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## ON THE “INTIMATE CONNIVANCE” OF LOVE AND THOUGHT

Jeremy De Chavez

De La Salle University, Manila

*jeremy.dechavez@dlsu.edu.ph*

### RESUMEN

El concepto de amor históricamente ha ruborizado a la filosofía, pues se mantiene totalmente ajeno a las exigencias de dar una explicación crítica de sí mismo. El amor ha respondido con resistencia muda a los interrogatorios del pensamiento crítico. De hecho, parece existir un consenso respecto de que el amor se sitúa en un territorio más allá de lo pensable y en la *doxa* romántica se ha establecido que el amor es un tipo de intensidad que no puede reducirse a ningún principio regulador. Como señala Alain Badiou, es “lo que se sustrae de la teoría”.

En este ensayo me opongo a una postura tan antifilosófica y exploro el parentesco del amor con el pensamiento y la verdad. Basado principalmente en la obra de Jean-Luc Nancy y Alain Badiou, sondeo la relación entre amor y pensamiento, pues ello constituye una ocasión para que nos percatemos de la “connivencia íntima entre el amor y el pensar”, en palabras de Nancy. En un momento en que el amor se ve amenazado por acusaciones de no ser nada más que un “optimismo cruel”, sugiero que Nancy y Badiou hacen una defensa filosófica del amor al subrayar su parentesco con el pensamiento y la verdad.

#### PALABRAS CLAVE:

*amor, Nancy, Badiou, afectividad.*

### ABSTRACT

The concept of love has historically been somewhat of an embarrassment for Philosophy because it remains relentlessly oblivious to the demands for it to present a critical account of itself. Against the interrogations of critical thought, it has only responded with mute resistance. Indeed, the consensus seems to be that love dwells in the domain beyond the thinkable, and it is ensconced in the Romantic *doxa* that it is a form of intensity that is not subject to any organizing principle. As Alain Badiou observes, it is “what is subtracted from theory”.

In this essay, I oppose such an “anti-philosophical” position, and offer an exploration of love’s kinship with thought and truth. Drawing primarily from the work of Jean-Luc Nancy and Alain Badiou, I explore the relationship of love and thought, for it is an occasion that obligates one to realize the “intimate connivance between love and thinking,” to use the words of Nancy. At a time when love is threatened by accusations of being nothing more than a “cruel optimism”, I suggest that Nancy and Badiou offer a philosophical defense of love by underscoring its kinship to thought and to truth.

#### KEYWORDS:

*love, Nancy, Badiou, affect.*

## ON THE “INTIMATE CONNIVANCE” OF LOVE AND THOUGHT

Like a lover who is tongue-tied when in the presence of the beloved, Philosophy finds itself unable to sufficiently discourse on love, with the legitimacy of its pronouncements undercut by uncertainty, circularity, tentativeness. The relationship of (Philosophical) thought to love might be described as a movement marked by perpetual evasions. Philosophy’s will-to-know demands no less than precision and clarity as it moves towards its goal of total conceptual unity; however, love invariably frustrates those advances either by its mute resistance or by its flux of dizzying affects and intensities. Indeed, the universal consensus seems to be that love resides in the domain beyond the thinkable, the “experience *par excellence* of a vague ineffable intensity or confusion” (Hallward, 2003, p. 185). Thus, Roland Barthes (2002) comes to a distressing realization that one “cannot hope to seize the concept of [love] except ‘by the tail’: by flashes, formulas, surprises of expression, scattered through the great stream of the Image-repertoire” (p. 59). In the game of love, thought is perpetually wearied and fatigued.

Jean-Luc Nancy (2003) suggests that the problem of exhaustion is at the core of the poverty in the thinking of love; exhaustion in at least two senses. First, we have run out of new and meaningful things to say about love—for “has not everything been said on the subject of love?” (p. 245). And second, we are getting tired of making old ideas seem novel, of pouring old wine into new bottles, so to speak—for words of love “miserably repeat their one declaration, which is always the same” (Nancy, 2003, p. 245). This exhaustion in thought is undergirded by the universal consensus that love is that which lies beyond the domain of the thinkable. As dominantly conceived, love is simply ungraspable intensity that cannot be contained by the restrictive parameters of theory. Paradoxically, it is putatively the metaphorical language of poetry and art —“in the musical ejaculation of novelistic subtleties”—that provides the most “direct” method to render love somewhat

accessible to thought (Badiou, 2000). According to philosopher Alain Badiou, this contra-philosophical position installs the thinking of love within the “multiplicity of language games” where it is oriented toward infinite description that is perpetually subject to the shifting and unstable laws of the linguistic universe rather than oriented toward the production of truth (Badiou, 2005, p. 35). Indeed, it is a way of thinking love that begets exhaustion by being circuitously inexhaustible.

The apparent incompatibility of love and thought resonates in the embarrassment of theorists and philosophers when they speak of love as a legitimate object of critical inquiry. Thus, when Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2009) argue for the need to reconceptualize love within political theory in *Commonwealth*, they felt it necessary to make a preemptive strike against skeptics: “Yes, we know [love] makes many readers uncomfortable. Some squirm in their seats with embarrassment and others smirk with superiority” (p. 179). Love and thought’s incompatibility is further emphasized by the idea that former is that which wears down the latter. In *A Finite Thinking*, Jean-Luc Nancy (2003) speaks of the intellectual paralysis that occurs when one attempts to philosophize about love: “Has not the impossibility of speaking about love been...violently recognized...We know the words of love to be inexhaustible, but as to speaking *about* love, could we perhaps be exhausted?” (p. 245). The challenge posed by these thinkers then is how to think of the relationship of love and knowledge without descending into either embarrassment or exhaustion.

Despite the vexed relationship of love to thought, this essay seeks to examine the enabling possibilities of their relation. I turn to Jean-Luc Nancy and Alain Badiou for guidance because both thinkers have explored the “intimate connivance between love and thinking” (Nancy, 2003, p. 247). The depth of this “intimate connivance” leads Nancy to the conclusion that thinking itself is love. For Nancy as well as for Badiou love is not cheap sentimentality. It is not an emotion, passion, nor is it an affect. It is not an ideological illusion that colludes with the dominant

bourgeois morality and conceals the logic of advanced capitalism that covertly structures modern relationship. It is, rather, thinking itself. The work of Jean-Luc Nancy and Alain Badiou, for the most part, represent incompatible systems of thought. However, their thought might be seen to intersect when it comes to the idea of communism and of love. They see both as an exigency for the future of thought. For Badiou and Nancy the importance of communism and of love remains something to come. Yet, whereas the two are rather prolific on the topic of communism their reflections on love seem to be more modest, episodic rather than sustained. Even Badiou's book-length work *Love* is a modest 104 pages, and is uncharacteristically informal, impressionistic, and anecdotal. I would like to suggest that those moments of tentativeness and hesitation are demonstrative of a thinking solicited by love. Their ponderous pace of thought might dramatize "a new style of philosophy", a movement that "requires leisureliness and not speed" (Badiou, 2005, p. 58). It has to be, in a way, out of sync with the mad dance of the dominant capitalist regime:

Our world is marked by speed: the speed of historical change; the speed of technical change; the speed of communications; of transmissions; and even the speed in which human beings establish connections with one another...Speed is the mask of inconsistency. Philosophy must propose a retardation process. (Badiou, 2005, p. 51).

Thinking must proceed at a tempo that would allow it to properly unfold, which is often unsynchronized with the pulse of the world. It prepares us to "receive and accept the drama of the Event without anxiety," and is "open to the irreducible singularity of what happens...fed and nourished by the surprise of the unexpected" (Badiou, 2005, pp. 55-56).

## LOVE AND THOUGHT'S INTIMATE CONNIVANCE: JEAN-LUC NANCY ON LOVE

### So, what is the relation of love and thought?

Jean-Luc Nancy (2003) says that to ask that question is to encounter a profound silence, for it is a question that “asks for extreme reticence as soon as it is solicited” (p. 245). One could read that reticence as love’s refusal to submit itself to thought. Nancy, however, suggests that the silence that confronts us when we attempt to think love does not signify intellectual vacuity. In fact, that silence is a result of generosity, “the generosity not to choose between loves, not to privilege, not to hierarchize, not to exclude” (p. 247). For thought “essentially takes place in the reticence that lets singular moments of experience offer and arrange themselves”. (Nancy, 2003, p. 247). For Nancy (2003), all thinking is undergirded by love “because thinking most properly speaking, is love” (p. 247). Love because of its powers of contradiction and multiplicity—that is, its generosity—responds with a daring refusal to thought’s tendency to totalize and hierarchize. But this refusal also initiates a movement of thought, a dialectical movement. For love “is thought according to the dialectic and as the essence of the dialectic” (Nancy, 2003, p. 251).

So, now we might ask: if thinking begins with love, when does love begin? For Nancy (and for Badiou as well, but more on this to come), love begins with the amorous declaration, the utterance of “I love you.” If love were an affect, its legibility within the socio-symbolic would carry little weight in confirming its existence; however, for Nancy, what is most vital in love is contained within its declaration: “All of love resides in the fact of saying “I love you” to someone... In a certain sense, “I love you” says it all; everything is contained in “I love you” (Nancy, 2011, p. 66). This declaration initiates the dialectical movement of love.

By being thought according to the dialectic and as the essence of the dialectic, love is assigned to the very heart of the movement

of being... If one may say so —and one may rightly, in the most accurate and most proper manner— love is the heart of this dialectic... Love is at the heart of being. (Nancy, 2003, p. 251).

Nancy (2003), with a certain tentativeness, defines love as "extreme movement, beyond the self, of a being reaching completion" (p. 249). However, with love being the "heart of the dialectic" contradictions become sites of exposure and openness rather than resolved by sublation: "The heart exposes the subject. It does not deny it, it does not surpass it, it is not sublated or sublimated in it; the heart exposes the subject to everything to everything that is not its dialectic and its mastery as a subject" (Nancy, 2003, p. 254). To utter "I love you", to inscribe the existence of love in the domain of the socio-symbolic, marks the genesis of an "extreme movement" of a "being reaching completion" which does not involve sublation of the self or other; rather, the self is exposed, "but what is exposed, what makes it exposed, is that it is not completed by this process, and it *incompletes itself* to the outside..." (Nancy, 2003, p. 253).

Deviating from standard presentations of love as fusional, Nancy posits that love initiates a cutting, an incision, a fissure. Love shatters self and other, and in this mutual gesture of opening up, an amorous relation is formed: "... he, this subject, was touched, broken into, in his subjectivity, and he is from then on, from the time of love, opened by this slice, broken or fractured, even if only slightly... From then on, *I is constituted broken*" (Nancy, 2003 p. 261). Nancy's somewhat contradictory metaphors themselves enacts those very concepts of shattering and severing, for it challenges the reader's demands for conceptual consistency. Touching and caressing are not gestures that one would immediately associate with fracturing and shattering. But what I think Nancy is attempting to demonstrate is the extreme fragility of any supposed self-enclosed and total subject or idea. Love undermines the tendency of thinking to totalize, classify, hierarchize. To touch, to caress are gestures that suggests contact, relation, but not possession nor

domination. Thus, Nancy not only defines the relevance of love to thought (which for him are locked in a mutual embrace), but also suggests a way to conceptualize thought itself as non-immediate and non-totalizing. He enacts this approach to thinking and love in his own writing, which appears impressionistic, tentative yet at the same time urgent and carefully considered. In reading “Shattered Love”, one is touched by the work, and one only touches it too, never fully grasping it. Commenting on the impact of “Shattered Love”, Avital Ronnell (2001) writes:

It has changed lives, it has devastated, it has created ecstatic recognitions and dis-identifications, break-ups, new fusions and so on, multiplied the whole notion of a possible couple and given different modalities of loving and love...It somehow inscribed itself inside me somewhere. (from <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/jean-luc-nancy/articles/love-and-community> )

Although she uses the word “inscribe”, one might say that the text has “touched” Ronnell. It has shattered her understanding of love, and it the same gesture offered her new possibilities of thinking (about love).

Nancy’s contribution to the thinking of love also brackets out concepts of attachment, obsession, and desire. For Nancy (2003), desire is “foreign to love”...[it is] “infelicitous love”...[It] lacks its object...and lacks it while appropriating it to itself (or rather, it appropriates it to itself while lacking it)...[It] is unhappiness without end...” (p. 263). Love is not constructed out of libidinal matter that comes from within the subject; rather, love comes from the outside:

It does not pass through the outside because it comes from it... Love does not stop, as long as love lasts, coming from the outside. It does not remain outside; it is this outside itself, the other, each time singular, a blade thrust in me, and that I do not rejoin, because it disjoins me (Nancy, 2003, p. 261).



The declaration of love, if uttered sincerely, is a moment of realization that one is open, shattered, exposed. The moment of being touched, fissured, shattered by love, and exposed to the other, is a crucial moment for thought for it makes possible the communication of *sense* (sens). For Nancy, most forms of communication are moments when rationality merely thinks itself and when a subject converses with itself (despite seeming that he or she is conversing with another). What we often consider to communication between two subjects is really just a dialogue of one: in speaking to you, I speak to myself, and in hearing you I hear myself. Love shatters this echo chamber making it possible to communicate *sense*, a dialogue that occurs "across the absolute incommensurability of speaking positions" (Morin, 2012, p. 40).

Given the absolute disjunction between singularities, how do we establish genuine relations with another? Nancy suggests that it is certainly not to place oneself within the "desire of the other" by positioning a total and unified presentation of the self within the other's field of desire (an unconscious tendency that made Jacques Lacan posit the impossibility of sexual relations). It is rather through love, which opens and exposes singularities to themselves and each other.

### **I MATHEME YOU: ALAIN BADIOU AND THE AXIOMATICS OF LOVE**

Alain Badiou sees love as emerging from the gap between two singularities. He challenges the dominant tendency to think of love as attempting to erase the disjunction that defines the relation between the sexes, suggesting that it is precisely this tendency that is responsible for the poverty in the thinking of love. Badiou like Nancy insists that love and thought are in "intimate connivance." In "The Scene of Two" Badiou says that he is "...pleased to conclude that to love is to think" (2000, p. 261). Badiou arrives at his conclusion though the highly formal process of an "axiomatics of love," which he formulates on the basis of nothing but an "essential conviction" (p. 182). He rejects approaching love

through “psychology or a theory of passions,” for the “experience of the loving subject...does not constitute any knowledge of love”; “love does not think itself” (p. 182). He invites us to imagine love subtracted of the things one is predisposed to spontaneously associate with it, for only when those distractions are jettisoned can a highly formal analysis of love properly take place. For Badiou (2008), logic is the best remedy for the exhaustion that afflicts the thinking of love, declaring: “No theme requires more pure logic than love” (p. 183). Such a scandalous claim is, unsurprisingly, an open invitation for misunderstanding and ridicule. Indeed, one of his critics, a French broadcaster, found it disconcerting that he “would associate austere formulas with the marvelous experience of love”, and joked that Badiou abandons *je t’aime* (I love you) in favor of *je te matheme* (I matheme you) —a dismissive yet amusing pun whose rhetorical power works best on the airwaves where nuance rarely resides. The Romantic legacy had effectively welded passion, emotion, and sentimentality to the amorous experience; yet, Badiou argues that to pursue a philosophical inquiry of love the “pathos of passion, of error, of jealousy, of sex, and of death... must be held at a distance” (p. 183). When Badiou posits that the analysis of love requires pure logic, he invites us to think of love not in terms of affect, emotions, or passions, but via axioms.

Badiou’s argument that logic is the most productive method of thinking love is not merely an attempt to shock and provoke. For Badiou, to think love anew requires a complete break from established and sedimented knowledge. Logic cannot simply be supplemented to existing frameworks. There must first be a conceptual clearing. Thus, his philosophy of love begins with an enumeration and nonnegotiable rejections. In particular, he rejects “the fusional conception of love” (for love cannot be a procedure that suppresses the multiple in favor of a One), “the ablative concept of love” (for love is not an experience of the Other but an experience of the world/situation), and “the superstructural or illusory conception of love” (for love is not just an ornament to make smooth the clumsy procedure of sexual relations). The

conceptual origins of the first two definitions could be traced back to Romantic theories of love, while the third definition echoes Schopenhauer's philosophy that conceives of love as something manufactured by nature's will-to-live (Badiou, 2008, p. 181). For Badiou, love has to be a "production of truth," and all the aforementioned definitions of love sacrifice the production of truth in favor of the rule of the One: the "fusional" conception of love seeks to make a One out of Two; the "ablative," though attempting to produce an authentic knowledge of the Other, is only able to apprehend the Other as an object (*objet a*) within the coordinates of the subject's own fantasy (and thus is also caught in the logic of the One); and the "illusory," makes love a mere pawn in sexuality's regime.

Through his rejections Badiou enacts a conceptual clearing that opens up a space of thought for his very formal and logical approach to love. Liberated thus from thinking of love within those frameworks, Badiou proposes to begin not with feeling but with counting. Love for him is the construction of the amorous situation that he calls the "Scene of Two": One and another One, an immanent Two. To be clear, Badiou (2008) distinguishes the Two from the couple. Whereas the two subjects that constitute the scene of Two retain their disjunction the couple is a phenomenal appearance visible to a third position that counts the Two as One. The Two is not the combination of 'one' and 'one' but rather is an immanent Two, a "process" which signals that "there is one position and another position...totally disjunct from the other" (p. 187).

Love, Badiou claims, begins with an encounter, a haphazard meeting of pure contingency. It is the amorous encounter that marks the fortuitous moment when the life of one human being randomly intersects with another human being, transforming them both into authentic Subjects (to truth); that is, as authentic agents with the potential for action that is not manipulated by larger structures of power and control. For Badiou (2000), the encounter is "the name of the amorous chance, inasmuch as it

initiates the supplement". By referring to love as a "supplement" Badiou is underscoring his claim that love is not something that belongs to a situation, but something that comes from "outside" it; it is not an element recognized as belonging to a preexisting structure. This properly foreign element opens up possibilities for the amorous subjects of seeing the world anew, from the perspective of the Two instead of from the One. Badiou (2012), in one of his more poetic moments, writes:

When I lean on the shoulder of the woman I love, and can see, let's say, the peace of twilight over a mountain landscape, gold-green fields, the shadow of trees, black-nosed sheep motionless behind hedges and the sun about to disappear behind craggy peaks, and know—not from the expression of her face, but from within the world as it is—that the woman I love is seeing the same world, and that this convergence is part of the world and that love constitutes precisely, at that very moment, the paradox of an identical difference, then love exists, and promises to continue to exist. The fact is she and I are now incorporated into this unique Subject, the Subject of love that views that panorama of the world through the prism of our difference, so this world can be conceived, be born, and not simply represent what fills my own individual gaze. (p. 25).

It is instructive to underscore the ancillary comment "not from the expression of her face, but from within the world". Badiou hints that we should resist thinking of love within a Levinasian framework; that is, as an ethical relation initiated by the phenomenological encounter with the face that binds the subject to a pre-ontological and infinite responsibility to the other. Rather, love should be properly conceived as an "experience of the world, or of the situation, under the post-evental condition that there were Two" (Badiou, 2008, p. 187).

Badiou (2008) arrives at this unique understanding of love though the highly formal process of his "axiomatics of love", which he formulates on the basis of nothing but an "essential conviction" (p. 182). In "What is Love?" Badiou begins by provi-

ding three preliminary axioms: (1) "There are two positions of the experience of love" (Man and Woman); (2) "The two positions are totally disjunct"; and (3) "There is no third position" (p. 183). It is instructive to point out that there is a clear homology between his "axioms" and Lacan's theories on the relation (or lack thereof) of the two sexualized positions. Lacanian psychoanalytic theory similarly claims that there are two sexualized positions designated as "Man" and "Woman". These two positions are purely symbolic and have no biological, empirical, or social basis, but are so termed depending on the subject's relation to the phallic signifier (of wanting *to have* or *to be* the phallus). Those two positions constitute two wholly separate realms of experience, and no real connection between the two positions can be successfully established. This is because the laws of the Symbolic and the deceptive images of the Imaginary always mediate sexual relations; thus, subjects cannot transcend the perimeters defined by their respective fantasies<sup>1</sup>. However, although Badiou accepts the Lacanian thesis that the two positions are *absolutely* disjunct, he rejects the conventional reading of Lacan when it comes to the role of love in addressing the disjunction. Numerous Lacanian commentators have interpreted Lacan's famous "Love is that which comes to *supplement* for the lack of a real connection" to mean that love is merely this illusion that functions to make amorous subjects misrecognize their fundamental non-connection. Badiou unpacks Lacan's formula by first interrogating the function of the supplement. He argues that if one accepts the thesis that the two sexualized positions are separated by a non-rapport then this non-rapport *cannot* be written, and if it cannot be written, "if it is non-existent as an effect of a structure", it follows that "love itself as supplement can only arrive by chance" (Badiou, 2000). This absolute contingency is crucial in Badiou's project to re-think "love" as a truth-procedure.

<sup>1</sup> Hence, Lacan's famous pronouncement: "There is no sexual relation" (1988, p. 6).

Love, therefore, is not a relation (in fact, it is born precisely at the point of non-relation), but is a *process* that is “the advent of the Two as such, the scene of Two”. Love is the “hypothetical operator” of the accidental collision of two trajectories that is the “event-encounter” (Badiou, 2008, p. 188).

“There is no third position”, Badiou’s third axiom, has to do with “the announcement of the disjunction” (p. 184). The “announcement of the disjunction” cannot be done from the vantage point of a third position because it will necessarily entail the activation of an external law of count, a totalizing gesture governed by the “rule of One.” But what kind of interpreting intervention then is necessary to render love discernible within a socio-symbolic system? How can love be inscribed in a Situation as a “Scene of Two” if no position is available from which that love can be witnessed? Badiou (2008) posits that love is “fixed only through a naming, and this naming constitutes a declaration, the declaration of love” (p. 188). For Badiou (2008), this declaration puts in circulation within the Situation the truth of the gap that separates the two sexualized positions: “A Two that proceeds amorously is specifically the name of the disjunct as apprehended in its disjunction” (p. 189). And in this gesture of amorous nomination, the truth of the love-event necessarily marks itself onto the bodies of the subjects of love.

However, Badiou’s objective is not simply to assert the fundamental disjunction of the sexes, but also to locate the site of a transpositional truth that does not fall within the two positions—that is, a “truth” that is not limited to being exclusively located within the masculine or feminine positions. Thus, Badiou’s fourth axiom: “There is only one humanity”. Badiou makes it clear, however, that he wants the concept subtracted of its humanist associations. He defines humanity as “that which provides support to the generic or truth procedures... [It] is the historical body of truths (Badiou, 2008, p. 184). He derives the existence of a humanity through the rather self-proving logic that if (noumenal) beings could be subjectivized (made into subjects by a generic procedure)

then it "attests that the humanity function exists" (p. 184). Note that Badiou establishes the existence of a singular humanity not by enumerating positive characteristics that transcend the sexual disjunction but by the very process of subjectivization itself. For Badiou, although the "humanity function" is shared by the two positions it cannot be an object of knowledge. It is "present" but not presented, a "subtraction". Badiou's fourth axiom thought in conjunction with the first three creates a paradox that is precisely what love as a form of thinking seeks to address. The first three axioms suggest that truths are sexuated while the fourth axiom suggests that love is truly a *generic* procedure for it addresses only one humanity (and not a specific sexualized position). If the two positions, M and W, are absolutely disjunct then it seems to follow that truths are sexualized as well (read: there exists a masculine and feminine art/ politics/ love/ science). This is the kind of division that someone like, say, Luce Irigaray might endorse (Hallward, 2003, p. 189). How then can Truths be transpositional given this fundamental disjunction? Badiou's response: Love is precisely a process that thinks through this paradox. "Love does not relieve that paradox; it treats it" (Badiou, 2008, p. 186). Love then is itself the paradox that it treats.

#### TOWARDS A CONCLUSION, OR WHY PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW

I have always thought that writing about love is a lot like falling in love. It consumes your waking days and nights. The experience is full of excitement, possibility, promise, awe, even desire. You begin to find it in every corner of your life: it greets you "Good morning;" accompanies you to lunch; finds its way into daily conversation (make sure to be in the company of very patient ears). It does not seem to need rest for it waltzes into your dreams, a witness to Oedipal screenings (love after all is said to be a creature of the night). It takes its time (and thus this paper was submitted two weeks after the agreed deadline). And it has a weird way of

making you enjoy those moments when it is frustratingly demanding, cryptic, uncooperative. The wonderful feeling of amorous pain and anxiety! But like a lover who always feels that his labours of love are inadequate to show his beloved the depths of his feelings, this paper haunted by inadequacy. But what I have attempted to show in these pages is that both Jean-Luc Nancy and Alain Badiou suggest that the gap between two singularities where love emerges, the domain of so much joy, pleasure, pain and anxiety is also a domain of thought. It should not mandate the banishment of thought, but rather open up possibilities for its future. But I make these claims without presumption. I turn to Nancy and Badiou to make tentative claims about love, but I do so opportunistically, because I perhaps recognize my own experience in their words (or perhaps I superimpose my own experience on their words). All of this to say that for better or worse, this paper will inevitably contain my own stories of love: intimate expressions masquerading as general theory. My only hope is that perhaps you will find fragments of your own love stories in these pages.

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