

# On understanding love

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*Abstract:* This paper considers two of the popular theories of love, The Appraisal View and The Bestowal View, and combines them in an attempt to create a more compelling explanation for the nature of love. 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. By combining the appraisal and bestowal theories, I will be able to maximize their strengths into a coherent theory of love while casting out their weaknesses.

*Keywords:* love; emotion; philosophy; appraisal; bestowal.

## *Introduction*

The recent debate on the nature of love has yielded two competing value positions (The Appraisal View and The Bestowal View). The first suggests that love is a way of valuing an object based on its desirable qualities, the other, a way of creating value in an object that is not quality-dependent, but comes from the subject's projecting value on it. A trend has emerged however to join these opposing theories (Singer, Scheler, Jollimore) as they are not inconsistent with each other when taken together. The problem that arises however is explaining the extent to which these two theories work together in explaining the nature of love. Each investigation yields similar results of resorting to one position or the other – not inclusive of both. My aim is to therefore take on this task of uniting the appraisal and bestowal theories of love and explain the nature of love in a way that requires both valuing an object for its qualities and bestowing value as a creative response to the object.

Under the appraisal and bestowal theories of love, the object is valued by the lover, whereby the object takes on an irreplaceable significance to the subject. While each of these value theories do not fully capture the nature of love by themselves – because of either not accounting for a love object's irreplaceable

significance or by inadequately explaining the nature of the phenomenon – 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 – such as a love object being irreplaceably significant and the feelings, emotions, and beliefs that accompany a loving response to an object. 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, our feelings, emotions, and beliefs about an object, while a bestowal view explains the attribution of value onto a love-object, turning it from something that is not loved into something that is. Together they explain what love is, how it comes about (its conditions) and is sustained, and the role that it plays in our lives.

This paper will therefore focus on the explanation of these two theories and my attempt to combine them as a cohesive theory for the nature of love. I will begin by looking at each theory individually and the problems that they face, shedding light on the areas of each theory that require revising in order to establish a theory of love that accurately portrays the phenomenon of love as it is experienced. Once I am able to address the problems of each theory, I will explain the nature of how both the theories work together to explain how we respond to others with the attitudinal response of love. Philosophers such as Irving Singer, Max Scheler, and Troy Jollimore attempt the same type of unification of the appraisal and bestowal theories of love but ultimately fail in their attempt to explain how they work together. Their efforts however are heavily presented in this paper and by explaining how they fit together I can establish a more understandable version of the nature of love.

### *Part 1*

Beginning with the appraisal view, love is a way of perceiving an object's value through an appraisal of its properties (Soble 1990: 4-5; cf. Velleman 1999) – such as its qualities, characteristics, or the relationship between lover and beloved. Niko Kolodny (2003) promotes this view of love by suggesting that love is in fact, valuing the relationship that is had between the lover and beloved. 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's theory applies to appraisal love not in terms of finding value in the beloved for qualities that she<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I will primarily focus on romantic relationships where the lover is denoted as “he” or “the subject” (the person that loves) and the beloved as “she” or “the object” (the person that is loved). I will

possesses, like some more philosophically weaker versions of the theory, but in loving the beloved because of the value of 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 qualities such as his humor, kindness, and attitude. 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.

This appraisal of the relationship's value moves the experience of love from an object's qualities that can be replaceable and thus unrepresentative of the phenomenon of love under Soble's (1990) and Velleman's (1999) view to the relationship and the experience that is had between the subject and object as they relate. Even in this view however, where the relationship between the subject and object is more important than the apparent characteristics of an object, valuing the relationship does not overcome the problem of fungibility, and therefore does not explain why love objects cannot be replaced by other objects that are similarly related to. Kolodny even admits that if a doppelganger had the same "shared history", (2003: 162) meaning that the doppelganger had the same memories of the love-object (allowing for the same relationship), then the lover would have to love her 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 interpersonal relationship with their parents despite having the same functional role of being the parent's *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

do this for two reasons, 1. For convenience and consistency so as not to encounter pronoun confusion despite not reflecting the numerous pairings of genders who love, and 2. The majority of works written on love, that I will be referring to in this paper, focus on love as a romantic partnership, and thus to stay consistent with them, I will refer to love in a similar way.

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 different and so it would not make sense to explain children as doppelgangers. This is expressed even more in cases where parents love one child but do not love another child.

Kate Abramson and Adam Leite (2011) 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'" (676). Abramson and Leite suggest that love is the reactive attitude of the lover given the beloved's "morally significant character traits" (676). 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" (676). Love is not grounded in qualities like beauty or a sense of humor under Abramson's and Leite's view. 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 that could be (676). 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 disinterested responses to the beloved's characteristics (Frankfurt 2004: 42). 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. 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 has 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.

Abramson and Leite are on the right track in understanding love as a reactive attitude, however they 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" (2011: 673). 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. For example, if we were to think of a mother and her unborn child that she is pregnant with, we would not suggest that the mother does not love the fetus growing inside of her because it cannot respond to her with the right moral qualities. The mother would love her unborn child because of some special value that the unborn child possesses or is perceived by the mother as having.

This type of special value is expressed in Irving Singer's three part series: *The Nature of Love* (1984; 1984; 1987) where he undertakes the project of combining the appraisal view with a view he deems as the bestowal view. Ultimately he fails to explain the extent to which appraisal and bestowal work together, however provides insight as to the type of response the lover may have for the love-object that make it special or perceived as such. 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.

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" (1984: 3). 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. 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 com-

mitment to (1984). For example, a husband in a marriage does not love his wife because she is pretty or funny or because they communicate well. 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.

In order to acknowledge the role of appraisal though, Singer suggests that we do appraise each other on the basis of our personal interests but then fails to explain the necessity of such an act if love, the bestowal of value, cannot be reduced to our evaluations of an object. This is a problem that occurs when love is said to be irreducible under the bestowal theory, as Singer suggests it is (1984: 5). If love were irreducible, then the question, “how does 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 reduced in any meaningful way, how can we understand the nature of love if we cannot understand the process that creates it or what it is made-up of?

Jollimore, (2011) who like Singer tries to combine the ideas of appraisal and bestowal, describes love in terms of being a process in which an object appraises the value of an object and then bestows on that object, “generous attention” (124). 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 creates a response that distinguishes love from phenomena that is not love. With instances such as infatuation and admiration both exhibiting a subject’s appraisal and appreciation of the values that make the object valuable, it would seem as though love is not a phenomenon that can be distinguished from other phenomena. Jollimore’s theory, in contrast to Singer’s, relies heavily on the appraisal of value without clearly explaining why concern or attention is unique to the phenomenon of love, ultimately erring in the opposite way as Singer, but with the same result – not fully explaining the nature to which appraisal and bestowal 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* (2008), is able to avert this problem of distinguishing love from phenomena such as respect and admiration by explaining the phenomenological difference of loving something to 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 suggests that love and appraisal occur the other way around and that the emotional response of love occurs, which then leads to the positive appraisal and judgment of the beloved as being valuable. 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. Responses such as respect for instance, presuppose the passing of a judgment, which is not the case with love (149). 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.

Like Singer however, 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 such type of appraised characteristics for his subjective value of the beloved. 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 for an object occurs, it becomes unclear why some objects receive our love rather than others, and suggests that love is a randomly occurring phenomenon – which therefore makes understanding the nature of love problematic.

Singer’s theory undergoes 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” (1984: 5). 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.

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

Both sides (appraisal and bestowal) offer strong arguments for why love is either the appraisal or the bestowal of value. Neither side's arguments for the nature of love contradicts the arguments of the other side; therefore, by combining these sets of theories into a comprehensive theory of love I can not only affirm the different arguments made by each side are philosophically applicable to the nature of love, but that by incorporating them together, I can avoid their shortcomings and explain the nature of love in a more complete way – accounting for a love-object's irreplaceability and distinguishing between love and different types of phenomenal responses.

## *Part 2*

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 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. Similarly, 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.

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, but the appraisal is made subjectively rather than objectively. The subject appraises the object whereby the appraiser finds the object to be personally appealing and valuable, while an objective appraisal aims at making a



neutral, detached valuation. 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 the lover because it satisfies the lover's interests and desires, and elicits emotions, feelings, and beliefs that (ideally) the lover finds favorable. A subjective appraisal by itself however is not sufficient for love. As we saw earlier, the appraisal of an object or the relationship the lover and object share is also expressed in many other types of relationships such as relationships of admiration, respect, etc. In addition, by simply appraising an object or the relationship had between the subject and object, the object remains fungible.

While the appraisal part of love focuses on the value that the object has because of its qualities, perceived qualities, or the relationship that is shared, 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. The role of bestowing is for the subject to make the object irreplaceably significant by attaching to it the significance of the experience caused by the appraisal of the object, such as the beliefs, emotions, feelings, desires, etc.

When the object has Value<sup>2</sup> bestowed on it, she becomes irreplaceably significant to the lover because she represents the experience the lover has of relating to her. The "Value" that is bestowed is the lover's experience (the emotions, feelings, desires, and beliefs) of the beloved and their relationship as a quality that he begins to perceive her as having. Once Value is bestowed by the subject, the lover perceives the object as possessing this Value, just as she possesses the qualities of beauty and a sense of humor, trustworthiness or steadfastness. The Value attributed to the object is a projection of the subject's experience of relating to the beloved's perceived qualities and their relationship – through appraisal. For example, when the subject perceives the object, he appraises her intrinsic value (her favorable qualities/characteristics) and how he relates with her, and has certain emotions, feelings, beliefs, and desires about her. Those emotions, feelings, beliefs and desires create an experience of the object based on prior beliefs and desires the subject has in regards to how he was raised, what he thinks about relationships, her qualities, etc. That experience, had by the subject, is then projected onto the object so that the ob-

<sup>2</sup> My use of the word "Value" with a capital "V" will be the irreplaceably significant value created in an object upon bestowal of the original experience the subject has of that object. So an object that has Value has the quality of being irreplaceably significant because of the experience bestowed upon it. To bestow Value, is to bestow the quality of having that experience onto the object, and is thus loved. Therefore an object that is loved has the experience of the subject bestowed on it, making it irreplaceably significant, and so on.

ject represents the subject's experience of responding to her – which gives the object Value, making her irreplaceable and significant. The subject perceives the object as being trustworthy, sincere, having dark hair, and as representing the Valuable experience of his response to her – the emotions, feelings, and beliefs had when relating to her.

For instance a man may not only perceive his long-time pet cat's personality and looks, he may also perceive his own response to his cat – the happiness and satisfaction of playing with his cat, the warmth he feels when he comes home and his cat rubs up against his leg, etc., and thus the cat becomes irreplaceably significant unlike other cats. When confronted, in person or in thought by the cat, the man *sees* himself – the way he has felt and thought about the cat, the warmth, happiness, satisfaction, etc., in addition to the cat's personality and other intrinsic qualities. The Value of the cat becomes a quality to the man that consists of the experience that he has had of his cat. This quality makes the cat stand out from other cats as being special.

Bestowing Value is therefore 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 which can ignite emotions, feelings, beliefs, and desires in the lover. The bestowal then comes from the subject's 'creating a quality' for the object that is not intrinsic to it, i.e. the projection of his experience (the emotions, feelings, beliefs, and desires), which unites the lover to beloved, and makes the beloved irreplaceably significant to the lover.

For instance, I believe my dog is special because she has certain, intrinsic qualities that I value, such as her being beautiful and well-behaved – her gold coat, her symmetrical face, her one ear that is always bent over while her other ear stands straight up, her calmness, desire to always be in the same room as me, and her ability to follow my instruction of when she is allowed to sit on the furniture. When I see her and interact with her I experience the feeling of not being alone, the feeling of being a leader and having her follow my instruction, the belief that I am safe and that if someone tried to break into my house to harm me, she would protect me (or at least bark loudly), the desire to pet her and show her affection, etc. Under a joint appraisal/bestowal view however, the value comes from my 'creating a quality' in her that is not intrinsic to her, i.e. the projection of my experience of her (the way in which I respond to her). I therefore make her valuable to me by attributing Value (the experience I have of appraising her – the emotions, feelings, desires, and beliefs) so that I begin to perceive *her* qualities, partly, as consisting of my experience, making her irreplaceably significant. So when I see her I do not always think of her behavior or the way her ear folds over or her symmetrical face; instead, I see her and feel

the warmth of her protection, my desire to show her affection, the happiness I have had when interacting with her, etc.

The acts of appraising and bestowing often occur 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 (Ellenberger 2008). 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, and some may find it easier or more difficult to do depending on their personality. Regardless of when exactly the bestowal of Value occurs, how easily or difficult it is to Value something, or whether the subject realizes that he Values the object, the object gains the quality of being irreplaceably significant to the subject. It becomes more than just a set of qualities, it 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 a joint appraisal/bestowal of Value works, we can use the love a son has for his father. When a son loves his father, it is not solely because of the father's qualities (because many people possess the same qualities as him), but because of the Value that the son bestows on him. The father's Value is not just based on the fact that he has raised his son to be understanding, intelligent, hardworking, honest, or have any other qualities. He does not just have Value because he buys his son things, lets him have soda and candy on a regular basis, and tries to provide him with all of the opportunities that he could. Even though these are qualities of his that are valued, the son would similarly value anyone who did these things. The difference between the father and anyone else who possess these same qualities, is that the relationship that the father and son have, produce experiences that are positive, significant, meaningful, etc. to the son, which become associated

with the father – because those experiences are projected onto him as a non-intrinsic quality. So when the son then later appraises his father, he not only sees his father's intrinsic qualities, but also those past experiences that make his father significant and Valuable.

The son therefore loves his father (bestows Value on him) because he represents the son's feelings of happiness for succeeding at things that made his father proud and the warmth and comfort felt when his father took care of him when he got hurt. He represents the son's response to the things he did, the person that he is, and the relationship they have. He represents the son's emotions, memories, beliefs, feelings and desires. This is the significance that is bestowed on him that makes him irreplaceable to the son. He becomes a representation of the son's experience with him that the son subjectively values for its (the experience) significance and meaningfulness to him. That meaningful and significant experience is then projected onto the father (because he makes up part of and is the source of that experience).

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

Kolodny makes a similar point of the object representing the experience of the relationship when he states that the subject "mak[es] the object the source of value" (2003: 150). 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.

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 – it is my *vision*. 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 what qualities they value in him the most and both were to give identical accounts of all the same 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 perception and experience of the world and others (Wu *et al.* 2007). 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, because of the experience they have of him. One woman may feel flattered and special because of the man's chivalrous nature, because her father was chivalrous to her mother and she always dreamed of being with a man who treated her that way, while the other woman may feel flattered and special because she has never known anyone who was so kind and respectful. Either way, the emotions felt (even if they are the same emotions) create a different perception of the man (even if that man is perceived as being a love-object to both). One woman's memories and desires lead her to think of the man in a way that is individualistic to her (a man like her father that she always dreamed of being with) while the other woman's memories and desires lead her to think of the man in an individualistic way to her (a man like she

has never known before and who is different from all the other men she has been with in the past). Both women perceive the man through their own lives – lives which are themselves original, making the perception and bestowed Value original and irreplaceable.

Even in the extreme case of a subject being presented with his beloved and a doppelganger of his beloved, it would make sense to love the beloved and not the doppelganger. Despite the doppelganger's identical qualities and ability to recall all the same memories and experiences as the beloved, because the doppelganger gains a negative quality the beloved does not have – she is a doppelganger – the two become separated. The subject could have negative emotions, feelings, and beliefs about the doppelganger such that she is *not* the original, which then becomes associated with the doppelganger which sets the original beloved apart from her and everyone else. Immediately after being introduced to the doppelganger, the doppelganger and beloved will no longer be identical to one another. One will possess the quality of being the original beloved and the other will possess the quality of being a doppelganger, giving reason to love the original beloved but not the doppelganger.

The problem of a doppelganger raises questions about one's beliefs and how one might react given his particular situation if presented with a doppelganger but none that are damaging to this theory of love. For instance, what if the doppelganger was to trick the subject into thinking she was the original beloved, would the subject love her then? Also, *should* the subject love the original beloved over the doppelganger or could the subject love both? Again, these questions only concern the psychological behavior of the subject and not what it means to love.

For the latter problem, the subject could love the doppelganger if he was not to associate any negative beliefs, emotions, feelings, etc. to the doppelganger and simply thought of the doppelganger as the original beloved; however, after the introduction of the doppelganger, the subject's relationship and love would start to change for both the doppelganger and the original beloved because new experiences, emotions, beliefs, feelings, and desires would turn the original beloved and the doppelganger into two different people and thus they would begin to be treated differently. They would be experienced at different times in different ways despite being intrinsically identical.

As for the former problem, it would certainly be easy to confuse the two in the beginning of meeting the doppelganger, and the subject may mistake the doppelganger as the original beloved, but mistaking the two would not confuse loving the original beloved over the doppelganger, only that the subject was tricked as to which one was which, not that he loved the doppelganger over the original beloved. It could be the case however that after spending

enough time with the doppelganger and not the original beloved the subject may start loving the doppelganger because now the doppelganger would have extra positive qualities that the original beloved did not since the subject would have shared more and different experiences with the doppelganger. Either way, the theory of love as expressed as Value that is given to the object based on the subject's appraisal of the object not only overcomes the problem of fungibility but shows how appraisals directly affect the bestowal of Value through constant appraisals over time.

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 her trustworthiness, understandingness, nurturingness 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. For instance, I love her because all those times *we* had together fill me with happiness and the belief and confidence to be the best version of myself and the secure feeling that the future will be filled with more positive emotions, feelings, and beliefs of a similar nature, something I may not see in a doppelganger or other similar person because they are not the person I actually had the experiences with. The intricacies of how a person relates to an object, creates an experience of that object being irreplaceable. While it may sound odd that people are capable of eloquently listing reasons for why they love things, it is not hard to believe that the objects that are loved have a phenomenological quality that separates them from other similar objects for the subjects – that quality being the representational Value of the experience that has been bestowed upon them by the subjects. 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 our relating to it that is valuable because of its intrinsic qualities, the relationship that we share, and the originality of our persona. In other words, an object's Value consists of its qualities and how we react to those qualities which create a relationship and experience for us. That experience is then bestowed on the object as being a perceived quality (the object becomes a representation of Value – the experience the subject had) which affords the object significance and makes it 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 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 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.

### *Conclusion*

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 object), 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 affect people based on their psyche and specific way of thinking about the world.

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 (romantic love, familial love, brotherly love etc.)? 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 paper. We can now build on this joint appraisal/bestowal (A/B) theory in order to further explore and identify the forms, experiences, and effects of love.

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