

LOVE AS IDENTIFICATION

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I present and argue for a new understanding of love, "love as identification," where love involves an enriching integration of the beloved into the lover's identity, thereby transforming the lover's identity. The thesis is divided into three chapters, each elucidating the identification view through various means. The first chapter presents and clarifies the identification view, using conceptual tools and examples, and outlining its essential conditions: choice, commitment, and rituals. The second chapter discusses the emotion view of love presented by two prominent theorists, Brown (1987) and Badhwar (2003), highlighting the similarities and differences with the identification view, and demonstrating the strengths of the latter. The third chapter explores the union view of love by Scruton (1987), Nozick (1989), and Solomon (1988), providing a critical contrast with the identification view, and again highlighting its strengths. Overall, this thesis proposes and argues for a new perspective on love. Through critical engagement with contemporary theories, it underscores the strengths of the identification view.

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I introduce a new understanding of love called "love as identification." This view suggests that love requires an enriching integration of the beloved into the lover's identity. According to this view, we undergo a significant transformation by incorporating the beloved into our sense of self.

The first chapter delves into the concept of love as identification. It begins by exploring the nature of the transformation that occurs in the lover's identity, highlighting the enriching integration of the beloved into the lover's self-conception. This transformation is fundamental to the identification view, as it redefines the lover's sense of self through the presence of the beloved.

To further elucidate this concept, the chapter provides diverse examples of love, including devout love for God, a mother's love for her children, and a philosopher's love for philosophy. These examples serve to illustrate the various dimensions of the identification view and how it applies across different contexts. Additionally, the chapter distinguishes between everyday habits and genuine love, demonstrating the unique and profound nature of love as identification.

Lastly, the chapter outlines the essential conditions of this view: choice, commitment, and rituals. These elements are crucial in understanding how love uniquely transforms individuals, contributing to their overall well-being and adding profound meaning to their lives. By emphasizing these conditions, the identification view offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the deep and transformative impact of love.

The second chapter presents the emotion view of love by two prominent emotion theorists, Robert Brown (1987) and Neera Badhwar (2003), and contrasts their views with the identification view, highlighting the strengths of the latter.

Brown (1987) and Badhwar (2003) consider love as an affective appreciation of beloved's inherent qualities and overall emotional orientation toward the beloved. Robert Brown (1987) emphasizes love as affection toward the inherent qualities of the beloved. In other words, when we love someone, we feel affection for their inherent qualities that persist over time, despite any significant changes they may undergo (Brown, 1987).

Neera Badhwar (2003) offers a nuanced perspective on love, describing it as "one's overall emotional orientation towards the beloved: the complex interplay of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings" (Badhwar, 2003). Badhwar suggests that love encompasses more than fleeting emotions; it involves a deep-seated emotional orientation shaped by perceptions, thoughts, and feelings toward the beloved.

The chapter highlights the similarities and differences between Brown's (1987) and Badhwar's (2003) views and the identification view. While emotions views by Brown and Badhwar are compatible with Identification view on some grounds, they differ as well. Brown's and Badhwar's views do not necessarily account for commitment, an enriching integration of the beloved into lover's identity, and the loving behaviors and rituals, elements that can explain cases of love where the subject may temporarily or permanently be unable to express or experience such emotions.

The third chapter presents the union views on love as articulated by Scruton (1986), Nozick (1989), and Solomon (1988), and then provides a contrast with the identification view. This

chapter explores the common themes shared by the union view and the identification view, such as the merging of identities.

However, it also delves into the differences between these two perspectives, particularly regarding reciprocity and mutual involvement. The union view posits that love involves the merging of *two individuals* into *a unified entity*, characterized by a deep sense of mutual involvement and reciprocity. According to this perspective, both parties actively engage in the relationship, contributing to the formation and maintenance of the union.

In contrast, the identification view *does not necessarily* require reciprocity or mutual involvement from the beloved. This view focuses more on the lover's *personal transformation* and the integration of the beloved into the lover's identity.

This distinction allows the identification view to more easily and directly account for various forms of love that do not fit neatly into the framework of mutual involvement. For instance, in the context of a devotee's love for God, a philosopher's love for philosophy often involves a deep personal transformation and integration of beloved into the lover's identity, *without necessarily* requiring reciprocity and mutual involvement from the beloved's part.

CHAPTER 1. LOVE AS IDENTIFICATION

In this chapter, I will outline the identification view of love. I will first clarify the concept of love as identification by using various conceptual tools. Secondly, I will further clarify the identification view by providing examples. Finally, I will dedicate the third section to discuss three essential conditions of love as identification: choice, commitment, and rituals. In doing so, I will first discuss the role of choice in love, highlighting how choice and acceptance are integral to this view. Secondly, I will explore the role of commitment in sustaining love and the lover's identity. Finally, I will elaborate on the importance of performing rituals in maintaining the identity of a lover.

1.1 Love as Identification

This section sketches the foundational idea of "love as identification." Rather than providing a rigid definition, I will offer a view which could capture the phenomenon of love. The aim is to articulate how love *transforms* our identity, incorporating the beloved as a *positive* and integral part of our self-conception.

The central tenet of the identification view of love is that love leads us to adopt *a new* identity, that of a lover, by integrating the beloved as an *enriching* part of our self-conception. This idea depends on the transformative power of love, which goes beyond mere affection to initiate a profound change in how we perceive ourselves.

When we love someone, we do not just feel affection or emotional attachment; we undergo a *significant transformation* where the beloved becomes an integral, enriching component of our

identity. This process can be understood as a *reconfiguration* of the self, where the boundaries of our identity expand to include the beloved. The beloved's qualities and significance in our lives influence our actions, thoughts, and self-perception, making them a key part of who we are.

This transformation is *deeper* than a simple attachment. While attachment might involve strong feelings and a desire for closeness, the identification view suggests an *identity-altering* process. In love, the beloved becomes a part of our narrative, shaping our identity and self-concept in fundamental ways.

This integration can be seen in various aspects of life. For example, a parent who loves their child may incorporate *their role as a caregiver* into their identity, viewing themselves as *nurturing, protective, and dedicated*. Similarly, a person in love with their beloved may start to see their beloved's interests as their own.

In brief, the identification view of love emphasizes how love fundamentally alters our self-conception by incorporating the beloved as an enriching part of our identity. This process moves beyond surface-level feelings to suggest a profound redefinition of the self, highlighting the deep and transformative nature of love.

Nature of Transformation in Love

It is plausible to acknowledge that transformation occurs in various types of relationships, even in those deemed negative or harmful. However, it's important to clarify the specific nature of transformation within the context of love as identification.

When discussing the transformative power of love, we refer to a *particular type* of transformation that occurs within the identity of individuals involved in a loving relationship.

This transformation entails a fundamental shift in how individuals perceive themselves, wherein they begin to redefine their self-conception in light of their connection with the beloved. It goes beyond mere relational dynamics and touches upon the very essence of one's identity.

Moreover, the nature of transformation in love relationships differs from that in other types of relationships, particularly *negative* or *harmful* ones. In love relationships characterized by *enriching* identification, the transformation that occurs is more *positive* and *enabling*. It *empowers* individuals to grow, evolve, and flourish as they integrate the beloved into their sense of self. This type of transformation fosters *personal development* and *contributes to overall well-being*.

On the other hand, transformation in *negative* or *harmful* relationships may not be *enriching* or *enabling*. In such cases, individuals may experience transformation that is *detrimental to their well-being*, leading to *feelings of distress, insecurity, and even loss of identity*. The transformation that occurs in these relationships is often characterized by *limitations, barriers, and emotional turmoil*, rather than growth and empowerment.

Therefore, while it is true that transformation can occur in various relationships, the transformative power of love as identification stands out for *its unique and positive, enriching, and enabling impact* on individuals' identities.

Enriching Integration of the Beloved

Loving someone means seeing them as an enriching part of who we are. This concept of *enriching integration* highlights how love reshapes our self-concept to include the beloved as a *positive, enabling, and cherished* component of our identity. This process contrasts sharply

with how other emotions, like *hatred*, also incorporate others into our identity but in a *negative*, *disabling*, and *harmful* manner. The positive integration in love signifies that the beloved's presence *enhances* our sense of self, *enriching our identity* with their *qualities*.

Unlike hatred, which integrates the object of hate into our identity in a *damaging way*, love involves a *constructive process*. Hatred embeds the object of *negative feelings* within our identity, often leading to a *sense of bitterness* or *conflict*. This negative integration can *consume* a person, shaping their identity around the *loathing* and *hostility* they feel, ultimately *detracting from their overall well-being*. In contrast, love does the opposite by embedding the beloved positively and in an enriching way within our self-concept. This positive and enriching integration fosters a sense of growth and expansion within our identity. The beloved's *attributes* contribute to our personal development and emotional richness. For example, loving beloved leads us to appreciate their *unique qualities* enhancing and broadening our perspectives. Similarly, loving a child integrates a *nurturing* and *protective* aspect into our identity, making us more *compassionate* and *responsible*.

A question arises regarding the sense in which the object of love must be in an enriching, positive, and in an enabling way integrated into one's identity. The object of love is enrichingly integrated in several ways: the beloved is seen in a *positive light* and their presence is *cherished* and *valued*; their integration *enhances* the *lover's overall well-being*, contributing to personal growth and fulfillment; and their influence fosters qualities like compassion and responsibility, leading to beneficial outcomes.

Another important question arises is that how identification view accounts for *unrequited love* as it claims to, where lover seems to suffer; it is not quite obvious that in unrequited love, the beloved is an enriching, enabling, or a positive integration. Identification view suggests that

even in unrequited love, the beloved could be seen as an enriching and positive addition in the sense that their presence and qualities make the lover's life more meaningful in a good way. The beloved adds *meaning* to the lover's life in a significant way. The point is that even in the cases of unrequited love, the enriching integration of the beloved or their attributes in lover's identity gives lover's life meaning, it enriches their life by loving the beloved, despite the absence of reciprocation.

The notion of enriching and positive integration also raises concerns when examining cases of toxic relationships. In such scenarios, individuals may find themselves deeply attached to someone who is detrimental to their well-being. For example, a mother who loves her child unconditionally, despite the child's *abusive behavior* or *toxic tendencies*; in such cases it is not obvious that beloved is an enriching or a positive integration. As per identification view, even in these cases, the child enriches the mother's identity by providing a sense of purpose and meaning, even amid pain and distress.

Similarly, the complex relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* demonstrates that despite their tumultuous dynamic, their integration of each other into their identity significantly impacts their life. The beloved's attributes, even in a toxic relationship, can be seen as enriching and enabling in the sense that it profoundly gives lover's life meaningful more meaningful.

In brief, the concept of enriching and positive integration of the beloved into the lover's identity is central to the identification view of love. This sort of integration signifies that the beloved's attributes enhance our sense of self, enriching our identity with their qualities. Whether in reciprocated, unrequited, or even toxic relationships, the beloved enriches and enables the lover's identity, giving their life greater meaning and purpose.

Examples of Love as Identification

Exploring the identification view of love through concrete examples can illuminate how love transforms our identities. Here, I consider three compelling instances: maternal love, a philosopher's love for philosophy, and a devotee's love for God. Each example illustrates how the beloved becomes a cherished part of one's identity, showcasing the essence of love as identification.

Maternal Love

Consider a mother who dedicates herself to raising her child, prioritizing their needs and nurturing their development. Her identity as a caregiver and protector becomes a fundamental part of her self-conception. This love shapes her choices, behaviors, and even her future aspirations.

A mother's love for her child often exemplifies how the child becomes an *enriching* part of her identity. This form of love is not merely about affection or duty; it fundamentally reshapes the mother's sense of self. Her identity becomes *deeply intertwined with her role as a mother*, making the child an enriching aspect of who she is.

From the moment of birth, a mother's identity is profoundly shaped by her love for her child. Her sense of self includes her nurturing role and responsibilities with the child. This integration means that her daily life, decisions, and sense of purpose are influenced by her love for her child.

The child's well-being and growth become vital parts of the self-conception. Her joys, sorrows, and aspirations are often closely linked to her child's life. This integration illustrates how the

child becomes an enabling, positive, and defining aspect of her identity, enhancing her sense of meaning, purpose and fulfillment.

Philosopher's Love for Philosophy

Similarly, consider a philosopher who loves philosophy. This intellectual commitment is not just a professional pursuit but an integral part of their identity. The philosopher's engagement with philosophical ideas and dedication to exploring profound questions shape how they see themselves and their place in the world.

For a philosopher, love for philosophy is more than mere academic interest. It becomes a core part of their identity, influencing their worldview and values. Their sense of self is deeply connected to their intellectual pursuits and contributions to the field.

The philosopher's ongoing engagement with philosophical inquiry continuously shapes their identity. Each new idea, debate, and discovery reinforces their self-conception as a philosopher. This intellectual love drives their personal and professional growth, making philosophy an inseparable part of who they are.

A philosopher who spends decades exploring questions, teaching, writing, and engaging in intellectual discourse. Their love for philosophy shapes their daily life, interactions, and self-perception. This commitment defines their identity, illustrating how an intellectual pursuit can become a beloved, integral part of oneself.

Devotee's Love for God

A devotee's love for God exemplifies how spiritual devotion can become an enriching part of one's identity. This form of love integrates the God into the devotee's self-conception, shaping their values, actions, and overall sense of purpose.

For a devotee, love for God is not just a religious obligation but a profound aspect of their identity. This love influences their moral framework, guiding principles, and everyday behavior.

The devotee's identity is continuously shaped by their *spiritual practices* and *rituals*. This ongoing engagement reinforces their self-conception as a person devoted to their faith.

A person who devotes their life to religious service, prayer, and acts of compassion. Their love for God is central to their identity, influencing every aspect of their life. This spiritual devotion becomes a defining characteristic, demonstrating how love for the God can deeply transform and enrich one's identity.

Distinguishing Love from Everyday Habits

It is important to differentiate between the transformative nature of love and the routine nature of everyday habits. Here are the key points that clarify this distinction.

While daily habits like taking a particular path to work or drinking coffee from a specific mug provide comfort and structure, they do not hold the same depth in defining our identity as love does. These habits are regular patterns of behavior, lacking the psychological investment that transforms our self-conception.

Loving someone involves a profound connection that fundamentally reshapes our identity. The beloved becomes a significant and cherished part of who we are, whereas routine habits do not have this *transformative* impact.

The integration of everyday habits into our lives is typically neutral. These habits might offer minor satisfaction or familiarity but do not have as enriching, enabling, positive, and transformative a power as love.

Everyday actions, such as drinking from a particular mug or following a specific route to work, do not fundamentally shape our identity. They are routine aspects of our daily lives that do not affect our *core self-conception*.

In brief, while habitual actions like using a preferred mug or following a familiar route provide comfort and structure, they lack the profound psychological investment inherent in love. Love, on the other hand, establishes a deep connection that fundamentally reshapes one's identity, integrating the beloved as a significant part of the self.

Unlike routine habits, which offer only minor satisfaction or familiarity, love carries an enriching, positive, and transformative power that transcends mere routine behaviors. Hence, while daily habits do not fundamentally alter one's core identity, love profoundly influences how individuals perceive themselves.

1.2. Conditions of love as identification: Choice, Commitment, and Rituals.

Choice.

This section explores the specific conditions that *support* and *shape* the idea of love as identification, emphasizing the *role of choice* and acceptance. Understanding love within the framework of the identification view introduces a perspective on the role of choice. While conventional wisdom often portrays love as a *spontaneous* or *involuntary emotion* that happens to us, the identification view emphasizes the importance of *an active choice* in loving.

The identification view introduces a minimal notion of choice, centered around *acceptance*. This concept suggests that *we actively choose* to embrace *love as a part of our identity*, akin to accepting *other inherent aspects* of ourselves. Consider the analogy of being born in a

particular country. While we do not initially choose our place of birth, *through acceptance* and integration, we come to embrace it as an integral part of our identity. Similarly, the identification view suggests that *we must actively choose to love*, even if in this *minimal sense* of choice.

This minimal choice of accepting love is essential for several reasons. Firstly, as love is considered a *fundamental component* of our identity, it seems natural that we would *acknowledge* and *accept* it. Secondly, *denying* or *rejecting* this aspect of our identity does not contribute to our *personal growth* or *fulfillment*. Conversely, *choosing to love*, even in its simplest form of acceptance, *enriches our lives* and deepens our connections with the beloved.

When we *actively choose* to love, we *become aware of its presence* in our lives. This awareness acknowledges love as a significant and meaningful part of our identity, contributing to our overall sense of self. By accepting love, we affirm its importance and relevance, integrating it into our self-conception without denial or resistance. This acknowledgment enhances the transformative power of love and its impact on our personal growth and well-being. In brief, the identification view proposes that while love may initially seem *involuntary* or *spontaneous*, it ultimately *requires an active choice* – even if in the form of acceptance – for it to become a *meaningful* and *enriching* aspect of our identity.

A concern arises about the role of choice in love. How does the concept of choice *intersect* with love, particularly when *many aspects of our identity* are *shaped without our conscious decision-making*? Unlike *other facets of identity formation* that may occur *involuntarily* (let's say integration of impact of an illness/accident into our identity), where does choice factor into the equation of love? It seems that choice may not necessarily arise from identity, given that other influences (for instance, illnesses/accidents, trauma, death of one's loved ones) shape our

identity independently of our volition. For instance, if one were to acquire a disease, it becomes integrated into their identity without any element of choice involved.

It's crucial to acknowledge that while *certain aspects of our identity* may be *beyond our control*, others are *subject to choice*. For instance, factors like nationality or genetic predispositions are typically inherited and not chosen. However, there are aspects of identity, such as our *profession*, that individuals may *actively choose* to affirm and embrace. For example, one's identity as a philosopher, doctor, or actor is a significant part of who they are and *is chosen*. This choice shapes how they see themselves and how others perceive them.

Similarly, while certain life circumstances like illnesses or accidents may be uncontrollable, love occupies a unique space within our identity. Love is not merely a passive occurrence but rather a *conscious decision*—one that individuals actively engage in and choose to cultivate. This deliberate choice to love someone contributes to the shaping of our identity in profound ways, influencing how we perceive ourselves.

Although some may argue that love does not always involve a conscious decision, this view can be reconciled with the identification perspective by considering that the initial choice to enter into a loving relationship and the ongoing decisions to nurture and maintain that love involve *conscious elements*. Love, like a profession, requires a choice and acceptance that integrates it into our identity.

In brief, the identification view of love emphasizes that love requires an element of choice and acceptance to become a meaningful part of our identity. This choice, akin to choosing a profession, distinguishes love from aspects of our identity that are entirely involuntary. By actively choosing to embrace love, we acknowledge its importance and integrate it into our self-conception.

Commitment.

In this section, I will present the significance of commitment in the concept of love as identification.

The identity of a lover hinges upon a *sustained commitment* to the beloved. This commitment entails *consistently choosing* to love and care for the beloved over time. Without this ongoing dedication, the beloved's positive integration into the lover's identity may weaken, potentially jeopardizing the foundation of the relationship.

A sustained commitment is not a fleeting emotion but a steadfast resolve to prioritize the beloved. It requires conscious effort and dedication, as well as a willingness to weather the challenges and uncertainties that may arise in the course of the relationship. By *consistently reaffirming* their commitment, the lover solidifies their bond with the beloved, ensuring that they remain an enriching aspect of their identity.

Consistency in love is paramount for the beloved to maintain a positive presence in the lover's identity. This commitment provides *stability* and *reinforces the bond* between the lover and the beloved.

Consistency encompasses not only the expression of devotion but also the steadfastness of *character* and *integrity*. It involves being *reliable* and *dependable*, consistently demonstrating love in both words and actions. Through this unwavering commitment, the lover cultivates a sense of reassurance and belonging, affirming the significance of the beloved in their life.

Moreover, *stability* in love serves as a cornerstone for the identity of a lover. It creates a safe and nurturing environment. By upholding their commitment with steadfast determination, the

lover reinforces the enduring nature of their bond with the beloved, ensuring that it remains a vital and integral aspect of their identity.

In brief, commitment in love is essential for maintaining the identity of a lover. Through *sustained dedication* and *consistency*, the lover *reaffirms* their bond with the beloved, ensuring that their presence and attributes remains an enriching, positive, and enduring influence in their life. By upholding their commitment with unwavering resolve, the lover integrates beloved into their self-conception.

Rituals

In this section, I will discuss the importance of rituals in maintaining the identity of a lover. To clarify, the term "rituals" here is used to denote a category of *loving behaviors* and *actions* that affirm and reinforce the identity of the lover.

To uphold the identity of a lover, one must engage in behaviors that reinforce this identity. Actions such as *caring for the beloved*, *being concerned about their well-being*, and *maintaining meaningful conversations* among many others are essential components of what I term "performing rituals."

Maintaining the identity of a lover involves more than just feelings; it requires active engagement in these loving behaviors. These actions serve as tangible expressions of commitment. For instance, caring for the beloved's needs, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, showcases a genuine investment in their well-being. Similarly, engaging in heartfelt conversations fosters intimacy and understanding, further solidifying the connection between the lovers.

These actions, or rituals, not only express love but also reinforce the identity of the lover. By consistently demonstrating care, concern, and attentiveness towards the beloved, the lover affirms the beloved's positive role in their life. Each loving action serves as a reminder of the deep emotional connection shared with the beloved, strengthening the lover's sense of identity and purpose within the relationship.

Rituals of love encompass a myriad of practices and behaviors that hold significance within the relationship. From simple gestures like preparing breakfast together each morning to more elaborate traditions such as celebrating anniversaries or creating shared memories through travel, these rituals play a vital role in nurturing the bond between the lovers. What sets these rituals apart is their ability to transcend mere expressions of affection; they are deeply ingrained practices that contribute to the fabric of the relationship. Each ritual serves as a testament to the commitment and devotion lover has towards the beloved, affirming lover's identity.

Moreover, these rituals serve as meaningful reminders of the beloved's place in the lover's identity. By engaging in these activities and traditions, the lover reaffirms their connection with the beloved, reinforcing their sense of self.

To sum up, performing loving actions and engaging in rituals of love are vital aspects of upholding the identity of a lover. These behaviors not only express commitment but also serve to reinforce the significance of the beloved in the lover's identity. By actively participating in these practices, the lover strengthens their sense of identity with the beloved and maintains a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their relationship.

CHAPTER 2. EMOTION VIEW AND IDENTIFICATION VIEW

In this chapter, I will contrast the identification view with the emotion view and highlight the strength of the identification view. In doing so, firstly, I will present and examine the views of emotion theorists, Robert Brown (1987) and Neera Badhwar (2003). Secondly, I will contrast these views with the identification view highlighting the strengths of identification view.

2.1 Love as emotion: Brown and Badhwar.

Emotions play a significant role in our understanding of love, encompassing both immediate, intense feelings and long-lasting, underlying attitudes. To gain a comprehensive perspective on love as an emotion, I will explore the views of emotion theorists such as Robert Brown (1987) and Neera Badhwar (2003).

Robert Brown

Robert Brown (1987) offers a perspective that emphasizes love as an *affection* toward the *enduring qualities* of the beloved. According to Brown (1987), when we love someone, we feel affection towards their inherent qualities that persist over time, despite any significant changes they may undergo (Brown, 1987:106).

This view aligns closely with the concept of *dispositional emotions*, which are enduring states that persist over time, regardless of immediate circumstances.

Consider the example of a long-term romantic relationship. Over the years, both partners may undergo numerous changes in appearance, personality, or circumstances. Yet, the love that

persists is rooted in an affection for the core attributes of the beloved—traits such as kindness, intelligence, or sense of humor. These inherent qualities form the foundation of love, transcending momentary feelings or immediate circumstances.

Brown's (1987) view also aligns with Martha Nussbaum's theory of emotions as evaluative judgments (Nussbaum, 2004). Nussbaum (2004) posits that emotions are assessments of value or significance, often long-lasting and deeply embedded in our psyche (Nussbaum, 2004). Viewing a partner as *inherently valuable* and *significant* constitutes an *enduring emotional response akin to love*.

Furthermore, Brown's perspective underscores the notion of love as a dispositional state rather than a transient, occurrent feeling. This enduring affection signifies a lasting part of one's emotional landscape, extending beyond the immediate, physical reactions typically associated with occurrent emotions.

Neera Badhwar

Neera Badhwar offers a nuanced perspective on love, describing it as "one's overall emotional orientation towards the beloved: the complex interplay of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings" (Badhwar, 2003:46). In essence, Badhwar (2003) suggests that love encompasses more than fleeting emotions; it involves a deep-seated emotional orientation shaped by perceptions, thoughts, and feelings towards the beloved.

To illustrate Badhwar's (2003) view, consider a couple deeply in love. Their emotional orientation towards each other extends beyond momentary feelings of affection or attraction. It involves a profound understanding of each other's values, desires, and aspirations. They perceive each other not only as individuals but also as integral parts of their own identity and

life's journey. Their thoughts are often consumed by their shared experiences and envisioned future together. Additionally, their feelings towards each other are not limited to occasional bursts of emotion but rather form a consistent backdrop to their relationship, influencing their actions and decisions daily.

Badhwar's perspective aligns closely with the concept of *dispositional emotions*. Just as dispositional emotions are enduring states that shape one's overall emotional landscape, Badhwar suggests that love is an overarching emotional orientation, influenced by ongoing perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. This orientation permeates one's entire relationship with the beloved, guiding attitudes and behaviors over time.

Moreover, Badhwar's view shares similarities with Sabine Döring's perspective on emotions as affective perceptions (Döring, 2003). Döring (2003) emphasizes that emotions involve perceiving the world in an affective manner, where our emotional responses are shaped by our interpretations and evaluations (Döring, 2003). Similarly, Badhwar (2003) suggests that love is shaped by our perceptions of the beloved, informed by our emotional responses to them.

For instance, consider a person deeply in love with their partner. They perceive their partner's kindness, generosity, and loyalty, eliciting feelings of admiration, affection, and trust. These perceptions, combined with their emotional responses, form the basis of their emotional orientation towards their partner. This orientation guides their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in the relationship, reflecting Badhwar's assertion that love involves a complex interplay of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.

In brief, both Brown (1987) and Badhwar (2003) offer perspectives on love that emphasize *enduring* aspects of *emotional orientation* towards the beloved. Brown highlights *affection* towards the *enduring qualities* of the beloved, while Badhwar emphasizes a *broader emotional*

landscape encompassing perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Both perspectives underscore the depth and complexity of love beyond transient emotions, suggesting that love involves a *sustained emotional stance* towards the beloved.

Categorizing Love as Occurrent or Dispositional

To fully appreciate the emotional dynamics of love, it is crucial to differentiate between occurrent and dispositional emotions. This distinction sheds light on how various emotions contribute to the experience of love, delineating between short-lived and enduring emotional experiences within romantic relationships.

Occurrent emotions are those that someone is currently experiencing, for example, the sudden appearance of a face at the window might trigger an occurrent emotion of fear (Pitcher, 1965). They are episodic and often characterized by immediate, physical reactions, and are transient and tied to immediate physical responses (Whiting, 2003).

In the context of love, occurrent emotions might include feelings of excitement, passion, or attraction. These fleeting emotions often arise in the initial stages of a romantic relationship or during moments of intense connection with the beloved. For instance, the thrill of a first date or the rush of adrenaline from a passionate kiss are examples of occurrent love. These emotions contribute to the intensity and immediacy of romantic experiences but are not enduring.

Dispositional Emotions

Dispositional emotions, on the other hand, are enduring states that persist over time. (Pitcher, 1965). They reflect a more stable, underlying state of mind that influences one's actions and decisions. For example, someone might have a persistent fear of heights, which affects their behavior even when they are not currently experiencing the emotion (Whiting, 2018).

In the context of love, dispositional emotions encompass long-lasting emotional attitudes such as care, concern, and devotion towards the beloved. These sentiments form the foundation of deep, lasting bonds in romantic partnerships and contribute to the overall stability and resilience of the relationship over time. For instance, a general attitude of care and a desire to spend time with the beloved, even when not actively feeling intense passion, are examples of dispositional love.

By examining the distinction between occurrent and dispositional emotions, we acknowledge that love, as an emotional phenomenon, is multifaceted and can manifest in various forms. Sometimes, love is associated with occurrent states characterized by immediate feelings of attraction, passion, and excitement.

On the other hand, love can also be associated with dispositional states marked by enduring emotional attitudes such as *certain appreciation* towards beloved's inherent qualities, *certain perception, thoughts, feelings* towards the beloved. These long-lasting sentiments form the foundation of deep, lasting bonds in romantic partnerships and contribute to the overall stability and resilience of the relationship over time.

Common Themes: Brown and Badhwar

Love as Disposition

Both Brown (1987) and Badhwar (2003) offer perspectives on love that align more closely with the concept of dispositional emotions. Brown's view emphasizes *affection* towards the enduring qualities of the beloved, reflecting a stable, evaluative perspective on the beloved that persists over time. Similarly, Badhwar's perspective highlights an *overarching emotional orientation* towards the beloved, influenced by ongoing *perceptions, thoughts, and feelings*.

For example, Brown's emphasis on affection towards beloved's enduring qualities suggests a dispositional state of love, where the affection felt towards the beloved's inherent attributes is not contingent on momentary feelings or immediate circumstances. This enduring affection signifies a lasting part of one's emotional landscape, extending beyond the immediate, physical reactions typically associated with occurrent emotions.

Similarly, Badhwar's view of love as an overall emotional orientation involves a deep-seated emotional stance towards the beloved, shaped by ongoing perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. This perspective aligns with the concept of dispositional emotions, suggesting that love is not just a series of momentary emotions but rather a *deep-seated emotional stance* towards the beloved.

Enduring and Long-Lasting Nature of Love

Robert Brown (1987) and Neera Badhwar (2003) both emphasize the enduring and long-lasting nature of love, albeit through slightly different lenses. Brown (1987) suggests that love endures through significant changes in both partners because it is rooted in an appreciation for the beloved's inherent qualities. This view implies that love is not easily affected by external or superficial changes, such as alterations in physical appearance, career shifts, or personal growth. Instead, it persists as a stable and enduring affection for the core attributes that define the beloved. For instance, in a long-term romantic relationship, partners may experience numerous life changes, but their love remains constant because it is anchored in qualities such as kindness, intelligence, or a sense of humor. These inherent traits form a foundation that transcends temporary fluctuations, making love a lasting component of one's emotional landscape.

In contrast, Badhwar (2003) describes love as an overall emotional orientation towards the beloved. According to Badhwar, love is more than just an affection for specific traits; it is an ongoing and comprehensive emotional stance that shapes and is shaped by the lover's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about the beloved. This perspective suggests that love functions as a consistent backdrop to the relationship, influencing day-to-day actions and decisions. For example, a couple in love might consistently support each other's personal and professional goals, share in their partner's joys and sorrows, and make decisions that consider their partner's well-being. This deep emotional orientation ensures that love remains steadfast, even as circumstances evolve, and challenges arise.

Both Brown (1987) and Badhwar (2003) agree that love is not merely a transient emotion, but rather a durable and enduring state. Brown's (1987) emphasis on the beloved's inherent qualities provides a robust framework for understanding how love can withstand the test of time and various life changes. Even if the beloved's external situation changes drastically, the lover's affection persists because it is based on unchanging, intrinsic attributes. Similarly, Badhwar's (2003) concept of love as an emotional orientation highlights the continuous and pervasive influence of love on an individual's life. This orientation means that love is not limited to occasional bursts of passion or affection but is a persistent element that shapes how individuals perceive and interact with their partners on a daily basis.

To further illustrate, consider a scenario where one partner becomes ill or faces a significant personal crisis. Under Brown's (1987) framework, the enduring nature of love would manifest in the lover's continued affection for the inherent qualities of the beloved, such as their resilience or courage, despite the difficult circumstances. Badhwar's (2003) view would emphasize how the lover's emotional orientation remains unwavering, providing support and understanding throughout the crisis.

In brief, both Brown's (1987) and Badhwar's (2003) view aligns with the enduring and long-lasting nature of love. Brown (1987) focuses on the unchanging qualities of the beloved as the basis for lasting affection, while Badhwar (2003) emphasizes the comprehensive emotional orientation that underpins consistent and enduring love. Together, these perspectives enrich our understanding of love as a durable state that persists through life's inevitable changes and challenges.

2.2 Emotion view v/s Identification View

Similarities: Emotion view and Identification view

Enduring and Long-Lasting Nature of Love

Both the emotion view and the identification view *reject* the notion that love is primarily constituted by *occurrent emotions* such as strong immediate feelings, attraction, or infatuation. Instead, they propose a *more sustainable* conception of love, emphasizing *enduring qualities* that contribute to a lasting relationship. The emotion view, for example, values an *appreciation of the beloved's inherent qualities* and an overall emotional orientation informed by *certain perception, thoughts, and feelings* towards them. These aspects are inherently stable and long-lasting, aligning closely with elements of the identification view, such as *seeing the beloved as an enriching part of one's identity*, and *portraying loving behaviors and rituals*.

The emotion view, as articulated by Brown (1987), highlights the importance of affective appreciation for the beloved's qualities. This view suggests that love endures because it is rooted in an admiration for attributes like kindness, intelligence, or humor, which are perceived as intrinsic and unchanging over time. Similarly, Badhwar (2003) describes love as an overall

emotional orientation, encompassing a complex interplay of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings towards the beloved.

On the other hand, the identification view emphasizes the integration of the beloved into one's identity. This perspective posits that love involves seeing the beloved as an essential part of one's self-concept and life narrative. It includes a strong sense of commitment and the choice to maintain the relationship through various challenges. For example, even when faced with significant adversities such as health issues or career setbacks, the identification view suggests that love persists because the beloved is seen as integral to one's identity, and the commitment to the beloved is unwavering.

Both views place significant emphasis on *long-term* and *enduring qualities* in a loving relationship. While the emotion view focuses on the affective appreciation of the beloved's qualities and maintaining an overall emotional orientation towards them, the identification view stresses the importance of identity, commitment, and choice.

These common elements—appreciation of the beloved's inherent qualities, an overall emotional orientation, perceiving the beloved as an integral part of one's identity, and remaining committed and portraying loving behaviors—allow both the emotion view and the identification view to explain the continuity of love effectively. This continuity is a crucial aspect in the philosophical debate on love, addressing the question of how love can persist over time despite changes in overall external and personal circumstances.

For example, consider a scenario where one partner undergoes significant personal transformation, such as a career change or a shift in personal interests. The emotion view would argue that love continues because the foundational appreciation for the beloved's intrinsic qualities remains unchanged. Similarly, the identification view would maintain that love

persists because the beloved is still an integral part of the lover's identity and committed to the beloved. Both perspectives provide a robust framework for understanding how love can endure, emphasizing long-term stability over transient emotions.

In brief, both the emotion view and the identification view converge on the idea that love is more than just occurrent emotions. They emphasize enduring qualities and stable elements such as appreciation, emotional orientation, identity, and commitment, which together form the basis for a lasting and continuous experience of love. These commonalities allow both views to address the enduring nature of love, providing comprehensive explanations for how love can sustain itself over time, a central concern in the philosophy of love.

Differences: Emotion view and Identification view

Emotions as neither necessary nor sufficient for love.

While long-standing emotional states such as affective appreciation of the beloved's qualities and overall emotional orientation are often considered crucial elements of love, a closer examination reveals that they may not be necessary or sufficient for understanding love in its entirety. On one level, it appears that such emotional states are neither necessary nor sufficient for love, as there are scenarios where individuals can experience love without possessing these emotions.

Consider, for instance, a person with autism who may struggle to express or experience emotions such as affective appreciation or emotional orientation towards the beloved. Despite their inability to articulate these feelings in conventional ways, it is still conceivable that they are capable of experiencing love. This challenges the notion that long-standing emotional states

are necessary prerequisites for love, suggesting that love can transcend conventional emotional expressions and be manifested in alternative forms.

Moreover, even when long-standing emotional states are present in a loving relationship, they may not be sufficient to fully explain the complexity of love. For instance, a person may possess affective appreciation for the beloved's qualities and an emotional orientation towards them, yet this alone may not constitute love. What distinguishes love from other emotional states or attachments is the presence of additional elements such as commitment, the portrayal of loving behaviors and rituals that signify the depth of the relationship.

To illustrate, imagine a scenario where an individual deeply admires their partner's inherent qualities, such as kindness and compassion, and feels a strong emotional connection towards them. However, if this individual does not show any commitment to the relationship, fails to participate in loving behaviors, or neglects rituals that reinforce the bond (such as regularly spending time together or celebrating anniversaries), their affective appreciation of the beloved's inherent qualities alone may not suffice to define the relationship as one of love.

Furthermore, consider a case where someone has an overall emotional orientation towards another person but lacks the will to act on it in ways that are essential for love. They might feel positive emotions and appreciation but fail to support their partner in times of need, neglect to make sacrifices for the relationship, or avoid engaging in acts that demonstrate love, such as caring for them when they are ill (loving behavior and rituals). Without these critical components of commitment and rituals, the relationship cannot be fully characterized as love.

To truly constitute a case of love, additional elements are required. For example, commitment is essential. It signifies a dedication to the beloved's well-being and the relationship's longevity.

This includes standing by the beloved through difficult times, making sacrifices for their happiness, and consistently working to maintain and strengthen the bond.

Loving behaviors and rituals also play a crucial role. These actions and routines help to cultivate and sustain love. For example, performing acts of kindness, and creating shared experiences all contribute to the deepening of the relationship.

Finally, the integration of the beloved into one's identity is a key aspect of love that goes beyond emotional states. When the beloved becomes an integral part of the lover's sense of self, their well-being and happiness are perceived as lover's own. This identity integration drives the lover to prioritize the beloved's needs and desires, reflecting a profound connection that transcends mere emotional appreciation or an overall emotional orientation.

In the case of the individual with autism, as long as they perceive the beloved as an integral part of themselves, remain committed to the relationship, and engage in loving behaviors and rituals, this is considered love.

Similarly, these elements appear sufficient to account for love in various contexts. Whether it is a neurotypical individual experiencing conventional emotional states or someone with different emotional capacities, the presence of identity, commitment, and loving behaviors can serve as indicators of love. This broader perspective allows for a more inclusive understanding of love that transcends affective appreciation of beloved's inherent qualities or an overall emotional appreciation.

Identity, commitment, and rituals as necessary and sufficient

The integration of the beloved into one's identity is a fundamental aspect of love. This means that the beloved's presence and influence become integral to the lover's sense of self. Such integration is necessary for love because it reflects a deep connection.

This identity integration drives lovers to prioritize their partner's needs, often leading to selfless acts and sacrifices that are indicative of love. Without this integration, the relationship might lack the depth that characterizes love.

Commitment is a cornerstone of love. It signifies a steadfast dedication to the beloved. Commitment ensures that love endures through difficult times, making it a vital element.

Loving behaviors and rituals are crucial for nurturing love. Consider the simple yet profound act of taking care of a beloved when they are ill. This behavior shows not only concern but also a willingness to provide support and comfort. Such acts are tangible expressions of love that go beyond affective appreciation of beloved's inherent qualities and an overall emotional orientation.

Loving behaviors and rituals, like celebrating anniversaries, spending quality time together, or even daily routines like sharing a meal, contribute to the relationship's stability. These rituals create shared experiences and memories that reinforce the bond between partners. For example, a couple that regularly engages in a nightly routine of talking about their day builds a deeper understanding and connection, essential elements of enduring love.

While emotional states like affective appreciation and emotional orientation can enrich a relationship, they are not indispensable for defining love. The elements of seeing beloved as an integral part of one's identity, commitment, and loving behaviors and rituals are sufficient to account for love, even in the absence of these emotional stances.

For instance, in an arranged marriage, partners may initially lack affective appreciation or emotional orientation towards each other. However, through commitment and loving behavior and rituals, they can develop a deep and lasting love. Their dedication to making the relationship work, performing loving behaviors, and integrating each other into their identities can create a profound bond that exemplifies love.

Consider a scenario where an individual cares for an elderly parent. The caregiver might not feel a constant affective appreciation for the parent's qualities due to the stress and exhaustion of caregiving. However, their commitment to the parents, daily acts of rituals like care and providing comfort, and the integration of the parent's needs into their identity illustrate love. The caregiver's love is demonstrated through commitment and rituals, rather than necessarily an effective appreciation or emotional orientation or any other emotional stance.

In essence, emotional stances like affective appreciation and emotional orientation are indeed important aspects of love, they are not the sole determinants of its existence or depth. Love encompasses an interplay of commitment, seeing beloved as an integral part of one's identity, and performing loving behaviors and rituals. By embracing a broader framework that incorporates elements beyond emotional stances, such as identity, commitment, and rituals, we can gain a deeper understanding of the richness and complexity of love in all its forms and expressions.

CHAPTER 3. UNION VIEW AND IDENTIFICATION VIEW

In this chapter, I will critically analyze the union view of love and provide a contrast with the identification view. Firstly, I will present the views by prominent union theorists—Roger Scruton (1986), Robert Nozick (1989), and Robert Solomon (1988). Secondly, I will identify some common themes across all three views and compare them with the identification view.

1.1 Union view: Scruton, Nozick, Solomon.

The union view of love posits that true love involves a deep merging of identities between the lovers, creating *a new, unified* entity that reflects their combined interests, values, and preferences. This perspective suggests that love transforms the lovers into a *collective self*, where individual boundaries blur and a *mutual* identity form. This section will explore the main ideas of the union view through the perspectives of Roger Scruton (1986), Robert Nozick (1989), and Robert Solomon (1988), elucidating their theories with examples to illustrate their points.

Roger Scruton

Roger Scruton (1986) argues that love involves a profound connection that results in the merging of interests, values, and preferences into a single entity (Scruton, 1986). For instance, consider Ross and Rachel as lovers. According to Scruton (1986), when they fall in love, their individual preferences on matters like where to go for a summer trip or what to order for dinner merge into a common pool. This pooled identity reflects a shared set of interests and values, shaping their decisions and life choices.

Scruton (1986) posits that the essence of love lies in this *fusion*, where lovers are *no longer entirely separate individuals* but parts of a collective identity. This collective identity is characterized by shared experiences, mutual support, and an intertwining of lives, with the ultimate goal being to achieve a deep union where each person's identity is significantly shaped by the other. The lovers' transformation is mutual and collaborative, aiming to create a collective self rather than *focusing solely on individual change*.

Robert Nozick

Robert Nozick (1989) interprets union in love as forming a 'we,' a common identity that emerges when two individuals combine significant aspects of their identities (Nozick, 1989). According to Nozick (1989), when Ross and Rachel fall in love, they create a 'we' by integrating important aspects of themselves into a shared identity. This 'we' is evident in how they make decisions and navigate conflicts, always considering the perspective of their shared identity rather than individual preferences.

For example, when deciding whether to visit their parents for Christmas, Ross and Rachel would approach the decision from the perspective of 'we,' reflecting their combined interests and mutual considerations. This union forms through discussions about their wants, desires, long-term plans, and outlooks on life, creating a cohesive entity that embodies both partners' identities.

Robert Solomon

Robert Solomon (1988), another union theorist, believes that union in love occurs when the souls of the individuals involved become one (Solomon, 1988). This merging of souls signifies a deep connection and unity, where the lovers feel inseparable and interconnected on a

profound level. For example, when Ross and Rachel love each other deeply, their souls merge, making them feel complete and as if they share their joys and sorrows as one entity.

Solomon's (1988) union view emphasizes the merging of souls, indicating a profound spiritual and existential union. This view suggests that true love involves the dissolution of individual boundaries and the formation of a singular, unified soul. The focus is on achieving an almost mystical sense of unity where the lovers' identities are completely intertwined.

In brief, union theorists like Scruton (1986), Nozick (1989), and Solomon (1988) emphasize the *merging* of identities, interests, and even souls to form a *new, unified* entity in love. Scruton (1986) focuses on the merging of interests and values, Nozick (1989) on forming a 'we,' and Solomon (1988) on the spiritual merging of souls. Despite slight differences, they all underscore a fundamental transformation where individual boundaries dissolve in favor of a collective identity.

Common Themes in Union Views

Merging of Identities (forming a *we*, or a third entity)

In delving into the common themes of union views on love, one recurring concept is the formation of a third entity—a 'we' or a collective self—that transcends the individual identities of the lovers. This concept underscores the idea that love involves the merging of two or more individual identities into *a unified whole*, where shared interests, values, and preferences converge to create a common pool of identity.

Consider Roger Scruton's perspective (1986), where he argues that love involves the merging of interests, values, and preferences into *a single entity*. For example, in the relationship between Ross and Rachel, their individual preferences on matters like where to go for a summer

trip or what to order for dinner merge into a common pool. This pooled identity reflects a shared set of interests and values that shape their decisions and life choices.

Similarly, Robert Nozick (1989) interprets union in love as the formation of a 'we' identity. When Ross and Rachel fall in love, they integrate significant aspects of their identities into a shared identity. This 'we' identity guides their decisions and actions, reflecting their mutual commitment to each other's well-being and happiness.

Furthermore, Robert Solomon (1988) emphasizes a spiritual union of souls in love, where the identities of the lovers blend to form a singular, unified soul. When Ross and Rachel love each other deeply, their souls merge, signifying a profound sense of unity and interconnectedness. This merging of souls represents a deep spiritual bond that transcends individual boundaries and forms the foundation of their love.

To illustrate this concept further, consider the analogy of two rivers merging to form a larger, unified body of water. Just as individual streams combine to create a single river, the merging of individual identities in love forms a collective entity—a 'we' or a common pool of identity. Each stream contributes its unique qualities to the larger whole, enriching the collective identity with diverse perspectives and experiences.

In brief, the *merging of identities* is a central theme in union views on love, emphasizing the formation of a collective entity—a 'we' or a shared identity—that *transcends the individual selves of the lovers*. Through shared interests, values, and experiences, individuals create a unified whole that enriches their relationship and deepens their connection with each other.

Reciprocity and Mutual Involvement.

Reciprocity emerges as a fundamental principle in union views on love, highlighting the importance of *active participation* and *mutual engagement* from *both* lovers. This concept emphasizes that love requires a concerted effort, desire, and intentionality from both individuals to create and maintain a shared identity or 'we' entity.

In union views, such as those presented by Scruton (1986), Nozick (1989), and Solomon (1988), reciprocity is essential for the transformation of individual identities into a collective whole. For example, in Scruton's perspective (1986), *both* Ross and Rachel must actively contribute to shaping the shared identity through shared experiences, mutual support, and a collaborative effort to intertwine their lives. Without this mutual involvement, the formation of a collective identity would be *incomplete*.

Similarly, in Nozick's concept of forming a 'we' identity (1989), *both* lovers must engage in *reciprocal* actions and behaviors that contribute to the creation of a shared identity. This involves integrating significant aspects of themselves into the collective identity, engaging in discussions and negotiations to harmonize their desires and priorities.

Furthermore, Solomon's view (1988) of a spiritual union of souls underscores the importance of reciprocity in love. Both Ross and Rachel must actively engage in the process of merging their souls, forming a deep connection and unity that transcends individual boundaries. This mutual involvement is necessary for the creation of a profound and meaningful union.

To illustrate the concept of reciprocity further, consider the analogy of a dance partnership. In a dance, both partners must actively participate and coordinate their movements to create a harmonious and synchronized performance. Similarly, in love, both lovers must engage in reciprocal actions and behaviors to create a shared identity and deepen their connection with each other.

In brief, *reciprocity* and *mutual involvement* are central themes in union views on love, emphasizing the active participation and engagement of both lovers in creating and maintaining a shared identity. Through reciprocal actions and behaviors, individuals deepen their connection with each other and contribute to the growth and flourishing of their relationship.

3.2 Union view v/s Identification view.

Union and Identification: Similarities

Merging.

One notable similarity between union views and the identification view lies in their acknowledgment of the phenomenon of merging identities in love. Both perspectives recognize that love involves a transformative process where lovers merge or integrate beloved into their identities.

In union views, such as those presented by Scruton (1986), Nozick (1989), and Solomon (1988), the merging of identities occurs through various mechanisms. For example, in Scruton's perspective (1986), individual preferences, values, and interests merge to create a shared identity. Similarly, in Nozick's concept of forming a 'we' identity (1989), significant aspects of the lovers' identities integrate to shape a collective self. This merging is also evident in Solomon's view (1988) of a spiritual union of souls, where the souls of the lovers blend to form a singular, unified entity.

Likewise, in the identification view, the beloved becomes positively integrated into the lover's identity, becoming an integral part of their sense of self.

While both union views and the identification view acknowledge the merging of identities, there are slight differences in their exact understanding of this concept.

In union views, merging necessarily occurs from *both* parties involved—the lovers and the beloved. Both individuals actively contribute to shaping the shared identity, resulting in a collective entity or a 'we' identity. The merging process is akin to two drops of water merging into one, creating a third entity apart from the original two.

Conversely, the merging process in the identification view may be understood differently. While the beloved becomes integrated into the lover's identity, they do not necessarily form a third entity or 'we' entity. The integration is more akin to including aspects of the beloved into the lover's sense of self, rather than forming a separate collective identity.

Union view and Identification view: Differences.

Reciprocity and Mutual Involvement.

The union view places significant emphasis on *reciprocity* and *mutual involvement* as essential components of love. In this framework, the formation of a shared identity or "we" relies heavily on the active participation and engagement of *both* lovers. The merging of identities occurs through a reciprocal exchange of preferences, values, and interests, resulting in the creation of a collective self.

For example, imagine a couple, Alex and Sam, who are deeply in love. In the union view, their love is characterized by a mutual exchange of thoughts, feelings, and experiences. They actively participate in shaping their shared identity by integrating aspects of their individual selves into a cohesive whole. Their decisions, actions, and life choices reflect this reciprocal involvement, as they navigate their relationship together.

Conversely, the identification view does not necessarily prioritize reciprocity and mutual involvement in the same way as the union view. Instead, the focus is primarily on personal

transformation and integration of the beloved into the lover's identity. In this framework, love entails the positive integration of the beloved into the lover's sense of self, regardless of the beloved's reciprocation.

Consider a scenario where one person, Tina, deeply loves another, Sarah, who may not reciprocate those feelings. In the identification view, Tina's love for Sarah is characterized by the integration of Sarah into her identity, even if Sarah does not actively participate in shaping this integration. Tina's perception of herself is influenced by her relationship with Sarah, regardless of whether Sarah reciprocates her love.

The distinction between the union and identification views regarding reciprocity and mutual involvement allows for a more nuanced understanding of love in various contexts. While the union view emphasizes the importance of *mutual engagement* and *collaboration* in shaping a shared identity, the identification view highlights the significance of *personal transformation* and integration of the beloved into the lover's identity, irrespective of reciprocity.

For these reasons, the identification view can more easily and directly account for cases of unrequited love, where one person deeply loves another who may not reciprocate it. In such cases, the lover's experience of love is still valid and meaningful, as it involves the positive integration of the beloved into their identity, even without mutual involvement.

In brief, while both the union and identification views recognize the significance of merging identities in love, they differ in their emphasis on reciprocity and mutual involvement. While the union view highlights the importance of mutual engagement and collaboration in shaping a shared identity, the identification view focuses on personal transformation and integration of the beloved into the lover's identity, regardless of reciprocity.

Focus on Personal Transformation vs. Creation of Shared Identity.

The identification view places a significant emphasis on personal transformation through the positive integration of the beloved into the lover's identity. Love, in this framework, is seen as a catalyst for individual growth and development. For instance, consider the case of Mark, who deeply loves her partner, John. In the identification view, Mark's love for John leads to a profound transformation in their self-concept. He incorporates aspects of John's personality, values, and perspectives into their own identity, enriching their sense of self.

Conversely, the union view focuses on the creation of a shared identity or "we" through mutual involvement and merging of individual identities. Love, in this perspective, is viewed as a collaborative endeavor where both partners actively contribute to the formation of a collective self. Using the example of Mark and John again, their love would be characterized by a mutual exchange of preferences, values, and interests, resulting in the emergence of a unified identity that encompasses elements of both individuals.

Unrequited love.

The identification view offers a nuanced perspective on unrequited love, as it does not necessarily require reciprocal merging of identities between the lover and the beloved. In this view, love is primarily about the positive integration of the beloved into the lover's identity, regardless of whether the beloved reciprocate it. For example, consider the case of Emma, who deeply loves their friend Alex, but Alex does not share the same romantic feelings. Despite Alex's lack of romantic interest, Emma's love for Alex is considered a genuine case of love within the identification view. Emma may integrate Alex's presence, influence, and significance into her sense of self, remaining committed to him and expressing her love through supportive actions and behaviors.

On the other hand, the union view presents challenges in understanding unrequited love, especially when considering Nozick's (1989) assertion that the desire to form a "we" must be reciprocated by the beloved (Nozick, 1989). Nozick (1989) writes: what is necessary for love is merely the desire to form a "we," together with the desire that your beloved reciprocates; this "we" is "a new entity in the world...created by a new web of relationships between [the lovers] which makes them no longer separate" (p. 70).

Many interpret Nozick's (1989) above claim in a way that shows that union view can account for the cases of unrequited love. However, if we look carefully, we will find out that no, even if we accept Nozick's version of union view, it does not seem to account for the cases of unrequited love. Nozick's emphasizes that the desire to form a 'we' should be reciprocated by the beloved as well, the sole desire to form 'we' by the lover is not enough.

However, in the cases of unrequited love, though the desire to create 'we' is present from the lover's part, the desire to create 'we' from the beloved part is missing.

In cases of unrequited love, where the beloved does not share the desire to form a shared identity or "we," the union view may struggle to account for the nature of love experienced by the lover. For instance, if Emma desires to create a shared identity with Alex, but Alex does not reciprocate those feelings, the union view may not consider what Emma has for Alex as love. This limitation arises from the union view's emphasis on mutual involvement and the creation of a collective identity, which may not align with the dynamics of unrequited love where reciprocity is absent or at least not obvious and clear.

Furthermore, the identification view offers a broader framework for understanding various forms of love, including love for abstract entities like God, philosophy, or nature. In these cases, the desire to form a shared identity or "we" may not be explicit or applicable by both

lover and the beloved's part. Instead, individuals may integrate the object of their love into their identity, remaining committed to the beloved and expressing their love through rituals or dedicated practices. For example, a philosopher's love for philosophy may involve a deep integration of philosophical principles and ideas into their worldview, guiding their actions and decisions, even in the absence of reciprocal engagement from philosophy itself.

In brief, while both the identification view and union view offer valuable insights into the nature of love, the identification view provides a more flexible framework for understanding unrequited love and love for abstract entities. By focusing on the positive integration of the beloved into the lover's identity and allowing for diverse expressions of love beyond romantic relationships, the identification view offers a richer understanding of the complexities of the concept love.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I proposed a new theory of love, "love as identification," and contrasted it with two contemporary prominent theories of love: the emotion theory and the union theory. Through this comparative analysis, I aimed to clarify and substantiate the identification view.

In the first chapter, I outlined the identification view, emphasizing how love involves the positive integration of the beloved into the lover's identity, leading to a transformation of the lover's sense of self. I detailed the essential conditions of this view, including choice, commitment, and rituals, and provided various examples to illustrate these concepts.

The second chapter examined the emotion theory of love as presented by Robert Brown (1987) and Neera Badhwar (2003). Brown's perspective emphasizes affection towards the enduring qualities of the beloved, while Badhwar offers a nuanced view of love as a complex interplay of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. I highlighted the similarities and differences between these emotion views and the identification view, noting that while they both appreciate the beloved's qualities and overall orientation, they do not necessarily account for the element of commitment, which is crucial in explaining cases where emotional expression is not always possible.

In the third chapter, I explored the union theory of love as articulated by Scruton (1986), Nozick (1989), and Solomon (1988). These theorists view love as the merging of identities and emphasize mutual involvement and reciprocity. I contrasted these views with the identification view, pointing out that while both theories recognize the profound impact of love on individuals, the identification view does not require reciprocity from the beloved. Instead, it

focuses on the personal transformation of the lover, which allows it to account for diverse forms of love, such as divine love, intellectual love, and unreciprocated love.

By critically engaging with these contemporary theories, I aimed to clarify the identification view and demonstrate its strengths. The identification view provides a versatile framework for understanding love's transformative power, accommodating a wider range of loving relationships and experiences. Through this thesis, I have shown that the identification view offers a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of love, emphasizing personal growth and the integration of the beloved into the lover's identity.

In brief, this thesis has presented a comprehensive examination of love through the lens of the identification view, contrasting it with the emotion and union theories. By proposing "love as identification," I have outlined how love involves the integration of the beloved into the lover's identity, leading to profound personal transformation. Through comparative analyses in each chapter, I have elucidated the distinctions between the identification view and alternative theories, showcasing its versatility and explanatory power. The identification view, with its emphasis on choice, commitment, and rituals, offers a nuanced understanding of love that transcends conventional and traditional ways of thinking about the concept of love. Ultimately, this thesis contributes to the ongoing discourse on the nature of love.

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