

Giving up on knowing and loving oneself: Anders Nygren, Hannah Arendt, and Augustine

Torbjörn Gustafsson Chorell

To cite this article: Torbjörn Gustafsson Chorell (2022) Giving up on knowing and loving oneself: Anders Nygren, Hannah Arendt, and Augustine, International Journal of Philosophy and Theology, 83:1-3, 146-162, DOI: [10.1080/21692327.2022.2127419](https://doi.org/10.1080/21692327.2022.2127419)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21692327.2022.2127419>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 28 Oct 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 154



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Giving up on knowing and loving oneself: Anders Nygren, Hannah Arendt, and Augustine

Torbjörn Gustafsson Chorell

Department of History of Science and Ideas, Uppsala University, Box 629, S-751 26, Uppsala, Sweden

ABSTRACT

Anders Nygren's and Hannah Arendt's critical reading of Augustine's concept of love had its point of departure in a fundamental skepticism towards the possibility of knowing oneself. Nygren defended the need to give up the search for the ego in order to enter a fellowship with God, whereas Arendt's turn toward the world necessitated a critical evaluation of self-love and the search for inner motivations for action in a unified self. Arendt's solution in particular suggests that the fate of the tradition of *gnothi seauton* was to surrender to the new discourse on identity that effectively turned Augustine's question of himself from a puzzle solved by inwardness into a question of performance and encounters with others.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 24 January 2022

Accepted 19 September 2022

KEYWORDS

Love; self-love; self-knowledge; identity; Anders Nygren; Hannah Arendt; Augustine

Introduction

'I have always believed that no one can know himself,' Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) said in a speech the year she died. 'Only poor Narcissus will let himself be deluded by his own reflected image, pining away from love of a mirage.'¹ A few years before, Anders Nygren (1890–1978) vented his frustration with the recurrence of the principle of *gnothi seauton* (know yourself) in theology. 'Enter into yourself – so we are admonished – and take a good look at your own existence; you will then discover your finitude, and along with it, correlative to it, you will also discover God, infinite being, "being itself".'² Why were two such different authors as the German-American political philosopher and the Swedish theologian so critical of self-knowledge? The answer lies, I believe, in their criticism of Augustine, the theologian-philosopher who said he had become a question to know himself when struggling with the conflicts between his love of self, love of God, love of neighbor, and love of the world.³

As far as I know, no one has yet linked Arendt and Nygren as partners in a historical dialogue about central problems of modern intellectual history. Reading them in tandem on the problem of love and Augustine, however, gives an opportunity to explore how two radically different authors used their reading of a classical authority to challenge the centrality of knowing and loving oneself. Arendt seems to have wanted to develop a love of the world, but never elaborated on what it might mean. As will become clear, however, she replaced the inward search for a transparent self that knew its own darkest secrets

with a self that fitted the new discourse of identity that emerged after World War II, which gave the question of the self a new, external orientation. Nygren, on the other hand, who never entered the discourse on identity, saw knowledge and love of self as an outgrowth of the metaphysical tradition of ancient philosophy. He remained convinced that the only way out of the spiritual crisis of the present was to renounce the ego so that a true bond with God could be established. For both authors, Augustine was a central reference point and illustration of the problem they wished to solve.

Augustine has of course remained important in debates on the meaning of Christian love and love as a political virtue, just like Nygren and Arendt, to this day,⁴ and has inspired discussions of the self as inherently reflexive, vulnerable to dissolution, and constituted in the encounter with others.⁵ In this essay, however, Arendt's and Nygren's critical evaluation of the problem of knowing and loving oneself suggests another story: the trouble the tradition of self-knowledge ran into during the twentieth century, especially when identity became the response to the question of who we are. Although most of the essay will focus on Arendt's and Nygren's analyses of love, and what they considered to be shortcomings in Augustine's concept of love, the story beneath is the change in the response to the question, who are you? Instead of finding the answer by searching for an essential self and its inner motivations, such as self-love, the response was the recognition of oneself as a relational being with a specific identity.

I will focus entirely on Nygren's major work *Agape and Eros* and forgo most of his other texts. His output both before and after this book was enormous, but once he had outlined his understanding of Christian love and criticism of Augustine's concept of *caritas*, the basic argument was set, and he never produced another work of the same complexity that went deeper into the problem here. In the case of Arendt, the situation is reversed. After her thesis on Augustine in the late 1920s, she went on to produce a range of complex and challenging works throughout her life, but she never gathered her thoughts on love or identity in one place. The analysis of her ideas will, therefore, have a synthetic character in a way that is unnecessary in Nygren's case. The argument will proceed in three steps. I will first discuss Arendt's thesis on Augustine in dialogue with Nygren's analysis in *Agape and Eros*. Thereafter, early critics of Nygren's interpretation of the history of Christian love will help reveal the difference between his and Arendt's positions on Augustine. In the final section, I will turn to Arendt's mature works and her continued struggle with self-love and the idea that searching for an inner core or self as and alienates the self from the world. Instead she came close to a new concept of identity as an alternative to the inward search for a true self.

Eros, caritas, and agape: Arendt and Nygren on Augustine

'What else is love except a kind of life that binds, or seeks to bind, together two things, namely the lover and the beloved?'⁶ According to Arendt, who quoted these words of Augustine in her 1929 *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin*, the bonds of love decide the direction of life. She argued that Augustine alienated human beings from the world by privileging otherworldliness and the self's desire for the perfect object of love, God. The character of love decided the kind of life people lived: 'in *cupiditas* or in *caritas*, we decide about our abode, whether we wish to belong to this world or the world to come,' she wrote.⁷ In three, tightly argued sections, Arendt presented a philosophical reading of

Augustine's reflections on love. Such a reading evaluated the different trains of thought on love from the principle of consistency and if there was a unifying principle behind the different concepts of love. One result of her analysis was that such a unifying principle did not exist. The disjointed character of Augustine's concept of love was demonstrated by the difficulty to show the relevance of other persons in their uniqueness and individuality.

Love as craving had its meaning in a context where human beings sought relief in the desire for happiness and an endless life as a response to a dissatisfying existence. Such a craving implied that the overall goal of human existence was to reach the ultimate, all-encompassing, and fulfilling object of desire. It also implied that other persons were means to that end, and never appeared as desirable in themselves. The same worked for the world, which could never be a concern or object of care. *Cupiditas* did encourage love of the world and other persons, but once again not in themselves, but as expressions of God's creation. As God's created creatures, other persons are worthy of love, but this idea could not, Arendt argued, solve the problem of neighborly love. God was the ultimate object of love, and everything in the world, including fellow men, deserved love because they were created creatures, not because they were unique individuality.

Arendt argued that the reason people were joined together in Augustine's analysis were their common past as defined by faith. Faith gave meaning to human life as a story of a sinful and mortal existence that was redeemed by Christ. But this also implied that Augustine's concept of neighborly love did not start from a reflections on love but from the idea of a common history which got its meaning from faith. It is history, and a common past, that creates community, and not the fact that we factually live together with others. The bond is not neighborly love, but the idea that everyone shares a common past as mortal and sinful creatures that can be saved from this situation as long as they continue to have faith and commit to the command to love their neighbors as themselves. This principle was thus an expression of resisting the ever looming threat of sin and mortality which marked life in the past and the present. "However, the common past determines *caritas* at the same time. And in general, one's obligations toward another arises from this common past of sin, the concrete impulse of neighborly love arises from the thought of one's own peril."⁸ Augustine thus failed to present a coherent system of love, and also to show the relevance of neighborly love.

We will return to Arendt's critical reflections on Augustine in the context of her later works, where her remarks invite a rereading of the conventional demand to know and love oneself. In the meantime, Nygren's analysis of Augustine makes an interesting comparison, especially since he read and appreciated Arendt's thesis. When he reviewed it in the early 1930s, he called it excellent and lauded its analytical depth.⁹ In *Agape and Eros*, he only referenced it once in the second volume, but his interpretation resembled hers, which perhaps shows that there was an overall consensus among readers of Augustine at the time on how some of his ideas should be understood. However, in Nygren's case, as distinct from Arendt, Augustine was the main representative of the tradition that had prevented a correct understanding of the meaning of Christian love. Augustine's interpretation of love as *caritas*, which had become more or less synonymous with Christian love, was nothing but a mixture of two distinct ideas of love, *agape* and *eros*, which, Nygren argued, 'have originally nothing whatever to do with one another.'¹⁰

According to Nygren, *agape* and *eros* were ‘fundamental motifs’ that informed systems of thought or belief.¹¹ They were ‘driving forces’ that created a context of meaning for a life that was formed in accordance with these motifs. Without elaboration, Nygren implied that *eros* had several distinct meanings that he never separated clearly: desiring love (based on the ontology of humans as imperfect creatures), egocentrism (the idea that the human self is always the primary position or perspective), self-love (a certain type of love on a spectrum that included love of God and love of neighbor), and egoism (condemnable self-promotion). In *eros* ‘everything centres on the individual self and its destiny.’¹² At the root of this motif loomed sexual desire and self-preservation. Although sublimated *eros*, which was Nygren’s concern, was desire for the highest possible object of love (God), it could never rid itself of ties to self-love and bodily desires of the lowest kind. In the motif of *eros*, self-love was at the center of attention; love of God came second as the object of love that would satisfy the subject’s needs, and love of neighbor was the least important. As a principle of love, *eros* is of human origin and inherently associated with accumulation of riches and self-interest. ‘The aim of love [eros] is to gain possession of an object which is regarded as valuable and which man feels he needs.’¹³ *Eros* is therefore ascending; it is striving for the ultimate possession, the eternal good.

As an attitude to life,¹⁴ *agape* was, of course, the opposite of *eros*. Its point of departure is the fundamental difference between God and man. *Agape* descends from God to man and is unmotivated; that is, non-acquisitive. In Nygren’s interpretation of *agape* as a systematic idea of love, love of neighbor ranked first, love of God second (the effect of accepting the gift of love), and self-love last. When Paul set self-love and neighborly love against each other, Nygren said, he not only opposed a “lower self-love,” or the natural propensity to self-assertion, but all self-love whatsoever, even in its most highly spiritual forms. Nothing is more alien to his mind than to base neighborly love on a “spiritual” self-love, as if the ego must first look after his own spiritual interests and then secondarily show love to its neighbor.¹⁵ God’s love was indifferent to value; it was spontaneous, in Nygren’s vocabulary. Any evaluation of an object – whether of its beauty or of its contribution to happiness – was a construction on the basis of human ideals. God’s love was not acquisitive, but a spontaneous gift that did not ask for recompense.

The basic conflict between *eros* and *agape* was projected onto major writers in the story Nygren told of Western intellectual history from Plato to Luther. It ended on the brink of modernity. Luther’s Reformation, in which Christian *agape* regained its purest manifestation, had its counterpart in the Renaissance, which was dominated by the motif of *eros*.¹⁶ The two attitudes of life stood side by side because, as Nygren wrote already in the mid-1920s, ‘even though one can say that the theocentric tendency in Luther *in principle* had defeated the egocentric one, it does not follow that it also succeeded *historically*. On the contrary, the history of Evangelic Christianity after the Reformation is a story of the continued struggle between the two tendencies.’¹⁷ The meaning and future of Christian love and the meaning of human existence was thus not a settled matter. The fight continued in modern culture and within every individual. Even though *eros*, as a will to salvation, was an attempt to reach divine perfection, it always tended to become a love of the world (*amor mundi*) because self-love remained firmly at its center.

The villain in Nygren's history was Augustine. His inward turn toward the self and his synthesis of eros and agape created a third alternative, *caritas*, arguably the most important since it had virtually defined every modern interpretation of Christian love.¹⁸ In Nygren's analysis, which in its general outlines resembled Arendt's, Augustine's synthesis failed because despite its sophistication it could not free itself from egocentrism and self-love. The craving of the *summum bonum*, God, was the basic structure that his whole conception revolved around. It remained a version of ascending love and relied upon the ego's capacity to find the ladder to its true home by turning toward itself. 'To know oneself is to know God, to abide in oneself is to abide in God.'¹⁹ Augustine struggled to integrate the truly Christian elements into a comprehensive whole but did not succeed because the two ways of love were irreconcilable. Therefore, Augustine had to let humans be 'infused' by *caritas* in order to enable the transition from human desire to divine love. This gift of divine love in grace was the agape dimension in Augustine, which was combined with the erotic craving of attaining the highest good. Man 'does not possess any Caritas in himself, and if he is to gain it, it must be given to him by a special Divine act of grace, it must be infused into his heart from without.'²⁰ By God's grace, we are drawn into the field of divine love and are therefore supported in our attempt to redirect our craving away from the world and the false love of *cupiditas*. Despite this move, Nygren concluded, the basic aspect of Augustine's concept of love remained the acquisition of some good: 'Betrayed by the world in its quest for riches, honour and life, it [the soul] turns its back upon this world and seeks satisfaction in another, where these advantages can be gained, but in a still higher form, and for perpetuity.'²¹

When discussing Augustine's idea of neighborly love, Nygren adopted the Kantian maxim that one should never use a neighbor as a means to an end, but always as an end in him- or herself, as a yardstick. Naturally, this led to an anachronistic and questionable reading,²² but it is also where he seems most in harmony with Arendt. In his review of *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin*, Nygren specifically praised Arendt's insights into the limits of Augustine's understanding of neighborly love, and his words echoed hers. Love of neighbor in Augustine, he wrote, is not love 'concerned with the neighbor in his concrete situation, but with his "nature" as created by God.' The reason for this was the predominance of love as *eros* in Augustine's concept of love. 'Love finds a motive even here in the thought of the potential worth in the neighbor, which may in future become actual.'²³ Love of neighbor was thus only a means to reach God. Because of his dependence on the ascending love of *eros*, Augustine had not been able to fit neighborly love into his system. When confronted with *agape's* unmotivated neighborly love, Augustine was perplexed because the neighbor, from the point of view of *agape*, is neither a means (*uti*) to an end nor something to enjoy (*frui*). Therefore, Nygren found a rift running through Augustine's idea of love that Luther had ripped wide open when he, like Paul, separated *eros* and *agape*.

In opposition to most of the Christian tradition, Nygren thought that the commandment 'Love thy neighbor as thyself' was not a license to accept self-love. Self-love was a kind of love that belonged to human beings in their natural state as physical creatures. Therefore, it could not be part of a divine command. Christian love taught that one should abandon the self, but remember the intensity of self-love when it was redirected

toward the neighbor. This was only possible, however, when man had surrendered entirely to divine sovereignty. This was the only way the severed bond between man and God might be mended.²⁴

Neighorly love and social life

From the point of view of the problem that concerns us here, the most radical aspect of Nygren's schema was the means he proposed for moving away from love of self, and implicitly from every focus on the self. According to Nygren, a human subject who wanted to act lovingly in a truly Christian way had to voluntarily surrender his or her autonomy to divine sovereignty. There had to be a shift from an egocentric to a theocentric perspective in order to come to terms with the human situation of sinfulness and radical alienation from God. Human beings do not possess the means to save their own souls. This was why fellowship with God was so important.²⁵ *Agape* did not contain anything human, Nygren argued; man 'has nothing of his own to give. He is merely the tube, the channel, through which God's love flows.'²⁶ The Christian who had willfully embraced his fellowship with God thus also accepted his or her role as a vehicle for divine love. Fellowship with God, however, did not mean the destruction of the self but a qualitative change of the self. Through the new relationship, 'the self loses its egocentric character without having to be annihilated in the process.'²⁷ Nygren's extreme Lutheran understanding of the human incapacity of reaching a state of blessedness by one's own means, and his idea that a totally pure, divine *agape* did not contain any trace of humanity, left human beings utterly alone and unable to act unselfishly, even towards family and friends, without divine presence. What was left as a means to lift humanity out of this loneliness and selfishness was faith, which was 'receptivity, not spontaneity'.²⁸

This was a hard pill to swallow, and early critics were clear about the disagreements with Nygren. They thought his opposition between *eros* and *agape* was too rigid; that he misrepresented both *agape* and *caritas*, and failed to take the category of friendship into account.²⁹ However, one of these early critics deserve special attention. Among Nygren's early readers, Gunnar Hultgren seems to have been the only one familiar with Arendt's work on Augustine. Even though Hultgren agreed that self-interest ultimately gained the upper hand in Augustine's system, he thought Nygren reduced the ontological structure of love – that is, that love was part of an order of the entire world – to the psychological question of eudaimonism when it was in fact far more complicated. He also stressed that friendship, which he admitted was never unmotivated love in Nygren's sense, expressed itself primarily in family and society. Relying on Arendt's analysis, Hultgren argued that *vita socialis* was 'the real fulcrum of Augustine's positive understanding of love of neighbor.' One of the great merits of Arendt's study, Hultgren thought, and one that Nygren never commented upon, was its clear analysis of a Christian community based on the common ancestry from Adam. When human beings search for who and what they ultimately are, they will end up finding their creator and dependence on the gift of creation. Human beings have a common origin in Adam, and shared a 'common predicament: finitude and sinfulness.' To understand divine creation and the community of the faithful who love their neighbors in their sinfulness, one could settle on Arendt account. In Hultgren's understanding, this amounted to a truly Christian idea of love.³⁰

Although there is no evidence that Arendt ever read Nygren, she did read Hultgren's 'important study' and would thus have been indirectly familiar with his more famous compatriot.³¹ Even though Arendt's thesis was less elaborated than the revised version she worked on many years later, her result was not as positive as Hultgren thought. As we saw, she argued that Augustine's concept of neighborly love was philosophically incoherent. It was not the consequence of his analysis of love but the result of a redefinition of the human situation after the redemptive action of Jesus. Love of neighbor was a new command at odds with believer's pre-Christian sense of love. Arendt found this logic unsatisfactory. *Caritas* becomes a desire for the creator; *cupiditas*, on the other hand, becomes a misdirected craving for the world one thinks preexists man. The one who loves God after denying himself (i.e., his love of self) will love his neighbor as part of God's creation, but not as a concrete, individual person. In Augustine, Arendt concluded in agreement with Nygren, neighborly love is incomprehensible. Ultimately, one ends up watching oneself and one's neighbor from a position of 'absolute distance.' The more self-denial takes center stage, the more every real relation is forgotten.³² That is, Augustine's idea of love was directed toward otherworldliness and denial of the world one shares with others. In this sense, his idea of love as craving for the highest principle led to denial of the world as a legitimate object of care.

The problem Arendt formulated in the thesis, and expanded decades later when she planned an English translation, was how to reorient attention from escaping the bonds of the world to actually embracing it with all the consequences for politics and relationships with self and others that this embrace implied. Among contemporary readers, this turn toward politics has also informed interpretations of her analysis of Augustine.³³ In the historical world, humans live separated from God but depends on other people. According to Arendt's interpretation of Augustine, this kind of life was nothing but a life of estrangement and spiritual desert, and concern for the fate of the soul was the only basis for bonds between people in a Christian community. Love of God became just an abstraction, removed from any living relationship between human beings in their plurality and heterogeneity. 'Would it not be better to love the world in *cupiditas* and be at home? Why should we want to make a desert out of this world?' she added to the revised version of her thesis.³⁴ The ties with the world actualized in *cupiditas* were nothing but a fear of losing one's possessions, and desperate clinging to the world and its objects led to estrangement. The person's sense of self dispersed in the multitude of possibilities offered by objects that were not part of the true self. 'Whoever wishes to say "I am" and to summon up his own unity and identity and to pit it against the variety and multiplicity of the world, must withdraw into himself, into some inner region, turning his back on whatever the "outside" can offer,' was Arendt's summary of the general orientation in Augustine.³⁵

The problem she needed to solve was how to move from love of the self and the inwardness this implied to some kind of acceptance of the world as an object of care. This theme, only hinted at in her thesis, emerged more strongly in her additions and revisions to the text decades later. Whereas Nygren settled for the argument that human beings had to surrender the self to divine sovereignty and condemn their pre-Christian lives – agape was a devastating judgment on human selfishness³⁶ – Arendt faced the daunting task of reorienting the self from the introspective search for inclinations and motives to an

outward integration of the self with the world. This was made possible by the reorientation of the concept of identity that took place after the Second World War. In order to see this, we will have to follow her reflections on love and Augustine in some of her mature works.

Binding the self to the world: *amor mundi* and identity

Commentators on Arendt's remarks on love usually highlight the statement in *The Human Condition* (1958) in which love is dismissed as an anti-political phenomenon that shields the lovers from the world.³⁷ Recent studies of her *Denktagebuch*, however, shows that there are different ideas of love in her work that paint a rather complex picture of this fundamental emotional bond.³⁸ An important point of departure for an assessment of Arendt's thoughts on love is that she did not seek to replace *amor Dei* with *amor mundi*, as if she preferred *cupiditas* to *caritas* in Augustine's terminology. Her love of the world was rather an attempt to find an alternative to the exploitative and selfish attitude expressed by *cupiditas* – which Nygren, as we have seen, connected to eros's road to salvation.³⁹ Although Arendt only mentioned *amor mundi* in passing, and never elaborated what it entailed, it has been regarded as one of her major contributions to political thinking. A common interpretation is that love of the world is based on a non-possessive caring for the world. Care included questions of generational change and responsibility toward newcomers to the world, and the kind of environment they had to live in. Education was therefore a central aspect of this transmission of responsibility. 'Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it.'⁴⁰

In *amor mundi*, John Kiess writes, a 'civic virtue' had to be developed that put the common world we share with others before self-love's wish to appropriate and consume it.⁴¹ Kiess's interpretation implies that Arendt shared Nygren's opinion that self-love ultimately means acquisitiveness. This is confirmed in *The Human Condition* where Arendt refers to Max Weber's study of innerworldly asceticism and how it prevented genuine care of the world. Asceticism showed that an 'enormous, strictly mundane activity is possible without any care or enjoyment of the world whatever, an activity whose deepest motivation, on the contrary, is worry and care about the self.'⁴² In contrast, a consistent *amor mundi* demanded collective responsibility; that is, the self's subordination to the care of the world. Too much focus on the self leads to a denigration of, or indifference toward, the world. This was one of Arendt's major criticisms against Christianity. It is even possible to read her argument as structurally equivalent to Nygren's call for a shift from an egocentric to a theocentric perspective. In Arendt's case, the qualitative difference had to be a change of perspective from the self to the world.

Once again, Arendt's comments on Augustine serve as an important nexus. In Augustine's system one had to turn away from the world because self-knowledge and discovery of God coincided. The erotic quest for oneself was the quest to solve a puzzle and remedy a fundamental deficiency by becoming part of divine eternity. 'In order to *be*, man has to overcome his human existence, which is temporality,'⁴³ as Arendt formulated it. In her quest for an *amor mundi*, if that was indeed what she was after, Arendt of course had to go in the opposite direction. Instead of withdrawing from the world in search of

a true self, and confronting the motivating forces of action to ultimately discover the origin of creation, Arendt searched for a new 'I am' in the encounter with the multiplicities of the external world. This new 'I am' had to be constructed from appearances rather than material from the dark corners of the ego. As will be suggested below, this new 'I am' was identity, which was re-conceptualized in the decades after the war in a way that suited Arendt's turn away from inwardness and self-love.

Both Arendt and Nygren thought that the tension between self-love and neighborly love was the rift running through Augustine's theory, and that he struggled to harmonize the love of the self and its ascension to perfection with the command to love one's neighbors without using them as means to fulfill the ego's desire. Arendt contrasted this with another kind of dependence within the very act of thinking. Deliberation with oneself in thinking was a dialogue with a silent partner that helped to evaluate one's actions. 'It is not a question of loving myself as I may love others, but of being more dependent on this silent partner I carry with myself, more at his mercy, as it were, than is perhaps the case with anybody else.'⁴⁴ We are never alone when we think; in solitude we articulate and actualize a companionship with others (another self). Real loneliness would mean the end of the inner dialogue with oneself and a dreadful state of mental illness. What Arendt thus emphasized was the plurality inherent in the concept of the self. Even in solitude we discover plurality; it was there already at the beginning.⁴⁵ The recognition of the constitutive difference of the self opened the way for kinds of love and dependencies other than egocentric self-love. 'Friendship' was the word Arendt preferred to describe this bond between the self and its dialogue partner. Friendship was not primarily an intimate relationship of two, according to Arendt, but a space between people where deliberation, debate and negotiations could take place in trust.⁴⁶ In contrast to neighborly love in the Christian tradition, friendship presupposed an active choice of company. Christian love is de-individualizing, she argued; it looks for similarity and denies plurality and difference.⁴⁷ Friendship, on the other hand, was always a question of encountering specific others and appreciating difference despite the fact that it also had a mirroring effect, friends being another self, as Aristotle said.⁴⁸ Once again, we recognize her critique of Augustine's failed concept of neighborly love.

Another step away from the self was to reduce the importance of introspection. As a method for finding the truth about the interior self, inward searching was equivalent to biology's interest in the basic drives of living organisms. Relying on the Swiss zoologist Adolf Portmann, Arendt argued that visibility and self-display were just as significant for organisms as the drive to secure survival.⁴⁹ Human existence means to be perceived and perceive; it means appearing in front of others and oneself. 'To be alive means to be possessed by an urge toward self-display which answers the fact of one's own appearingness. Living things *make their appearance* like actors on a stage set for them.'⁵⁰ This was not the display of an inner self but of a unique public individuality. Without places of appearance in action and speech, humans would be stuck inside a solipsistic inner world of self-mirroring.

In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities, and thus make their appearance in the world. The disclosure of "who" in contradistinction to "what" somebody is – his qualities, gifts, talents, and short-comings, which he may display or hide – is implicit in everything somebody says or does [...] but it can almost never be achieved as a willful purpose.⁵¹

The self is shaped by the encounter with others, and we do not control our self-understanding since it is partly defined by the image others make of us. This is one aspect of living in a world of plurality and heterogeneity.

The downplaying of knowing and loving oneself implies that the definition of the self should occur within a context that supports care of the world. As the above quotation suggests, this was the context of identity. However, one must tread carefully here. There are many problems of identity in Arendt's work that are not connected in a comprehensive theory. Although previous studies on Arendt have often touched upon these problems,⁵² as far as I know no one has yet seen identity as part of her quest to shift perspectives from the self to the world. One reason for this is perhaps an insufficient sensitivity to the historicity of the problem of identity. In Arendt's works, identity implied at least five different problems: (1) Identity means sameness or oneness, something she always opposed.⁵³ (2) Identity is a question of continuity that creates foreseeability and stability, which Arendt cared deeply about, especially in terms of narratives about ourselves and others, and our capacity to make and keep promises.⁵⁴ (3) Identity comprises the characteristics that mark someone as a specific, unique individual or member of a group, an inevitable dilemma for a Jewish woman in the twentieth century.⁵⁵ (4) Identity is a sense of self-awareness that accompanies one's acts and thoughts, and the sense of belonging in a body;⁵⁶ an example she mentioned is pride, which, she argued, is the 'untaught and natural feeling of identity with whatever we happen to be by the accident of birth.'⁵⁷ (5) Identity is what we get when we recognize 'the strange difference that inserts itself into the core of this identity [I-am-I];'⁵⁸ that is, the problem of heterogeneity.

This incoherent set of problems was typical of the decades after World War II, when identity became the topic of numerous psychological and sociological studies in the wake of accelerating transformations of societies. However, they were about to be subsumed under a new concept of identity that was then in the process of formation. During the decades when Arendt wrote her major works and struggled with the love of the world as a way of binding humans to a shared commitment and responsibility, identity became a way of conceptualizing a sense of existential and temporal orientation in the world. Finding or defining one's identity became an existential problem of harmonizing one's perception of oneself with relationships to others so that one felt at home in the world. Identity became a bond, a way of connecting an individual to his or her world, and the project of finding, creating, or exploring identity was a way of incorporating the outside to one's sense of inner self and coherence. The different problems of identity one can find in Arendt's works, which could be analyzed independently of each other, were incorporated into the new existential concept of identity and the new identity discourse of the self. From this point onward, identity was a response to the existential question of who or what I am, an answer that defined one's attitude to and place in the world. In this new construction, identity immediately became a political problem connected to race, gender, social position, and economical power.⁵⁹

In the case of Arendt, the new construction of identity is perfectly aligned with the basic thrust of her work in overcoming alienation, avoiding self-love, and finding a home in the world. To be someone meant becoming a person in the encounter with others and appearing in front of them. Identity was about surface more than depth, the outer more

than the inner. Identity was the result of self-presentations, self-displays, and finding ways to belong to groups and communities. It reached outward and away from the private realm of feelings and egocentrism. 'Our conviction that what is inside ourselves, our "inner life", is more relevant to what we "are" than what appears on the outside is an illusion.'⁶⁰

This also makes it understandable why Arendt questioned the necessity of searching for inner motivations and what might be called knowledge of the self. The demand that one publicly display one's inner cravings turned everyone into hypocrites, she argued. 'I have always believed that no one can know himself, for no one *appears* to himself as he appears to others. Only poor Narcissus will let himself be deluded by his own reflected image, pining away from love of a mirage.'⁶¹ In modern iconography, the symbolic figure of Narcissus embodies both self-love and lack of self-recognition by turning away from the world. For a self that understands itself as immersed in the world, such self-reflection meant attending to the wrong problem.

With this quotation we are obviously back where we started. Arendt's quest for identity was opposed to the Augustinian inward search for self-understanding and the conventional focus on self-love as a way to comprehend inner motivations for action. Self-knowledge was theoretically dubious; perhaps there is no object to know at all; the idea that the self can see itself is an illusion. The inner circles of the self, including love, were dark places that neither contributed to the creation of a public self nor revealed the reasons for actions, since the motives were hidden not only to others but also to the agent, no matter how intense his or her self-scrutiny had been.⁶² From Arendt's perspective, the problem with knowing and loving oneself was not only that it withdrew the self from the world and aimed at a unity that denied plurality; it was also unpolitical and turned its back on the challenges of inhabiting the world together with people who were different. If it is true that one becomes like the objects one desires, Arendt's denial of the value of the inward turn and the love of the self thus also revealed the direction of her own inclinations.

A counterargument to the analysis above is that Arendt was not always dismissive of Augustine's concept of love. For instance, in the second part of *The Life of the Mind: Willing* she seems far more sympathetic to an Augustinian idea of love and seems to reread it as directed towards the other.⁶³ Augustine's love, she now argued, redeems conflicting wills and 'loves the love of the beloved,' in harmony with the Kantian principle that no one should be treated as a means to an end. But that analysis appears in the context of a history of the will in the era which Arendt thought discovered inwardness in a modern sense. In Augustine, she argued, the divided will is redeemed by being transformed into love, bringing the soul to rest. 'The soul's gravity, the essence of who somebody is, and which as such is inscrutable to human eyes, becomes manifest in this love.'⁶⁴ This kind of love is directed towards the essence of the self, and identifying this as love, which unifies the lover's love for the beloved other, is also a way of knowing who or what one is. Augustine's idea that this vision of love has an analogy in the trinity implies that the search for the inner core of oneself will end up in the divinity. Transforming will into love in order to solve conflicts of wills is therefore a way of finding the ultimate solution in divine love rather than in love of the other. Confronting Augustine and Kant, Arendt also argued that if Augustine had followed through on his vision of human being's as creatures with a beginning and an end, he would have called

them ‘natals’ rather than mortals, and interpreted freedom as the capacity to spontaneously create beginnings in a time-series rather than as a choice between willing and not willing.⁶⁵ From the perspective of the question at the center here, it seems that Arendt remained quite critical of Augustine’s concept of love and inward search for the essence of the self, even though less dismissive as in other contexts.

How does this conclusion compare with Nygren’s denigration of the search for self-knowledge? When we left him, he had surrendered the self to divine sovereignty. This move from an egocentric to a theocentric perspective means that the self willingly accepts becoming a channel of divine love. In his case, erotic self-love and the search for self-knowledge was part of the history of metaphysics. The project of knowing oneself was nothing but an attempt to find the divine part that constituted the core of the human soul. In what could have been an opportunity for a very interesting discussion, Nygren singled out the philosophical tradition Arendt belonged to as a modern heir of this tradition. Existentialist thought inspired by Martin Heidegger’s philosophy and its influence on theologians such as Rudolf Bultmann, who had been Arendt’s teacher for a short time in the 1920s, was, Nygren argued in his last work, nothing but a recurrence of the principle of *gnothi seauton* (know yourself). Although he never mentioned Augustine in this context, modern philosophy and theology of the Continental variety was still under the grip of the Church Father.

For *self*-understanding is the key to the understanding of *being* and ultimately also to the understanding of *God*. [...] Enter into yourself – so we are admonished – and take a good look at your own existence; you will then discover your finitude, and along with it, correlative to it, you will also discover God, infinite being, “being itself”. In this way the broad stream of religious metaphysics comes pouring into theology.⁶⁶

This kind of thinking was nothing but a modernized version of a metaphysical philosophy of *eros* in which the self has to seek its fulfillment by desiring the most valuable and highest object of love. However, entering into ourselves in search of the self would only mean encountering the greed of self-love and turn us further away from our true home in fellowship with God. Without a doubt, Nygren would have thought that Arendt’s love of the world and the self as identity were just other expressions of *eros*, adapted to a secular understanding of the human condition.

Concluding remarks

In contrast to Arendt, Nygren always and uncompromisingly sided with Christianity. Every Western society and culture, even in its secularized forms, was Christian at its core, and, therefore, the world was comprehensible within a Christian-Lutheran framework. Although this framework was challenged in modernity, in its major outline it was still valid for a proper understanding of the human condition. This was one aspect of what was at stake in the ongoing struggle between *eros* and *agape*. Modern culture and ways of perceiving the world were an unsound mix, which deprived modern men and women of a clear vision of their existential situation. Their perspective was limited, and modern people had caged themselves within the narrow box of innerworldliness and *amor mundi* in a Christian sense.

From Arendt's point of view, the alternatives Nygren presented, including his de-centering of the ego in agape as a channel of God's love, were nothing but alienation from the world. De-centering the self must take another route: if one recognizes the plurality inherent in the self from the beginning, then one also undermines the idea of the self as a unity. When one accepts that the motivating factors of human action, such as self-love, are uncertain territory, the self cannot be found by withdrawing from the world. The self is rather the effect of appearances, representations, and encounters with others; that is, the self is defined as identity. As a new context of meaning about the self and its place in the world, identity is what is left to a self that tries to find a home in the world and a new bond in *amor mundi*.

Arendt's turn towards identity is especially interesting since it suggests that the ancient tradition of self-knowledge, and its adaptation in the modern period when self-knowledge can be traced and reflected upon historically, was replaced by identity as a new way of understanding the self. However, the story of the decline of self-knowledge and the rise of identity has yet to be written. Nygren's and Arendt's skepticism, however, gives a hint of the theoretical problems facing this ancient tradition when confronted with the modern purge of metaphysics and the undermining of the self as the unitary basis of knowledge and love.

Notes

1. Arendt, "Prologue," 7.
2. Nygren, *Meaning and Method*, 324–5.
3. Augustine, *Confessions*, X:33,50.
4. See for instance, Hägglund, *This Life*; Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love*; Kristeva, *Tales of Love*; Collins & Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*; Simmons & Sorrells, *Love and Christian Ethics*.
5. Examples are Milbank, "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism," 225–37; Connolly, *The Augustinian Imperative*; Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity*; Caputo & Scanlon, *Augustine and Postmodernism*; L. Boeve, M. Lamberigts & M. Wisse, *Augustine and Postmodern Thought*.
6. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 18. Cf Augustine, *The Trinity*, VIII: 14.
7. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 18. A comprehensive summary of Arendt's thesis is Boyle, "Elusive Neighborliness," 81–113.
8. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 109.
9. Nygren, "Amor Proximi hos Augustinus," 267–69, and in German translation in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 57 (1932), 495–97.
10. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 31, 32. The first edition, *Den kristna kärlekstanken genom tiderna: Eros och agape* appeared in Swedish in two volumes in 1930 and 1936. An English translation of volume 1 appeared in 1932, translated by A.G. Hebert, and volume 2 was translated by Philip S. Watson in 1938. Watson's revised translation of both volumes in 1953 is the standard version in English.
11. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 27–58. See also "Motivforschung als philosophisches und geschichtliches Problem," 326–44.
12. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 179.
13. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 180. A history of eros directly opposed to Nygren's account is Osborne, *Eros Unveiled*.
14. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 34.
15. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 131. One of the sharpest rejections of Nygren's interpretation of agape is Outka, *Agape*.

16. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 671.
17. Nygren, "Egoism och religion"[Egoism and Religion], 149.
18. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 450.
19. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 517. See also 165.
20. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 522.
21. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 495.
22. Holte, *Béatitude et sagesse*, 275.
23. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 550; Nygren, "Amor proximi hos Augustinus," 268–9.
24. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 100–1.
25. Nygren, "The Atonement as a Work of God," 79–128.
26. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 735.
27. Nygren, "The Permanent Element in Christianity," 56.
28. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 127.
29. See for instance D'Arcy, *The Mind and Heart of Love*, 70–1, 77, and Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 19–20, 118, 123, 189. See also Burnaby, "Amor in St. Augustine," 174–86.
30. Hultgren, *Le Commandement d'Amour chez Augustin*, 259–60.
31. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 43–4.
32. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 98, see also 57, 94.
33. See for instance Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights*, 75–81 and Buhre, "Speaking Other Times," 133–45.
34. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 19. See also the editors' comments, 160–4.
35. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 24.
36. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 104.
37. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 242, 51–52.
38. Tömmel, "Vita Passiva," 106–22; idem, "Liebe," 292–94.
39. See Chiba, "Hannah Arendt on Love and the Political," 505–35.
40. Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 196.
41. Kiess, *Hannah Arendt and Theology*, 122.
42. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 254, 303.
43. Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, 29.
44. Arendt, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," 96.
45. Arendt, *Life of the Mind: Thinking*, 189.
46. Chiba, "Hannah Arendt on Love and the Political," 518–19.
47. Arendt, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," 76, 116, 123. See also *Love and Saint Augustine*, 95.
48. Arendt, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," 98; *Life of the Mind: Thinking*, 189.
49. O'Byrne, "The Task of Knowledgeable Love," 88–105, esp. 96ff. See also Fischer, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 239–42.
50. Arendt, *Life of the Mind: Thinking*, 21.
51. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 179.
52. On Arendt and identity, see Duvall Jacobitti, "Thinking About the Self," 199–220; Honig, "Arendt, Identity, and Difference," 77–88; Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, esp. ch. 1–2; Moruzzi, *Speaking Through the Mask*; Vivier, "Construction of Identity in the Philosophy of Hannah Arendt," 83–100.
53. Arendt, *The Origin of Totalitarianism*, 478; *Life of the Mind: Thinking*, 187.
54. Arendt, "Labor, Work, Action," 42.
55. Arendt, *Origin of Totalitarianism*, 584, 613.
56. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: Thinking* 156.
57. Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," 193.
58. Arendt, *Life of the Mind: Thinking*, 156; see also *Origin of Totalitarianism*, 613.
59. On the history of the concept of identity, see Izenberg, *Identity* and Niethammer, *Kollektive Identität*.
60. Arendt, *Life of the Mind: Thinking*, 30. A counterargument could be that Arendt was critical of phrases such as "identity crises" and "search for identity," which became fashionable in

the 1960s. Searching for identity was, she argued, based on the mistaken idea that finding identity meant being a unity unto oneself. Such an idea did not recognize our inherent plurality, both when we are alone and when we are in the world (*Life of the Mind: Thinking*, 187). The popular discourse about searching for identity was just another version of an introspective hunt for an authentic self or essence.

61. See note 1 above.
62. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 96–8.
63. Arendt, *Life of the Mind: Willing*, 122.
64. Arendt, *Life of the Mind: Willing*, 125, 95.
65. Arendt, *Life of the Mind: Willing*, 109.
66. Nygren, *Meaning and Method*, 324–5. Nygren was critical of Bultmann’s program to demythologize the Bible. Instead, the self-evident presuppositions of modernity had to be scrutinized because they prevented the Bible from being read as a realistic description of the human situation. See Nygren, “Christ and the Forces of Destruction,” 363–75.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Frida Buhre for sharing her knowledge of Arendt and Augustine and to Florence Grant for many suggestions on how to improve the text.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Torbjörn Gustafsson Chorell is professor at the Department of History of Science and Ideas, Uppsala University and specializes in modern intellectual history and historical theory. His recent works in English have appeared in *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, *Rethinking History*, and *Partial Answers*.

Bibliography

- Arendt, H. *On Revolution*. London: Penguin, 1973a.
- Arendt, H. *Between past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* [1961]. London: Penguin, 1973b.
- Arendt, H. *Life of the Mind*, Vol. 1 *Thinking*. New York & London: Harcourt, 1977.
- Arendt, H. *Life of the Mind*, Vol. 2 *Willing*. New York & London: Harcourt, 1978.
- Arendt, H. “Labor, Work, Action.” In *Amor Mundi: Explorations in the Faith and Thought of Hannah Arendt*, edited by S. J. J.W. Bernauer, 29–42. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987.
- Arendt, H. *Love and Saint Augustine*, edited by J. V. Scott and J. C. Stark. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996.
- Arendt, H. *The Human Condition* [1958]. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Arendt, H. “Prologue” [1975]. In *Responsibility and Judgment*, edited by J. Kohn, 13–14. New York: Schocken, 2003a.
- Arendt, H. “Some Questions of Moral Philosophy” [1965–66]. In *Responsibility and Judgment*, edited by J. Kohn, 49–146. New York: Schocken, 2003b.
- Arendt, H. “Reflections on Little Rock” [1959]. In *Responsibility and Judgment*, edited by J. Kohn, 193–213. New York: Schocken, 2003c.
- Arendt, H. *The Origin of Totalitarianism* [1951/58]. New York: Schocken, 2004.
- Augustine. *The Trinity*. Translated by E. Hill. New York: New City Press, 1991.

- Augustine. *Confessions, Book 9-13*. Translated by C. J. B. Hammond. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Benhabib, S. *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.
- Birmingham, P. *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights: The Predicament of Common Responsibility*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
- Boeve, L., M. Lamberigts, and M. Wisse, editors. *Augustine and Postmodern Thought: A New Alliance against Modernity?* Leuven: Peeters, 2009.
- Boyle, S. J., P. “Elusive Neighborliness: Hannah Arendt’s Interpretation of Saint Augustine.” In *Amor Mundi: Explorations in the Faith and Thought of Hannah Arendt*, edited by S. J. J.W Bernauer, 81–113. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987.
- Buhre, F. “Speaking Other Times: Hannah Arendt and the Temporality of Politic.” diss., Uppsala University, 2019.
- Burnaby, J. *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* [1938]. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1947.
- Burnaby, J. “Amor in St. Augustine.” In *The Philosophy and Theology of Anders Nygren*, edited by C. W. Kegley, 174–186. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970.
- Caputo, J. D., and M. J. Scanlon, editors. *Augustine and Postmodernism: Confessions and Circumfessions*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Chiba, S. “Hannah Arendt on Love and the Political: Love, Friendship, and Citizenship.” *The Review of Politics* 57, no. 3 (Summer, 1995): 505–535. doi:[10.1017/S0034670500019720](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034670500019720).
- Collins, E., and S. J. Vacek, editors. *Love, Human and Divine: The Heart of Christian Ethics*. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1994.
- Connolly, W. E. *The Augustinian Imperative: A Reflection on the Politics of Morality*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.
- D’Arcy, M. C. *The Mind and Heart of Love: Lion and Unicorn. A Study in Eros and Agape*. London: Faber & Faber, 1947.
- Duvall Jacobitti, S. “Thinking about the Self.” In *Hannah Arendt: Twenty Years Later*, edited by L. May and J. Kohn, 199–219. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996.
- Fischer, J. *Philosophische Anthropologie: Eine Denkrichtung des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Freiburg & München: Karl Alber, 2008.
- Gregory, E. *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethics of Democratic Citizenship*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Häggglund, M. *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom*. New York: Pantheon, 2019.
- Hanby, M. *Augustine and Modernity*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Holte, R. *Béatitude et sagesse: Saint Augustine et le problème de la fin de l’homme dans la philosophie ancienne*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1962.
- Honig, B. “Arendt, Identity, and Difference.” *Political Theory* 16, no. 1 (February, 1988): 77–88. doi:[10.1177/0090591788016001005](https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591788016001005).
- Hultgren, G. *Le Commandement d’Amour chez Augustin: Interprétation philosophiques et théologiques d’après les écrits de la période 386-400*. Paris: Vrin, 1939.
- Izenberg, G. *Identity: The Necessity of a Modern Idea*. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.
- Kiess, J. *Hannah Arendt and Theology*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Kristeva, J. *Tales of Love*, Translated by L. S. Roudicz. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
- Milbank, J. “Postmodern Critical Augustinianism: A Short Summa in 42 Responses to Unmasked Questions.” *Modern Theology* 7, no. 3 (1991): 225–237. doi:[10.1111/j.1468-0025.1991.tb00245.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0025.1991.tb00245.x).
- Moruzzi, N. C. *Speaking through the Mask: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Social Identity*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Niethammer, L. *Kollektive Identität: Heimliche Quellen einer unheimlichen Konjunktur*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1998.
- Nygren, A. “Egoism Och Religion [Egoism and Religion].” *Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift* 3, no. 2 (1927): 129–150.
- Nygren, A. “Amor proximi hos Augustinus.” *Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift* 8, no. 3 (1932): 267–269.

- Nygren, A. "Motivforschung als philosophisches und geschichtliches Problem." In *Adolf Phalén in Memoriam*, edited by H. Nordenstam, 326–344. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1937.
- Nygren, A. "Christ and the Forces of Destruction, and a Word Concerning the De-mythologizing of Christianity." Translated by, E. J. Johanson. *Scottish Journal of Religion*, 4, no. 4 (1951): 363–375.
- Nygren, A. "The Permanent Element in Christianity" [1923]. In *The Essence of Christianity*, edited by P. S. Watson, 11–78. London: Epworth, 1960a.
- Nygren, A. "The Atonement as a Work of God" [1932]. In *The Essence of Christianity*, edited by P. S. Watson, 81–128. London: Epworth, 1960b.
- Nygren, A. *Agape and Eros: A Study of the Christian Idea of Love* [1930, 1936]. P. S. Watson Translated by. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
- Nygren, A. *Meaning and Method: Prolegomena to a Scientific Philosophy of Religion and a Scientific Theology*, Translated by P. S. Watson. London: Epworth Press, 1972.
- O'Byrne, A. "The Task of Knowledgeable Love: Arendt and Portmann in Search of Meaning." In *Artifacts of Thinking: Reading Hannah Arendt's Denktagebuch*, edited by R. Berkowitz and I. Storey, 88–105. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017.
- Osborne, C. *Eros Unveiled: Plato and the God of Love*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1994.
- Outka, G. *Agape: An Ethical Analysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.
- Simmons, F. V., and B. Sorrells, editors. *Love and Christian Ethics: Tradition, Theory, and Society*. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2016.
- Tömmel, T. N. "Liebe." In *Arendt Handbuch: Leben-Werk-Wirkung*, edited by W. Heuer, B. Heiter, and S. Rosenmüller, 292–294. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2011.
- Tömmel, T. N. "Vita Passiva: Love in Arendt's Denktagebuch." In *Artifacts of Thinking: Reading Hannah Arendt's Denktagebuch*, edited by R. Berkowitz and I. Storey, 106–122. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017.
- Vivier, E. "Construction of Identity in the Philosophy of Hannah Arendt." In *From Conflict to Recognition: Moving Multiculturalism Forward*, edited by M. Kearney, 83–100. New York: Brill, 2012.