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REVIEWS

Kathy E. Ferguson, *Letterpress Revolution; The Politics of Anarchist Print Culture*

Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2023; 352pp; 9781478016595

If you find it fascinating that, while in Switzerland in the late 1870s-early 1880s, the foremost theorist of anarchist communism, Peter Kropotkin, along with a few others, would sometimes set up the printing for their paper *Le Révolté*, then this book will bring you a great deal of joy. Likewise, if you have ever wondered about the lives and work of Jo Labadie and Joseph Ishill, whose names are attached to highly important archival collections of anarchist letters and periodicals. How did these archives come into existence? What was their significance for those who authored and curated them? And what does it mean to have – or indeed to work with – a collection of anarchist material held in the library of Harvard University? Also, if we focus on materiality and the relational dimensions of activism, then how does this reshape our understanding of the work of women within the movement?

And even if you think that none of this matters, Kathy Ferguson has written a wonderful book, an essential contribution to the history of classical anarchism – with her eyes firmly on the present – and a must-read for anyone interested in the movement's political, social, cultural and material history, and in the women and men who *made* it, quite literally. *Letterpress Revolution* brims with knowledge and a keen intimacy with the history and material traces of the movement in the UK and US (the book's core geographical remit). It offers many theoretical perspectives, both in its overall framing and in micro-analyses, and weaves together multiple strands of recent research: print as the organisational basis of anarchism and a key, multi-scalar community-building site; the materiality and spatiality of activism; anarchism as a transnational networked movement; the role of anarchist women, teachers and illustrators; collecting and archive-building – to name just a few salient themes. And this is done so deftly, not only with erudition but also fascinating details and anecdotes, and empathetic storytelling.

Starting from the simple reminder that anarchist print culture, embodied by the figure of the printer, is a far more important component of anar-

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chism than the bomber or brick thrower stereotypically associated with the movement, Ferguson examines the three different types of letters at the heart of this print culture: the printing press, the epistolary links connecting activists, and engagement with radical study. She defines anarchist print culture as 'a dynamic combination of media technology, epistolary relations, and radical scholarship' (p3), which can be approached through the concept of 'assemblage', depicting the movement as a set of fluctuating and open structures. This, in turn, substantiates her central claim that anarchism, despite being perennially caricatured as a social movement highly proficient at theory but failing the test of practice, does in fact exist through a host of relational and politically-rich practices, but actually tends to fall short on the theory front – a weakness which the book sets out to rectify.

The first chapter, 'Printers and presses', probes the work carried out by groups and individuals and machines as 'simultaneously aesthetic, political, intellectual, and duplicative' (p29); the fact that this material work 'enabled a great deal of other work to be done' is precisely why the study is fundamental to understand the movement as a whole, as it does indeed provide a fruitful entry point into its history. Printing is understood as being akin to an artistic practice, and Ferguson draws our attention to the specificities, beauties and political meanings of anarchist mastheads. Often unheeded forms of activism are considered, such as the contributions of engravers, teachers, archivists, and librarians.

The second chapter restates the role of private correspondences as an integral part of the movement's print culture, stressing relationality and emotional bonds between activists, between readers and archival material and, most strikingly, between the historian, the primary material they might study, and those whose lives unfold in and through these pages – a point which is most striking in Ferguson's retelling of her emotions when reading the correspondence between Rudolf Rocker and Ishill, steeped in the grief of sickness and death. This includes a reflection on the spatiality of key archival centres visited to research the history of anarchism, from Michigan to Amsterdam's International Institute of Social History, with its free espresso machine.

Chapter 3 explores a third meaning of 'letters', the learning of radical culture/study expressed in and created by print, in particular in the press but also the historian's own work. The focus here is on the political and emotional community-building roles and specific modalities of print, through a careful inventory of the various sections of papers and their functioning, as well as the multiple connections which they made possible on many scales.

Ferguson does not shy away from critical perspectives, and Chapter 4 concludes the book by returning to the contrast between the richness of anarchist practices and the movement's theoretical shortcomings, and in particular its failure to engage with Blackness and intersectionality. A second point where history sheds light onto the present, Ferguson argues, is the role of new materialism, 'at the interface among organic, social, semiotic, and technical arrangements' (p186), as illustrated by the work of contemporary radical collectives. There, she argues, are founts of energy for the movement's present and future.

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Benjamin Franks, *Anarchisms, Postanarchisms and Ethics*

London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2020; 238pp;
ISBN 9781783488292

How to account for an anarchist ethics when wariness towards universal rules is fundamental to anarchism? Is an ethics of anarchism even possible? Benjamin Franks attempts to answer such questions in *Anarchisms, Postanarchisms and Ethics* by proposing an anarchist virtue ethics. He combines Michael Freeden's conceptual approach to ideology with Alasdair MacIntyre's account of virtue to advance a 'practice-based virtue theory' that offers 'a basis for moral judgement while rejecting a universality perspective' (p11). Throughout the book, Franks engages critically with a range of alternative approaches (deontology, consequentialism, utilitarianism) to delineate the advantages of virtue ethics in thinking about anarchism. At the same time, he reckons with the complicated and evolving relationship between anarchism and postanarchism. Here the question of ethics helps define, evaluate, and ultimately re-frame, anarchism and postanarchism. This triangulation (anarchism, postanarchism, ethics) allows Franks to reflect productively on the future of anarchism and its ethical categories.

Franks's main line of argument is that anarchism comprises an anti-hierarchical, practice-based, immanent and material virtue ethics. The book opens with a chapter on the centrality of ethics in anarchist practice. Using Freeden's work on political ideology as conceptual scaffolding, the chapter advances an understanding of anarchist ethics as a set of immanent and practice-dependent principles, rather than universal norms that are uniformly applicable. In chapter

two, Franks argues that prefiguration makes such an ethics most compatible with virtue theory. Drawing on MacIntyre's work, Franks argues for a practice-based virtue theory that posits multiple, interlocking, and intersecting goals and values. Anarchism is here a 'functioning ideology' that provides guidance in evaluating actions and in making collective decisions on key questions (p59). The third chapter engages with meta-ethics to draw a distinction between anarchism and postanarchism. Franks proposes an 'inter-subjective critical materialist approach' (p12). He attempts to chart a path that avoids the pitfalls of subjectivism and universalism whilst acknowledging that values are unavoidable. Although values can only be assessed in concrete situations and specific contexts, they are not purely subjective. The fourth chapter examines how anarchism morphed into postanarchisms in order to be able to engage with the pressing issues affecting twenty-first century society. He identifies a series of questions (freedom, priority of goals, agency, the state) that have long preoccupied anarchists, and sketches the ways in which they must be reformulated by contemporary anarchists in response to the current '*crisis of liberalism*' (p131). The final chapter analyses three case studies – pornography, violence, free speech – to demonstrate how anarchism offers a more productive approach to these thorny ethical questions than any other philosophical paradigm currently at our disposal.

Anarchisms, Postanarchisms and Ethics provides a thought-provoking and inspiring approach to the immanent, material, practice-based and dynamic operations of anarchism. It is a well-researched, well-informed, often disarmingly witty, and ultimately valuable and welcome contribution to anarchist ethics. Nevertheless, the reader cannot help but question one of the book's fundamental premises: is the blanket rejection of universalism a fitting theoretical response to the universal's shortcomings? After all, as Franks himself rightly points out, values are unavoidable and shared collectively across a multiplicity of anarchist practices. Perhaps the problem is not the universal as such, but rather its outmoded definition that does not resonate with our contemporary world. The challenge, then, becomes redefining the universal in a way that is compatible both with the world we live in and with anarchism's creative and innovative ways of engaging with it. Further consideration of this topic by Franks in future research would certainly be worthwhile, to develop and complicate the conceptual framework presented in this book.

The reader faces certain challenges in engaging with the material, due to its novel format. In a typical book, footnotes are cast in a purely supporting

role, but here they have a life, and a voice, of their own. The body contains the main thrust of argumentation, while the footnotes function as a twinned narrative arc, in which the author offers a self-reflective meta-commentary on the process of writing and structuring the argument, the nature of academia and the contemporary political moment. Though enjoyable, this innovative duplex structure can be at times overwhelming, diluting the potency and productivity of Franks's work. Likewise, the author sometimes digresses excessively, detailing at length the main alternative approaches to ethics and offering fulsome rebuttals to anticipated counterarguments. Whilst such meticulousness is commendable, the author's own unique position is unfortunately often decentred, even obfuscated. Stylistically and formally, the book is not straightforward: the structure is quite convoluted, despite much self-conscious meta-commentary on that question, and the writing would benefit from being punchier. Nevertheless, such minor shortcomings do not outweigh the value of the ideas set out in the book. Indeed, these quirks seem to be an inherent part of Franks's favoured reflective research methods. From this perspective, they might ultimately contribute to the book's overall coherence. In sum, this book is an exciting conceptual contribution to rethinking anarchist ethics and anarchist practice for the twenty-first century.

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Paul Dobraszczyk, *Architecture and Anarchism: Building without Authority*

London: Antepavilion in association with Paul Holberton Publishing, 2021; 248pp; ISBN 978913645175

Paul Dobraszczyk is a collector, and his recent *Architecture and Anarchism: Building without Authority* is another example of his research methods in the history of architecture. He lists, categorises, taxonomises, and contextualises. The book is thus structured into eight thematic chapter, each of which uses seven or eight case studies to detail a particular motivation and/or method for architectural invention. Such methods are useful for the way in which the categories and case studies might serve future research, and because they prompt the reader to identify omissions and other possible categories, frames for thinking, and contexts in which the examples or categories might be evaluated. Throughout my reading

of *Architecture and Anarchism* I found myself wishing for further inclusions or, indeed, worrying that some examples should be excluded. This is both the blessing and the curse of Dobraszczyk's methods.

Chapter 1, 'Liberty', emphasises self-governance and organisation and aptly insists upon anarchism as a theory of organisation, an art of living, and a model for thinking and acting: 'a delicate balance between freedom and control' (p27). The focus is on intentional communities: ephemeral, such as Rainbow Gatherings, or more permanent, such as Christiania. Here, the book's tensions are already evident. Burning Man, which has come to represent a form of 'tech bro' libertarianism, is ill-placed in a collection that otherwise celebrates more mutualist or communitarian models. The inclusion of Vienna's Hundertwasserhaus also poses the question of whether it is appropriate to include work which is anarchistic rather than explicitly anarchist, though Dobraszczyk does make a case for doing so.

Chapter 2, 'Escape', groups projects that seek to reimagine social relations in new landscapes – separatist or informal settlements and intentional communities. Drop City and the anti-airport ZAD near Nantes make the list, as do the Essex Plotlands and junk playgrounds. Chapter 3, 'Necessity', extends this to settlements brought together by shared need. This includes The Jungle in Calais and Kowloon Walled City. Again, some blurring of the categories happens. A squat might have equal measures of need, ideology, and social experimentation in evidence. Migrant camps are a more extreme category: there were sterling examples of mutual aid exhibited in The Jungle, but predation by gangs and organised crime poses the problem of differentiating between anarchism and lawlessness. Dobraszczyk's inclusion of The Jungle is problematic, but usefully so: the tensions are food for thought.

In Chapter 4, 'Protest', anarchist ideas and social and architectural experimentation are clearly aligned and expressed in protest camps such as Grow Heathrow or Occupy Wall Street. Here too there are fruitful tensions. Can the protests in Tahrir Square or Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement be seen as anarchist? They draw from a toolbox crammed full of anarchist actions and theories, but when the intention is limited to replacing or reforming the state, questions arise.

Ruin and reuse tie together Chapters 5, 'Ecology', and 6, 'Art'. In the former, Dobrasczyk returns to more recognisably permanent architectural forms, presenting buildings which fit Murray Bookchin's model of social ecology. What stands out is the fully anarchist Ruin Academy in Taipei, which employs ruina-

tion as an ecological tool. As the building disintegrates it becomes host to ever more species. At the intersection of art and architecture is Gordon Matta-Clark, whose methods were clearly anarchist ('anarchitecture'). His 1975 'Conical Intersect' carved an entirely new architectural order out of a condemned building in Paris's Marais. Its titular cone-shaped voids penetrate the walls and floors, providing a neat metaphor for how anarchism concerns itself with both order and disorder.

Many of the projects here arise from the detritus of capitalism and consumerism as adaptive reuse and creative reinvention, a continued theme in Chapter 7, 'Speculation'. This chapter presents speculative or utopian projects. My favourite amongst these is Clifford Harper's 1976 drawings for the 'Autonomous Terrace'. It re-envisions a British terrace as a communal dwelling with shared facilities. Adaptive reuse of existing architecture as an anarchist practice could form the theoretical basis for further work, tying together histories of squatting, protest, and urban, social, and architectural invention that take place with minimal means but an abundance of shared effort.

The book finishes by foregrounding mutual endeavour in Chapter 8, 'Participation'. Dobraszczyk perceptively identifies a key quality of anarchist architecture: 'there is no such thing as building without a community; and there is no freedom for oneself without, at the same time, there equally being freedom for others' (p209). Buildings (both edifices and landscapes) are here processes rather than products, which is immensely fruitful as the most cherished social goods – freedom, equality, democracy – are practiced and mutually assured in (architectural) space.

This sensibility is the backbone of Dobraszczyk's *Architecture and Anarchism*. Following Colin Ward, he shows the potential of bottom-up power and mutual aid, seeing 'revolution as an emergent process that is already evident in the world, observable in practices of all kinds' (pp16-17). These practices are forms of citizenship in which people are participants, not recipients. If this book is also seen as an open-ended practice, in which it is up to readers and future researchers to chase down the gaps and omissions and pregnant possibilities, then it will have justified its collector's methods admirably.

Tim Waterman, University College London

Tom Wetzel, *Overcoming Capitalism: Strategy for the Working Class in the 21st Century*

Chico: AK Press, 2022, 411pp; ISBN 97818499354707

Anarchism, as is well known, emerged out of the international socialist movement of the nineteenth century. In both theory and practice, it is and always has been an anti-capitalist movement fundamentally characterised by its unwavering and unapologetic opposition to economic exploitation in all forms, and there is certainly no shortage of anarchist writings that enumerate and defend the underlying reasons for this opposition. What is far less common, at least in the present, are clear and compelling discussions of what anarchist alternatives to capitalism might look like, let alone how to make such alternatives a reality. To the comparatively limited extent that such discussions exist at all, moreover, they tend to rely on ideas from earlier eras which, whatever their other merits, were developed in response to forms of capitalism that (by and large) no longer exist.

There is, accordingly, a desperate need for fresh analyses of how anarchists should, or at least might, resist capitalist oppression in the twenty-first century, no less than what their ultimate end game might be for doing so. Few writers are better equipped to address this need than Tom Wetzel, a veteran writer and activist with more than four decades of experience in the libertarian socialist movement. As one of the founding figures of the Workers Solidarity Alliance in the 1980s, Wetzel contributed significantly to reviving the tradition of antiauthoritarian syndicalism at a time when it had all but vanished from the political scene. Since then, he has played a key role in advancing explicitly socialist and syndicalist currents within American anarchism, a movement hitherto dominated by various post-left tendencies. In one form or other, everything from the resurrection of the Industrial Workers of the World to the emergence of the Black Rose Anarchist Federation bears witness to his influence.

Needless to say, Wetzel does not disappoint. In just over four hundred pages – all of them packed with razor-sharp analysis and penetrating but accessibly written prose – *Overcoming Capitalism* manages to make one of the most significant contributions to the anarchist canon in more than half a century, if not longer. I realize that this is a supremely bold claim, especially for an inveterate critic such as I, but I believe there are very good reasons to be offered in support of it.

Overcoming Capitalism is notable for consistently and effectively circumventing all manner of blind spots that bedevil contemporary anarchist writings,

not least the presupposition of a broadly sympathetic audience with a high degree of already-existing background knowledge. Wetzel does not treat 'the case against capitalism' as self-evident; he does not assume that his readers already agree with him, nor that they come ready equipped with the 'basic understanding' of capitalism that such a case requires (p7). Wetzel starts from a blank slate, building his case carefully and meticulously from the ground up. In the course of doing so, moreover, he avoids the lamentable tendency toward mere parroting of 'classical anarchist' thinkers, providing fresh expositions and justifications of a wide range of fundamental anarchist and syndicalist commitments that have for too long been treated as dogmas and articles of faith.

Even among the so-called 'classical anarchists', who had an obvious interest in distinguishing their views from those of Marx and other authoritarian socialists, one finds a not-uncommon tendency to frame critical analyses of capitalism and its attendant problems in essentially Marxist terms. Far from diminishing with the passage of time, this tendency has, if anything, become even more pronounced among anarchist writers, as evidenced by contemporary anarchist theory's outsized reliance on Marxists like Deleuze, Negri, Camatte, and Bordiga, among many others. Wetzel bucks this trend, too, reserving some of his most astute and trenchant criticism for all manner of Marxist theoretical frameworks, including those with which contemporary anarchists (including Wetzel's fellow libertarian socialists and syndicalists are all too eager to flirt). This is particularly evident in his discussions of electoralism (chapter 8), bureaucratic unionism (chapter 9), and Leninism (chapter 10).

Though well-executed and fruitful, these theoretical interventions are only a small part of what makes *Overcoming Capitalism* such an important text. As Wetzel notes, 'a plausible politics for replacing the capitalist regime requires *realistic* ideas about the methods of action and organization that could build a social movement with the real capacity to transform society' (p153, emphasis mine). In my view, the greatest virtue of this text is its unremitting focus on formulating and critically evaluating such ideas – an aim which, though obviously crucial for anarchist thought, has tended to wither on the vine in recent years. Though Wetzel ultimately argues on behalf of broadly syndicalist strategies, he does not so in a way that self-consciously avoids atavism and revolutionary nostalgia. On the contrary, Wetzel acknowledges that such time-honoured tactics need to be adapted to the political, social, and economic realities of the present.

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Tim Waterman, *The Landscape of Utopia: Writings on Everyday Life, Taste, Democracy, and Design*

Abingdon: Routledge, 2022; 218pp; ISBN 9780367759155

In essence, Tim Waterman's book is about the deep, meaningful and sensuous relationships that groups of humans have with the landscapes they inhabit. It is also about the forces that seek to destroy and dispossess these relationships, and the ways in which humans can – and do – resist this, seeking to create new worlds (utopias) by occupying existing places and everyday life in new (tasty) ways.

The book appears to be aimed at a generalist audience and contributes to debates in Tim's discipline of Landscape Architecture, and the design disciplines more broadly. It is therefore not self-evidently an anarchist text from the cover title, although Waterman foregrounds anarchy as an influence from his opening sentence. Amongst his incredibly diverse range of sources – from buildings to Bourdieu, graffiti to Gaudí, he also draws on anarchist writers including Kropotkin, Goldman, Bookchin, and Graeber, amongst others. The breadth and diversity of theorists and perspectives from across centuries shows little deference to disciplinary boundaries and prefigures, in a sense, the kind of leftist social movement that Waterman envisages. The book takes form as a series of standalone chapters, which one imagines could be read in any order, rather than as a progressive (modernist) narrative, yet the book as a whole has coherence that develops rhizomically.

Concepts and debates within anarchist studies are not central to the book, yet an anarchist ethos suffuses the book in terms of its critiques of capitalism, colonialism, alienation, hierarchical power more broadly and the ways they manifest in our built environments. Yet Waterman seeks something more 'polymorphous' than anarchism, a loosening of schisms between anarchists, socialists, and others on the left to 'find ways to unite and close ranks against (disembodied, disemplaced) power's tendency to flow away' (p15). These actions necessarily take place and have their own local character – and so Waterman prefers an approach to anarchy as a method, rather than anarchism as ideology about political reality or a blueprint for organising. Waterman's new conception of prefigurative politics involves experimenting with landscapes and tastes to understand, rediscover and reconfigure 'what is of value and what is to be rejected' (p16).

What is to be rejected? The enduring image I take away from the book comes from Chapter Two, in which Waterman narrates the Bond film, *A View to a Kill*, where a car chase scene in Paris (Eiffel Tower in shot) forces 'the urban peasantry running souvenir booths' to 'flee from the paths of the speeding vehicles' in the wake of upturned displays of fruit and vegetables (p30). Waterman notes that the audience is clearly expected to identify with Bond, rather than the urban working class, reinforcing 'the superciliousness and sadism of a persistently colonial English mindset' (p30). Some further examples of the malevolent forces that dispossess humans from their true home in the landscape include nationalism and advertising, both of which manipulate human landscape desires and imaginaries, and 'instruments of control and compliance' such as policing, surveillance and bureaucracy, which shut down democratic public space (p131). Waterman coins the neologisms 'blang' (bland meets bling) (pp37-9) and the 'beige hole' (pp165-8) to describe the blandness and 'non-tastes' of the placeless neoliberal elite (p166).

The utopian aspect of what should be valued includes some unsurprising (to anarchists) examples of prefigurative politics such as mass trespass (the Right to Roam movement during the 1930s) and occupation (the Occupy! Movement), both of which embody the utopian and anarchist impulse to enact resistance with our bodies in physical places, and to embody the society we wish to create. Although such examples are well covered in anarchist literatures, a fresh perspective is brought in the focus on connections between bodies and landscape. Waterman also ushers in more surprising examples when he revels in the unexpected resurgences of utopia to be found in everyday life, such as in the tasting of local beer and cheese (pp43-50), and in the digital commons, through experiments in telematic dinner parties (pp77-96).

I should make a disclaimer that I consider Tim to be a friend, so my review was bound to be glowing, but I was even more delighted than expected to have easy access, in a handy book, to a constant supply of his illustrious humour and wit. Tim's writing style is joyously chaotic and anarchic, incredibly broad in scope, yet with an underlying ethico-political coherence, consistently pointing back to the need for utopias to be rooted in places, building upon what is already there, and recognising the importance of taste, as embodied sense and as judgement, in educating our collective desires.

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Richard Gilman Opalsky, *The Communism of Love: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Exchange Value*

Chico: AK Press, 2021; 336pp; 9781849353915

Love – real love – is fundamentally antagonistic to capitalist exchange relations. The aspiration to love represents a longing for communist forms of relationality. Any worthwhile communism must be grounded in love. *The Communism of Love* develops these theses through encounters with a dizzying array of philosophers including Plato and Socrates, Weil and Levinas, Blanchot, Beck, hooks, and most rewardingly with Jenny Marx, Rosa Luxembourg and Alexandra Kollontai. We share the author's fundamental commitment to 'love as a communist power' (p3). And yet, we want a more expansive notion of love, and of the 'real movement' of communism, than Gilman-Opalsky offers.

One of the book's central moves is to separate love from desire, that is, from '*sexual relations, lust, or [...] the private desires of individual persons*' (68, original emphasis). For Gilman-Opalsky, love as a 'subversive power' (p261) and practice is categorically independent of these 'affective or libidinal longings' (p58), even when they co-exist. Desire can be commodified; (real) love cannot. The critique of the privatisation of love, and attention to forms of love beyond the Happily Ever After industry, are welcome. However, in its consuming desire to wrest pure love from the compromising space of sexuality, the book not only makes some questionable leaps (for instance, love is not always sexual *therefore* 'realistic' love stands in mature contrast to 'sexual ecstasy and overjoyed infatuation' (p261)) but obscures a significant source of love's radical potential.

Absent, for instance, are queer struggles risked on the terrain of desire, which precisely challenge love/desire's privatisation through public celebration of the kinky and communal sexualities that heteronormative order would closet.[1] Notably, some of the book's own most compelling readings rely on erotic affect to articulate love's 'explosive' (p36) power: Blanchot's formulation of revolt as the 'active formation of a community of lovers that does not and cannot abide by the rules and values of existing political power' (p37), or Spartacus' mythical priestess-lover whose 'mystical allure [...] was seen as treasonous for its ability to attract the desires of everyday people who could be driven to question the power of the state' (p85). At moments like these, Gilman-Opalsky is driven to recognise 'passion' as 'close to subversion' (p85).

At others, he veers into a suburban cul-de-sac. For even as the book claims to

oppose the privatisation of love, it retains a strange fidelity to the monogamous, child-producing family unit. The author insists he does not 'want to romanticize or valorize marriage as an institution' (p109), yet the normative family is mostly insulated from critique. The 'basic marital/family unit' (p134) – an essentialising construction denoting a couple and their children – returns repeatedly to demonstrate the 'communist sensibility that naturally arises in a loving family' (p105). The book does foreground some beautiful examples of love between friends, or shared with non-human companions (most delightfully, Luxemburg's with her cat Mimi). However, counter-normative families and relationships – 'same-gender family units' (p115), 'transgender love, and polyamorous activity' (p66) – only show up uncomfortably tacked onto lists, which other as they attempt to include. Meanwhile, Gilman-Opalsky broadly overlooks or, as in his reading of Kollontai, softens critiques of The Family's role in reproducing capitalist, patriarchal, and white supremacist social relations.[2]

Real movements are used to illustrate love's communist power – for example, recognising in Black Lives Matter 'revolt as a love asserted against the racist violence of police, capital, and law' (p205) – while substantive attention is reserved for written theory. Thinking with these movements, however, could be generative. For instance, Gilman-Opalsky contends that love cannot function 'as a power of communist relationality and activity' in the face of 'immediate concerns of life and death' (p237). This position would surely be modified by serious engagement with the generations of prison and police abolitionists who have developed a communist practice of love in the face of constant existential threat. His statement that 'I never feel less political than when I am lying in a speeding ambulance' (p237) might appear less straightforwardly universalisable from the perspective of the Black Panthers, who organised community ambulances and medical clinics.[3] He scolds Black feminist bell hooks for 'overly anecdotal' (p222) argumentation, while dispatching her critique of Eldridge Cleaver on the grounds that Cleaver's public homophobia and misogyny are 'contradict[ed]' (p235) by explorations of homoerotic desire in his unpublished work. And yet, it is Black feminists who have made space for a radical and abolitionist politics of love that is explicitly grounded in the embodied, affective, creative, and intellectual labour of movements.[4] A different communism of love, then, would begin with and from those excluded from Gilman-Opalsky's 'decent family' (p105).

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NOTES

1. L. Berland and M. Warner, 'Sex in Public', *Critical Inquiry* 24, 2 (1998): 547-566.
2. M.E. O'Brien, *Family Abolition*, (London: Pluto Press, 2023).
3. J. Bloom and W.E. Martin Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2012), pp187-193.
4. J. James, *In Pursuit of Revolutionary Love: Precarity, Power, Communities,* London: Divided Publishing, 2023); J.C. Nash, 'Practicing Love: Black Feminism, Love-Politics, and Post-Intersectionality', *Meridians* 1, 2 (2011): 1-24.