

Act 01: Love
On Political Love vs. Institutional Loyalty

By Sepideh Karami

‘Love requires something active. It is not just about
having regard to or taking notice of someone.’

(Harris, 2016)

Prologue:

To thole

The ambiguity and disruptive force of love, combined with the fragility and vulnerability it lends to the elements involved in the act of love, is what makes it a powerful but difficult concept to work with and to think through. The landscape of love is immense, broad and growing, de-territorializing the world through which it grows and questioning the borders, boundaries and categories it encounters. The vanishing edges of this landscape expand beyond sight, beyond the reaches of perception, into a darkness that requires other ways of relating to one’s surroundings. It’s why defining love and categorizing it in various forms of romantic – Platonian, etc. – destroys it and threatens to lay waste to its radicality, its disruptive and revolutionary potential. To define love is to try to regulate something unregulatable and to pollute it with control.

To grasp love, however, one must inhabit it, act it, and take the risk of facing its pain of falling. Its complexity, and being lost in the impossibility of understanding it, should be preserved and cherished by avoiding attempts to define what it is, and instead listening to it, enjoying it, probing about in its darkness, ‘*tholing*’ its unknowingness, sniffing its pungency and thereby constructing a universe out of the agglomeration of all these fragments, out of the feeling of being lost (@RobGMacfarlane, 2018). Whatever this complex agglomeration of incompatible things is, one thing is clear: when one is there, off the edge, leaning slightly over the threshold, nothing is the same; one’s experience of life, and of the world, becomes different from the moment of falling in love. That moment and the inhabitation of what follows as the duration of being in love can be expanded to various arenas of life. In this text, this understanding of love and its ambiguity is situated in the context of institution. The disruptive force of love is

investigated through two characters: the *lover* and the *loyal*. These two characters represent the amateur and the professional. I insist on putting loyalty and love at odds with one another in this text, to arrive at a slippery, unstable and ambiguous ground where love could work as a political and dissenting force instead of conforming to the existing power relations; where it could construct other ways of acting within institutions and dealing with issues such as disciplines and professionalism. As is apparent in its etymology,¹ the *amateur*, as a lover in the professional world, examines love as a critical force that challenges that world. To replace loyalty with love then is to valorise criticality over conformism. It is to ‘de-professionalize’ the professional world (Merrifield, 2017: xv).

To write through love, one needs to find a language that keeps its complexity intact without simplifying it. This is what this text is trying to achieve: it aims to expand and dwell in the moments when love is experienced as a force that moves one out of habit. To avoid limiting the concept of love and as an experiment of constructing a transversal ground of love, where love can be exposed and grasped momentarily, I have applied forms of experimental writing that evolve through things, acts, and places that come in between discussions of amateurism and professionalism. In each of these parts, the effort is to put love and loyalty into an encounter and *let love perform*. These acts, things and places also challenge and problematize the established understanding of love and try to find potential in what is condemned in love, to arrive at a *political concept of love*.

Things:

A Kite and a Flag

A connection is like a kite in the wind, unmoored, high up in the sky. No matter how high or far, it’s there, drifting in the heavens. No matter how free or wild, it is here, generated from inside in the warmth of a thought, in a hint of a clasp, in a sigh, as subtle as the sound of a hair moving on a shoulder.

In contrast, control is the sound of punching poetry over sheets of paper; categorization, filing, naming, drawing lines between categories of love. While the kite flies freely in the sky, control is like a flag, the flag of a nation fantasising

¹ The amateur originates from the Latin word *amator* that means lover.

about territory, ownership, borders, dancing in the backyard of a nationalist's holiday house or a state institution. A flag is the opposite of a kite. Its strong foot is firmly on the ground, marking ownership. It's the *symbol* of control. Control doesn't recognize the drifting of the kite across the borders, flowing between things of love.

The kite is the thing of love. It is turbulent, taken, lost, torn down, broken, yet free to move aloft, even if broken, even if detached. A lost kite lands on a mountain, or in the ocean. It ultimately becomes a fragment of an immense landscape.

The flag is stable. It enjoys a safe dance, protected by a pole. The flag pretends freedom, wildness, but the dance is staged, applauded by its supporters. Control grows over clamour, over being a hero, over fame, a name, a celebrity. Control is the institutions that construct those heroes, names, celebrities, grading, inside and outside, prizes, best and worst. It defines the idea of success.

The kite is dreaming of a forbidden love. It disappears from sight. In silence, or in the roar of a tornado. The thread disappears into infinity. It dreams of holding on to the kite, stretched, taut, intense. The thread is just a reminder of a kite that passes out of sight. It lets it go.

Love vs. Loyalty

In the labyrinthine corridors of the modern institutions, the lover and the loyal probe about, to find their ways and to find a ground to act on. They oscillate between following the institutional instructions and transforming them. They give meaning to these institutions by inhabiting them, either by reconstructing them critically through the force of love, or by conforming to their established structure by remaining loyal to it. While the lovers construct their ground of action through critical engagement² and contributing to the project of change, the loyals hold onto a given ground and conform to the structures that make the very identity of those specific institutions. The lover as the constructor and composer, expands this ground beyond the impermeable walls of

² In her discussion of political strategies in art, discusses the possibility of 'critically engaging' with institutions as an alternative to Exodus; that is, the total withdrawal from existing power structures.

institutions to encounter and include the other, ‘the stranger’, ‘the farthest’, and ‘the alterity’ (Hardt et al., 2009: 183). The lover uses the radical force of love, to move towards the other(s), as a way of engaging with institutions i.e. reinventing them. To love radically is to reinvent life, and by living that life, to reinvent the world, where this life is being lived. As Rosanna Warren writes, ‘As Rimbaud sought to reinvent love, he reinvented writing – and violently’ (Warren, 2008).

To reconnect with the ‘radicality of love,’ is to cherish its complexity, to endure its pain of falling, and to inhabit its risk of unknowingness (Horvat, 2016). It is to encounter it as a ‘fatal and unexpected crack in the world’ and to make a decision as to how to pass through that crack (Horvat, 2016: 04). Despite what institutional forms of love – defined and regulated by terms such as institution of marriage, nationalism etc. – do to simplify its complexity, to ease its creative hardship, to normalise and regulate it, to tame it through stabilisation, by praising the loyal character, the *political concept of love* is an *unfinished* work, a continuous construction. For the lover acting in an institution, love is a political act. A political concept of love turns it into something that cannot be regulated or controlled by institutional systems of morality, regulations, or instructions, because it is what makes a crack in those systems; it problematises them. These cracks do not destruct the institutions, but reinvent them by letting the light of the unknowingness pass through the walls of establishment. As an ontological concept and a revolutionary force, love questions conventions, criticises the establishment and constructs new relations.

In contrast to love, loyalty – a concept required by institutions – is to guarantee the stability of their terms and conditions, and to form ethics that constantly feed and protect that stability. The loyal character, favoured by such institutional ethics, is a conservative that indisputably follows the fixed values of institutions and as a reward, avoids the risk of exile, dismissal and failure. While the loyal stands in the centre, on a safe ground, protected by the institution as a reward to his/her loyalty, the lover stands on the edge, leaning toward an abyss, and embraces the risk of falling, in search of the unknown. As Ronald J. Pelias writes in his *A Methodology of the Heart: Evoking Academic and Daily Life*, ‘The heart pushes the self forward to places it does not belong’ (Pelias, 2004: 08). For the lover, those places are extension of home far to the *exile*.

Silence

Drifting to the places ‘it doesn’t belong to’, the kite passes out of sight. The thread, still confused, still touched by a connection, is just a reminder of the kite. The connection, though, remains there, grows over silence. The silence exhales and inhales like a breathing bridge. Exhales push the invisible kite even further. Inhales imagine it close by. In the silence something has lain dormant. What was dormant hears, listens, sniffs, grows, spreads, melts. What was dormant dreams of a cell:

A white cell. I am all in white. I have a visitor. Eventually, I have a visitor. The warder slides the bars open. I step into the loo before leaving myself in the arms of the visitor. I urinate. The urine splashes yellow dots on my white garment. The white garment smells of urine. The warder slides open the second bars. The visitor drapes arms around my shoulders. The hairs slide over the visitor’s arms with a deafening sound. I smell of urine.

The thread is looking for where it was connected, its gaze flapping in every single breath of the wind.

Moving from Caring to the Act of Love

The event of love is accompanied by the *act of falling*; a break from the stability of the ground on which one stands, the risk of letting go of a closed subject, a fixed identity, and of becoming a subject that is unfinished, broken and under construction. To understand love as a force of rupture, as what cuts through the isolated closed worlds, is to reconnect to its radicality as a revolutionary force. It is the radicality of love that makes it different from *habits of care*. Although caring is part of the act of love, distinguishing between them, helps me to arrive at the revolutionary force of love.³ Understanding love as the act of falling prevents love from becoming a habit and keeps it as an event. As Srećko Horvat says in his *Radicality of Love*, ‘The worst thing that can happen to love is habit’ (Horvat, 2016: 04). Because when it becomes a habit, it concedes to the sameness, repetition and stops reinventing. The understanding of love

³ The discussion of violence and fragility exposes how caring is part of love. I prefer to use *fragility* in lieu of care, as there is risk in fragility that is absent from care.

as habit eradicates its critical potential in subjectivation of the lover as an unfinished subject. As an event, falling in love is singular and specific to that encounter between the lover and *the other*, and its revolutionary potential lays in the intensity of that unique moment. Its specificity and singularity, together with its force of rupture and its criticality as it transforms the lover into a new subject, is what makes love political.

The political act of love though, leaves the lover in a vulnerable position, exposed to risk of falling, dismissal and exile. It is the very act of engaging with institutions that leaves the lover in this vulnerable situation. While the Loyals are protected by the institution, what happens to the lovers? Are they supported by any institution, or are they left in a state of unrequited love? Could there be institutions run by the force of love, or is the very meaning of institutions destructive to the force of love? Or is it characteristic of the lover to be always at odds with institutions? Where is the politics of care for the character of lover in today's society and its institutions?

In his *The Burnout Society*, Byung-Chul Han writes that twenty-first-century society is no longer Foucault's disciplinary society, but rather an 'achievement society' (Han, 2015: 08). The inhabitants of such society are 'achievement-subjects,' producing a 'we' that is obsessed with unlimited 'can' and 'should'. Institutions of the achievement societies are themselves set up on such ethics, by creating measuring systems of success and achievements. Moving toward the unknown places, that carries along the risk of failure, is a method through which, the lover resists the measuring systems of success and questions the taxonomy of achievement. To achieve, for the lover, is not anymore institutional promotions, rewards and getting higher points in the measuring system of success. The lover instead, brings in a critical way of engaging with institutions, hence questioning its established structure. The 'pressure to achieve' in achievement society on the one hand causes 'exhaustive depression' in those who cannot fit into such system of measurement, and on the other hand pushes out those who voluntarily question and challenge such system by not following its instructions and not fitting into it (Han, 2015: 10).

In Adam Haslett's novel, *Imagine Me Gone*, Michael, the eldest son of a family could be read as an exemplary character in such a society. In his novel, Haslett portrays the passage of the members of a family through pain and grief. Oscillating between the joy

of life and the burden it imposes on them, they try to rescue each other, but constantly fail. The impossibility of communicating such pain of living brings two suicides to the family; that of John, the father, and the other of the son, Michael. The two depression-sufferers commit suicide in the inability to bear the tension between the beauty of the world and the pain of not being able to inhabit that beauty and make sense of it. Michael, a fragile character 'who makes sense of the world through parody' is stuck in various healthcare institutions (The Publisher, 2017). From his late teenage years, he goes into voluntary exile, distancing himself from various institutions such as family and university. Radically in love with something that he cannot identify, he constantly looks for justice in an unjust world and struggles to construct other ways of connecting with people and society.

Michael is a radical lover whose object of affection doesn't exist, but the fragments of that object are omnipresent in a landscape of things, in the immensity of the universe, and hence it is so difficult for a pioneer of radical love to find one's route. Yet Michael's changing body and his frequent failures carve moments of realized love in this world. Constantly stuck in unrequited love and as a consequence suffering from anxiety and depression, he is being tamed by the medical treatments of psychological and mental health institutions. The medicine transforms him from a boy bursting with life to a slow and heavy man, highly dependent on his bag of medicine; he can't even go out for a stroll without the bag of medicine, convinced that is the only thing that can support him. Yet caring for the world and in love with a world of justice, along with the medicines, he carries antiracist bulletins to distribute among people. Hospitalized every now and then, he tries to use the very structure of those institutions to express himself, to communicate his pain, care, and concern. He uses the hospital information sheets and questionnaires to express his life events through his affection for music, arts, literature, politics and philosophical contemplation. Confused and without the tools to survive in this world, he is only supported by the members of his family, who themselves lack proper resources and tools to take care of him, and who fail to rescue him.

When achievement-subjects in the achievement society claim: 'Nothing is Impossible', Michael ends up in an extreme situation of 'Nothing is Possible' that leads to his suicide (Han, 2015: 11). The question raised by encountering individuals like him is whether our modern institutions are designed to care for such characters, or if they are designed

to turn them into achievement subjects? Do they only care for the norms of achievement that are loyal to the institutional, and exclude those driven by the force of love? In her 'Matters of Care in Technoscience', Maria Puig de la Bellacasa writes that 'calls for care are everywhere' these days, 'from the marketing of 'green' products to discussions of moral philosophy on the 'ethics of care' (de la Bellacasa, 2011: 85). She discusses care in contrast with 'concern' and suggests that care 'has stronger affective and ethical connotations.' She points to a difference between 'I am concerned' and 'I care', where the latter 'adds a strong sense of attachment and commitment to something', and the former 'denotes worry and thoughtfulness about an issue as well as the fact of belonging to those 'affected' by it' (de la Bellacasa, 2011: 89-90). Accentuating 'care' as a verb 'to act', she writes: 'One can make oneself concerned, but 'to care' more strongly directs us to a notion of material doing' (de la Bellacasa, 2011: 90).

The characters of lover and amateurs take one step further and transform the verb of caring to the act of love. Love has disruptive and revolutionary connotations; that the very act of 'material doing' exposes the lover to the risk of dismissal. Yet the existence of such strong characters who put criticality before conformism in institutions raises the question, which characters can contribute better in reconstructing institutions and adapting them to the changing complex world? How should the institutional ethics and values be rethought in order for the characters of lover be respected and cherished instead of excluding them or turning them to achievement subjects?

In Praise of Unrequited Love

Unrequited love is a vast landscape, an endless horizon, disappearing and reappearing in the recurrent ascendance and descendance of a thick fog. Seeing one's road partially at the time makes the air tangible. It's a force of being dragged along that landscape, across the fog, prone to falling into an infinite abyss.

Requited love spins in a room. It is a room without a door.

Unrequited love is the revolutionary force of hopelessness. Positioning one on the edge. It trembles, it enjoys instability, vulnerability. Unrequited love is a hand sweeping along the walls of an endless ally. Fingers sore. It's a bodily perception,

radical understanding of the materiality of the world, all the gaps, pores, cracks of the wall remains with the body, with the finger's tips.

Required love is a ring. A circular movement of the middle finger along the narrow rim of an empty wine glass: Repetition. Rhythm. Agreement.

Unrequited love moves one from self to the outside, it places the lover in front of fragments of a broken mirror, reflecting light from diverse parts of the universe. The image of love, hence, changes while the hung pieces of mirror drift in the wind.

Unrequited love is infinite. It never becomes required. It remains always unrequited.

In Praise of The Amateur: The Radical Lover

In one of her poems, the Chinese migrant worker poet Wu Xia translates her 'brutalizing experience of modernity', her 14 hours of factory work, into poetry. Through this poem she talks to the 'beneficiaries of her labour' (Walsh, 2017), writing:

I want to press the straps flat
so they won't dig into your shoulders when you wear it
and then press up from the waist
a lovely waist
where someone can lay a fine hand
and on the tree-shaded lane
caress a quiet kind of love
last I'll smooth the dress out
to iron the pleats to equal widths
so you can sit by a lake or on a grassy lawn
and wait for a breeze
like a flower (Xia, 2016: 165).

The poem, which is written in a benevolent tone, also points to the insensitivity as well as the complicity of the world with the workers' inhumane situation in China. Wu Xia

is one of many migrant worker poets, who, as Megan Walsh writes, ‘sublimate 14-hour shifts on assembly lines into lines of poetry’ (Walsh, 2017). These workers – who spend more than half of their lifetimes inside factories, mines or other harsh working environments, are deprived of many human rights and receive meagre wages – use their exploited work conditions to produce something else that not only has the potential to make their voices heard, but also gives them power over their lives and deprivation, through poetry. As simple workers who engage in a highly cultural activity such as poetry, they also question the division between cultured and non-cultured – a social division common in Chinese society – and bring forth a serious position of the amateur as poet into the dry noise and homogenising structure of a factory (Walsh, 2017). As a mixture of a brutal system and the fragility of the language of poetry, their poetry is an ‘amalgam of extremes,’ in Eleanor Goodman’s words (Walsh, 2017). By publishing their poems online via their phones in between shifts, they stage themselves as amateur poets, interrupting the flow of the assembly line. Their amateurism derives from a lost hope for a better life, yet a love for poetry that makes them stand against a brutal capitalist economy. While their poetry might not effectuate an immediate change, it exposes the fragility of being a human in an extremely vicious environment and the paradoxical power of that fragility. Their poetry is a stutter that interrupts the repetitive flow of capitalist production and cuts the long hours of harsh labour.

The example of Chinese worker poets exposes the importance of the amateur as a serious and political occupation, undertaken not as a hobby or a pastime, but as what could cut through violent working conditions. The concept of love in the construction of the amateur has its significance in two terms: in one, as a revolutionary force and a force of rupture, and in the other, as relating to the responsibility and taking the risk of stepping out of where one feels at home into ‘exile’ and inhabiting that exile. The former is the event of falling in love, and the latter is the inhabitation of love. To inhabit love is to continue to construct the subject of lover and the space of encounter with the other. One is an event, and the other is the construction of the ground achieved from that event. It is a process of breaking down and constructing anew. In the construction of the amateur character, falling in love is as important as reconstructing the moment of falling again and again and again, and thereby constructing a performing ground for amateurism.

The act of falling in the formation of the amateur is the moment at which one steps out of the routine of work, or when one stands up ‘to speak to power’, as Edward Said puts it (Said, 1996: 85). It is a moment when the safe ground of everyday habit is suddenly shaken, and from then on every step is accompanied with taking risk. The character of the amateur who steps out of that comfort zone suddenly lets go of her power position, as a professional and as an expert, and falls into becoming a beginner, encountering an *other* world. The event of falling in love cuts the lover’s internal and isolated world open to the outside. When this closed world is cut open, she starts inhabiting the space between herself and the other. It is in this space that the one in love reconstructs herself through the act of love. She takes the risk of *encountering* the other and constructs the space of the encounter by moving toward the other. She thereby becomes an amateur maker of the new, strange, ungraspable worlds that were once unimaginable, impossible, or the most distant and invisible. While constructing the new world, she *becomes* anew; she becomes a new subject.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri situate their discussion of love in the ‘common’ to problematise the image of love advocated by the contemporary ideology of neoliberal capitalism, in isolated, commercial and institutional forms limited to closed and exclusive circles of family, couples, and embracing *the* similar. They write:

In fact what passes for love today in ordinary discourse and popular culture is predominantly its corrupt forms. The primary locus of this corruption is the shift in love from the common to the same, that is from the production of the common to a repetition of the same or a process of unification. What distinguishes the beneficial forms of love instead is the constant interplay between the common and singularities (Hardt et al., 2009: 182).

In the world of the professionals, there are loyal characters who follow instructions, who speak the language of experts, who are rewarded for staying loyal to the institution, to the profession, to confirm its power relations. The conditions of loyalty are predefined; loyalty comes before the subject. As a predefined and closed condition, loyalty is based on a compulsory commitment. Furthermore, as loyalty depends on certain subjectivities and roles, it works towards the formation of fixed identities, subjects and its consequent exclusive institutions, such as profession, family, race and nation, that seek out

similarity and sameness instead of reaching for *the other*; ‘corrupt forms’ of love as Hardt and Negri put it (Hardt et al., 2009, 182). The amateur, however, is an unfinished subject; in this sense a disloyal character who takes the risk of letting go of her professional closed and finished subject. Yet she remains in the world of professionals and performs on their chatty stage. After falling from the power position of being a professional, she utters her role in a stuttering language on that stage. Her stutter echoes in the neat professional world. It interrupts the polished language of experts. She stutters like a lover.

Love for the amateur is labour; it is ‘work’, as Rainer Maria Rilke puts it (Rilke, 2004: 41). However, it is not limited to a profession, but formed through apprenticeship, learned by practicing, by making, by experimentation that is accompanied by the risk of failure, the joy of discovery and the invention without mandate. For Edward Said, amateurism is “an activity that is fuelled by care and affection rather than by profit and selfish, narrow specialization (Said, 1996: 83).” In his discussion of amateur and professional, Said appoints the intellectual the responsibility of becoming an amateur. This intellectual amateur could ‘transform the merely professional routine most of us go through into something much more lively and radical’ (Said, 1996: 83).

Professional work originates from institutions of control, training and regulations, and is based on a body of theoretical knowledge (Beegan et al., 2008: 307). Amateur is a challenge of professional, and common alternative formulations are unprofessional, non-professional, dilettante, dabbler, as well as the vernacular pastime and hobby. These terms, used in various contexts as a critical response to professionalism, somehow point to the outside of profession and its limits, and in one way or another breaks from its disciplinary boundaries. These terms are usually assigned to the work done by untrained individuals, who ‘lack attachment to a specific practice’ and are not committed to any specific field (Beegan et al., 2008: 309). They are also associated with traditional or popular culture and/or pastimes, unpaid hobbies that are undertaken in spare time. The politics of these activities, from an institutional point of view, are about turning consumers into producers through the attainment of agency.

However such an understanding of amateurism is not enough. Without devaluing such a perception of amateurism, assigning amateurism merely to pastime activities, denies

its subversive potential, and at the same time limits it to a small, privileged group with sufficient income and the resulting access to free time. Amateurism as the political work of love, however, is what should be undertaken *within* the work one does as an occupation, and within one's profession. Promoting amateurism in such a way brings it along with the risk of dismissal, exile, letting go of safety, stability, and rewards in search of the unknown. It is accompanied with the risk of failing.

To be in Exile at Home

My discussion of amateurism, then, does not lie in the separation between amateurism and professionalism, but it originates from their encounter, where the professional breaks from the limits and regulations of her profession and *becomes* an amateur within that profession. This is what turns an amateur into a political performer. Amateurism, as I suggest, arises from the constraints of the profession. Therefore, as a liberating and subversive practice, it should address those very constraints by acting within and upon the limits and established rules of a profession. Perhaps one should become a professional amateur who, as Said says, is:

[...] moved not by profit or reward but by love for and unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across lines and barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a specialty, in caring for ideas and values despite the restriction of a profession (Said, 1996: 76).

In his very inspiring discussion about the formation of the intellectual, Said describes the intellectual as an amateur rather than a professional. For him, an intellectual should be relatively independent and pursue the attitude of an amateur. In criticising modern professionalism, however, Said does not propose a naïve denial of the influence of professionalism in advancing different fields, but attempts to recognise the character of an intellectual within the world of professionalism who does not stay loyal to its terms and conditions, but pushes herself into a condition of *exile*. He argues that the amateur should 'represent' – and I add construct – 'different values and prerogatives' within the world of professionalism (Said, 1996: 82). These values are different from the required loyalty and conformism to profession and disciplinary knowledge.

In his 'In Defense of Amateur,' Stan Brakhage describes the amateur as 'at home' anywhere he works, while Said describes the amateur as an intellectual who is always *in exile* – even in her own 'home' – and hence struggling with joyful difficulties to make sense of the new world of exile (Brakhage, 2014). Being in exile retains the notion of the distance from 'home,' and of the struggle of making sense of that distance while inhabiting it. For Rilke, this distance is the necessary dimension for arriving at togetherness, as he says one should love the distance between (Rilke, 2004: 30). Rilke describes this distance as being alone. Concerning amateurism, this distance could be defined as a distance from our certainty and comfort zone – Said's constant state of exile, being in exile even at home.

Danilo Dolci, the Italian sociologist and trained architect 'whose critical practice took the form of making community by resisting the government and mafia alike,' could be understood as one such position of being an amateur in one's own profession. In the introduction to Dolci's *Report from Palermo*, Aldous Huxley describes the author in a manner similar to how Said presents the intellectual and the amateur. For Huxley, he is:

capable of surpassing the limited domain of his own specialized knowledge, and able to turn his capacity for dialogue with other disciplines into a program of social action and benefit, while simultaneously putting his technical knowledge to work in partnership with empathy and compassion (Coleman, 2014: 52).

Huxley describes such a character as someone who can make the best of 'the world of the head no less than the world of the heart' (Huxley, 1956: xi).

Such an opening up of the professional world of achievements and success into a space of encounter with the other, is the work of the amateur in one's own profession. As Andy Merrifield writes in his *The Amateur: The Pleasure of Doing What You Love*, 'the amateur is both a real and an imagined category – somebody who does exist today, but also someone who ought to exist' (Merrifield, 2017: xi). Amateurs ought to exist within the professional world and risk doing things with their professions that would open it up to the unknown; an unknown world that emerges in the stutters of the amateur, of the lover.

Epilogue:

The Tulip and the Volcano

A tulip that grows on the edge of a volcano grows to kiss death's lips. The kiss curls the tulip's long pointy leaves, transforms its bright red petals a withered blackened red. The kiss lasts less than a millisecond, and the world becomes twenty-one grams lighter. The tulip on the edge of the volcano grows back. The kiss curls its long pointy leaves, twists its brittle stem. The tulip crackles and rises as smoke in the air. The world becomes another twenty-one grams lighter. The tulip grows back, closed, with its head bent down. The kiss lasts less than a millisecond and the world is another twenty-one grams lighter.

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