

Agamben, G. (1993 [1990]). *The Coming Community*. Translated by M. Hardt. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

### *Whatever*

The **coming being** is whatever being 1

*Quodlibet* = the term that is unthought in each transcendental conditions  
the meaning of all the other transcendentals 1

whatever does not mean "it doesn't matter which," it means "being such  
that it always matters" 1

whatever being has an original relation to desire 1

**singularity**: being such as it is 1

whatever singularity it is not about having this or that property, or  
belonging to this or that set 1

whatever being is reclaimed for its being-such 2

this singularity is whatever you want, lovable 2

**love** is not directed at this or that property, nor does it neglect  
properties in favor of something general, it wants the loved one with  
all of their predicates, it wants their being such as it is 2

he seems to suggest that the and that love transports us toward our own  
taking-place, toward the Idea 2

### *From Limbo*

persisting without pain and divine abandon = **limbo** 5

always already forgotten by God 6

infused with the joy with no outlet 6

in neither salvation nor perdition, neutral 6

an unsalable life cannot be subject to the norms of the Christian  
religion 6

[limbo is thus, in a way, the territory that is illegible to the  
state (as the invisible committee puts it)]

it is in a way a preview of life that begins on Earth after the last  
day, which is to say a preview of simply **human life** 7

### *Example*

relations between the individual and the universal 9

singularities can be transformed into members of a class, defined by  
common property 9

the tree as both singularity and class 9

the **example** is the concept that escapes the antimony between the  
universal and the particular 9

it is both one among others, and at the same time it stands for  
all of them 10

neither particular nor universal, it is a singular object that  
presents itself as such, that *shows* its singularity 10

being-called is the property that establishes all possible belongings 10

pure singularities communicate only in the empty space of the example – they are not tied by any common property – they are expropriated of all identity, so that they may appropriate belonging itself 11  
they are thus exemplars of the coming community 11

### ***Taking Place***

ethics begins when we understand that the good consists only in the grasping of evil 13  
increase indent similarly treat consists in the taking-place of the false 13  
the possibility of an appropriation of impropriety 14  
the perfect has appropriated all the possibilities of evil and impropriety 14  
the transcendent is the taking-place of everything 15  
God is the taking-place of entities – the being-stone of the stone 15  
that the world is: this is the good 15  
being irreparably in the world [is a can to Nietzsche's discharging our strength into the world] 15  
the good is just the point at which a being grasps the taking-place that is proper to it  
evil is the reduction of the taking-place of things to a simple fact among others, a forgetting of the transcendence inherent in the very taking-place of things 15

### ***Principium individuationis***

whatever is the unmistakable symbol for singularity 17  
Duns Scotus leaves unthought the *quodlibet* that is inseparable from singularity 17  
*Quodlibet* is not indifference 17  
*Quodlibet* is not a predicate of singularity that expresses its dependence on common nature 17  
singularity's essence is not constituted by common nature 18  
the common is not the persistence of an identical essence in each single individual 18  
for Spinoza the common is: all bodies have in common to express the divine attribute of extension 18  
but what is, and cannot constitute the essence of a single case 18  
commonality is thus inessential, a solidarity that does not concern in essence 18  
taking-place is the communication of singularities in the attribute of extension; it does not unite them in essence but scatters them in existence 19  
whatever is constituted by the indifference of the common and the proper 19  
whatever is the thing with all its properties 19  
the human face is neither the individuation of the generic face nor the universalization of the singular face 19  
it is whatever face in which what belongs to common nature and what is proper are absolutely indifferent 19

the passage from potentiality to act, and from common form to singularity, is one we make over and over again back and forth 19  
common and proper, genus an individual, are only the two slopes dropping down from either side of the watershed of whatever 20  
the particular and the generic become in different 20  
the passage from the common to the proper is a shuttling in both directions along the line of sparkling alternation 20  
the being that is engendered on this line is whatever being 20  
and the way it passes from the common to the proper back again is called usage or ethos 20

### ***Ease***

the adjacent place 23  
what is most proper to every creature is its substitutability, its ability to be in the place of another 23  
this does not mean compensating for what the other lacks, but exiling oneself to the other as she is 24  
to offer priced hospitality in the others own soul 24  
the taking-place of every single being is always already common 24  
the idea of the un-substitutability of the individual is a hypocritical fiction 24  
and unconditioned substitutability is an absolutely unrepresentative of community 25  
being whatever, being such as it is, the coming to itself of each singularity, the multiple commonplace 25  
the name of this commonplace is ease 25  
ease is the space adjacent to the empty space where we can move freely 25  
it is the very place of love as the experience of taking-place in whatever singularity 25  
these is the "free use of the proper," one Holderin called "the most difficult task" 25

### ***Maneries***

A manerie is a state of things in which each thing persists as it is 27  
neither generic nor particular – an exemplary singularity 27  
manner is thus whatever singularity 27  
he wants to find the etymology in *manare*: being in its rising forth 28  
this is neither an essence nor in existence, but a manner of rising forth, a being that is its mode of being 28  
it is singular, but it is valid for all 28  
in this modality of rising forth we can see a being that does not remain below itself (which is to say does not presuppose itself as a hidden essence) but rather exposes itself and its qualifications, neither accidental nor necessary, but continually engendered from its own manner 28  
[i.e. whatever being]  
being engendered from one's own manner is the definition of habit 29

a manner is ethical when it does not befall us and does not found us,  
but engenders us 29  
and this being engendered from one's own manner is the only happiness  
really possible for humans 29  
a manner of rising forth is also the place of whatever singularity, its  
principle of individuation 29  
it is an impropriety which is assumed in appropriated as our proper being  
29  
this impropriety, which we exposes our proper being, engenders us and  
makes us happy 29

### ***Demonic***

the possibility of not-being calls for help 31  
the power to not-be is the root of evil 32  
fleeing from our own impotence we construct the malevolent power that  
oppresses those who show us weakness 32  
failing our possibility of not-being, we fall away from the only thing  
that makes love possible 32  
creation is not the victorious struggle of a power to be against the  
power to not-be 32  
it is rather the impotence of God with respect to his own impotence, his  
allowing – being able to *not* not-be 32  
this is the birth in God of love 32

### ***Bartleby***

potentiality and possibility is distinct from reality 35  
a potentiality to not-be or impotence 35  
the being that is properly whatever is able to not-be; it is capable of  
its own impotence 35  
potentiality to be has as its object a certain act; potentiality to not-  
be it is not about a simple transition from potential to act 35  
it is about a potentiality that has as its object potentiality itself 36  
only a power that is capable of both power and impotence is a supreme  
power 36  
thought as the potentiality to think 36  
tabula rasa 37  
the unthought thought is pure potentiality 37  
**Bartleby** is a scribe who chooses not to write 37  
he is a writer that chooses his own potentiality to not-write 37  
[generalized to an actor that chooses its own potentiality to not act]

### ***Irreparable***

at the end of time everything will be just like it is now, but it will be  
irreparable 39  
things will be consigned without remedy to their being-thus; they will  
be precisely only their thus 39

they are thus absolutely exposed and abandoned [they are bare life] 39  
in this condition both necessity and contingency have disappeared 40  
necessity is the not being able to not-be 40  
contingency is the being able to not-be 40  
the irreparable is to not not-be 40  
after the judgment we will enjoy an incorruptible fallenness, we will  
enjoy the coming singularity 40

### *Ethics*

ethics is only possible if we have no essence, destiny 43  
but we cannot freely decide whether to be or not to be 43  
there is something that we are and have to be: the simple fact of our  
own existence as possibility or potentiality 43  
but our most proper being is also lacking in a certain sense: it can  
not-be 43  
and so we have and feel a debt 43  
we have to exist as potentiality 44  
and we feeling guilt for what we lack, for an act we have not yet  
committed 44  
potentiality itself is the most proper mode of human existence 44  
evil consists in regarding this potentiality as a fault that must  
always be repressed 44

### *Dim Stockings*

capitalist commodification of the human body 47  
neither generic nor individual, neither God nor beast, the body became  
something truly whatever 48  
whatever is a resemblance without archetype, it is an Idea 48  
the promise of happiness is to link together image and body in a space  
where they can no longer be separated, which is to forge the whatever  
body, this is the good that humanity must learn how to wrest from the  
commodities in their decline 50

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### *Halos*

the tiny displacement, not in things, but in the space of ease between  
everything and itself 54  
if everything is perfect, if everything is finished forever, then  
everything is dead 54  
the halo is something that is added even when nothing essential can be added,  
that makes it more brilliant 54-55  
it is the becoming singular of that which is perfect 55  
singularity is not a final determination of being but an unraveling of  
its limits 56

the halo is a zone in which possibility and reality are indistinguishable 56  
when a being has reached its end, it has consumed all of its possibilities, which implies that what it means to be is to have possibilities, to have the potential to become 56

### ***Pseudonym***

the gap between the word and the thing, the slippage of meaning, is possibility 59-60  
when everything is said, there is no possibility 60  
the uttered is thus vital, the ease between the name and the nickname 60

### ***Without Classes***

there are no longer social classes but just a single planetary petty bourgeoisie 63  
it has the aptitude of refusing any recognizable social identity 63  
it lives in a world of only the improper and the inauthentic 63  
truth and falsity have lost meaning 63  
and the absurdity of all this has lost pathos 64  
they try to make their own identity in a reality that has become absolutely improper and insignificant to them 64  
the final absurdity is death, the frustration of individuality, bare life 64  
bare life is exterior to them 65  
humanity is moving toward its own destruction in the form of a planetary petty bourgeoisie 65  
but this means there is an opportunity as never before 65  
instead of continuing to search for a proper identity, we must belong to this impropriety as such 65  
to make being thus not an individual property but a singularity without identity, a common and absolutely exposed singularity 65  
we must be-thus not in our particular biography, but rather we must be only *the* thus 65  
only then would we enter into a community without presuppositions and without subjects 65  
[appropriation, it seems, is a dead-end for Agamben]

### ***Outside***

whatever is the figure of pure singularity 67  
it has no identity and it is not determinate 67  
singularity borders all possibility and receives its determination through this bordering 67  
belonging, in the sense of being-*such*, is only the relation to an empty and indeterminate totality 67  
the bordering is a point of contact with an external space that must remain empty 67

a space of pure exteriority, of pure exposure 67  
the outside is not another space, it is a passage to exteriority 68  
*ek-stasis* is the experience of being-*within* an *outside* 68  
[ek = out; stasis = stand ... "to be or stand outside oneself, a  
removal to elsewhere"]

### ***Homonyms***

the idea of a property being distinct from the object that has it 71  
the class of all the classes that are not members of themselves 71  
Bertrand Russell's paradox brought to light the existence of properties  
that do not determine class 72  
a term (shoe) can refer to every member of its extension and also to  
itself, so it both is and is not a member of the class it identifies 73  
distinguish between a shoe and its being-called-shoe 73  
a word is neither other than the thing it expresses, nor is it identical  
to it 74  
a synonym: same name same definition 75  
a homonym: same name different definition 75  
single horses are synonyms with respect to the concept horse, but they  
are homonyms with respect to the idea of the horse 75  
[he is distinguishing here between a concept (generic category)  
and an idea (Form)]  
the idea of a thing is the thing itself 76  
whatever is singularity insofar as it relates not only to the concept,  
but also to the idea 76  
this relation does not found a new class 76  
rather it is that which in each class draws singularity from its  
belonging to a class (its synonymy) toward a pure and anonymous  
homonymy 76  
whatever means that which, holding itself in simple homonymy, in its  
pure being-called, is for this reason unnameable 76

### ***Shekinah***

Debord: all that is directly lived is distanced in a representation 79  
human sociality is alienated 79  
practical power of humans is separated from itself and presented as a  
world unto itself 79  
lesson: capitalism directed towards the alienation of language itself 80  
language is the communicative nature of humans, the logos, which is the  
Common 80  
[here he seems to be except some idea of a *proprio*, of appropriation]  
and yet the spectacle pertains something like a positive possibility  
that can be used against it 80  
knowledge and the word should not be isolated 81  
we cannot separate the word from what it reveals an assign to it and  
autonomous consistency 81  
things that are revealed and manifested are common and shareable 81

the society of the spectacle separates communicativity into an autonomous sphere 82

humans are separated by what unites them 82

language also no longer reveals anything, or just reveals the nothingness of all things 82

a constant unveiling that unveils nothing 82

no longer is power founded on a presupposed foundation 83

" the kingdoms of the earth set course... for the democratic-spectacular regime" 83

[what Badiou calls capital-parliamentarianism]

in this era, it is possible for humans to experience their own linguistic being, the very fact that they speak 83

we must bring language itself to language, carry the project of alienation from our linguistic being to completion 83

then we will be the first citizens of the community with neither presuppositions nor a state 83

### ***Tiananmen***

so what is the politics of whatever singularity, of a being whose community is mediated not by any condition of belonging but by belonging itself? 85

it's a good idea to look at Tiananmen Square, where the demonstrations had an absence of determinate contents 85

the coming politics will no longer be a struggle for the conquest or control of the state, but a struggle between the state and the non-state, which is humanity 85

a struggle between whatever singularity and the state organization 85  
whatever singularities cannot form a *societas*, because they don't have any identity to vindicate 86

the state can only deal with people who are claiming an identity 86

it cannot tolerate singularities that do not affirm and identity, that remain merely humans co-belonging without any identity to belong to 86

the state will try to impose an identity on the whatever 86

[just like when Christianity can't deal with souls in limbo who don't have any concept of the distinction between being saved or damned]

the whatever is *homo sacer* 86

excluded from the human world, able to be killed without committing homicide 87

whatever singularity rejects all identity and every condition of belonging 87

it is able to be in common with others, without identity, without identity-based belonging 87

it is the principal enemy of the state 87

### ***Appendix: The Irreparable***

we no longer pay attention to ontology, and also to the relation between essence and existence 89



be irreparable, again, is things are just as they are, without remedy 90  
 Revelation reveals that the condition of the world is that it is irreparably  
 profane 90

- making the world sacred again is bullshit 90
- despairing about the world's profaneness is also bullshit 90
- the world will be saved only in so far as it is profane 90

presented with a condition in which things are certainly and definitively  
 thus, we must perceive a margin, a limbo, a remainder that cannot be contained  
 91

- a pure *being-thus* without any attributes 91
- joy and sadness, happiness and unhappiness, good and evil contain the  
 same states of things 92
- the irreparable is neither an essence nor in existence, neither a  
 possibility nor a necessity 92
- it is not a modality of being, it is a being that *is* its modalities 92
  - it is not *thus*, but rather it is *its* thus 92

being-thus is not a determination or qualification 93

- it is rather being that is irreparably thus, it *is* its *thus* 93
- thus means not otherwise, it negates all possibilities 93
- it negates each predicate as a property 94
- but it takes them up again as im-properties or improprieties 94
- such a being is whatever existence 94
- [its thusness is not its own, it does not belong to it, because it is  
 whatever]

Anaphora (a referring back) can only make sense of itself by pointing to its  
 predicate, it's proceeding term 94

- we have to conceive of an anaphora that has no proceeding term, which  
 would be an absolute thus that does not presuppose anything 94
- pure being has been understood using presupposition 94
  - a non-linguistic element has been presupposed 95
  - the double meaning of the pronoun 95
  - what needs to be conceived is a relation that is neither  
 denotation or meaning, neither ostension nor anaphora 95
    - but rather their reciprocal implication 95
    - not nonlinguistic nor being in language; but rather the  
 being-in-language-of-the-non-linguistic... The thing itself  
 95-96
    - the exposure of being 96

existence and essence do not have a relationship of identity but of ipseity 96

- the thing transcends toward itself, towards its own being such as it is  
 96
- "as such"-- they stipulate each other, they expose one another, they do  
 not refer back to any presupposition 96
- my being-such is not this or that quality 97

being exposed is not a quality, but neither is it other than a quality 97

- exposure is pure relationship with language itself, with language's  
 taking place 97
- suchness is the category that remains unthought in every quality 98

each being is and must be its mode of being, its manner of rising forth: being  
*such* as it is 98  
    we must investigate the *as* 99  
    meaning, denotation, and a third term: being-such 100  
        neither what is denoted nor what is meant 100  
        this is the meaning of Plato's theory of ideas 100  
    exposed in its being 100  
the being-such is the Idea 101  
    it is as if every feature were detached from a thing and then stood  
    beside it, in the easement 101  
    it is a gnostic reading of Plato 101  
redemption is the profanity of the profane 102  
    we can have hope only in what is without remedy 102  
    the thus is without remedy 102  
    we are saved only when we no longer want to be 102  
in being-thus, in being our own mode of being, we are deprived of thingness,  
of a proper nature 102  
    we live in a world of things evacuated of meaning...when we bump into the  
    limit of this world, then we will be able to be exposed, to grasp the  
    being such of the world beyond good and evil 103  
    we will be able to say yes to our being-thus, which is incorruptible,  
    eternal 103  
    yes is the name of language 104  
    yes is the power to not not-be 104  
    to be other than nothingness 105  
    language/reason [logos?] is that whereby something exists rather than  
    nothing—it is how we have the power to not not-be 105  
    when we are thus, when we are being only our own mode of being, we are  
    capable of the rather, of the not-not-being 105  
    when we can see something only in its being-thus, when we perceive its  
    irreparability, that is when we love it 106