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Precarity and Gender: What's Love Got to Do with it?

This article examines the concept of precarity from a feminist perspective, focused on love and affective labour, critically addressing the gender inequalities of neoliberal capitalism. The romantic, heterosexual model of love, typical for modern Western societies, has been dismantled and criticized in various ways, leading to contradictory solutions, which include its annihilation, sublation and modification, as well as (rather conservative) efforts to preserve it. However, love – in its different versions, both as theory and in practice – still provides models and solutions, not only for the neoliberal labour market and new forms of exploitation and expropriation of care and affective labour, but also for revolutionary ideas and transformations, among both feminists and Marxists. It thus requires a theory focusing on the sublation, rather than annihilation, of love's past models. In my article I build such a perspective, signalling its potential for resistance and models for revolution in the times of neoliberal capitalism.

Keywords: feminism, precarity, affect, love, neoliberalism

But love is an un-Critical, un-Christian materialist.
K. Marx, *Love*, in: *The Holy Family*

Precarity, location and resistance

It is always interesting to look at the evolution of the gender division of labour in times of crisis. In recent decades, some important changes provided by feminist and minoritarian movements have reshaped the heteronormative, sexist, classist and racist capitalist patriarchy. Paternal leave, equal pay demands, sexual liberation, legal measures against sexual harassment, and access to childcare, have definitely supported new definitions of gender, in which masculinity lost a small part of its privileges (see: MacKinnon 2016; Illouz 2012; Giddens 1992). Care and affective labour have become objects of detailed studies, and the Social Reproduction Theory offered a generalized perspective on their understanding in the context of work and production (see: Bhattacharya 2017a). The egalitarian social trends are often perceived as ultimate proofs of the realization of genuine equity, which leads to unsubstantiated claims about gender equality already having been achieved. For some scholars, on the other hand, the issue of gender remains invisible, thus leading to blind spots and the maintenance of invisibility of domestic and affective labour, ignorance of discrimination etc. On yet another hand, some institutional mechanisms initially aimed at eliminating gender inequality, with the notable example of academic systems of prevention and reaction to gender based discrimination and harassment, have recently been seen as failures (see: Ahmed 2008, 2016; MacKinnon, 2016), thus leading to massive expressions of dissatisfaction and demands for justice from huge numbers of women on social media and other communication platforms (Majewska 2020). The most famous example of such a public demand for justice, undertaken massively via social media, namely the #metoo campaign, led to changes in anti-discrimination policies and ways of reacting to harassment (see: Mac Kinnon 2019; Bhattacharya 2017). These transitions show the dynamic and conflicting character of social changes in the context of gender relations, particularly in the context of sexuality, affective and care labour, as well as work relations.

In these transitions, the feminist discussion concerning love and intimacy constitutes an important element, assuming several contradictory roles at once, such as: the locus of ideals of individual success and fulfillment (Illouz 2007; Jonasdottir 2010), the model for labour relations in precarious neoliberalism (see: MacRobbie 2016; Weeks 2011), the inspiration for resistance and revolution (Ferguson 2013; Weeks 2011;

hooks 1984) and the heteronormative imaginary matrix of desiring practices to be overcome (Weeks 2017; Berlant 2011; Wilkinson 2013). It is between those and more historical perspectives on love that I would like to navigate, showing how the complete rejection of love constitutes an obstacle, rather than a liberating move for the feminist analysis of affective labour, queer utopia or feminist socialism. My effort does not attempt to defend the romantic model of love, focused on finding the significant other of a different gender, creating a family and supporting the capitalist economy and nation state with invisible, reproductive labour, progeny and monogamy. The traditional model of the family and affective relations has already been rejected by late-modern societies, and criticized for its abuse of women and children by feminists and progressive authors, queers and utopians. However, it should undergo a sublation rather than annihilation, as the affective involvement, reproduction and affective labour not only did not disappear, but in some cases became more intense and sometimes also even less visible than before, due to the externalization of some domestic and care labour to immigrant workers or peripheries. In such conditions, cultural theory cannot occupy its usual Western-centric position and pretend that colonies never happened and that all people enjoyed full citizen rights, because unfortunately this is not the case. This article is also aimed at undermining the perspective that neoliberal precarization oppresses us all equally, regardless of gender and sexual orientation; in fact it has its favorite oppressed groups, unsurprisingly fulfilling the definitions of the oppressed familiar from earlier times, such as women, the non-heteronormative, the colonized, “Europe’s others”, the poor, immigrants, etc.

Many scholars have already attempted to address neoliberalism’s gender inequality. They argue that the politics of neoliberal precarization is not gender-neutral, neither in street politics (Athanasίου 2014), nor in the economy (Adkins 2015) or academia (Lipton 2015). Lisa Adkins puts it very straightforwardly: “It is widely rehearsed, for example, that austerity is impacting women more harshly than many men, and extending and intensifying socio-economic inequalities organised along axes of gender” (Adkins 2015, 32). Women face a new backlash in the process of the state’s withdrawal from care and stabilizing functions, while being offered the same neoliberal instability, precarity and high productivity standards. However, men are not asked to fulfill the caring duties formerly provided for by the state, while women are. The key element of precarity as theorized by its main protagonists consists in the destabilization and dismantlement of state mediation between the worker and the employer. The stability of employment, care and affective assi-

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stance granted by employers in the Fordist or state communist workplaces, along with their social and health insurances, are becoming objects of scrutiny in labour history research, rather than vital elements of the workers' present (See: Standing 2011; Negri and Hardt 2011 and Federici 2006).

We need to emphasize that this is largely a Euro-American perspective: in many countries of Asia and most African states these "caring" aspects of the state were absent in the last century. It should also be stressed that the concept of "precariat" is not new, and nor is its practice global. The rather popular presumption that precarity influences the life experiences of different people globally in the same ways has also been undermined (See: Munck 2013; Lorey 2015). Feminist theories of love and solidarity can strengthen this critique, with their emphasis on gender inequality, the materiality of affective labour and care, and the necessity of differentiating the experience of precarization according to gender. Black feminist analysis, such as that offered by bell hooks, clearly shows that love and family bonds, also those shaped in most traditional ways, constitute the only counterbalance to capitalist oppression on the labour market (see: hooks, 1984). Thus the axis of race and class should be considered as forming the experiences of intimacy and support quite differently for women in the upper classes and of white descent, than they do in the lives of migrant workers, refugees, the poor and ethnic minorities, hence the demand that feminist analysis should embrace intersectionality as a method (Crenshaw 1991). In post-socialist Poland, the centrality of love and family became strikingly important – as the neoliberal capitalist shock therapy swept away the state guarantees of the retired, the unemployed, the working poor and women, entire regions were thrown into unemployment and poverty levels that far exceeded those of state communist times (see: Stenning 2007). Family became central, not only in the lived experiences of those large parts of the Polish population, but also as an ideal central to the young generation's vision of a safe future. It was thus absurd and incomprehensible to see the analysis of the social survey of young people's ideals summarized as: "young Polish people are conservative" (Świda-Zięba et al., 2005). Yes, for the majority of young people right after the neoliberal transformation in Poland family was the most important element they wanted to see in their future, positioned ahead of freedom or a wonderful job in the hierarchy of their future goals. However, flattening such life choices under the common denominator of "conservative values" is a simplification, as for the majority of that generation family was the only stable, safe and providing social force they knew. Thus our discussions of family,

However, flattening such life choices under the common denominator of "conservative values" is a simplification, as for the majority of that generation family was the only stable, safe and providing social force they knew. Thus our discussions of family, values and private choices have to be liberated from such immediate, accusatory clichés as that one, which only recognizes conservatism in a larger composition of life experiences and choices, where it can very well simply signal a claim to a safe future, love and support, otherwise unknown to large sections of society.

values and private choices have to be liberated from such immediate, accusatory clichés as that one, which only recognizes conservatism in a larger composition of life experiences and choices, where it can very well simply signal a claim to a safe future, love and support, otherwise unknown to large sections of society. In particular, feminist discussions of love often become victims of one-sided version of progress, where dismantled family ties are immediately identified as emancipation, while there are perhaps different ways in which people express affect and care for each other, apart from a single person's household, polyamory or commune. As research proves, violence and abuse can take place in any kind of family/ intimacy or kinship context, and so can respect and care.

Love seems to be one of these words which need no explanation. Therefore I omitted its definition in my earlier texts on the topic, discussing the perhaps less evident moments where it appears, such as the process of accessing knowledge and formation, as in Socrates' discussion with Phaedrus, or in theories of translation, where authors usually refrain from discussions of love, but then suddenly say that "translation should proceed lovingly" (Benjamin 2004), or that love, understood as submission, should be present in the process (Spivak 1993). For the purpose of this text, love should combine its affective part – understood as emotional investment, which can become a burden, as in Lauren Berlant's analysis of "cruel optimism", but also as an inspiration to become a better person, as in Plato's *Phaedrus* – with the "love power", which, according to Anna Jonasdóttir, embraces the potential to care and inspire, while constituting labour. Jonasdóttir explains: "My use of Marx's method led me to identify love and love power as a creative/ productive—and exploitable—human capacity, comparable in significance to labour or labour power" (Jonasdóttir 2011, 45).

In an effort to overcome what Wendy Brown aptly diagnosed as "the leftist melancholy", I would like to offer an inquiry in the gendered, geopolitically differentiated precariat, which still can be a dangerous class (Brown 1999; Standig 2011). As all analysis should be located, I will refer to the transformation from state communism to neoliberal capitalism in Poland for two reasons: to briefly commemorate the "Solidarność" independent workers unions created in 1980, 40 years ago, and to use an example of a state where the gender difference in the experience of precarization is particularly striking. As "Solidarność" demanded both democracy and socialism, which included the state's participation in the caring tasks of the family, this seems more than appropriate.

The neoliberal state of exception and the gender bias

The imposition of the state of exception upon an entire population, as Naomi Klein argued, proceeds in accordance with a discourse of “the shock doctrine” (Klein 2007). It legitimizes changes in markets that in fact enhance the crisis, leading to an extra profit for a selected group of ‘big players,’ while the economic deprivation of the masses deepens. The experiences of countries where neoliberalism was introduced as a general cure for the supposed disease of over-institutionalization, such as Poland, Argentina and many others, clearly support Klein’s point. It should be stressed, however, that both Klein’s analysis of the “shock doctrine” and Standig’s analysis of precarity lack an in-depth feminist approach. While in *No Logo* a feminist perspective was still present, at least in the discussions of strategies of resistance, in *Shock Doctrine* Klein’s narrative becomes supposedly “neutral” (Klein 2000). This might be because the focus here is on the oppressive measures of neoliberalism, rather than on strategies of resistance. I think it is now certain that because of the recent economic crisis and austerity measures imposed to supposedly end it, many societies have returned to traditional patterns of survival, which – as I will show below – are based on traditional division of gender roles.

The feminist scholars discussed here claim that love, intimacy, care and affective labour have been permeated by the capitalist production of value, but they also claim, somewhat in line with Michel Foucault, that they also have some potential for resistance (for other research on love, see: Bauman 2003; Ticineto Clough 2007, Illouz 2007, 2012; Giddens 1992 and others). This difference in perceiving the nature of care/ affective labour influences how the strategies of anti-capitalist resistance are chosen – if we believe that family and love are free from capitalist influence, we might be tempted to uncritically strengthen them in political agency. Yet – as studies concerning domestic violence and the abuse of women as care-givers have shown, the sectors of social life which have been labeled as “private” still clearly require modifications that empower women (see: Majewska, 2006).

Precarity as a Form of Backlash

Austerity measures and the tendency to leave the employed and unemployed similarly alone with their health, social security and status problems, often lead to a reconstruction of traditional gender role divisions,

where women are once again designated as sole care-givers and affective laborers (Fantone 2007, Stenning 2007). The mechanisms depicted by Arlie Hochschild in her studies of the appropriations of emotional labour by capitalist corporations can now be seen as an important aspect of the current transformation of affective labour in capitalism (Hochschild 1983). Another aspect of this transformation, largely ignored thus far, relates to women being forced to perform care and affective labour when employers stop providing employees with any stability. This refers both to women active on the labour market, who – instead of nurses, secretaries and other specific personnel – have to care for their colleagues, many of whom have difficulties with handling insecurity and stress, and to women whose partners and other relatives rely on their care and support because of a sudden precarization of labour conditions. These tendencies have been emphasized in the work of the Italian feminist scholars, such as Laura Fantone, who explained that the analysis and political activism around precarity tends to produce a normative and selective understanding of subjectivity. Fantone claims: “This subject generally corresponded to a young man living in a northern Italian urban area, employed in the service sector, specifically in chain stores, customer care phone services or large distribution warehouses, and performing repetitive tasks” (Fantone 2007, 9). Her analysis clearly shows that in more traditional societies, even if they are perceived as part of the West, gender bias is consolidated in neoliberal crisis, and austerity measures can only reinforce it. Similar tendencies can be observed in Polish society, which – although state communism did encourage women to enter the labour market and definitely provided measures such as daycare or equality in education – was traditional when it comes to the gender roles. The state definitely did not suggest any reconfigurations of the binary gender roles, on the contrary – it emphasized the feminine mystique and the masculine as neutral form of subjectivity in all areas of social and cultural life. The political transition after 1989 in Poland did bring some new trends, like the wave of feminist organizations, publications and activities. However since the Catholic Church was one of the central agents of that transition, the capitalist emphasis on entrepreneurship and profit was immediately combined with a revival of traditional female roles. Thus, abortion was banned, marriage was defined as a union between a man and a woman (in the Constitution) and feminism became the public enemy for decades. In such a cluster of capitalism and Catholicism, most women work two shifts, at work and in family, in order to meet professional and family ideals (See: Stanning 2007; Dunn 2005).

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Socialist feminists and feminist writers of color seek a formula for love and solidarity, and do so in a spirit of understanding the necessary connections between individuals, as well as the complexities of embodiment, as well as of reproductive and affective labour, in search of safety zones away from oppression and discrimination (Ferguson 2011; hooks 1984; Davis 1999). As Marx demonstrated, one's views on love can be important for setting a context for critical theory. In this article I engage with several socialist feminist theories of love. The revolutionary love theorized by bell hooks and writings on Black blues singers by Angela Davis will also be discussed. Additionally, I focus on the relations between feminism and Marxism and briefly analyze concepts of "love-power", created by Anna Jonasdottir, and "affective production" and "global solidarity", as expounded by Ann Ferguson.

Love in Capitalism. Marx and beyond

Readers of Marx rarely examine his work in search of conceptualizations of love. However, the author of *Capital* definitely knew how to write about it and was known as a rather passionate journalist and pamphleteer committed to individuals' and groups' search for freedom. For Marx, love was often a useful element of the critique of the Hegelian left, the circle of "critical critique". In his letter to Feuerbach from 11 August 1844, Marx wrote:

"These Berliners do not regard themselves as *men* who *criticize*, but as *critics* who, *incidentally*, have the misfortune of being men... Love, for example, is rejected, because the loved one is only an "object". Down with the *object*. It is therefore regarded as the greatest crime if the critic displays *feeling* or *passion*, he must be an *ironical ice-cold* [Sage]" (Marx [1844]).

This mixture of irony, criticism and integrity, resulting in ridiculing the absurd and reductive versions of social criticism is, I would like to argue, one of the crucial elements of Marx's legacy that is fully accurate even today, and can be particularly helpful for feminists. While granting the fulfillment of human's purposes, affect is also capable of unmasking and opposing dangerous forms of alienation.

This is the aspect of love most clearly visible in the fragments on money from Marx's *Politico-Economical Manuscripts*. Michael Hardt suggests, that in this fragment love is "equated with money", in the sense that both possess equivalent power, rather than bearing a resemblance

as 'things'. Hardt finds it difficult to operate with such an understanding of love, since, as he argues, it cannot lead to creating new social bonds (Marx [1844]; Hardt 2011). In Hardt's view, Marx sees love solely as a form of exchange. Therefore *political* love, Hardt suggests, should extend across social hierarchies, create bonds, function not as identification, but *via* differences and, last but not least – transform the subjects it touches. I would like to argue that this is love's function in Marx's *Manuscripts*, in his letters – to Feuerbach and others – and in the short chapter on love in the *Holy Family*. Love, Marx argues, allows us to see through the alienation and reification performed by money; transforms us in such a way that we become immunized to commodification; and finally, makes us something more than a *sophos* (the bearer of wisdom, word used by Marx in the above quote). These claims can and should be read as a suggestion that love has a sort of unmasking potential: it moves both individuals and situations into something beyond the realm of reification, beyond market exchange.

It might be worth noticing that Marx presents the proletariat as a class incapable of love under the reign of capital, since in it its existence is reduced to merely reproductive functions, allowing mere survival, but not a true life. This point could be criticized from the perspective opened by Jacques Ranciere in his research on the French proletariat in 19th century (Ranciere 2004). In his dispute with Althusser since the 1970s, Ranciere argues that the Marxist image of the proletariat is in many ways petrified by the intellectuals' perspective, and thus perhaps blind to some aspects of the proletarian lived experience which bypasses bourgeois epistemology. In Ranciere's own research, this blind spot of the analysis of the proletariat is located in the invisibility of proletarian culture and education, however it could perhaps be expanded to cover the proletarian affective life, which is perhaps also more diversified and authentic than bourgeois science wants to see it as?

To suggest that love is for Marx merely a form of exchange also seems reductive. As much as I think Hardt was right to revisit the *Manuscripts* and to emphasize the necessity of using the concept of love in order to rethink politics, I think, that there exists a different way of reading Marx. In the sections dedicated to money Marx expresses a sudden interest in passion that undermine and possibly also challenges the hegemony of monetary exchange. This can be read as a recognition of a powerful affect that points to an alternative to capitalism.

It is also important to examine the chapter on "Love" from *The Holy Family*, perhaps one of the first feminist readings of popular literature. *Fleur de Marie* by Eugene Sue, a popular story published in a newspaper,

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depicts a young prostitute, who thinks she found rescue in true love, but eventually enters a convent. The main aim of “critical criticism”, deconstructed by Marx under the guise of the popular novel, is to do away with affect. Marx says openly:

“In order to complete its transformation into the ,tranquility of knowledge”, Critical Criticism must first seek to dispose of *love*. Love is a passion, and nothing is more dangerous for the tranquility of knowledge than passion.” (Marx and Engels [1845] 1956).

For Hardt this kind of reference might not seem interesting, yet it nevertheless could be seen as preparation for articulating a critical potential that love has – one of revealing the actual content of alienating capitalism.

A line from *The Holy Family* aptly suggests what happens if theory is not interested in the affective: “For abstraction, love is „the maid from a foreign land” who has no dialectical passport and is therefore expelled from the country by the Critical police” (Marx and Engels 1956). In times of forced and often delegalized migration, voluntary and involuntary nomadism, deterritorializations that do not always result in finding one’s own *lignes de fuite*, theorizing love might be useful not only to theorize care and affect, but also to critically delimit the expectations connected with the freedom supposedly gained in late capitalism. The concept of “precarity” currently seen as a site of resistance, risks becoming another form of “bad abstraction”, if it remains deprived of the practical connections with the affective, with love understood not just as a mere sensation, but also as a set of embodied social practices informing and shaping our being with others. In order to become a challenge, a critical and transformative concept, the theory of precarity should embrace the feminist analysis of gender divisions and of the persistence of traditional roles, as well as the critique of the alienated vision of autonomy in which the subject has others to perform care labour for them.

Lauren Berlant’s friendly reply to Hardt’s article discussed above was published in the same issue of *Cultural Anthropology*. She explains that the concept of political love is yet to be invented, however she does not exclude the possibility of building one. This is where Berlant is very close both to post-operaist Marxists and socialist feminists, who, while focusing on affective and reproductive labour, also aim at a political concept of love. Berlant’s issue with the “political concept of love” was summarized in one sentence: “So I fear that love asks too much or too little – I can’t tell, I’ m ambivalent – for it to ground a social theory”.

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She sympathizes with thinkers who ground their theories in love, such as Chela Sandoval, yet for her the kind of emancipatory pedagogy depicted in Ranciere's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* almost never happens in love. An interesting interpretation of sexual love as non-sovereignty is proposed in Berlant's article as she claims: "Sex is what retains those pockets of freedom to be oneself but unsovereign; to be in nondestructive relation without requiring a full-souled performance of relationality or world-building duration" (Berlant 2011, 689). Although she perhaps could, Berlant does not see this apparent failure of the building of power as a victory of emancipation.

I think both Hardt and Berlant neglect the reproductive, care-giving and reparative dimensions of love; moreover, they also detach it from materialized existence. These dimensions are central in the Black feminist analysis of love, be it that offered by Angela Davis in her analysis of the blues legacies and Black Feminism, or the discussion of revolutionary love potential found in bell hooks' books on love and feminist theory (Davis 1999; hooks 1984). Hardt and Berlant situate love on the side of non-production, and also on the side of the non-colonized, utopian dimension of our otherwise commodified lives. In doing so they join ranks with critical theorists, such as Nancy Fraser, who recently claimed that at least some parts of affective labour has not been reified and can be a site of resistance (Fraser 2013), which, after the feminist Foucauldian analysis of biopolitics, sounds somewhat like a remnant of idealism. In the discussion of precarity and precarization, this concept of love obviously cannot hold, since it is one which, instead of strengthening the critical analysis of neoliberalism and resistance, only pushes the analysis even further away from its materialized, concrete social grounds. While inspiring, caring and revolutionary, love power, as Anna Jonasdottir argued at large, can also be commodified and alienated. Love cannot just be seen as an "existing utopia", as some critical theory thinkers would like to see it, nor as solely the abusive romantic pattern to enslave women and exclude sexual minorities. We definitely need a dialectics of love. Particularly in times when love has become a site of capital's agency and has been appropriated for the purposes of commodification. But it has also given hope, strength and support as a site of inspiration, pleasure and/or care. In this sense, love is purely heterotopic, it has all the potential for liberation and yet its conditions are always defined by the existing social structure, it can seem revolutionary, yet at the same time resembles a prison (Foucault [1967] 1984). Love can be compared to the *pharmakon* depicted by Derrida as a performative metaphor for writing, or to modernity, which – as Marshall Berman argued

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– transforms all that is solid into air, yet allows ruins, like New York for example, to rise up again (Derrida 1981; Berman 1988).

It might be interesting to see how different the feminist analysis of love is from Alain Badiou's *Praise of Love*, where he reinstalls the concept of *agape* as key element of his vision of change. Unfortunately, his narrative of disembodied, universal humans reestablishes the concept of a subject that has a clearly heteronormative character. In Badiou's account, in the process of loving, the object is always female and the loving one behaves like a man and speaks from a traditional masculine position (Badiou 2012). Although Marx argued for new notions of community and social individual, and Badiou clearly searches for such a formula, I would like to suggest that a revitalization of Christian visions of community might not solve the problems of alienation, oppression and inequality, as depicted by feminist theorists during the last 40 years. The disembodied *agape* of supposedly masculine subjects discovers a community of understanding, maybe compassion, but not of embodied affect connecting diversified, embodied and sexualized subjects, familiar from cultural studies of practice or affect.

An interesting perspective on love's appropriation by neoliberalism was provided by Kathi Weeks, who – in her article *Down with Love* – argues that the contemporary labour market introduced romantic passion as its main incentive, thus inviting workers to fall in love with their tasks or workplace, invest in it in ways shaped by the nineteenth century model of romantic love (Weeks 2017). As interesting, critical and ironic this analysis of the neoliberal labour market might be, it does not prove that there is nothing inherent to love that can be emancipatory when practiced in intimate/ affective contexts. On the contrary, it could be very well proven that the effort to once again shift love passion away from value production could become an interesting task for emancipation. However, in her focus on the exploitative dimensions of capital's appropriations of love discourse, Weeks neglects the caring as supportive dimensions love still has in families and households, particularly those whose members cannot afford daycare, health insurance or food. When she writes: "In this way, under heteropatriarchal capitalism, the ideology of romantic love born of the separate spheres, an idealized and feminized model of love, is being harnessed, not only to continue to assign domestic work to women, but to recruit all waged workers into a more intimate relationship with waged work" (Weeks 2017; 40), she is obviously right. However, a necessary question comes to mind: was all there is to love defined in the misogynist narrative of the 19th century? Such

a perspective seems reductive, as does the analysis provided by Weeks. While her rejection of patriarchal abuse of emotional labour seems perfectly justified, it should not be claimed that the processes of neoliberal appropriation of women's affective work fully cover all the "love's labour" that we can possibly imagine. On the contrary – as is evident from the narratives of Davis, hooks, Jonasdottir and Ferguson, and to some extent also in Alison Stenning's accounts of Polish families' struggles to survive the neoliberal transformation – love was and is the central power, allowing persistence, resistance and struggle of the oppressed (see: Stenning 2007).

Love and the Common

Contemporary Marxist depictions of affective labour do not usually embrace the full image of bodies shaped by social norms and the inhibitions caused by restrictive gender patterns. In Negri's and Hardt's *Commonwealth*, the description of affective labour is at times reduced to a 'smile of the hostess' (Hardt and Negri 2011). This image, directly borrowed from Hochschild's groundbreaking study of the commodification of emotion, sounds frivolous in a text aimed at uniting various forms of creative and affective work in resistance to contemporary capitalism. The concept of immaterial labour, developed throughout Hardt and Negri's writing until their last book, requires some serious reconsideration of the material, embodied social practice of gendered roles in order to address the contemporary evolution of labour conditions and possibilities for resistance emerging from them. Some authors, including Ann Ferguson, Eleanor Wilkinson and Rosemary Hennessy, have addressed these problems at length (Ferguson 2013; Wilkinson 2013; Hennessy, 2013). In the *Commonwealth* the notion of biopolitical labour replaces the immaterial labour, although this plausible change is sometimes still undermined, both by the authors and their commentators. The Foucauldian concept of 'biopolitical labor' suits the feminist analysis much better, since it does not suggest the sudden immaterialization of work, disembodied production and other problematic references. It is not defined as gendered, however, and this could perhaps be changed.

The "common" is defined by Negri and Hardt as a third version of ownership – sharing, as an alternative to private property or the state-owned "public" (Negri and Hardt 2011, 76-77). Another description focuses on what is commonly own – the air, all that is usually seen as a "resource", cultural production, including languages. Their thinking

is quite Hegelian in their insistence that both aspects – the type of relations between subjects and what is owned – are seen as “the common”. Thus the relation and its involved parties all constitute the common.

Love was given a particularly important position in Negri’s and Hardt’s work. In Part 3 of their book, they declare that love is the “element that pulls together all other elements of their analysis”, namely the multitude of the poor, the alternative project of modernity, the social productivity of biopolitical labor and the exodus from capitalist command (Negri and Hardt 2011, 179). In order to accomplish this task, love must become a kind of superpower, or at least it should be proven that it is a materialized, embodied force organizing life. In Negri’s and Hardt’s approach, love is mainly understood as a social force, a form of solidarity and care for others. Once again, the poor are the main reference. Love is also an economic power, as a way of organizing social production in the private. Love is ontologically productive, as a force allowing individual change. Love is also, as Spinoza noticed earlier, a way of redirecting one towards joy (Negri and Hardt 2011, 180-181). There are several forms of corrupted love, such as racist solidarity or mystical union with god, excluding any interest in the existing world (Negri and Hardt 2011, 182-184).

After reading the rather short passage on love and multitude, it is rather striking to discover that all the richness of affective involvements among humans (and also non-humans) is being reduced to social solidarity and individual romantic love, rather than allowing the multitude to enjoy its diversified forms of passions. In *Testo Junkie*, Paul Preciado rightly asked whether the multitude has sex, sexual organs etc. (Preciado 2013). I would add some other questions, such as: does the multitude have children, parents, grandparents, cousins, sisters, brothers? To recall the richness of affective labour, which is still predominantly perceived as women’s work, and still organizing large areas of human lives (and non-human too). As we will see in further parts of this article, socialist feminists do not forget that Caliban had a mother, not only in analyzing the early days of the modern era, as Silvia Federici did in *Caliban and the Witch*, but also today (Federici, 2004). It seems clear, however, that the concept of the “common”, as one built on a very clear dismantling of the private/public divide, and as one aimed at materialized, embodied social practice of conformity to social norms, but also of resistance, is perhaps the most interesting proposition of theorizing the social that has been put forward in recent years, especially in the texts of Negri and Judith Revel, published recently (Revel, 2003; Revel and Negri, 2011).

The common – as the process of becoming of the multitude, is depicted as composed of differently socialized individuals, who face different expectations when it comes to care.

As Negri and Hardt rightly point out, women who do not fulfill these expectations are seen as monstrous. Revel adds, that the (in)famous “feminization of labor” does not consist on the appearance of women or men in sectors of production in which they had not been seen before. The feminization of labour consists of introducing to the sector of production of all those factors that have traditionally been assigned to women and therefore excluded from the realm of production – such as love, relations, care etc (Revel 2003, 127). Therefore the emancipation of women or becoming-women in production involves a systemic change in the functioning of care, love and relationality, and the liberation of those who were socialized to perform them. In this analysis, love is one of the key elements of the project of emancipation.

Love and solidarity in socialist feminisms

Socialist feminists seem to have a more realistic and diversified vision of affective labour and love than some representatives of post-operaist Marxism. Iris Marion Young suggested that the question of the division of labour was almost as important for Marx as the issue of class, at least in the early stages of his work (Young 1981). She therefore saw a great potential in rearticulating the division of labour in view of gender and race, rather than just of class, making her much closer to Marx than many other feminists. The mode of production leads to discovering two aspects of love and affective labour: the fact that it is embedded and structured by the existing cultural and economic system (capitalism) and that even the parts of the social which are still resisting the processes of reification are not independent or external. In this sense, socialist feminists differ from those more tied to the critical theory school, who, like Nancy Fraser for example, would suggest that emancipatory theory and practice should refer to the non-commodified zones of the social (Fraser 2013), such as intimate relations or care/affective labour. However, at least in my view, the ontological status of these supposedly ‘non-colonized’ domains of the social seems problematic, and especially in view of Foucault’s analysis of the “hypothesis of repression”, Althusser’s theory of ideology or Bourdieu’s analysis of *habitus*.

Socialist feminist theorists focus on the gender division of labour and assume that a properly feminist socialist theory can solve the problem

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of social reproduction and reproductive labour. Anna Jonasdottir has been developing a concept of love-labour and an understanding of humans as “sociosexual” (Jonasdottir 1991). She later explained several presuppositions necessary to understand love-labor. On the most general level, she uses Marx’s methodology to answer feminist questions, as Julie Mitchell suggested in the early 1970’s. She is critical about the split between radical feminism, focusing on violence against women, and socialist feminism, and predominantly on labour (Jonasdottir 2009).

This division between production and reproduction, often emphasized by both Marxists and feminists, is also negotiated in Jonasdottir’s work in reference to *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, where Friedrich Engels wrote about two types of production, namely labour and production of life. Jonasdottir claims that the divide between production and reproduction is a misinterpretation – again, common among both feminists and Marxists. She explains that Engels did not intend to create a dualistic vision of work but only referred to the fact that humans reproduce themselves and produce things. Rather than as a dualistic vision of human labour, Jonasdottir sees this as a description of a twofold nature of production. In line with Federici, she explains that not only both kinds of production are at the same time reproductive, but also that the tendency of simply projecting the structure of labour onto the family or vice versa is a form of unjustified reduction. Emphasizing the twofold character of labour should not be dualistic, but dialectical; intertwining nature and culture, biology and society, theory and practice.

The perspective opened by the concept of “love-labour” also shows a possible horizon of emancipation, which would be common for both sectors of production. I think this part of Jonasdottir’s theoretical project is particularly important for an analysis of what was recently called “cognitive capitalism”, and it is also particularly helpful in diagnosing and measuring the abuse of care labour within contemporary precarious forms of labour. It also possesses an important capacity of detecting the weaknesses of such concepts as precarity or “immaterial labour”, in which the gender of the agents and the historical materiality of work is replaced by a possibly idealist concept. Although Negri and Hardt explain that only the results of immaterial labour are immaterial, yet still their later choice to discuss “biopolitical labor” seems far more interesting (Negri and Hardt, 2011). This Foucauldian concept not only allows us to recognize the oppressive systems of control and management organizing contemporary production, but it also points to the corporeal nature of production, to the embodied agency of any labour. The com-

bination of reproductive and productive aspects in all kinds of labour seems to be the only way to omit such misunderstandings.

Jonasdottir also notes that Marx discussed love as a kind of exchange that - although perverted by capitalism - can still be seen as different from value-oriented exchange. I would agree with her on this point, since the notion of communism, central for the later Marx's work, clearly follows from his concept of love. Love becomes the key element in his claims about human species and in his critique of the alienating practices of capitalist exploitation that transform the basic human biological functions into reproductive capacities. However, I would add that both Marx's and Jonasdottir's notion of love in capitalism could be further seen as 'colonized' – not only in the sense given to the word by Jurgen Habermas, when he discussed the colonizations of life, but also in the way it is used by postcolonial studies with its focus on economic exploitation based on imperialist distinctions involving ethnic differences as supposedly causal factors. The contemporary modes of capitalist production involve not only global processes, but also dynamics in which the intersections of class and gender are additionally crossed by racial and geopolitical inequalities. The contemporary Western mother is increasingly replaced by a Southern and Eastern one, just as maids from poor countries are an increasingly popular form of labour in the richer families in the global South and East. This means that affective labour should definitely not be uncritically understood as free or potentially resistant. On the contrary – large parts of it, possibly the majority, should be seen as either degrading or even enslaved. Yet still – as we have seen in Marx, and as we shall see in the feminist writers of color – there is some potential in love.

An important part of Jonasdottir's claim lies in the emphasis on the sexual capacities of humans and the tendency typical for patriarchal capitalism to promote men's appropriations of female sexual labour. Jonasdottir claims that since neoliberal societies tend to emphasize the importance of love, feminist theory should also focus more on this issue. Gary Becker, the Nobel Prize-winning neoliberal economist, stressed the importance of affect and, particularly, altruism, in organizing the family within society. Becker sees altruism as the basis for a new organization of society and combines the reinstatement of traditional gender roles with an increasing freedom... of the market. The use of women as those who should come back to their domestic duties and "take care" of men is a key element of this project of a reinstallation of the autonomy of the market (Becker 1991). It also provides a perfect legitimization for the precarization mechanisms of the labour market. In contrast,

The contemporary modes of capitalist production involve not only global processes, but also dynamics in which the intersections of class and gender are additionally crossed by racial and geopolitical inequalities. The contemporary Western mother is increasingly replaced by a Southern and Eastern one, just as maids from poor countries are an increasingly popular form of labour in the richer families in the global South and East.

Jonasdottir's theory shows the empowering aspects of care and affect, and not only criticizes the abuse of women's love-power, but also calls for emancipation.

In line with Jonasdottir, Ann Ferguson argues for the necessity of theorizing sexual and affective labour. She has developed a "multisystems approach" to social inequalities, in an effort to avoid reducing patriarchy to capitalism, and vice-versa, and a strategy informed by poststructuralism (Ferguson, 2009). She combines the sexual and caring aspects of reproductive labour and shows their coexistence in at least some household contexts, through the concept of "sex-affective production". Yet, as Young rightly pointed out, such a vision of caring/ reproductive labour is still distinct from market organized production (Young, 2005). In Ferguson's later work however this distinction is more permeable, partly due to the inspiration she takes from Deleuze and Foucault, and partly because she attempts to combine the racial and sexual aspects of affective production in a larger critique of patriarchal capitalism. Ferguson also claims that it is necessary to overcome the distinction between production and reproduction, and emphasizes the material and embodied character of affective labour.

For Ferguson, love is an affect between individuals or small groups, whereas solidarity should shape social relations in their multiplicity. As early as the 1990's Ferguson emphasized the necessity of building bridges – a metaphor popular amongst Chicana feminists (see: Anzaldúa 1999), transforming the visions of development into less abusive and more inclusive ones. She asked whether a politics of liberation that polices the borders of its own membership can really succeed. In another, more recent article, Ferguson developed a more visionary account as to what love and solidarity should mean in radical feminism, and it is worth quoting at length here:

To resolve the Solidarity/Love dilemma that haunts oppositional movements, then, feminist social justice activists will have to be prepared to combat the politics of fear, contempt, and hate in our oppositional affective economies and to network across class, race and ethnic/religious differences... (Ferguson 1998).

Ferguson sees love as an element a necessary to various forms of labour, both in the household and in various forms of political involvement and activism. Her concept of "affective economy" is a gender sensitive one, yet she is not only preoccupied with women's work. Looking into radical collectives, zones of sexual experimentation, such as the recent polyamorous experiments, and emphasizing the significance of homo-

erotic affective investments, Ferguson builds a vision of political love emerging from the resisting ‘margins’ of the social. In doing so she reconnects with Foucault, who revisited radical medieval communities in order to define the “heterotopias.” Ferguson’s theory, while avoiding the traditional affective constellations, allows a bridge to be constructed between the traditional families and alternative lifestyles, between traditional families and people following new organizations of intimacy. Ferguson uses the notion of “transformational solidarity”, which expresses the ability of creating political bonds between various subjectivities learning from each other and unlearning colonial practices (Ferguson, 2011).

Another perspective on love, reproductive labour and resistance has been developed by Silvia Federici, who in an important lecture on precarious labour emphasized the complications faced by any loving mother or female partner who might refuse to provide care for her relatives (Federici, 2006). The supposed impossibility of this kind of refusal, the ultimate pain attached to a domestic strike, is an aspect of the affective labour performed in the household that is almost entirely absent from other Marxist accounts. Through the example of a mother willing to refuse to do housework, Federici addresses the dilemmas of all those performing care work, regardless of gender. Still, it should not be underestimated that many more women than men provide care and affection, and how strongly their self-esteem and confidence are attached to an evaluation of the capacity for providing care, both internalized and external. In this sense the people who “refuse” emancipation are often those whose sense of value is tied to their gender role and all the prohibitions/ exclusions it contains.

Discussing the notion of “immaterial labour” proposed by Hardt and Negri, Federici argues it is based on an unjustified presupposition as to the immaterial character of emotions. Affects are embodied; they are experienced in the bodies and shape the bodies in the processes of production (Federici 2006). Federici separates productive and reproductive labour in order to emphasize the gendered social inequalities and support feminist efforts to value this labour on one hand, and feminist forms of resistance on the other. Federici’s claims about the specificity of the situation of a female worker, who – in order to resist – has to oppose the ones whom she loves, are some of the most persuasive lines in feminist writing. For Federici the experience of a refusal in the domestic sphere is a crucial form of feminist protest, but it also allows a transformation of others around the protesting woman and a process of learning that is exceptional for its particular position in the social sphere.

Decolonizing love and the precariat

The issue of translation, particularly when understood in a global perspective, allows us to look more critically at the concept of precarity. Another serious deficiency of the concept of precarity is its local, deeply Western definition and applicability. Ronaldo Munck claims, in his critical revision of the notion of precarity, that the majority of global labour is and has always been precarious; in contrast to claims by such authors as Standing and others, it is the Fordist model that constitutes an exception in the global system of labour, not precarity (Munck 2013). It should be noted that the organization of labour based on the Fordist model was also applied in the former Eastern Bloc, which constituted a large territory somehow unrecognized by Munck. Labour relations in China, although definitely distant from the comfortable stability of West European countries in the 1960's, can also be seen as problematic from the perspective of the applicability of one model – whether Fordist or precarious. Regardless of these difficulties however, the accuracy of Munck's critique of the concept of precariat should be stressed – the majority of the world either never had a stable, functional and safe model of labour, or enjoyed it only for a very short time, and selectively.

In his article Munck claims that the concept of the precariat blatantly repeats elements of colonial domination, “It also, above all, acts as a colonizing concept in the South in classic Eurocentric mode, although its proponents are blithely unaware of these implications.” (Munck 2013, 753). Munck compares Standing's concept to that of “marginal worker” from the 1970s, “informal labor” and “social exclusion” from the 1980s, and even Marx's analysis of the “lumpenproletariat”. Quite accurately, he points out that calling the precariat a “dangerous class” might be an unfortunate repetition of the worst upper- and middle class prejudices against the poor, which have already been criticized by Victor Hugo. His suggestion of *nihil novi* in the recent fascination with precarity bears some similarities to the critique of the fetishization of work in liberal feminism executed by bell hooks in *Feminist Theory. From Margin to Center*. In the discussions in the early 1980s, hooks accentuated the fact that the majority of Black women in the US had already been working when Betty Friedan demanded access to labour for, as she thought, “women”, who actually were a much smaller group consisting of the upper middle class white wives of rich husbands (hooks [1984] 2000). Munck argues, in a similar way that “From a Southern perspective work has always-already

been precarious, a basic fact which unsettles the notion that something new has been discovered.” (Munck 2013, 753).

The gendered inequality resulting from precarization, yet not scrutinized in the main works on precarity, including those of Ronaldo Munck, has been particularly visible in the economic transformation in Poland in the last 20 years, when the big state-owned industrial workplaces were privatized, dismantled and eventually closed in several cities, and where at the same time the state was weakening its responsibility for social security, including health. The detailed studies of the “grey sphere” of unwaged labour done to sustain otherwise unsupported lives of the families of unemployed workers, which were conducted by Alison Stenning and her students in Nowa Huta, clearly show the dominance of work typically assigned to women, such as cooking, care-giving, cleaning and providing food, in the process of transition (Stenning 2007). The protests of nurses, repeatedly staged in Warsaw since 2001, which finally brought about a substantial pay rise only in 2015, also show, that in comparison to men-dominated professions, women had to survive on much lower wages than men (Kubisa 2014). Finally, the liquidation of alimony fund – the state support for single parents and other care-givers in 2003, suddenly transformed this group, predominantly composed of women, into one of the poorest groups in society. These examples do not cover the Polish experience of the neoliberal transformation in its full scope, but they do show how the process of precarization is gendered.

While translating bell hooks into Polish (see: hooks, 2014), I suddenly realized that her perspective, and the Black feminist perspective on love as the affective bonds preserving the poor, Black, excluded community from destruction in the hardships of capitalist exploitation, can help foster a better understanding of the role of affective labour in the processes of transformation after 1989. It is due to love-affective labour, not only to the ability to establish economic “grey zones”, that entire cities survived the beginnings of capitalism in Poland after 1989. While Stenning and other authors focus on the labour dimensions, other aspects of love, such as inspiration, remain unseen. While, in turn, Weeks criticizes the abusive patterns of the neoliberal commodification of love in the service of capitalist management, the very prospect of solidarity, let alone intimacy or affection, is neglected. I believe Black feminism brings all these marginalized aspects of love back to the game, making of them the necessary yet neglected condition of resistance and revolution.

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Love in Black and Decolonial Feminism

Feminist scholars and writers of Color, particularly bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, directly refer to love and sometimes also to family as not only a space permeated by oppression, but also as a significant source of support and strength for black and migrant women. bell hooks depicts this difference perhaps most clearly, when she writes:

Contemporary feminist analyses of family often implied, that successful feminist movement would either begin with or lead to the abolition of the family. This suggestion was terribly threatening to many women, especially non-white women (...). Devaluation of family life in feminist discussion often reflects the class nature of the movement. Individuals from privileged classes rely on a number of institutional and social structures to affirm and protect their interests. (hooks 2000, 38-39).

In her book *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, Angela Davis depicts several black female blues singers as the first black women to take the position of independent subjects, who not only overcame the conditions forced upon women in racist, patriarchal capitalism, but also became the secular public's voice of the Black community, singing about sexual love as a source of pleasure and possibly also liberation. Davis claimed, "Love was not represented as an idealized realm to which unfulfilled dreams of happiness were relegated. The historical African-American vision of individual sexual love linked it inextricably with possibilities of social freedom in the economic and political realms" (Davis 1999, 10).

This notion of love clearly reminds of one of the many definitions of communism proposed by Marx and Engels in the *German Ideology*, where they declare that it is not an "ideal to be established" but a "real movement, which abolishes the present state of affairs." It can also be seen as particularly close to Negri and Hardt's vision of love in the *Commonwealth*, discussed above. However, the fact that a woman expresses it, in the particular cultural context of the male-dominated community of Afro-Americans still suffering oppression, but – at the time the songs analyzed by Davis were written – also subjected to institutionalized violence and discrimination, makes the emancipatory potential of love far more persistent and compelling than anything we can find in the *Commonwealth*.

Davis's analysis of female singers stresses the fact that black women, who became stars of popular music in the beginning of the 20th century,

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somehow escaped the familial context. Davis claims that only a few out of some 200 songs she discusses were talking about family. In the great majority – black female singers sang about love in the name of individual, unmarried women, clearly seeking pleasure and accomplishment in their sexual relations with men. Davis stresses that the black blues female singers were also a secular alternative to the black preachers, who also referred to love as emancipatory power of the Black folk, but embedded it in traditional religious and familial contexts. From her point of view, MA Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday were the first black women to stand independently as representatives of the needs of the whole community and at the same time the ones who overcame the social, cultural and religious constraints of the patriarchal community.

The emancipatory heritage discussed by Davis also contributes to our understanding of precarity as gendered. In the highly individualized, newly segregated societies, in which more and more workers experience nomadic existence, the possibilities of experiencing love, but also of being allowed to express it as an experience of stability and fulfillment, are particularly limited. The songs recalled by Davis show women focused on their own emotional lives, not solely on the lives of others, to which they are more and more confined due to the dismantling of social and state secured stability. In the times of neoliberal transformation, of precarization and the introduction of austerity measures, these songs are a distant reminder of the liberating aspects of individual affect.

In her speech delivered during the Women Suffrage Convention in 1851, commonly known as “Ain’t I a Woman?” Sojourner Truth explained the difficulties of finding a place and a form for expressing her own situation – of someone, who – as a former slave and also a black woman, and a political activist – does not fit in the gender and class categories provided for any of these positions if taken separately (Truth, [1851] 2014). Almost 150 years later, bell hooks initially finds herself in a similar position. Writing about her upbringing in a small town in Kentucky, still under racist segregation, she emphasizes the specific epistemology she developed as someone from “the margin”. In *Feminist Theory*, hooks discussed the class nature of the rejection of the family in large parts of the feminist movement. She claims that most women in the US are still economically dependent on their partners, therefore it would not be possible for them to “buy services”, as it is for women from the upper classes. She also writes about love as the element that makes it possible to endure the racist, misogynist class society (hooks 2000). Here a different experience of love in the Afro-American experience opens up – one in which the family sustains the individual’s resistance to economic

injustices and racism, which are often intertwined. In Poland, the translation of hooks's *Feminist Theory. From Margin to Center* sparked a renewal in the interest in love, but also in class analysis and in viewing economic inequalities as necessary objects of feminist critique.

Conclusions

In the precarious societies of today, a growing tendency can be observed that obliges women to provide affective support, nourishment and care to all those whose needs ceased being the state's obligation. Thus precarity is not equally distributed among genders, as some of us – women – are expected to bear more of the costs of the transition of the state and employers, than others, i.e. men. Although there has been a large shift in gender roles and in the family structure, the traditional gender division of labour still prevails in most households, and still constitutes the major reference. Additionally, during the neoliberal crisis, be it that of 2008 or the current one, caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, old patterns of the gender division of labour become dominant, resulting in a backlash and a renewal of women's obligation to fulfill their traditional roles.

All this should lead to a discussion of strategies of survival in the conditions of growing instability and insecurity; of resistance to globalized imperialist capital, as well as to prospects of changing the existing socio-political context of exploitative neoliberalism into a more egalitarian system. As I argued earlier, love can become necessary to explain the modalities of resilience and resistance against capitalist, patriarchal abuse and racism. It was portrayed in ways allowing such analysis by Marx and Engels, utopian thinkers, Hardt and Negri, hooks and Davis, as well as by various socialist feminists. Love should thus be seen as an inspiration, a tool and a motivation, as well as a toolbox for action, not flattened to its commodified, profit-oriented or traditional, romantic versions.

The feminist analysis offered here opens up a more general perspective, where elements of individual lived experiences are combined with visions of an emancipated society. Therefore they are similar to what Marx and Engels called *communism* – they are “not an *ideal* to follow”, but “a *real* movement, which abolishes the present state of affairs” (Marx and Engels [1845] 1956). Not all love is lost in the meticulous ideology of neoliberal employment, where workers are lured to longer hours of labour by a vision of romantic engagement in their workplace, as Kathi

Not all love is lost in the meticulous ideology of neoliberal employment, where workers are lured to longer hours of labour by a vision of romantic engagement in their workplace, as Kathi Weeks eloquently explains. In some contexts, love still gives the common the power to resist abuse, claim social change and to revolt against exploitation.

Weeks eloquently explains. In some contexts, love still gives the common the power to resist abuse, claim social change and to revolt against exploitation.

In the contemporary version of capitalism, love often appears either as an element of commodified affective production or as a revival of conservative family visions. It is the task of theories and practices of resistance, new feminist affective ontologies, to challenge these reductive perspectives, and offer a more nuanced vision of the social bonds structured affectively in ways exceeding neoliberal constraints and profit orientation.

We need a global theory of solidarity and resistance, not merely a globalized Western one. Thus the forms of affect and its organizing structures need not only to be viciously attacked and dismantled, but also observed, discussed, negotiated and reshaped, as perhaps there are more ways of liberating ourselves from abuse or commodification than rejecting love altogether. Perhaps such global solidarity can learn from the many ways affect, and love in particular, finds its expressions beyond the neoliberal labour market, in households, factories and dispersed sites of creative work, as well as in families and other affectively invested networks. In such a decolonized, feminist context, the concept of the precariat could be given an afterlife by recognition of the affective and material substance of the common, daily, embodied experiences of lives struggling with commodification in different cultures, class and genders. In doing so, feminist theory should not focus solely on the gender division of labour and the alienating, commodifying capitalist forces within the crisis. Love can be – as Ann Ferguson shows – a fundament for solidarity and collective acts of resistance, it can also offer, as Deleuze called them, *lignes de fuite*. In a world governed by “absent heirs”, as invoked by Zygmunt Bauman, love and solidarity could build the much-needed connections.

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Tytuł: Prekarność i gender: Co ma z tym wspólnego miłość?

Abstrakt: Niniejszy artykuł analizuje pojęcie prekarności z perspektywy filozoficznej, skupiając się na miłości i pracy afektywnej oraz odnosząc się przy tym krytycznie do nierówności genderowych w neoliberalnym kapitalizmie. Romantyczny, heteroseksualny model miłości, cechujący współczesne społeczeństwa zachodnie, był na wiele sposobów rozmontowywany i poddawany krytyce, co doprowadziło do sprzecznych rozstrzygnięć – zniszczenia, zniesienia, wytworzenia się jego wariantów czy (raczej konserwatywnych) prób jego zachowania. Jednak miłość, w jej różnych postaciach, zarówno jako teoria, jak i praktyka, wciąż dostarcza modeli i rozwiązań nie tylko neoliberalnemu rynkowi pracy i nowym formom wyzysku i wywłaszczania opieki i pracy afektywnej, ale także rewolucyjnym ideom i przemianom, zarówno wśród feministek i marksistek. Miłość wymaga zatem teorii skupiającej się raczej na zniesieniu, a nie unicestwieniu poprzednich modeli miłości. W swoim artykule konstruuje taką perspektywę, ukazując jej potencjał jako model oporu i rewolucji na czasy neoliberalnego kapitalizmu.

Słowa kluczowe: feminizm, prekarność, afekty, miłość, neoliberalizm