abramson and Leite suggest (in what I would
consider to be partially a joint A/B view of love), that love occurs only if the appraisal is of “morally significant character traits.” This of course leads to the problem that we saw in the second chapter such as what counts as morally significant and seems to not adequately address the problem of explaining the origin of bestowal. Regardless, these questions about the transition between appraisal and bestowal are unproblematic. We do not need to pinpoint the exact moment that appraisal creates the experience and a bestowal is made. To say that appraisals of value elicits a bestowal is to say that there comes a time when one final or specific appraisal causes a person to respond from just liking, admiring, respecting, etc. a person to loving him or her. Just because we cannot pinpoint the exact criteria for a bestowal does not mean that we cannot account for the origin of the bestowal. Everyone appraises different qualities and a different number of them. The point in which appraisals become something that is bestowed is completely subjective – it differs from person to person.

An example of a similar idea occurred when my roommate invited me to a concert. I told him I would think about it and get back to him. The next day I told him I was going to pass on the show. While I do not recall at which part of the day I changed from being indecisive to deciding I did not want to go, I know how I came to the decision of not wanting to go. I weighed the pros and cons of going to the concert and decided that I did not like the band enough to pay the money required to get in. Again, I came to the decision that I did not want to go to the show but I do not recall the exact thought that pushed me to decide not to go. I could have afforded the concert if I would have liked to see the band and I would have went regardless of how much I liked the band if the ticket price was equal or less than my level of interest, but with the ticket price being what it was and me not being too excited to see the band, I chose not to go. Similarly with the case of a bestowal of Value, I may not be conscious of the exact moment I begin to bestow Value and it could be the case that there is no exact moment; however, the process includes making appraisals and bestowing the Value that the appraisal creates. So while there may be a “gray area” before the bestowal occurs, we can

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explain how the phenomenon of love is created and therefore what the phenomenon of love is.

**Summary**

The combined process of appraising and bestowing Value in an object creates the phenomenon of love. By thinking of love in these terms, not only can we account for the features of love that get us to experience love in our own individual ways for innumerable kinds of objects, but we can acknowledge other theories of love in relation to the A/B theory. We can experience love in the form of emotions by expressing our thoughts and beliefs, we can experience love as a feeling, by knowing that we are perceived by others as being irreplaceably significant to them. We even often recognize love in people by their behavior and expression of Value that their beloved has.

So while love consists in creating Value in an object through a particular process of appraising subjective value and bestowing a phenomenological quality that represents the experience the subject has of the object, making the object irreplaceably significant, we can think and talk of love as being different things. We can think and talk about it as an emotion (the expression of bestowing Value), a feeling (the sensation and meaningfulness of the process), a description (type of relationship in which this process occurs); we can think of love as being beautiful, destructive, a necessity in life, and we can even love the idea of love. It makes sense that love is portrayed in a variety of ways in movies, books, and theater, because the phenomenon of love lends itself to effect people based on their psyche and specific way of thinking about the world. The next chapter will therefore focus on the psychological correlation between a person’s thoughts and behaviors and the process of appraising and bestowing Value in objects.
Chapter 4
Cognitive Behavior of Love

Introduction

The process of appraising and bestowing Value on an object is conducted in accordance with how people psychologically respond to objects. One way that we respond to objects is by appraising them; then, depending on that appraisal, we can bestow an attitudinal quality on the object, whether that is irreplaceability, significance, fear, hatred, etc. This A/B process is utilized in different psychological therapies in order to help patients to change their unhealthy ways of responding to objects. Therapies such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) rely on the A/B process and will be the subject of this chapter.

My objective in this chapter is to support my A/B theory of love with psychological evidence through the analysis of thoughts and behavior and their correlation to relationships and love. By closely examining effective therapeutic processes that can lead to a patient finding love (such as CBT and REBT), we can gain insight into the components that make up love which matches up to the A/B process of love. To examine these therapeutic processes, I will look at their aim and how they work. Once we understand the mechanics and efficacy of the therapies, I will provide examples, through self-help books, in which the therapies are directed at helping patients love an object. The therapies utilized in these types of books rely on the same principles that are used by therapists in counseling sessions.

There will be two payoffs to this examination. First, by being able to identify how the A/B process is incorporated into therapies such as CBT and REBT, I will be able to further support the theory through practical evidence. The second benefit will be to gain an understanding of the active role that the subject can play in the process of appraising and bestowing Value on an object and how knowing about the nature of love can allow us to be active participants, capable of exercising choice when it comes the objects that we love. We can withdraw our love from those that we are in an unhealthy relationship with, prevent ourselves from withdrawing love from our partners, or give love to those that we want to be in.
a loving relationship with. To begin our examination of the role of the A/B process in certain psychotherapies, we will look at how the therapies, CBT and REBT, work.

4.1 A/B and the Examination of Psychotherapies

As we shall see below, the psychotherapeutic approach of CBT shows that prior beliefs play a shaping role in what we perceive – thus affecting the way we appraise and react to a given stimulus. By altering these beliefs, a person is able to change the way he/she responds to objects, and CBT aims at getting people to change their beliefs through various techniques. By actively taking part in changing the certain perception forming beliefs we have about an object or situation, which I will explain how later, we can alter our perceptions, emotions, feelings, and reactive attitudes toward objects, essentially altering our ability to love. Since love for me occurs just the same as my fear of being mauled by a lion, in that both are reactive attitudes toward an object, altering my love for an object (choosing to love it or to withdraw my love from it) should involve similar processes to overcoming fears, depression, and other mental disorders. If love is a reactive attitude, then I come to love an object because I have perceived it in some way that is different from how I perceive objects that I do not love. And in order to perceive it in a way that is different from the objects that I do not love, I must hold certain beliefs about it. Furthermore, if my beliefs were to be altered, I may no longer perceive the object as being valuable or special, or no longer have certain emotions or feelings about it and may lose my love for it. This process of beliefs altering attitudes is exemplified by CBT and REBT.

Before getting into the details and efficacy of CBT and REBT, it is important to first mention and establish, what being able to actively control our beliefs consist in. I am not speaking of a type of direct doxastic voluntarism whereby a person is able to alter their beliefs as easily as flipping a switch.124 I therefore do not suggest that tomorrow when I wake up, I can look out the window and decide to believe that the clouds in the sky are made out of millions of cotton-balls that are glued

together and happen to be floating in the sky. Similarly, it will not be within my power to go to my neighbor, who I happen to despise, and decide I actually love him and that we are best friends. I do not advocate anything so extreme and untenable as this.

What I will be presupposing however is a type of indirect voluntarism in that a person is able to alter their beliefs indirectly through the presence or absence of inferences that one makes in order to arrive at that belief. So while I may not have direct control over the belief that I do not love my neighbor, there are steps that can be taken and inferences that can be made in order for me come to love my neighbor. For instance, if I became more acquainted with my neighbor than I am now, spending more time with him and understanding him as a person, perhaps I may see him as really great guy. Or maybe getting to know my neighbor will just make me dislike him even more than I already do because of all his negative qualities that I discover. I may learn that he lies about things, has no sense of empathy, has poor communication skills, and lacks conversational skills. But then I may realize that the qualities that I hate in him are also qualities that I myself possess; and upon reflecting on how I believe I am a good person regardless of those qualities, I am also able to overlook or discount those qualities in him and then come to be able to respond to him with neighborly love. Of course this could work in the reverse order, and upon reflection and comparison, I might come to dislike myself as much as my neighbor. However the same outcome applies – my beliefs are changed from what they were before making inferences and gathering information about my neighbor. I am therefore able to alter my beliefs indirectly through means of inference, introspection, information gathering, etc.

Altering beliefs is not something that occurs immediately upon desire to change them however. Using the psychotherapies that I am about to exposit are time and effort consuming endeavors that often require professional psychologists. But there are other ways of receiving the type of therapy that garners the same results – for example, bibliotherapy (which will be discussed in the next section).

Regardless however of the time frame in which, and the way that psychotherapy is administered, CBT and REBT both exemplify not only how beliefs can be changed, but as I will show later, how the appraisal and bestowal of Value feature in the process of altering which objects we love.

CBT and REBT are some of the most widely practiced and effective forms of Psychotherapy.\textsuperscript{126} They are used to treat patients with depression, phobias, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and many other cognitive disorders. What CBT and REBT aim at doing is to eliminate these types of problems in patients by changing the way they think and behave. The National Health Service of Great Britain explains how CBT works thus:

CBT works by helping you make sense of overwhelming problems by breaking them down into smaller parts. Your thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and actions are interconnected, often trapping you in a negative spiral. CBT helps you stop these negative cycles. It aims to break down factors that are making you feel bad, anxious or scared so that they are more manageable. It can show you how to change these negative patterns to improve the way you feel.\textsuperscript{127}

The way of managing these factors is by a therapist introducing ideas to the patient in a way known as “semantic therapy.”\textsuperscript{128} Albert Ellis and Robert A. Harper give a brief description of how we help make sense of our problems – with reference to REBT, a type of CBT. In their book \textit{A Guide to Rational Living}, Ellis and Harper state:

\begin{quote}
[H]umans tell themselves various sane and crazy things. Their beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and philosophies often take the form of internalized sentences or self-talk. Consequently, they can change their self-defeating emotions and behaviors, by their clearly seeing, disputing, and acting against their internal philosophies….\textsuperscript{[REBT]} has been backed by literally hundreds of research studies, almost all of which show that when people change their beliefs or philosophies about something, their emotions and their behaviors also significantly change.\textsuperscript{129}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{126} "Cognitive Behavioural Therapy," Royal College of Psychiatrists, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), accessed May 12, 2014, \url{http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/therapies/cognitivebehaviouralt_therapy.aspx}.


\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., xii-xiii.
They go on to explain Instances of this “self-talk”:

When clients insist, “I can’t stop worrying,” or “I find it impossible to diet,” we try to help them to change their beliefs to “I can stop worrying, but so far I haven’t,” and “I’m finding it exceptionally difficult to diet – but hardly impossible!” When people say “I always do badly at social affairs,” we try to help them to change this to “I often do badly at social affairs.” When clients insist, “It would be awful if I lost my job!” or “How terrible to get rejected!” we try to get them to think, instead, “It would be highly inconvenient if I lost my job,” or “It is distinctly disadvantageous when I am rejected.”

In order to therefore change negative thoughts and behaviors, people can introduce ideas in the form of ‘rational sentences’ which will help get them to change what they believe and think about a given stimulus.

To help treat disorders in patients, therapists examine the experience a patient has to a given stimulus – whether the stimulus is an object that he/she is afraid of or something that he/she becomes anxious about, etc. – and helps the patient to change the way he/she thinks about it. The experience that a person has when reacting to one of these stimuli consists of thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations, and desires, which all function interconnectedly to make the patient’s experience negative. When changing what he/she thinks about the given stimulus, the emotions, feelings, desires, etc. also change. So by helping a patient change the way he/she thinks about an object that he/she is afraid of, the therapist can help cure people from phobias and other cognitive disorders.

As an example, suppose a woman goes to see a therapist for her fear of micro-organisms (germs). Her germaphobia would be broken down into the thoughts and beliefs that make up her fear, such as the thought of getting sick, the feeling of being “dirty” and having bacteria on her skin, and the belief that she can get viruses or diseases which could be fatal. These beliefs and feelings that make up her fear of germs would be addressed by the therapist in order to get her to put them into a context that helps her alter how she responds to germs (or the thought of them). For instance, the therapist may try to alter her thoughts and beliefs by explaining that not all germs are bad. Germs include micro-organisms such as bacteria, which depending on its type can be helpful rather than harmful to the human body. So rather than be afraid of germs or all types of micro-organisms, she may actually only be afraid of pathogens, the

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130. Ibid., xiii.
types of micro-organisms that cause diseases, or harmful viruses. The therapist may then explain to the patient that it is rare for a person to catch a life-threatening disease or virus and by catching some diseases and viruses, a person can become healthier – by developing a stronger immune system or by receiving an anti-virus. By continuing to focus on how harmless the everyday germs are that she may encounter, the woman may begin to form different beliefs about germs. She may start to believe that not all germs are bad and the germs that she comes into contact with can often be helpful in allowing her immune system to develop. Those beliefs can then alter the way she feels about being in situations where she comes into contact with germs – by her no longer attributing negativity to the feeling of being surrounded by germs and therefore stopping her from feeling bad, anxious, uncomfortable, etc. – and helping her to experience germs in a new, positive way.

While this is a very simplistic account of the CBT process and CBT often requires much more in depth and lengthy explorations into the thoughts and beliefs of a patient, I am trying to illustrate how CBT works at a very basic level. By contextualizing, altering, dismissing, and accepting beliefs about a stimulus, a person can alter the experience he/she has of that stimulus. So instead of being afraid of germs, the patient may develop a psychological tolerance to germs and begin to live a more pleasant life.

This CBT process implicitly features the concept of appraisal and bestowal. A subject appraises an object objectively, then has a subjective experience of that object, and then bestows on it the experience of being fearful – thus giving a quality to the feared object that represents the negative experience of perceiving it. The A/B theory of love works according to the same process, only the experience of the object is positive and the subject bestows Value instead of fear. For CBT to therefore be effective, the patient must alter the way she appraises the object that she is afraid of so that the experience that she has of it will not be negative. Once she begins to have a more positive experience of the object, she will no longer bestow fear onto it, thus treating her fear of germs.
The scope of the CBT method far exceeds that of just curing patients from unwanted or harmful behaviors. The implications of changing behavior through altering beliefs or personal philosophies implies that by targeting and altering the right beliefs, we can adapt our behavior to however is personally desirable. If we therefore want to fall in love, then we can alter some set of beliefs that get us to perceive an object as being subjectively valuable and putting us in the position to bestow Value on it. We do not need an exact philosophical account of the ontology of love to address the fact that we can play an active role in choosing who we love (romantically, familially, brotherly, etc.). As long as love is a reactive attitude, then we can play a role in creating it. By altering our beliefs about something (and ourselves and our philosophies), we can alter our perception of it, transforming it from something that is not perceived as an object of love to being something that is perceived as an object of love.

4.2 CBT and Love

If CBT works according to my A/B model, then to support an A/B theory of love, CBT should also be able to effectively alter the way people respond to love-objects – by either helping a patient to withdraw the bestowed Value given to an object or getting a person to positively experience an object in order to provide him/her with the opportunity to bestow Value on it. By being able to help a patient love (or withdraw love), the effectiveness of CBT will imply that love follows this A/B process. This will help support my thesis of love being a response to an object by appraising it and bestowing Value on it, by showing that an A/B process features in the development of love. This section will therefore focus on how CBT has been directed at love, utilizing the A/B process.

To examine the therapeutic process of CBT’s focus on love, I will look at self-help books – which are directed at romantic love, and are a self-treatment substitute for counseling sessions with a therapist. I do not mean to imply here that all self-help books or even most self-help books are effective cognitive therapeutic tools; however, bibliotherapy and the use of books in aiding an
individual's mental health recovery have been proven and endorsed in clinical reviews to be effective.\(^{131}\) Again, going to the local bookstore and buying a self-help book may not be the best or most effective way in treating mental problems, but certain self-help books, written by professionals in the field and administered to a patient under the right circumstances may provide the patient with a way of altering his/her behavior.

For instance, if my marriage is failing and I buy a self-help book about how a person can save his/her marriage and the book does not really address the problems my partner and I are going through or the information in the book is not delivered by the author in a way that captures my interest, then I will most likely not benefit from that particular self-help book. On the other hand however, if the author addresses the exact problems that my significant other and I face and I am engaged with the material and learn techniques and strategies for fixing the problems that plague my marriage, then it is possible that I can use those solutions to fix my marriage.

Bibliotherapy can be an effective addition to psychological counseling and in some cases a replacement in general. It is important to note that the types of books that can be used in bibliotherapy are not always books that are written by professional psychologists for the purpose of helping people overcome problems. Books that can help a person overcome mental disorders can be literary fiction, journal articles, pamphlets, and of course, self-help books. The reason that many different forms of literature can be used as a therapeutic tool is because of the indirect way we can alter or change our beliefs. As mentioned in the previous section, indirect doxastic voluntarism suggests that beliefs can be altered through introspection, making inferences, and information gathering, which can be brought on by reading different types of literature. If we are to therefore assume that beliefs can be altered and changed in this way, then regardless of the type of self-help book or how unscientific a piece of literature is, literature \textit{can} help alter and change our behaviors and perceptions of the world.

\(^{131}\) C. Barr Taylor, “Panic Disorder,” \textit{British Medical Journal} 332, no. 7547 (April 2006).
Like therapists, bibliotherapy utilizes the A/B process in order to help a patient change his/her response to a given stimulus. Some self-help books for instance can assist readers to change the way they think about an object by introducing positive “self-talk,” which was mentioned in the previous section, and/or evidence that negates the reader’s irrational beliefs. The reader can then incorporate the ideas from the book into the way he/she thinks about an object in order to alter his/her beliefs about it; thus, altering his/her behavior towards it – giving him/her a more pleasant experience of the object and therefore the opportunity to bestow Value on it.

The first example we will look at is the New York Times Bestseller, *The Five Love Languages*, by Gary Chapman. In it he talks about how there are five different ways that couples communicate in romantic relationships. The five ways are: words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. Through these five means of communicating, the partners are able to give and receive affection in a way that they are most familiar with. While for one person, the physical touch of his/her partner is a romantic gesture, the other partner might think that giving gifts is a romantic gesture. Each partner may communicate their romantic feelings for each other through these different ways and if neither partner acknowledges the other’s romantic gesture, they will not feel romantically loved and may withdraw themselves from the relationship.

For instance if a man believes giving gifts is a sign of romantic love and continually gives his wife gifts to show her he loves her, but his wife believes that spending quality time together is a sign of romantic love and gifts are given to friends and relatives, her receiving gifts from her husband may not register with her as being a way of him communicating his romantic affections toward her. Her idea of communicating their affection for each other is to spend quality time together – something that he may not think is a show of romantic love. By not feeling as though they are receiving an expression of love from each other, each might begin to believe that they are not loved by the other and then begin to withdraw themselves from the relationship, becoming distant to the point at which they stop loving each other. Their romantic relationship could end
because their ways of communicating with each other were not being recognized by the other.

Chapman explains his experience with counseling couples thus:

I have listened to many married couples share their secret pain. Some came to me because the inner ache had become unbearable. Others came because they realized that their behavior patterns or the misbehavior of their spouse was destroying the marriage. Some came simply to inform me that they no longer wanted to be married. Their dreams of “living happily ever after” had been dashed against the hard walls of reality. Again and again I have heard the words “Our love is gone, our relationship is dead. We used to feel close, but not now. We no longer enjoy being with each other. We don’t meet each other’s needs.”

According to Chapman, his clients no longer met each other’s needs because they could not communicate their affection for each other. His book thus explains the different ways of communicating affection to a romantic partner; and, in order for that message of affection to be received, both partners must know how each communicates. If a woman is therefore aware that her partner is communicating his affection and can herself communicate her affection to him, then their experience of each other will be more pleasant, thus providing them with the opportunity to bestow Value on one another or avoid withdrawing it.

By providing the reader with a new way of thinking about communicating with his/her partner, Chapman’s book can help to alter the behavior of partners in a romantic relationship – creating a more pleasant relationship for both partners. The new beliefs about how they can communicate better with each other will allow each partner to positively appraise one another, creating an experience of emotions, feelings, and desires about each other that can then be bestowed as an irreplaceable significance onto each other. CBT, as implemented through this book, shows that my A/B theory is correct because CBT itself is predicated implicitly on the A/B theory. By utilizing CBT, Chapman’s book requires the reader to respond to his/her partner according to my A/B model.

We must avoid confusion over the order of things though. In this case Chapman mentions receiving love before the relationship gets better because he is speaking of relationships in which love is already present. Under the circumstances of a first date or before love occurs or even in the instance of a couple that was in love, and then fell out of love, adhering to the love languages are meant to create better communication and therefore affection and a stronger relationship, rather than actual love. By having a stronger relationship, each partner can respond to the other with positive appraisals of value and have a better possibility of perceiving the other in the “loving way.” In a positive relationship, the lover continually re-appraises the beloved, adding to the experience of being with that person in a healthy affectionate relationship which nurtures the experience that is represented by the beloved. The breakdown of communication therefore would lead to an “empty love tank” and partners that re-appraise each other by adding negative experiences or withdrawing positive experiences.


In a joyful relationship between a man and a woman, the experience of love, desire, and pleasure does not flow along a simple, unidirectional pathway but rather through a reciprocal cycle of continuing mutual reinforcement. Loving an individual, we perceive him or her as a source of real or potential happiness; desire is born; desire generates actions that result in pleasure or joy, through involvement with the loved person; pleasure operates through a kind of feedback loop to intensify desire and love; and so on. In this manner, love develops and strengthens. Here, perceiving the object as a real or potential source of happiness is the act of bestowing. By bestowing Value, the lover projects the experiences of happiness and other pleasures on the beloved because the beloved is the one who is appraised for the positive experiences to occur. These experiences, which are the responses from the lover, are then bestowed onto the beloved. As for the feedback loop that Branden mentions, under the A/B theory, love is exactly that, a feedback loop. The lover appraises the beloved and responds by

having experiences consisting of beliefs, emotions and feelings and then projects those experiences onto the beloved, creating love. Once the beloved is loved by the lover, the beloved then has further qualities that are appraised again. The lover sees the beloved as a source of love (because she represents the experience the lover has of her) and then reacts to those experiences by having more beliefs, emotions and feelings that can be rebestowed onto the beloved.

Of course, this would be the hoped for way in which the process would work. Often however the bad experiences or learning new information about our partner causes us to appraise them negatively and sometimes the negative appraisals create negative beliefs, emotions and feelings and overcome the lover, to where he/she no longer bestows Value or importance on the beloved and the couple falls out of love. This is why Chapman’s thesis about the love languages and communication are so important to love. Without the ability to communicate properly, the relationship will weaken, causing negative experiences that work in the opposite way in which Branden talks about with the feedback loop. Rather than constantly reinforcing the Value of the beloved the lover actually unravels the Value that was placed on the beloved by adding negative experiences or withdrawing positive experiences from the Value – making the beloved less significant.

For instance, if I loved my mother and all through my childhood I saw her as a kind-hearted, caring individual who worked hard to take care of me and my brother, then I may perceive her as being a person with those qualities. My experience of her would be that she is a good mother and would Value her because of it. Now perhaps when I got older I noticed things about my mother that I did not notice when I was younger. I saw that she often kicked small animals, yelled incessantly and beat my brother when she thought I was not around, lied, stole, passed-off the good deeds my father did as things that she did, was lazy and many other negative things. Seeing all of those qualities may get me to reappraise her as not being the kind-hearted, caring individual, who worked hard to take care of me and my brother that I thought she was. It may be the case that despite her being my mother and my growing up happy and
unaware of her bad qualities, I begin to perceive her as a bad person who no longer has the Value that she once did.

I could have withdrawn the Value that I bestowed on her; but whether the Value is strengthened as is often the case in healthy relationships, or withdrawn in negative relationships, the acquisition of new experiences with an object leads to the lover continually reappraising the beloved, creating newer experiences and perceptions of him/her/it. Either way, love exists as this looping process that is constantly taking place although, because of a collapsing relationship, the love diminishes, which is the message that is expressed in books like “The Five Love Languages.” They try to correct the problems in the relationship in order to give the couple the best chance at obtaining love. When the relationship falls apart, appraisals begin to become negative and a possible outcome will be that the negative experiences overcome the positive experiences and the bestowal of Value will diminish or be withdrawn.

Another example of a self-help book that aims at creating love or preventing the withdrawal of it is *Men Are from Mars Woman Are from Venus.* This book expresses a similar message to the previous book mentioned. By understanding the differences between the sexes, romantic partners can communicate in a healthier way, creating a more pleasant relationship and provide the partners with the opportunity to bestow Value on each other. By understanding how the sexes differ in their ability to interact in a romantic relationship, each partner can know how his/her partner reacts to certain situations or what he/she thinks generates conflict in the relationship, thus being able to avoid conflict and know the best course of action for communicating with each other.

John Gray, Author of the books, says:

To improve relations between the sexes it is necessary to create an understanding of our differences that raises self-esteem and personal dignity while inspiring mutual trust, personal responsibility, increased cooperation and greater love.\(^{135}\)


\(^{135}\) Ibid., 4.
He goes on to suggest:

*Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* reveals new strategies for reducing tensions in relationships and creating more love by first recognizing in great detail how men and women are different. It then offers practical suggestions about how to reduce frustration and disappointment and to create increasing happiness and intimacy. Relationships do not have to be such a struggle. Only when we do not understand one another is there tension, resentment, or conflict.\(^{136}\)

Just like Chapman, Gray argues that love comes from the relationship as an effect of the positive experiences of understanding, cooperation, trust, etc. Positive appraisals lead to a bestowal of Value and positive appraisal occur mostly in healthy relationships. So if a person builds good relationships, he/she is likely to create love relationships – relationships where the lover bestows his/her experience of the beloved on the beloved as a positive Value.

The aim of these books is to help partners in relationships (and even those that are not in a relationship), through the use of CBT, to understand the behavior of their partner (or potential partner) in order to build a healthy relationship and not ruin the relationship because of poor communication. If the relationship can be made better, stronger, or healthier, than the prospect of love is higher. By understanding each other’s behaviors, the couple may be able to avoid falling into the situation in which they resent each other, thus avoiding negative appraisals and bestowals that will hurt the relationship and lead to a withdraw of love. Again, these self-help books aim at understanding the partner so as to make the relationship better. If the relationship is good, then positive experiences are more likely to occur, allowing each partner to positively appraise the other and bestow the experience onto him/her, making him/her Valuable. Appraising and bestowing Value thus enter into the phenomenon of love by being the process by which an object becomes loved by a subject.

**Summary**

The process of appraising and bestowing Value on an object is conducted in accordance with how we psychologically relate to objects. The

\(^{136}\) Ibid., 5.
CBT method is used in instances of love because the nature of love requires a process of thinking and behaving that is the focus of CBT – the efficacy of which supports love being a phenomenon of relating to an object. If the lover were God or the quest for Truth, it may be difficult to apply the methods of CBT to it; while other theories like the union theory of love or the robust concern view of love were unable to adequately account for the depth of love and the features mentioned in the first chapter. In addition the appraisal view and the bestowal view of love independently were flawed, however together they account for love’s features and are inherent in CBT.

The way psychotherapies address relations and love, shows us that we can in fact play an active role in the process of love. We may not be able to directly choose who or what we love, but we can take steps to indirectly give ourselves the opportunity to love or to introduce ourselves to ideas that can provide us with the courage to leave destructive relationships or fix/create broken relationships. Again though, playing an active role in love (utilizing CBT) is not an activity that works for everyone. Just because someone seeks out therapy or reads self-help books about making their relationships better or finding love, this does not mean that he/she will accomplish those things. Actively altering the way we think and behave is a difficult task that is often very time-consuming. Regardless of the type of people that psychotherapies help to love an object, or fix relationships that lead to love, the methods of altering how we respond to objects can lead to love for some because the phenomenon of love is constructed out of the appraisal and bestowal of Value.
Conclusion

Even though explaining the nature of love in terms of appraising and bestowing Value may allow us to understand what love is, this does not mean that pursuing the phenomenon is a simple task. Some forms of love come easy and naturally like familial love, or the love of inanimate objects, and some forms of love take time and effort, such as romantic love, friendship love, and often self-love. Love affects our state of mind, often causing us to feel happy, sad, comforted, scared, concerned, as well as many other feelings and emotions. Just because we can explain the phenomenon of love through A/B, this does not mean that we can decide what objects are going to affect us and what objects will not. The most we can do, armed with our understanding of love, is to open ourselves to the possibilities of being able to experience objects in a meaningful way, giving us the potential to create irreplaceable significance in objects.

I have taken an essentialist idea of love that consists in the appraisal and bestowal of irreplaceable significance in order to show how the different experiences we have of love relate to a single phenomenon. Within this phenomenon however, there are multiple forms (romantic love, brotherly love, etc.) that each have specific properties and features of their own that make them that specific form of love. While I have not addressed the nature of these specific forms, their nature includes the framework of the A/B theory of love. Each form of love shares the appraisal and bestowal of Value but there are some other features that distinguish each form from the others. Love takes on different forms for the different objects that are loved, affects people differently, often causing extreme behavior, and does so because of the significance of the object that separates it from anything else not loved.

Nevertheless, a theory of the nature of love is far from finished despite our understanding of how objects become loved. These questions remain: What exactly is the nature of each form of love? Are the forms of love simply the relationship role between the lover and beloved? Are there certain distinctive features that constitute romantic love, romantic, and familial love, familial, etc.? Each form requires its own detailed exposition, and the advancements of cognitive and neurosciences may help us in our understanding of our behavior and the ways
in which we relate to things. Regardless, the foundation of a theory of love has been laid in this thesis. We can now build on an A/B theory in order to further explore and identify the forms, experiences, and effects of love.
Bibliography


