

**“EXILED FROM ALL GREGARITY”: PROFANE LOVE, POETICS
AND POLITICAL IMAGINATION IN BARTHES AND AGAMBEN**

**“EXILIADO DE TODA GREGARIEDAD”: AMOR PROFANO, POÉTICA E IMAGINACIÓN
POLÍTICA EN BARTHES Y AGAMBEN**

Yoav Ronel

Ben Gurion University and Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design

Yoavronel1@gmail.com

Fecha de recepción: 10-01-19

Fecha de aceptación: 22-01-19

doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.30827/TNJ.v2i1.8522>

Abstract:

This article offers the literary and philosophical concept of “profane love”, following the juxtaposition of Giorgio Agamben’s concept of singular love and his political and poetic project of profanation, with the figurative and scattered notions of love found in Roland Barthes *A Lover’s Discourse: Fragments*. The article opens with a critique of the discursive state of love today and its relation to politics and power. Following Barthes idea of an obscene and Agamben’s notions of profanation and exposure, the article argues that love should be thought of as an experience in passivity that happens in the encounter and touch of two separate singularities. This process, the article argues, involves the imagination, and as such is thought of with regard to political and poetic imagination. The article thus thinks of Agamben’s notoriously pessimistic figure of the *Homo-Sacer* – the abandoned man – in a new light. It argues that the lover, as a participant in a radical experience of passivity and exposure, can also be thought of as abandoned, offering an affirmative perspective on Agamben’s political thought.

Keywords: Love; Literary theory; Agamben, Barthes; Imagination; Post-secular; Homo-Sacer, Poetry.

Abstract:

El presente artículo despliega el concepto literario y filosófico de "amor profano" siguiendo la yuxtaposición, por una parte, del concepto de amor singular de Giorgio Agamben y su proyecto político y poético de profanación y, por otra parte, las nociones dispersas y figurativas de amor presentes en la obra de Roland Barthes *Fragmentos de un discurso amoroso*. El presente trabajo se abre con una crítica del estado discursivo del amor hoy en día y su relación con la política y el poder. Siguiendo la idea barthesiana de lo obscuro y las nociones agambenianas de profanación y exposición, el presente artículo considera que el amor debería pensarse como una experiencia de la pasividad que sucede en el encuentro y el roce de dos singularidades separadas. Tal y como se defiende en el presente trabajo, este proceso se lleva a cabo mediante la imaginación, y por tanto se piensa en relación con la imaginación política y poética. El presente artículo concibe por tanto la figura célebremente pesimista del *homo sacer* –el hombre abandonado– en nuevos términos, al sostener que el amante, como participante en una experiencia radical de pasividad y exposición, puede pensarse también como un ser abandonado, ofreciendo así una perspectiva afirmativa sobre el pensamiento político de Agamben.

Palabras clave: Amor; Teoría literaria; Agamben; Barthes; Imaginación; Postsecular; Homo sacer; Poesía.

It is imagination, not the intellect, that is the defining principle of the human species.

Giorgio Agamben

In the Hebrew poet Leah Goldberg nameless poem love is presented as an ontological experience: we find ourselves in the world, through love:

And will they ever come, days of forgiveness and grace,
when you'll walk in the fields, simple wanderer,
and your bare soles will be caressed by the clover,
or the wheat-stubble will sting your feet, and its sting will be
sweet?

Or the rainfall will catch you, its downpour pounding
on your shoulders, your breast, your neck, your head.
And you'll walk in the wet fields, quiet widening within
like light on the cloud's rim.

And you'll breathe in the scent of the furrow, full and calm,
 and you'll see the sun in the rain-pool's golden mirror,
 and all things are simple and alive, you may touch them,
 and you are allowed, you are allowed to love.

You'll walk in the field. Alone, unscorched by the blaze
 of the fires, along roads stiffened with blood and terror.
 And true to your heart you'll be again humble and softened,
 as one of the grass, as one of humankind.

Western's love tradition has mostly located love as an experience connected to sight, and as such as somewhat unattainable. However here love is "allowed" and as such enables us to touch things. It is an ontological experience that moves from the eye ("you'll see the sun") to a *meeting* enabled by touch. Seeing become touching, and humanity is accordingly freed: "*you are allowed to love*". The world allowed in Hebrew also means untied, released, loose and free. This article deals with the idea of love as a form of "untied" and abandoned mode of being in the world, as it is revealed in the thought of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben when it is juxtaposed with Roland Barthes' scattered figures of love in his *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*.

This essay thus is concerned with the juxtaposition of two different philosophical and poetic discourses of love. The first is the fragmentary and anti-methodical writing of Barthes in *A Lover's Discourse*, and his concept of obscene and abandoned love; the second is the form of "profane love" that appears in the works of Giorgio Agamben, working as the cornerstone of his philosophical project. Through Barthes notions, I suggest that a clearer and more clear understanding of Agamben's concept of love, and its connections to poetics and politics, comes to light.

The juxtaposition of Barthes and Agamben will open up two ventures. The first concerns the language of love in our time that is torn between two pitfalls: the sacred and unattainable romantic ethos and the cynical and economic discourse of the social agreement of the "relationship". In the first the proper dwelling place of love is unattainable; in the second, propriety is presented as naïve, kitsch-like and even dangerous. Sara Ahmed's critique shows how only an identarian form of love possesses political power today, usually used by nationalist and far-right factions, while Eva Illuz and Alain Badiou's critique of modern love shows how it lost its potentiality (for solidarity, enjoyment, and forms of subjectivity that rely on alterity) and is discussed as an economic and juridical contract. In this sense, the this essay endeavors to offer a re-potentialized love discourse.

The second venture concerns the political horizons of love. In a recent essay called "How to Change the Course of Human History" the anarchist anthropologist David Grae-

ber, alongside archeologist David Wengrow, suggest that the problem of 21st century politics is a problem of the imagination: "there seems to be a growing recognition, in revolutionary circles, that freedom, tradition, and the imagination have always, and will always be entangled, in ways we do not completely understand" (Graeber and Wengrow). For them, as it is for Agamben (and probably many other thinkers today), we need to *imagine* a new form of life for humanity. Agamben directly connects poetics and imagination to a new vision of the world: "Rendering inoperative the works of language, the arts, politics, and economy, it shows what a human body can do, opens it to a new possible use" (Agamben 2015, 93-94).

This poetic stance works against the familiar notions that for both Agamben and Barthes, love cannot be used as an affirmative or effective political tool (Parsley 31-53). I argue that the juxtaposition of their thought reveals the affirmative potentiality a concept of love as a meeting of imagined singularities. Moreover, as the opening of the pathway towards an affirmative political discourse through imaginative and poetic manners. I offer that for Agamben and Barthes love is at once the *passive process* of the encounter with another singularity and the affirmative process of poetic imagination. In the meeting of Barthes and Agamben I think that the potentiality of a re-invigorated love discourse arises, with all the political, theological and poetical implications such a move entails.

I open with a brief engagement with the status of love discourse today, as seen through the sociological prism of Eva Illouz, the philosophical lens of Alain Badiou, and the political lens of Sarah Ahmed's critique of love. Then I will move on to a discussion of Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse*, to the concept of love in Agamben's work, and the connections between the two. Focusing on Barthes' discussion on the obscene and Agamben's notions of profanation and singularity, I will draw the contours of a concept of love that I will call "profane". The essay will conclude with reflections on the connection between profane love and questions of literary theory. Because, as Agamben says, paraphrasing Wittgenstein's statement that philosophy should be poeticized, "Poetry should really only be philosophized" (Agamben 1999b 115). As such, Hebrew poetry, Shakespearean Drama and Platonic prose will be used here as gestures that not only explain the thought process of this essay but also connect it – hopefully – to the experience of literature and poetry.

A. Love Has to be Reinvented

Today the attempt to talk about love – in a philosophical love discourse, but even just to talk about it publicly – stands at the brink of an abyss; not because it's an isosteric or idiosyncratic experience, but because it is *the typical experience* of human lives: most of us have loved, and all of us have an opinion on love. As philosophy distanced itself from the public sphere and the opinions of the crowd now occupy its place. It is almost

impossible to talk about love because we already – anyone and everyone – know what we feel about it.

The philosophical engagement with love is difficult for other reasons as well: as Badiou puts it, love's philosophy is torn between two insufficient discursive poles (Badiou 13-26).¹ On the one hand the modern (capitalist), instrumental, and (pseudo) scientific depictions of love as a contract, with the economic and juridical implication that this concept holds; or even as a biological or psychological process. Love is explained as anything other than love: as an economic solution, an answer to loneliness, a reanimation of oedipal conflicts or a Biological mechanism. These depictions of love open up an experience in which love's components exist but love itself is lacking. Here we meet the modern "marketplace" of love – according to the sociologist Eva Illouz's – where the romantic encounter takes place in the mitigated and safe online dating sites, and the match is predicated by the sameness of the potential lovers' predicates, interests and most of all social status (Illouz 2015, 2017).

Illouz's essential works on emotional capitalism and the economy of "the marketplace of love" clarifies this discursive crisis: the language that we use when we talk about love does not refer to love" (Illouz 2015, 21). Illouz shows how in the modern era love and has turned into an economic category: we choose our partners according to the logic of the marketplace (18-59). Love is privatized into the accumulation of predicates: the loved one is rich, attractive, funny, spontaneous, vegan, etc. Moreover, love has turned into a process that involves the "knowledge of the self". Love discourse turned into a process in which one actively knows and shapes himself, in the neo-liberal idea of self-fulfillment. Badiou shows that this privatization functions as an infrastructure of a "safe" form of love – manifested most prominently in dating sites – where any speech about love can be seen as a romantic cliché that does not relate to the "real world" (Badiou 6-7). In the scientific, economic, psychological and self-oriented discourse of love, talking plainly about love without regard to "realistic" issues, is considered naïve.

On the other hand, there is the romantic love discourse. Here the loved one is holy, love is promised, and we all have a "second half". Love is the utopia we aspire to, and as utopias go, it is always destined to disappoint. Here we seek to imbue ourselves in our second half and to be reborn as a unified couple. This image of love is ancient, as our romantic imagination about the holiness of the union is represented through Plato and the *Song of Songs*, to Medieval troubadour poetry, *Romeo and Juliet* and onto modernity, from Goethe's *Werther* to every other romantic comedy. And, as *this* story goes, love has two "solutions": It either ends in a tragic death or marriage (the relationship and the end of the love story). Either way, it ends before it begins. Love in modern times threatens to sink into the economic abyss

1 Badiou discussed two slightly different philosophical positions (13).

of the "relationship" or to crumble into dementia and melancholy of the tragic loss. This is where love and "falling in love" are separated. As such, authentic love does not refer to authentic and "realistic" living, and in the authentic and realistic life, love has no language. One can think of our need to separate the "falling in love" or "crush" bit of our love-life, from the more mature depiction of love as a relationship, as a manifestation of this tear.

For example, this is commercial sign currently appearing in London's underground trains: "We're serious, this is the end of dating. This is the end of "disappointing"; of "hopeless" [...] We bring you "like-minded"; "the kindred spirit". We do it all differently. 35 years of decoding the *Science of lasting love*. 150 carefully selected questions and that one person you never thought you'd meet. We take love seriously". Here, in hellish alchemy economy and science and the romantic myth meet: Love has turned into science that unites people precisely according to their predicates.

Moreover, in the background lies psychoanalysis, another discourse in which love is revealed as other than love: we are to answer 150 questions that will reveal our interiority, and thus enable the algorithm to unite us with potential lovers. But, in a devilish maneuver, the commercial also plays on the allure of the romantic myth: we are to meet "our second half", the "one person" that suits us. Love is a secure (probably insured) and scientific process that actualizes a romantic and unattainable myth. Economy, psychology, and data mining join together to bring forth a love process to end all loves, and as a matter of fact single love's failures. Badiou famously discussed a similar commercial, promising safe love ("love without chance"), that for him poses "a threat for love" (5-6). Our love discourse is torn between a holy and thus naïve and kitsch-like sphere, and a secular, technological and economic – and thus cynical and empty – one. Love is either natural, authentic and almost impossible to achieve, or functions in a discourse in which authenticity holds no merit.

The Hebrew poet Arie Zaks expressed this form of what I will call "secular" love, in his poem "A Hard Breakup":

You became a
Habit

But not something like a delicate
Aperitive before dinner

But like
Heroine.

Zaks' poem secularizes – materially and obscenely – the holy experience of the biblical *Song of Songs*. There, love is "as strong as death" (*Song of Songs* 8 6), and here, it is compared to substance abuse. Moreover, as Robert Alter shows, the *Song of Songs* creates

an elaborate metaphoric structure, where metaphors create the erotic movement, as the lover and the loved one are compared and imagined in a garden of metaphors. A metaphor is usually made up of two components: the vehicle that carries one thing and turns it into another (the tenor). In the *Song of Songs* the erotic-metaphoric movement never stops, as each tenor is also a vehicle in itself (Alter 185-203). In Zaks' poem, on the other hand, this imaginary and erotic movement is entirely lacking. The loved one is not imagined or metaphorized as anything else: it is simply a habit, with the imaging "like" absent (For example "Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the young women" *Song of Songs* 2 2). It is *the habit* that is compared to other daily and material enjoyments. Love here takes the form of the notions of the *Song of Songs*, where love is described as a sickness ("for I am faint with love" 2 5) or as a tragic and deadly movement ("As strong as death" 8 6) transforms and secularizes them. The secular form of love turns the romantic and sanctified spheres of love "on their head", transforming them into a cliché, and turning love into a physical experience from which one has to rehabilitated and withdraw from. Love is entirely separated from any form of sacredness: it is entirely separate from the image (man, we recall, was created in God's image, and now the two are separated).

In his *Lover's Discourse* Barthes explains the exiled state of love, showing how it's also connected to questions of discourse and power:

The lover's discourse is today of an extreme solitude. This discourse is spoken, perhaps, by thousands of subjects (who knows?), but warranted by no one; it is completely forsaken by the surrounding languages: ignored, disparaged, or derided by them, severed not only from authority but also from the mechanisms of authority (sciences, techniques, arts) [...]. [This] discourse is thus driven by its own momentum into the backwater of the "unreal", exiled from all gregarity (Barthes 2).

Barthes' words – written in 1977 – resound profoundly today. As Steven Unger explains "Barthes questions the appropriate ways to write about love at a moment when, from all indications, it is a labor of lust, nothing more than sex" (Unger 84), connecting the dots between Barthes' work in the late Seventies, and Illouz and Badiou's work today. This does not mean in any way that people do not love today.² What I suggest is that there is a problem in the gap between love – the thing we all do, in some form or another – and its representation in language. And following that, in the relations it creates with our poetic and political imagination. It is not surprising then that for Barthes and Badiou the problem of love is related to the question of power and politics. For Barthes, the problem of the lover's discourse is its detachment from "mechanisms of authority"; while for Badiou, love is one of the ways in which a process of truth can be produced (Badiou 2012, 27-28, 43).

² See Illouz 2015, 238-239.

I will not delve into Badiou's political and ethical theory here; I will only note that the philosopher's perception of love lies in its capacity for opening a form of life that exists through difference, what he calls a "two-scene" (Badiou 28). It is also important to say that Illuz's criticism on the state of love today ends in an attempt to reclaim love as an essentially social (even socialist) experience, that forces us to live and grow with other people (Illouz 2015, 246-247).³ Also, following that, that in the "marketplace of love", these political and ethical aspects are negated in favor of a neo-liberal process in which the subject is mostly concerned with his gain: and love is seen as just (another) privatized capitalist process.

Unsurprisingly, the only realm where love still holds a relation to power is identity politics, and mostly in their perverted national and alt-right manifestations. In her book on politics and emotions, Sarah Ahmed shows how nationalist and racist political groups base their self-definition on love (Ahmed 122-125). This model presents a clear heterosexual form of love that is based upon a model of the identity between the lovers, that creates a form of idealization: "So the idealization of the loved object can allow the subject to be itself in or through what it has" (128). Love has to do not only with identification – the love to the self-same as reflected in the other – but also with the question of possession (and land).

Here, the subject tries to unify himself with the loved object – which also represents the nation– and in this unification he reinforces himself. This is not a "two-scene" but a one-scene where love disguises the recoil from the other (Ahmed 127). Ahmed points out to the connection between love phrases such as "I Love Every Jew" / a prominent figure of speech in Israeli right-wing messianic politics – and practices of voting for the candidate who "represents me": looks like me, thinks like me, desires like me and lives where I live. In this model, it is not that I "hate the other" but just the simple fact that I love my own kind, and the non-queer nature of this love that is based upon identification nullifies the possibilities of being with difference. Love here stands as the ethical and private grounds for the appropriating of the political space and turning it into a place where I/us hold political power, privileges, and rights. And all of this happens "in the name of love" as a means of representation and identification, that also produces a clear and *proper* form of life that one has to identify with.

Ahmed forms an acute critique fixed upon the failures and falsification of the project of identity politics in which the far-right serves as an extreme example to a problem that is present in the heart of liberal and multi-cultural politics (Ahmed 130-140). Privately, love today holds no power; and when people do speak in the name of love, it forms the basis for

3 The socialist aspect of Illouz's thought's on love is manifested in a series of articles in the Hebrew newspaper *Ha'aretz*, between the years 2013-2015. See for example "Don't Be My Valentine: Are Couples Becoming a Thing of the Past?", *Ha'aretz*, 14/2/2013, <https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-don-t-be-my-valentine-is-coupled-1.5229897>.

the crisis of representation in politics and liberal democracies that we are witnessing today. As Jean Luc Nancy stated in 1992, words that resound profoundly today: "Nevertheless, social speech – cultural, political, and the like – seems as impoverished as that of lovers. It is at this point that we should revive the question of literature." (Nancy 37).⁴

B. Barthes Contours of Love

Barthes' *Lovers Discourse* confronts the problem of "talking about love". The book consists of philosophical and poetic fragments that are arranged alphabetically, and do not create a clear argument or a stable process: it is an encyclopedia of notions about love. The fragments deal with various phrases from love's life: gossip, the catastrophe, the tip of the nose. The text does not aspire to discover the depth or "meaning" of love and to tell us "what love is", but to present (and then represent) love's speech act: "Its active principle is not what it says but what it articulates" (Barthes 6). As Stephan Heath says, this is not a psychological account but a topology: "What is in question is not a psychological but a structural account of the lover in place of discourse the 'place de parole' that the lover occupies as lover" (Heath 101). And Barthes writes that "the argument does not refer to the amorous subject and what he is (no one external to this subject, no discourse on love), but to what he says" (Barthes 5). This is he calls a "figure" – a linguistic image – a linguistic gesture that occupies a particular space.

Steven Unger shows the importance of the image to Barthes' conception of love. It is important to note that this is not merely an image or a word but a bodily gesture. "Priority of the body does not, however, exclude the word, body, and word interacting in what Lacan describes as the convergence of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real" (Unger 88). Bodies, images, and speech are entangled in the emotive gesture of love, that is, as Unger points out, inherently connected to knowledge. "Because Barthes's practice of semiotics acknowledges the emotive structure of cognition" (Unger 85). The linguistic image that every one of love's many experiences creates points to an attempt to rethink the means through which knowledge is produced. If we follow Roman Jakobson's idea that the poetic function is focused on the transmission itself (the enunciation) and not on the referent, then Barthes' *Lover's Discourse* can be thought of as a philosophical-poetic endeavor of the imagination, where the two, philosophy and poetry, coincide in the same gesture (Jakobson 350-377).

As stated earlier, the book opens with a statement about love's language dwelling in no-man's land, uprooted from any discursive power, on the limits of philosophy. In the past,

4 On the impoverished state of world politics example see Agamben "In the Name of What" (2017); see also Wendy Brown's *Undoing the Demos*. Echoing Walter Benjamin's resentment towards what he calls "left-wing Melancholy" Brown connects this crisis of legitimacy, law and politics to the capitalist regime.

Barthes says, love had a "method". For example, in Plato's "Symposium":

this conversation is systematic: what the guests try to produce are not proved remarks, accounts of experiences, but a doctrine: for each of them, Eros is a system. Today. However, there is no system of love: and the several systems which surround the contemporary lover offer him no room (except for an extremely devaluated place): tum as he will toward one or another of the received languages, none answers him, except in order to tum him away from what he loves. Christian discourse, if it still exists, exhorts him to repress and to sublimate. Psychoanalytical discourse (which, at least, describes his state) commits him to give up his Image-repertoire as lost. As for Marxist discourse, it has nothing to say. If it should occur to me to knock at these doors in order to gain recognition somewhere (wherever it might be) for my "madness" (my "truth"). These doors close one after the other; and when they are all shut, there rises around me a wall of language which oppresses and repulses me – unless I repent and agree to "get rid of X" (Barthes 211).

The lover's language is "exiled from all gregarity [collectivity]" (Barthes 2), but the book does not reorganize and make it proper, but leaves it in that abandoned state, against closed doors. This process of diss-appropriation involves the deconstruction of the figure of authenticity as well. The text does not give love an authentic ethos or origin (or present emotions as man's authentic and non-linguistic experience). Love here is a linguistic and imaginary (poetic) process made of quotations. The book is a constellation of quotes and paraphrases from different sources – Plato, Nietzsche, Sade, Goethe, Zen wisdom and the author's nameless friends – alongside personal and philosophical interpretations from Barthes. Love is born as a quote, in *in-authenticity*.⁵

As such, text does not re-affirm the somewhat melancholic disposition of the romantic myth –always ending in either marriage or death. I say this against Robert C. Solomon claim that Barthes does not discuss love: "Throughout his *Discourse* he dwells instead on the languor, the waiting, the distance, the suffering of love" (Solomon 148). Solomon does not simply reject Barthes' gesture as nihilistic, but he does attempt to answer them with a more "optimistic" lover's discourse (149). I somewhat agree with his claims about the problems in the depiction of love as longing, and especially for the call for an affirmative concept. However, I argue that juxtaposed against Agamben's thought, Barthes' love re-appears not as longing and loss but as exposure, a radical experience of passivity that offers a meeting with the other. As such the romantic myth of longing serves as the *profane typology for a language of love as being together*. And as Unger shows, the text does open up an affirmative mode of love that holds – like hope itself – a tautological

5 As Catherine Belsey, in her work on love stories in western culture, simply puts it: "*I Love you* is always a quotation" (Belsey 76).

nature: "To affirm love is thus to concur-tentatively, that is in the spirit of critical thinking – that the subject of love (overdetermined as both discursive voice and humanist topos) is perhaps nothing more than (nothing other than) its polymorphous affirmation" (Unger 88).

Before moving on to Agamben, and the connection between love and profane politics, I will locate the philosophical space that *A Lover's Discourse* occupies, a space that is also inherently exposed. The text implicitly opens up a tension that concerns the impossibility of love's language (perhaps even the problem of philosophy at large): the tension between the general and the particular that love always reveals and leaves unresolved. Between his own painful or happy memories and experiences depicted in the text, and the philosophical endeavor it presents, Barthes points out to the fact that love is always torn. It is the most common of feelings and experiences, as we all talk about our love all the time; and at the same time, it is a general (philosophical) concept. To talk about love is to be forever torn between talking about *my* love and talking about *love*. Barthes text attempts to solve this tension; or, to be more accurate, to linger in the caesura that opens up between the particular – the loving *person* – and the general – the Idea of love.

C. Agamben's "Love as-such"

These ideas will become clearer, I argue, through a comparison with Giorgio Agamben's philosophy of love. Agamben approaches love differently than Barthes. While Barthes replaces talking about love with an in-love discourse (the contours of love), Agamben attempts to philosophically define love (or, it is correct to say that he tries to define the philosophical function of love). One of the more telling discussions of love in his work happens in the early essay concerned with Heidegger's approach to love. Agamben claims that even if love appears in Heidegger's writing only a few select times, in a way it is the basis for the German philosopher's thought: love is the basic movement that opens up being (*Dasein*) to the world (Agamben 1999, 198-199).

I suggest that love functions in the same manner in Agamben's thought: it serves as the basic means of approach to philosophy, poetics, and politics as it is the basis for the potentiality of the imagination, which for Agamben is the "defining principle of the human species" (Agamben 2013, 55).⁶ In the opening of *The Coming Community*, love appears the imaginative tension between the particular and the general, the idea and its representation in individual cases of human life.

Love is never directed toward this or that property of the loved one (being blond, being short, being tender, being lame), but neither does it neglect the properties in favor of an

⁶ As Parsley says, Agamben is concerned with an "attempt to retrieve the image from the modern scope regime of aesthetics semiotically-governed questions of truthful representation, and Cartesian perspectivism, in order to reconnect the image to its place within the imagination that Agamben privileges above the intellect (37).

insipid generality (universal love): The lover wants the loved one with all of its predicates, its being such as it is. The lover desires the as only insofar as it is such-this is the lover's particular fetishism. Thus, whatever singularity (the Lovable) is never the intelligence of something, of this or that quality or essence, but only the intelligence of an intelligibility. The movement Plato describes as erotic anamnesis is the movement that transports the object not toward another thing or another place, but toward its own taking-place-toward the Idea (Agamben 2007 3)

Agamben's love happens in the tension between the particular (blond, tall, gentle) and the general (universal love). Here, Agamben turns our pre-prescribed notions of the Platonic idea on their head: the idea is not an origin that we represent, and we are not glancing at shadows on the wall of a cave. The idea is precisely the thing itself: the singular being – between the particular and the general – that we love "as such". Agamben even declares that the idea for Plato is the intelligibility of the thing in language (Agamben 1999, 31): not as means of communication of knowledge or the referent, but intelligibility as such: the appearance of language as *means without end* (Agamben 33). And love is the "bridge" to the idea. It is the intelligibility of the thing itself, that is simply the beloved that lies in front of us. He is loved not because any of his predicates and not because of universal love:⁷ the loved one is loved in the constellation of his predicates, as such.⁸

The thing itself is not an abstract and divine concept but coincides with human language as such; the lover is a linguistic image that is intelligible *but still resists the representative mechanisms of communication*. She/he is an image without a referent because she/he is their own referent. The loved one does not represent anything (black/white, rich/poor), but only him/herself. He/she appears as a constellation predicates and does not annul them (the way a simplistic Marxist or liberal notion on the other will do). He/she is an image that represents only itself, and in this way, it is an idea. If we return to Barthes' concepts, this is the typology of the lover's speech, that lies outside the discursive powers: the idea of love is singular and does not create representative relations with other discourses, and for that reason lies as a remnant in the middle of the tension between the private and the general. The loved one is somehow intelligible, and yet interrupts the means in which we represent him/her (black, left wing, immigrant) as it exists in a non-relation with them.

It is important to note that Agamben rejects the notion – that might turn up whenever one talks about loving an "image" / that this idea of love is self-referential and thus consists

7 Agamben works against Badiou's concept of universal (in *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*). On the difference between between Badiou's universalism and Agamben's see Prozorov (Prozorov 83).

8 For Agamben, following Walter Benjamin and Aby Warberg's, the idea is revealed in a constellation: this is the profoundly historiosophical element of his work, as historical exigency is key for the appearance and intelligibility of the idea. His work on the paradigm in *The Signature of all Things* is an attempt to theorize the method of the constellation. See also Ilit Ferber *Philosophy and Melancholy Benjamin's early reflections on theater and language*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013.

of auto-affection:

if one recognizes oneself in the image but without also being misrecognized and loved in it [...] it means no longer being able to love; it means believing that we are the masters of our own species and that we coincide with it. If the interval between perception and recognition is indefinitely prolonged, the image becomes internalized as a fantasy and love falls into psychology (Agamben 2015, 57-58).

Agamben reflects here on the two failed philosophical extremes that I have outlined at the beginning of this article: for him, Love is not an encounter with the self-same or a melancholic and endless longing for the unattainable. He clearly states that love is a shared mode of living (intimacy) that involves inherent distance and strangeness, that preserves the other's singularity:

To live in intimacy with a stranger, not in order to draw him closer, or to make him known, but rather to keep him strange, remote: unapparent – so unapparent that his name contains him entirely. And, even in discomfort, to be nothing else, day after day, than the ever open place, the unwaning light in which that one being, that thing, remains forever exposed and sealed off (Agamben 1995, 61).

Love is a meeting (touch, encounter, adventure) of singularities: images, gazes, tongues, and *bodies*, that reveal nothing but the world as such. "These lovers have initiated each other into their own lack of mystery as their most intimate secret; they mutually forgive each other and expose their vanitas". (Agamben 2004, 87). I argue that Agamben's profane ethics are based on this form of love. Man, Agamben argues, has no work, vocation or essence: "it is clear that if humans were or had to be this or that substance, this or that destiny, no ethical experience would be possible-there would be only tasks to be done" (Agamben 2007, 44). I argue that to understand the relation between Agamben's love and its political and poetic implications, we must understand his idea of the profane. Agamben's ethics (of love) rejects both instrumental and pragmatic economic existence (and one can easily think here about the manners in which politics turned into a pragmatic and technical economy or *oikonomia*), and religious ethics of transcendental meaning. As such, profanation is not secularization:

Secularization is a form of repression. It leaves intact the forces it deals with by simply moving them from one place to another. Thus, the political secularization of theological concepts (the transcendence of God as a paradigm of sovereign power) does nothing but displace the heavenly monarchy onto an earthly monarchy, leaving its power intact. Profanation, however, neutralizes what it profanes. Once profaned, that which was unavailable and separate loses its aura and is returned to use. Both are political operations: the first guarantees the exercise of power by carrying it back to a sacred model; the second deactivates the apparatuses of power and returns to common use the spaces that power had seized (Agamben 2015, 76).

Profanation preserves sacredness through play (poetics, imagination): "The passage from the sacred to the profane can, in fact, also come about by means of an entirely inappropriate use (or, rather, reuse) of the sacred: namely, play [...] This means that play frees and distracts humanity from the sphere of the sacred, without simply abolishing it" (Agamben 2015, 75-76). Play must be thought of as the imaginative (poetic) manner that love potentializes and returns to common use. Play, love or poetic existence are not a different mode of living, but the potentiality that exists in the world as such.

These notions will become clearer if we understand that profane potentiality does not exist solely in modern or post-modern texts but is inherent to the process of sacredness, as free use is to exclusion. In the case of love's genealogy, a profane event appears (only to be rejected) in one of the canonic texts of the love's philosophy. I return to Plato's *Symposium*, a text that deals with the relations between theology (Eros is a god, after all), philosophy and love. In close quarters, intellectual and political figures of an imagined ancient Athens meet to discuss that noble emotion. In this philosophical symposium of love as a method, two events of profanations uproot the orderly and proper love discourse.

The first reminds us that love is something that beings experience: the drunk and Athenian hero Alcibiades Athenian enters the room and retrieves love from general idealizations to a particular embodiment. Here we do not encounter gods and myths but a prosaic and straightforward narrative of spurned love. Stammering drunkenly, Alcibiades reveals that time and again Socrates rejects his wooing and prefers the philosophical dialogue to the loving embrace. Philosophy is profaned, but Alcibiades' speech remains in the ethos of love as sacred. He says about Socrates:

his words are like the images of Silenus which open; they are ridiculous when you first hear them; he clothes himself in language that is like the skin of the wanton satyr [...] but he who opens the bust and sees what is within will find that they are the only words which have a meaning in them, and also the most divine, abounding in fair images of virtue, and of the widest comprehension, or rather extending to the whole duty of a good and honorable man (Plato).

For Alcibiades Socrates' love discourse only *seems* as ridicules, but in fact, it is a guise and image that holds meaning, duty, and honor. And even though Alcibiades connects the form of love – the fair image – with ethics, this apparatus depends upon the sacred dichotomy of the proper and the improper. However, his drunken break-in into the philosophical space brings forth a further opening of boundaries and limits of this secluded space.

suddenly a band of revelers entered and spoiled the order of the banquet. Someone who was going out having left the door open, they had found their way in, and made themselves at home; great confusion ensued, and everyone was compelled to drink large quantities of wine (Plato).

The doors of the sacred spaces of love's discourse are broken free, as bodies mix with tongues and tongues with bodies. If only for a fleeting moment, in a profane action, Love and its language pass over together to the realm of free use. Sacredness is not annulled but is freed from the representative mechanisms that chain it: in these few sentences we experience the possibility of human life and love that exists only as it is exiled from all gregariness and every discursive language (power, sciences, knowledge), and for that reason free. It is no wonder that the *things that were said and done* in this abandoned philosophical orgy remain out of the text, canon, and law.

D. Towards an idea of profane love:

This profane trans-historical potentiality takes on a historical figure in Barthes' *Lovers Discourse*. I suggest that the profane figure of the "obscene" serves for him as the hypothesis of any love discourse today: "Example of obscenity: each occasion in this very text that the word love is used (the obscenity would cease if we were to say, mockingly, 'luv')" (Barthes 175); any discussion of love appears as obscene and improper. "Discredited by modern opinion, love's sentimentality must be assumed by the amorous subject as a powerful transgression which leaves him alone and exposed: by a reversal of values, then, it is sentimentality which today constitutes love's obscenity (ibid)".

Barthes recognizes the historical status of love in modernity: the lover today is alone and exposed. This is a "historical reversal: it is no longer sexuality which is indecent, it is the *sentimental* – censured in the name of what is in fact only another morality" (177). Here modern secular thought merely reenacts the old, mostly religious restrictions on love. Unsurprisingly Barthes, following George Bataille, connects this discursive struggle to questions of sovereignty, human potentiality and the attempt to free it through this exposure, "the necessary form of the impossible [love's philosophy] and the sovereign" (176).

Exposed and abandoned love and its (figurative) speech open the modes of profanations. For the unwelcomed "band of revelers" or Goldberg's "simple wanderer", profanation allows for the free use of the sacred: the grounds of the temple, philosophical speech, and political power (if only for a fleeting, imagined moment). Love– exposed and obscene – works against modernity as a mode of profanation.

Whatever is anachronic is obscene. As a (modern) divinity, History is repressive, History forbids us to be out of time. Of the past we tolerate only the ruin, the monument, kitsch, what is *amusing*: we reduce this past to no more than its signature. The lover's sentiment is old fashioned, but this antiquation cannot even be recuperated as a spectacle: love falls outside of *interesting* time; no historical, polemical meaning can be given to it; it is in this that it is obscene (177-178).

Love today appears only as obscene, a wanton material addiction. But it is in this obscenity that the potentiality of profanation appears.

Amorous obscenity is extreme: nothing can redeem it, bestow upon it the positive value of a transgression; the subject's solitude is timid, stripped of any *décor*: no Bataille will give a style (*en écriture*) to that obscenity. The amorous text (scarcely a text at all) consists of little narcissisms, psychological paltriness; it is without grandeur: or its grandeur (but who, socially, is present to acknowledge it?) is to be unable to reach any grandeur, not even that of "crass materialism". It is then the *impossible* moment when the obscene can really coincide with affirmation, with the *amen*, the limit of language (178-179).

The exposed, obscene, abandoned, and wanton love, released from the sacredness of romantic love and the cynicism of modern pragmatism, is the linguistic moment of affirmation, of the *amen*. Love is singular because it is not actual(ized), because it hinges at the edge of representation, forming a non-relation. The grandeur of the lover's speech is the fact that it is non-relatable, not represented and functions outside of the halls of representation (sciences, philosophy, politics). This is the singular being that Agamben refers to: a loved being, that in her profane state is an image that doesn't demand identification or representation, but speech and touch. The loved one, with his predicates, as such, is made out of a constellation of small narcissisms that are the idea. It is love's detachment from power – its antiquated being – that opens up now the possibility to use it freely, to talk about love. This, I argue, does not mean giving up on love's sacred elements – the romantic myth, the sacredness of love, the joys of sex - and the imaginative potential they possess, but *playing with them*.

Here man's proper place, the authentic and the sacred, entirely coincides with the improper, the inauthentic and the secular; where the *amen* and the obscene coincide. The *amen*, as Barthes says in the final pages of his book, is not a prayer for a transcendent divine force (sovereignty) but a Nietzschean blessing celebrating profane and loving human existence as-such: "not to pray any longer! To bless" (Barthes 234). In Agamben's words:

So be it. In every thing affirm simply the thus [...] But thus does not simply mean in this or that mode, with those certain properties. "So be it" means "let the thus be." In other words, it means "yes". [...] Seeing something simply in its being-thus-irreparable, but not for that reason necessary; thus, but not for that reason contingent- is love (Agamben 2007, 102-105).

Profane and obscene love – appearing as such, not particular nor general but singular, at the caesura between the sacred and the secular – is the improper place where man finds his propriety, his *potentiality*. In this image of love the tension between the general and the particular and the proper and the improper, the human and the divine, becomes inoperative.

Tzachi Zamir's reading of Shakespeare's *Othello* can shed more light on these ideas. Zamir claims that Othello's anger comes from the fact that Desdemona's deep and unrelenting love is, as Zamir says, "a love that cannot be lost". As such

Something in this loving saint [Desdemona] makes [Othello's] personality irrelevant. On the most fundamental level, the tragedy is thus about the limitations of erotic bliss. It is about the psychological murder implied by the very idea of an erotic bond that transcends action and contingent biography (Zamir 160).

Zamir points out that Othello's self-value – the reasons he considers himself worthy of love – derives from his actions and utility (159). Against that, Desdemona's loving gaze penetrates through contingent history, actions, and achievements: "it is a mode of connecting with the lover in ways that transcend what he does" (158). Thinking Zamir through Agamben, I argue that this loving gaze sees the image of the lover not as a fixed and actualized historical project, but the unstable constellation and potentialities – using Agamben's terms – that form the hypothesis (basis) of Othello as a *singularity*.

Othello and Desdemona disagree on the meaning of love: for Othello, you should be loved for who you *actually are*, and he mistakes Desdemona's love for one that negates his achievements, actions, and history. He mistakes it for a universal and general love and thus is offended by it. However, as Zamir says "Desdemona's offer is of a deeper level of connection, in which she sees as far as his watery, as yet unshaped, source" (159). Her vision of the beloved's image as his "watery state" - as potentiality, basically - brings to mind Agamben's idea of the subject as a vortex:

We should not conceive of the subject as a substance but as a vortex in the flow of becoming. He has no other substance than that of the single being, but, with respect to it, he has his own figure, manner, and movement. And it is in this sense that we need to understand the relation between substance and its modes. Modes are the whirlpools in the endless field of substance, which, by collapsing and swirling in itself, is subjectivized, becomes aware of itself, suffers and enjoys (Agamben 2017, 61).

Here subjectification is a process that has a singular rhythm (57), but at the same time is not individual per se, as the vortex is made of the whole water. This subject is an ongoing process that is at once historical, sociological and thus general, but also has a rhythm, and therefore it is singular. We do not love the other because of his actions, but *in his potential, unfinished state*: because of his rhythm. And potentiality, as Agamben shows, is not subordinate to actualization, but depends on impotentiality "potentiality is not a logical hypostasis but the mode of existence of a privation" (Agamben 1999, 179). This watery mode – unrealized – is an existence of a privation, the having of potentiality, the ability to not do. Moreover, even when potentiality is realized, "impotentiality isn't abolished: on the

contrary, it preserves itself as such in actuality" (184). What Desdemona's gaze sees – what love sees – is the potential of the loved one to not-be - defined by his actions, actualizations, history – but also not be separated from them): to be as-not, potential, and be loved as-such, as a vortex.

E. Impotentiality, Politics and Imagination

Connal Parsley's considers love in Agamben to be "pure means", that serves only as a radical experience of passivity that cannot form political action or relation to the other (Parsley 44-45). As I have shown, Agamben does indeed think of love as an experience of alterity. Against Parsley's notions, I suggest that this movement also holds political implications. Because it is here that Agamben's worn-out figure of the "*homo sacer*" the man that law does not protect nor release but abandoned – his pessimistic paradigm of modernity – gains an affirmative meaning (Agamben 1998, 71-75). The *Homo Sacer* is a person who was sacrificed to the gods but returned to man, and his sacredness is precisely his abandoned and profane state. Much alike, exiled from all gregarity and representation, the lover's discourse is sacred precisely because it is abandoned, passive and impotent. I argue that the lover is the sacred man that can (speak of) love without secularizing it or reestablishing the kingdom of heaven.

In *Remnants of Auschwitz* – a notoriously pessimistic text – Agamben also offers a depiction of a form of subjectivity that begins with shame: subjectivity is the process in which a person serves as a witness to his own de-subjectification, the encounter with the fundamental passivity that constructs subjectivity. Being a person means that you are the subject of your de-subjectification, existing in the form of a fluid vortex of passivity and activity:

the fundamental sentiment of being a subject, in the two apparently opposed sense of this phrase: to be subjected and to be sovereign. Shame is what is produced in the absolute concomitance of subjectification and desubjectification, self-loss and self-possession, servitude and sovereignty (Agamben 1999, 107).

Agamben connects this form of subjectivity to poetics: for him, poetry is the linguistic process of witnessing this process of desubjectification (118-119). The poet, *homo-sacer* or the lover are figures (or gestures) that express the idea that subjectivity, politics, and poetics are inherently connected as an experience of passivity and of exposure.

The same ideas can be said about Barthes notions of love. Eduardo Cadava and Paola Cortes-Rocca show that for him, love is an experience that changes the self in the presence of the other: "the body he loves is not unlike the music he loves, since both enter his own body and, in entering it, prevent it from remaining just 'his', even if, as he [Barthes] suggests, 'he' and his body become a kind of musical organ that 'plays' this music from *somewhere else* as if it were emerging from him" (Cadava and Cortes-Rocca 31). However,

this encounter is not with the lover itself, but with its image, its gesture. As Barthes writes "In the fascinating image, what impresses me (like a sensitized paper) is not the accumulation of its details but this or that inflection, What suddenly manages to touch me (ravish me) in the other is the voice, the line of the shoulders, the slenderness of the silhouette, the warmth of the band, the curve of a smile, etc" (Barthes 191). What interests both Barthes and Agamben is the meeting of singularities (without relation, without knowledge) that is opened up in the gestures of the other (and of the self).

It is this exposure to non-knowledge – "Something accommodates itself exactly to my desire (about which I know nothing)" – that is the key to a thinking poetics, politics, and love as a radical experience in passivity; it is important to note how this stance exactly works against the notions of modern love which I discussed earlier, that, as Illouz showed, focus on love as a process of self-enlightenment and improvement. Here, love only informs me of my non-knowledge and passivity. As Agamben writes: "Lovers go to the limit of the improper in a mad and demonic promiscuity; they dwell in carnality and amorous discourse, in forever-new regions of impropriety and facticity, to the point of revealing their essential abyss (Agamben 1999, 204)".

I offer that love does not only presents the beloved as a singularity "as such": love also offers the lovers space to dwell in, together, as strangers. More importantly, love opens up inside the subject this same space. It is not only between subjects but also between the subject and himself (Wolfreys 159). Not only do we "learn" that the beloved is his idea *and* his corporality, but that we are (in) this vortex. Language and its dwelling place in politics open this fundamental alterity that can also be called passivity, exposure or love.

I argue for the political implications of such a concept. Firstly, it is a subtle attempt at an affirmative language of love and imagination. The critique of Agamben's work claims that his view on contemporary politics is inherently negative. Badiou shows that his political "heroes" are desperate, melancholic and impotent (Badiou 558-559).⁹ These perceptions miss the essential aspect of Agamben's thought, which is in its heart messianic and optimistic at its heart (Prozorov 10-16), and I argue that Agamben offers an affirmative philosophy of the imagination.

Moreover, Agamben's "coming community" is not an empty one. As he goes to great lengths to display in *The Use of Bodies* and *The Highest Poverty*, the horizon of humanity is not that of a "man without content", but a form-of-life for which life and rule coincide. In simple terms, Agamben's rejects the liberal depiction of law as the power that allows an empty form of freedom – as long as you don't do X you are allowed to do anything (thus

9 See also Prozorov (54).

basically detaching man from the law) – and calls for the realization of forms-of-life for whom there is a deeper meaning to the things they do.

The aporia of this claim is apparent: one cannot call for a multitude of singular forms-of-life without succumbing to empty generalizations or to dogma. This is why Agamben tries to offer imagination and its relation to potentiality as the core of human existence. Imagination is always a linguistic faculty, and language depends upon imagination. So, as the loved one is the idea – a singular image – it is love that opens up the realms of imagination, potentiality and the new horizons of humanity. If, as Agamben stated recently, the only figure we can speak in its name today is language itself, as all other social mechanisms have lost their legitimacy (Agamben 2017, 63-71), I offer that love can serve as a philosophical, poetic and political paradigm that will enable this form of speech and imagination.

I suggest that what he offers here is not another “empty” form of universal humanity, but the attempt to think of singularities that exist in a union of form and content, law and life; albeit always in a process of change, as the subject-lover is always the subject of its own de-subjectification. The lover’s blushing gaze offers the paradigm or image for such a form-of-life. The lover is the figure for which passivity and activity, impotentiality and creation, desire and philosophy and life and poetics coincide. The obscene figure of Barthes’ lover can serve as the political hero that Agamben’s thought needs, in its complicated path towards affirmative politics.

This leads me to my final suggestion: in love, we attempt to re-insert imagination and poetics into the political discourse. It is important to note that even for Ahmed – who wholeheartedly rejects the idea of thinking poetics through love – the connection between love and political imagination remains prominent:

If love does not shape our political visions, it does not mean we should not love the visions we have. [...] We need to be invested in the images of a different kind of world and act upon those investments in how we love our loves, and how we live our lives, at the same time as we give ourselves up and over to the possibility that we might get it wrong, or that the world that we are in might change its shape (Ahmed 141).

Passivity – giving ourselves up to the watery potentialities of the world – is the cipher of a love that is, at all time, connected to a vision (image) of the world as such, with all its potentialities. This is what this essay tried to open up, whilst giving itself up to love’s language, again and again: to talk “in the name of love”, not in an attempt to recreate some form of lost identification, communion or community, but to think of a linguistic and political space in which abandonment, passivity, and non-relation are the basis for politics and subjectivity. This is – using Jean Luc Nancy’s words – an “inoperative community”, where the relation between the different singularities does not demand communion but touch. Love is an ex-

perience of exposure that can only happen at the limits (of the body, of the subject, of the nation); but this is not the "safe" limit of the modern "relationship", nor the "held" borders of the state. As Jean-Luc Nancy says (while quoting George Bataille):

This is why speech – including silence – is not a means of communication but communication itself, an exposure [...] The speaking mouth does not transmit, does not inform, does not effect any bond; it is-perhaps, thought taken at its limit, as with the kiss-the beating of a singular site against other singular sites: "I speak, and from then on I am-the being in me is outside myself and in myself." (Nancy 30-31).

Perhaps we can again be informed by Leah Goldberg's stance: "we are allowed to love". It is love that separates us, and *in this untying we are joined together as "one of the grass*. Touching each other as singularities, intimate but apart: *all things are simple and alive, you may touch them... as one of humankind*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Agamben, Giorgio. *The Coming Community*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

_____. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford, Calif, Stanford University Press, 1998.

_____. *The Idea of Prose*. Albany, State University of New York, 1985.

_____. *Nymphs*. London, Seagull, 2013.

_____. *Nudities*. Stanford, Stanford California Press, 2011.

_____. *The Open: Man and Animal*. Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 2004.

_____. *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*. Stanford, Cal, Stanford University Press, 1999.

_____. *Profanations*. New York, Zone Books, 2015.

_____. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. New York, Zone Books, 1999a.

_____. *The Adventure*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2018.

_____. *The Church and the Kingdom*. London, Seagull, 2012.

_____. *The End of the Poem: Studies in Poetics*. Stanford, Calif, Stanford University Press, 1999.

- _____. *The Fire and the Tale*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2017.
- _____. *The Idea of Prose*. N.Y, State University of New York press, 1995.
- _____. *The Man Without Content*. Stanford, Calif, Stanford University Press, 2008.
- _____. *The Use of Bodies*. Stanford, Calif, Stanford University Press, 2015a.
- Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2014.
- Alter, Robert. "The Garden of Metaphor". *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, New York, Basic Books, 2011, pp. 185-203.
- Badiou, Alain. *Logics of Worlds*, London, Continuum, 2009.
- Badiou, Alain, Nicolas Truong, and Peter R. Bush. *In Praise of Love*. New York, New Press, 2012.
- Barthes, Roland. *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. London, Penguin Books, 1977.
- Belsey, Catherine. *Desire: Love Stories in Western Culture*. Oxford, Blackwell, 1994.
- Cadava, Eduardo and Cortes-Rocca, Paola. "Notes on Love and Photography". *October*, vol. 116, Spring 2006, 3-34.
- Graeber, David and Wengrow, David. "How to Change the Course of Human History". <https://www.eurozine.com/change-course-human-history/>
- Heath, Stephan. "Barthes on Love". *SubStance*, Vol. 11/12, Vol. 11, no. 4 - Vol. 12, no. 1, Issue 37-38, 1982/1983, 100-106.
- Illouz, Eva. *Cold intimacies the making of emotional capitalism*. Cambridge, Polity 2017.
- _____. *Why love hurts: a sociological explanation*. Cambridge, Polity, 2015.
- Jacobson, Roman (1960), "Closing Statements, Linguistics and Poetics". *Style In Language*, edited by [Thomas A. Sebeok](#), Cambridge Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1960, pp. 350-377.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc, and Peter Connor. *The Inoperative Community*. Minneapolis, Minn, University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- Parsley, Connal. "'a Particular Fetishism': Love, Law and the Image in Agamben". *Giorgio Agamben, Legal, Political and Philosophical Perspectives*, edited by Frost, Tom, New-York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 31-53.

Plato. *The Symposioun*. Project Gutenberg, internet source, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1600/1600-h/1600-h.htm>.

Prozorov, Sergei. *Agamben and Politics: A Critical Introduction*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2014.

Solomon, Robert C. "A Lover's Reply (To Roland Barthes' A Lover's Discourse)". *Philosophy and Desire*, edited by Silverman, Hugh J., New York, Routledge, 2000, pp. 143-158.

Unger, Steven. "The Professor of Desire". *Yale French Studies*, No. 63, 1982, 80-97.

Zamir, Tzachi. *Double Vision: Moral Philosophy and Shakespearean Drama*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2012.

Whyte, Jessica S. *Catastrophe and Redemption: The Political Thought of Giorgio Agamben*. Albany, SUNY Press, 2013.

Wolfreys, Julian. "Face to Face with Agamben; or, the Other *in Love*". *The Work of Giorgio Agamben: Law, Literature, Life*, edited by Justin Clemens, Nicholas Heron and Alex Murray, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008, pp. 149-163.S