



However, such minor criticisms aside, this is a warmly recommended book. To tell anything like the full story here would have been an impossible task. Instead judiciously chosen examples serve to highlight broader trends and illuminate the importance of live music in American life. But not *just* American life. Waksman completed the book as the Covid-19 pandemic temporarily obliterated live music. His last words are: 'Its return is essential to our recovery' (p. 569). Amen. Moreover, many of the reasons for why that is essential can be found within these pages. Read them.

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## References

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***Punk Rock and Philosophy: Research and Destroy.* Edited by Joshua Heter and Richard Greene. Chicago, IL: Open Universe, Carus Books, 2022. 346 pp. ISBN 978-1-63770-022-8**

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Comprising 31 chapters, Heter and Greene's *Punk Rock and Philosophy* marks a tremendous accomplishment. One might initially wonder what punk has to do with philosophy; when someone mentions the Sex Pistols or the Slits, nobody thinks of tweed jacket with elbow-patches or wildly dense tomes exploring the nature of reality. This popular-level volume challenges preconceptions about punk, philosophy and how they relate. Unlike many volumes in the various pop-culture and philosophy series, Heter and Greene have assembled a collection of essays that, while covering disparate topics from punk feminism and class-consciousness to the 'paradox of the poseur', come together to offer a narrative about punk and philosophy rather than merely pointing to disparate philosophical ideas, all of which have some connection with punk. Instead, reading the sizeable text, one gets the sense that each author struggles to pin down just what punk is. In this way, punk is the perfect introduction to and illustration of the force of philosophy: it takes something familiar, such as punk, and examines it from every angle until what we thought we knew about it becomes a distant memory – all the while sharpening, or perhaps *remastering*, our understanding.

Timothy M. Kwiatek's chapter 'The Essence of Punk' (Chapter 1) opens the volume and sets the tone. Appealing to punk's wide variety of styles, values, aesthetics and scenes, Kwiatek walks readers through the difficulties central to defining

punk, suggesting instead that punk resists analysis. Appealing to Ludwig Wittgenstein's famous challenge to philosophical analysis, Kwiatek suggests that punk, like 'games', cannot be identified by some set of essential characteristics – rather different kinds of punks share a 'family resemblance'. Kwiatek suggests that we can point to a broad swath of features, none of which are required to define punk, but all of which occur in *some* area(s) of punk. In other words, 'punk' picks out a host of loosely related concepts each of which has 'fuzzy boundaries' (p. 8).

This Wittgensteinian theme is reinforced implicitly throughout the book. Randall E. Auxier (p. 118) and Marty Sulek (p. 139) independently invoke US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's infamous concurring opinion in *Jacobellis vs. Ohio* (1964) to make the point. Justice Stewart declined to define obscenity, instead claiming, 'I know it when I see it'. Punk, these authors suggest, functions the same way – we don't know how to define it, but we know it when we see or hear it. The first half of the book progresses from analyses (Section I) to punk values (Section II), punk's ties to the history of philosophy (Section III) and punk politics (Section IV, which stands out as the strongest section in the volume). It is striking that despite the challenge of clearly demarcating punk, a number of central features recur. Nearly every chapter includes at least one of the following: authenticity, freedom, a rejection of authority/anti-fascism, rebellion, spectacle and the rejection of commodification.

While the emphasis on rebellion and rejection might lead one to think of punk as an essentially negative or nihilistic movement, many contributors highlight punk's creative side. Whether creating music, zines, fashion or scenes, the book as a whole makes the case that punk is more constructive than it might first appear. Emphasising punk's trademark anti-commodification/anti-consumerist style, contributors key in on punk's do-it-yourself commitments and punk's ability to facilitate community. Despite community's positive connotation, sometimes it goes wrong. At the mid-point of the book, Ryan Falcioni returns explicitly to the book's Wittgensteinian theme, but with a twist. Falcioni's chapter, 'Nazi Punks Fuck Off!' (Chapter 17) argues that while punk is impossible to cleanly demarcate, Wittgenstein's take on analysis can help punks key in on features in their culture that can be used to undercut neo-Nazi punks' recruiting strategies. At once this chapter reminds readers of the book's Wittgensteinian theme and provides the tools to fight Nazis – a stand-out chapter for sure.

Having reminded readers of punk's resistance to being defined, the second half of the book explores punk's relationship to broader cultures – including Buddhism and Christianity, among others (Section V), punk aesthetics (Section VI) and punk ethics (Section VII). Several philosophical themes from the first half of the book are reinforced in the second half. For instance, George A. Dunn's 'Be Like Johnny' (Chapter 26) and Lindsey J. Schwartz's 'Good Guys Don't Wear White' (Chapter 30) explore the concept of virtue in punk aesthetics and ethics – a reintroduction of the idea of virtue introduced in the first section through Bailie Peterson's 'To Resist Despair' (Chapter 5). Such thematic consistency speaks to Heter and Greene's thoughtfulness in organising the text.

Despite the overall strength of the book, there are a few weaknesses. A couple of chapters address the same topics in remarkably similar ways. Peter Brian Barry's 'The Paradox of the Poseur' (Chapter 7) and Jesse Prinz's 'The Seven P's of Real Punk' (Chapter 9) both address punk as an identity, explore the challenge presented by trying to really *be* a punk, which at once demands that one reject conformity and

fit in with 'real' punks. Both chapters appeal to a sense of authentic selfhood as a proposed solution. The paradox is interesting, but it probably does not need to be treated twice. While each essay offers a slightly different analysis of and solution to the paradox, the strikingly parallel treatments undercut the book's Wittgensteinian framing by showing more convergence than diversity.

In other cases, content-overlap draws attention to an inevitable feature of edited volumes, viz. the variability of writing styles and uneven quality of the chapters. For instance, Gwenda-Lin Grewal's 'A Punk by Any Other Name Would Smell as Rotten' (Chapter 11) and Christopher M. Innes's 'Revolting Punks' (Chapter 14) both treat Diogenes's punk sensibilities. Rather than feeling redundant, in this case, Grewal's essay stands out as an example of a particularly risky chapter. Grewal's essay, and a handful of others in the book, seem to embody punk's spirit by challenging the norms of philosophical writing. Punk though it might be, the danger in rebelling against established writing norms is that, like some punk songs, the audience may find it stylistically off-putting.

Finally, there is something a little strange about the project as a whole. One seemingly central feature of punk is a commitment to not 'selling out'. While the contributors to this volume boast impressive punk credentials, buying a book about punk from a major publishing house does feel a bit like seeing Henry Rollins in a commercial for Calvin Klein. To be fair, Markus Kohl's 'The Post-Punk Struggle for Authenticity' (Chapter 10) and a number of others directly address the issue of 'selling out' – and whether one can be an authentic punk in an age where punk is now a commodity unto itself.

Each chapter provides a Ramones song-length glimpse into a philosophical theme in punk, affording readers the opportunity to benefit without having to set aside several hours at a time to work through a dense academic text. At the same time, the thematic consistency provides a nice narrative cohesion for anyone reading cover-to-cover. So what does philosophy have to do with punk? *Punk Rock and Philosophy* will convince readers that punk is deeply philosophical and philosophy is punk as fuck.

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## Reference

*Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U. S. 184 (1964)

**Naná Vasconcelos's *Saudades*. By Daniel B. Sharp. Bloomsbury Academic, 33 1/3 Brazil series, 2021. 272 pp. ISBN: 978-1-501-34570-8**  
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Daniel B. Sharp contributes to the Bloomsbury '33 1/3' series' Brazil list by taking a biographical approach in his treatment of *Saudades*, giving relatively little space to the album itself to understand the many choices and fortuitous events in the life of Brazilian musician Naná Vasconcelos (1944–2016) resulting in its creation.