

43rd Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 12th August 2013
PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE
DURAS – BLANCHOT – NANCY
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1. Love is about loving the absence of the beloved person.
2. Love is a feeling which relies on the absence rather than presence of the other, on the distance between the two lovers, on the rift which is their truth, their shared aporia.
3. Truth would be the name of an absolute unfamiliarity, and love would mean the opening towards the limit of the knowable in the experience of its ontological fragility.
4. The love that extends the self into the other and the other into the self, defines itself as „access to the inaccessible“,¹ as a touch of its untouchability: untouchability of the other as well as myself.²
5. Touch in which thought touches itself, „without being itself, coming to itself without self“, that is, without profiting from the stability of a substantial self.³
6. Because the touch retains an infinitesimal distance to what is touched, it happens by not happening. Instead of being a factual contact, it is a „tangency without contact“.⁴
7. Instead of taking possession of something or someone, it articulates itself as the impossibility of possession: „You hold nothing; you are unable to hold or retain anything, and that is precisely what you must love and know. That is what there is of a knowledge and a love. Love what escapes you. Love the one who goes. Love that he goes.“⁵
8. No encounter into which error wouldn't remain inscribed, no presence without absence.

9. No reference, to use another one of Blanchot's terms, which wouldn't be „rapport sans/without rapport“.⁶
10. To touch means to touch upon something vanishing, which, just like a ghost, eludes being touched.
11. Love exists solely as the love of ghosts.
12. Two subjects test their boundaries by dissolving themselves towards the boundlessness of the other.⁷
13. The other's presence always falters between presence and absence.
14. A ghost is there without being there and the other way around.
15. The same holds true for the loved one. Here and simultaneously elsewhere, ephemeral yet present.

- 1 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Richard Richardson and Anne O'Byrne, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2000. On the "accessibility of the inaccessible" see Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, New York: Fordham University Press 2005.
- 2 Cf. Jacques Derrida, *On Touching - Jean-Luc Nancy*, trans. Christine Irizarry, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2005.
- 3 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, Paris: Éditions Métailié 2006.
- 4 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Noli Me Tangere*, trans. Sarah Clift, Pascale-Anne Brault, Michael Naas, Fordham University Press, 2008, p. 24.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 37
- 6 Cf. Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Jotis, New York: Barrytown Limited 2006. On this "monstrous contradiction (which refuses to accept the principle of non-inconsistency)" as a figure of a "non-dialectic description of intersubjectivity", which wants to correspond to the "radical asymmetry" of interpersonal relationships, in Blanchot and Levinas, see: Simon Critchley, *Ethics Politics Subjectivity*, London / New York 1999, p. 264
- 7 On love as indefinite reconnaissance of the other, to which the regulative factor of an impossible justice corresponds, cf. (besides the texts by Levinas and Derrida) Jean-Luc Nancy, *Just impossible. Petite conference sur le juste et l'injuste*. Paris 2007.