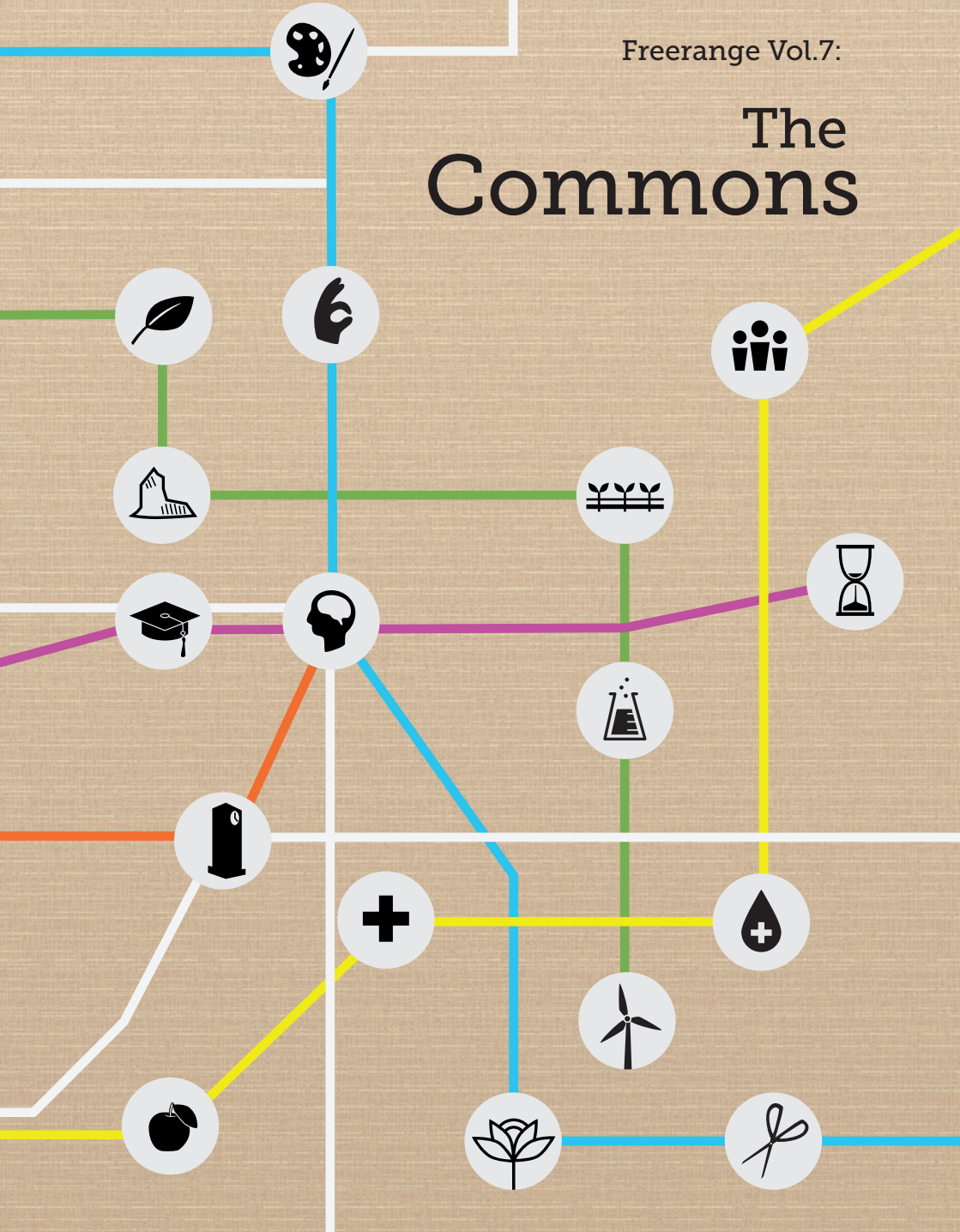


Freerange Vol.7:

The Commons



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The Commons

The law locks up the man or woman
Who steals the goose from off the common
But leaves the greater villain loose
Who steals the common from off the goose.

The law demands that we atone
When we take things we do not own
But leaves the lords and ladies fine
Who take things that are yours and mine.

The poor and wretched don't escape
If they conspire the law to break;
This must be so but they endure
Those who conspire to make the law.

The law locks up the man or woman
Who steals the goose from off the common
And geese will still a common lack
Till they go and steal it back.

(UNKNOWN AUTHOR)

This folk poem (a common in itself) dates to seventeenth century England and was a protest directed at the privatisation of common land on a nationwide scale known as the Enclosure Movement.

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Freerange Vol.7: The Commons

As a species we have evolved an innate ability to cooperate which has allowed us to collectively realise many admirable cultural and scientific achievements. Never before in our history have we been so connected by technology, yet simultaneously we are dangerously disconnected from our inherent commonality and the commons. Many civilisations and empires no longer exist due to their failure to sustainably manage their common resources. However as a highly interconnected globalised society the collapse we face is global in scale and presents a new and terrifying prospect.

The commons can be defined as 'all that we share' or those resources (physical, intellectual and cultural) whether finite or infinite and whether currently in existence or not that are shared and managed collectively by a community. Globally, more than 2.5 billion people depend directly on natural common resources such as forests, rivers, wetlands and pastures for their livelihoods. However, these natural commons also provide wide-ranging contributions which indirectly maintain ecological and economic balance for us all. Cultural and intellectual resources such as the internet are also commons which provide hugely important services to our societies.

The sustainability of the commons demands a dedication to co-operation, equitable use, participatory democracy and sustainability. It is apparent that the failing political and economic systems we have inherited are inadequate to meet these demands. Over the latter part of the preceding century the commons sector has been marginalised by the collusion of the public and private sectors in what has been described by commons academic David Bollier as a 'market-state duopoly'. The prevailing paradigm under this hegemonic global order is one of unrestrained and unregulated growth, individualism, artificially created scarcity and competition for common resources.

The vast majority of the global population has been utterly disenfranchised by this system which fails to deliver the essential needs of humanity and fails to involve us in participatory decision making about our collective resources and futures. This increasingly imbalanced system has paved the way for division, partition and 'enclosure' of our public spaces and our cultural and physical resources at alarming and unprecedented rates. Indigenous and impoverished communities in particular have been unable to resist unregulated land grabbing and systematic plunder of their natural resources for private profit.

There are, however, promising signs all around us of a flourishing and resurgent commons sector. Resistance to appropriation of public space has been a central theme of the powerful social movements to have emerged in this new millennium. It was no accident that the loss of Gezi Park to private development was the spark that ignited latent discontent Turkey in 2013. Similarly, the Arab Spring, Occupy, Los Indignados and the global indigenous Idle No More movements all tap into our collective feeling of lack of participation in decisions over common space and resources. The commons approach does not provide easy answers or quick fixes to the systemic problems we face but it will play a huge part in the reshaping of our planet along more equitable and sustainable lines.

The emergent commons sector offers a truly free and open market running in parallel to and in some instances even supplanting the growth based capitalist economy. It utilises innovations such as open source licensing and technology, a sharing/gift economy and cooperative and community controlled production and enterprise. The new indicators of progress in this system are human based rather than financial and it will involve a gradual transfer from the private and public to community ownership of resources.

The role of government needs to shift from centralised decision making or privatisation to one that would facilitate the ability of local communities to govern their own common resources. This approach will require active participation of communities in governance and development of their resources. It encourages higher levels of cooperation, innovation and creativity

by encouraging collaboration and communication between peers in loosely and fluidly organised networks and gives the freedom and the structures we need to work together.

The commons approach is perhaps our best hope as we pull our heads out of the sand and face up to the challenges of fundamentally redesigning our society with people and the planet as the primary considerations. This journal is a celebration of the commons and aims to give a broad overview of the theme as well as highlighting inspirational visions of a more commons based future. *Freerange 7* includes in-depth research into the areas of intellectual property rights, our food system and the reclaiming of cultural space through digital mapping. Some personal insights are offered into the commons perspective of post-earthquake Christchurch and early childhood education. This edition also includes discussions of urban public space, the emerging peer to peer economy and participatory decision making alongside more artistic treatments of the theme of the commons through poetry and imagery.

The information presented here is far from comprehensive, however those inspired to learn more are encouraged to explore the further readings suggested herein.

– JOSEPH CEDERWALL & JESSIE MOSS

The commons as a transformative vision



Excerpt from the introduction to THE WEALTH OF THE COMMONS: A WORLD BEYOND MARKET & STATE. David Bollier & Silke Helfrich. Levellers Press, Massachusetts 2012

It has become increasingly clear that we are poised between an old world that no longer works and a new one struggling to be born. Surrounded by an archaic order of centralized hierarchies on the one hand and predatory markets on the other, presided over by a state committed to planet-destroying economic growth, people around the world are searching for alternatives.

That is the message of various social conflicts all over the world – of the Spanish Indignados and the Occupy movement, and of countless social innovators on the Internet. People want to emancipate themselves not just from poverty and shrinking opportunities, but from governance systems that do not allow them meaningful voice and responsibility.

Beyond the market and state

For generations, the state and market have developed a close, symbiotic relationship, to the extent of forging what might be called the market/state duopoly. Both are deeply committed to a shared vision of technological progress and market competition, enframed

in a liberal, nominally democratic polity that revolves around individual freedom and rights. Market and state collaborate intimately and together have constructed an integrated world-view – a political philosophy and cultural epistemology, in fact – with each playing complementary roles to enact their shared utopian ideals of endless growth and consumer satisfaction.

The presumption that the state can and will intervene to represent the interests of citizens is no longer credible. Unable to govern for the long term, captured by commercial interests and hobbled by stodgy bureaucratic structures in an age of nimble electronic networks, the state is arguably

incapable of meeting the needs of citizens as a whole. The inescapable conclusion is that the mechanisms and processes of representative democracy are no longer a credible vehicle for the change we need. Conventional political discourse, itself an aging artifact of another era, is incapable of naming our problems, imagining alternatives and reforming itself.

This, truly, is why the commons has such a potentially transformative role to play. It is a discourse that transcends and remakes the categories of the prevailing political and economic order. It provides us with a new socially constructed order of experience, an elemental political worldview and a persuasive grand narrative. The commons identifies the relationships that should matter and sets forth a different operational logic. It validates new schemes of human relations, production and governance – one might call it ‘commonance,’ or the governance of the commons.

The commons provides us with the ability to name and then help constitute a new order. We need a new language that does not insidiously replicate the misleading fictions of the old order – for example, that market growth will eventually solve our social ills or that regulation will curb the world’s proliferating ecological harms. We need a new discourse and new social practices that assert a new grand narrative, a different constellation of operating principles and a more effective order of governance. Seeking a discourse of

this sort is not a fanciful whim. It is an absolute necessity. And, in fact, there is no other way to bring about a new order. Words actually shape the world. By using a new language, the language of the commons, we immediately begin to create a new culture. We can assert a new order of resource stewardship, right livelihood, social priorities and collective enterprise.

The transformational language of the commons

This new language situates us as interactive agents of larger collectivities. Our participation in these larger wholes (local communities, online affinity groups, intergenerational traditions) does not eradicate our individuality, but it certainly shapes our preferences, outlooks, values and behaviors: who we are. A key revelation of the commons way of thinking is that we humans are not in fact isolated, atomistic individuals. We are not amoebas with no human agency except hedonistic ‘utility preferences’ expressed in the marketplace.

No: We are commoners – creative, distinctive individuals inscribed within larger wholes. We may have many unattractive human traits fueled by individual fears and ego, but we are also creatures entirely capable of self-organization and cooperation; with a concern for fairness and social justice; and willing to make sacrifices for the larger good and future generations.

The commons identifies the relationships that should matter and sets forth a different operational logic.



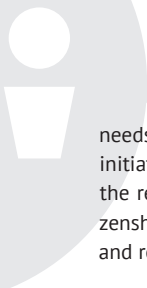
The commons helps us recognize, elicit and strengthen these propensities. It challenges us to transcend the obsolete dualisms and mechanistic mindsets. It asks us to think about the world in more organic, holistic and long-term ways. We see that my personal unfolding depends upon the unfolding of others, and theirs upon mine. We see that we mutually affect and help each other as part of a larger, holistic social organism. Complexity theory has identified simple principles that govern the co-evolution of species in complex ecosystems. The commons takes such lessons to heart and asserts that we humans co-evolve with and co-produce each other. We do not exist in grand isolation from our fellow human beings and nature. The myth of the 'self-made man' that market culture celebrates is absurd – a self-congratulatory delusion that denies the critical role of family, community, networks, institutions and nature in making our world.

The commons as a generative paradigm

A major point of the commons (discourse), then, is to help us 'get outside' of the dominant discourse of the market economy and help us represent different, more wholesome ways of being. It allows us to more clearly identify the value of inalienability – protection against the marketization of everything. Relationships with nature are not required to be economic, extractive and exploitative; they can be constructive and harmonious. For people of the global South, for whom the commons tends to be more of a lived, everyday reality than a metaphor, the language of the commons is the basis for a new vision of 'development.'

The commons can play this role because it describes a powerful value proposition that market economics ignores. Historically, the commons has often been regarded as a wasteland, a *res nullius*, a place having no owner and no value. Notwithstanding the long-standing smear of the commons as a 'tragedy,' the commons, properly understood, is in fact highly generative. It creates enormous stores of value. The 'problem' is that this value cannot simply be collapsed into a single scale of commensurable, tradeable value – i.e., price – and it occurs through processes that are too subtle, qualitative and long-term for the market's mandarins to measure. The commons tends to express its bounty through living flows of social and ecological activity, not fixed, countable stocks of capital and inventory.

The generativity of commons stewardship, therefore, is not focused on building things or earning returns on investment, but rather on ensuring our livelihoods, the integrity of the community, the ongoing flows of value-creation, and their equitable distribution and responsible use. Commoners are diverse among themselves, and do not necessarily know in advance how to agree upon or achieve shared goals. The only practical answer, therefore, is to open up a space for robust dialogue and experimentation. There must be room for commoning – the social practices and traditions that enable people to discover, innovate and negotiate new ways of doing things for themselves. In order for the generativity of the commons to manifest itself, it



needs the 'open spaces' for bottom-up initiatives to occur in interaction with the resources at hand. In this way, citizenship and governance are blended and reconstituted.

Creating an architecture of law and policy to support the commons

For too long commons have been marginalized or ignored in public policy, forcing commoners to develop their own private-law 'work-arounds' or sui generis legal regimes in order to establish collective legal rights. Examples include the General Public License for free software, which assures its access and use by anyone and land trusts, which establish tracts of land as commons to be enjoyed by all yet owned as private property ('property on the outside, commons on the inside,' as Carol M. Rose has put it).¹ The future of the commons would be much brighter if the state would begin to provide formal charters and legal doctrines to recognize the collective interests and rights of commoners. There is also a

¹ Carol M. Rose. 1998. 'The Several Futures of Property: Of Cyberspace and Folks Tales, Emission Trades and Ecosystems.' 83 *Minnesota Law Review*, 129: 144.

The future of the commons would be much brighter if the state would begin to provide formal charters and legal doctrines to recognize the collective interests and rights of commoners.

need to reinvent market structures so that the old, centralized corporate structures of capitalism do not dominate, and squeeze out, the more locally responsive, socially mindful business alternatives (a trend that the Solidarity Economy movement has been stoutly resisting).

Throughout history, civilizations have always had a dominant organizational form. In tribal economies, gift exchange was dominant. In pre-capitalist societies such as feudalism, hierarchies prevailed and rewards were allocated on the basis of one's social status. In our era of capitalism, the market is the primary system for allocating social status, wealth and opportunities for human development. Now that the severe limitations of the market system under capitalism have been made abundantly clear, the question we must confront is whether the commons can become the dominant social form. We believe it is entirely possible to create commons-based innovations that work within existing governance systems while helping bring about a new order.

Anthropologists, neurologists, geneticists and other scientists confirm the critical role that cooperation has played in the evolution of the human species. We are hard-wired to cooperate and participate in commons. One might even say that it is our destiny. While the commons may seem odd within the context of 21st Century market culture, it speaks to something buried deep within us. It prods us to deconstruct the oppressive political culture and consciousness that the market/ state duopoly demands, and whispers of new possibilities that only we can actualize.



Of we within margins: A performance of edge

WRITTEN BY Hannah HOPEWELL

Water enshrines this muddy city as 1613 kilometres of thought are stretched to a line, a coastline. This is Auckland's outline. Or so say maps with bounded stories of in and out, yours and mine, soft and hard. The sometimes filled-in, stepped-over contours of river and creek reach to where outline turns inline – edges dissolve. External, internal: inner margins out.

Water speaks as medial – Auckland I see your guts. Such a silty subconscious made within mud. This city of slips, of between-ness, solid and liquid, stable and loose. What shining gravity makes and marks the here, the We-here of soft and shared edges?

Reigning is a fluidity, where waters seep not gush, rise as do fall and pool in periods - puddling; held. A momentary stillness in a watery together. Where, like tensile breath, this station, this fleeting refrain is marked in the tides' unbroken concert. Residues take passage on the global tide – the shifting ground – pending release to unrelenting waters. Back to the ebb, the flow and the path of belonging in this We-system of distribution and exchange. Amid the city's contesting assembly of tempos it's tide the We-within inherit. It's tide that carries place-rhythms' resonance; a lull of connection, a common isolation in the performance of with. Tide is the city's curator of a common path – a dance of aquatic seductions. It unites, connects, transmits and transforms – water is Auckland's language of movement felt. Yet how much of you is repetition, of us is repeated difference?

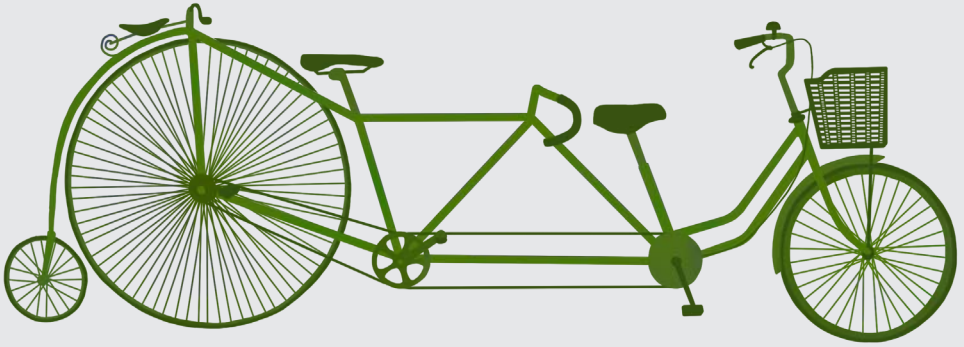
This Auckland-of-us is a lax city: some things float, others sink. It's a nonsubstantive city as its developed fabric loosely hangs between boundaries of diffusion. Its geology of patient rupture, its retreat from western turbulence – when

dominated by the consequences of mobility Auckland likes to move, and sometimes crash. Boom, boom, bust. Unlike cities of old and elsewhere, no church spires or civic space reference this We-within-urban. Water marks and maps our way and limits change. Composed of the common green of the cones, the utility of the trig points, the promise of the motorway and the inner edges of dissolution – a stubborn conversation?

We of Auckland make a soft place to pause, collect, spread out and leave. Neither a this, nor a that, but a city of sorts, a city of all-sorts. A here of muddy tones and intonations, fluid, blurred habits, a mixed metaphor of Pacific temperament amid bitter breezes. It's a constant do-up, a fix-up, an expanding city, an extending city, a city with its gaze firmly on the way out. A submerged city, an embodiment of its position in the globe, cast adrift, free-floating and unable to be definitively fixed or grasped. This is its very glory, its connected isolation, its common form and re-form.

We of Auckland make a wayward city – a go-it-alone city. Here common is a quiet anarchy. Auckland is a city looking out, on the look out; a city where momentum means movement and movement means money. Immersed in water it's a sea of mirrors and mixed reflections. Seduced by beauty or blinded by Waitemata's sparkle, its gaze is reduced to a squint – a cloudy desire of 'not quite there yet' intention. It's a haphazard city borne from the tension of locating terra firma on such shifting waters. Knocking down and smoothing out to soak up, to mop up all that dampness with stolen earth – We of Auckland find difficulty in holding ground.

Things break off, and like the mangrove seed float away, go underground and re-emerge to take root elsewhere. We-with-in fits no spatial mould. For planning-norms are of elsewhere - with a form fetish and tone deafness they cannot locate the cadence of this song. Yet this is no accident, no failure of city planners, for Auckland's muddy qualities, its anarchic squint, are borne on the seepage of the tide, the cracks in the concrete, the unruly kikuyu, the smell of damp basements and a yearning for bare feet. This is the We-with-in and Auckland's order of sorts; this common marginal, these hybrid edges where production intensifies within the sea of stuff and the slipperiness of difference.



How to escape the inferno

WRITTEN BY Leland MASCHMEYER

For his 2012 Vanity Fair article, 'The Book of Jobs,' Joseph Stiglitz addresses a simple question: what are the parallels between the Great Recession of the 1930s and the global economy's current Great Stagnation?

The former chief economist of the World Bank and Nobel Prize winner believes that insight into this parallel holds the key to global economic recovery.

But is his assessment correct?

In 1900, the United States economy needed a huge portion of its population to engage in food production. That situation changed over the next three decades as advances in seed technology, fertilizers, farming practices and farm equipment ignited massive gains in agricultural productivity.

Eventually, output outpaced demand. Prices plummeted. Farmer incomes shrank.

To compensate, farmers borrowed heavily to sustain their living standards and agricultural operations. They hoped to push through the hard times in expectation of an eventual turnaround.

The price declines, however, were steeper than anyone expected. The duration of unemployment was also longer than the banks could support. With credit stretched too thin, a credit crunch ensued. That's when the economy snapped and collapsed.



The world's largest economy is currently undergoing an economic phase change on the same scale as the shift from an agricultural economy to a manufacturing economy.

To aid its citizenry, the United States government loaned money to the distraught workforce.

That – in Stiglitz's opinion – was a bad move as the loans only exacerbated the downturn. This policy helped maintain an agricultural labour force despite the fact that, with each passing year, the economy had less and less need for such labour. New machinery eliminated and would continue to eliminate many agricultural jobs.

Unfortunately, it took World War II to save the United States from itself. Military mobilization forced the country to do two things it had been unwilling to do:

1. It led the government to build a massive manufacturing infrastructure that tipped the economic scales from agriculture to manufacture.
2. The war narrative compelled citizens out of the fields and into the factory where they received new, valuable skills.

At this point in the article, Stiglitz introduces his core thesis: what caused the Great Recession also caused the current Great Stagnation. In other words, the world's largest economy

is currently undergoing an economic phase change on the same scale as the shift from an agricultural economy to a manufacturing economy.

In the 1950s, manufacturing jobs made up a third of the United States's work force. Today, the productivity gains of digital technology, automation, algorithms and outsourcing has shrunk that number from one third of the nation's workforce to less than a tenth of it. Today's unemployed factory workers are yesterday's doomed field hands.

The parallels don't stop there. Technology and outsourcing has downscaled the total number of jobs available. In the United States, there are 6.6 million fewer jobs today than there were four years ago. Some 23 million Americans who want full-time work cannot find it and half of them have searched for six months or longer with no luck. For the first time since the Great Depression, unemployment has exceeded 8 per cent four years after the onset of recession (Denning, 'Is the US in a Phase Change to The Creative Economy?').

Stiglitz compels his readers to not let history continue to repeat itself.

Rather than prop up an outmoded economy and workforce yet again, government leaders must recognize the emerging economy, invest in growing it and help the workforce quickly transition into it.

The question then becomes: what is this emerging economy?

Stiglitz believes the United States economy is evolving from a manufacturing economy into a service economy.

But is his assessment correct?

Consider this: the majority of competition has historically remained among a few big players in each category. Think *Chevrolet v. Ford*, *Sony Music Entertainment v. Universal Music Group*, *Anheuser-Busch v. MillerCoors* and *Random House v. HarperCollins*. Big meant safe. It meant competitive advantages in the marketplace and intransigence in market share. In fact, the average lifespan of a company listed in the S&P 500 index in the 1920s was 67 years. Today, that lifespan has plummeted from 67 years to 15 years. The bottom doesn't stop there, either. By 2020, turnover will be so rapid that three-quarters of the companies listed will be companies people today have never heard of (Gittleson, 'Can a company live forever?').

Something deeper is going on than a shift from products to services.

Evidence suggests it is not a shift in what the economy produces, but in how it produces.

Consider Joe Justice.

For many years, Joe enjoyed life as a young software consultant in the Seattle area. One day, a question popped into his head: 'Was a road legal 100-mpg car even possible?' At that time, 100-mpg cars did exist, but they looked like giant cigar tubes, held only one person and didn't meet any safety standards. Nor did it look like Detroit would ever produce one. By law, car companies only had to achieve 36.6-mpg fuel efficiency by 2017. At that rate, the sun would burn out before Detroit produced a 100mpg road legal car.

That said, Joe was a curious guy. And curiosity can take you a long way. With no experience in automotive manufacturing, this software consultant began learning how one might engineer what Ford, GM, Toyota and Honda could not.

He blogged about his ambition and what he was learning along the way. This was a smart move. As his story spread through social media, readers from all over the world raised their hands to volunteer their help: forty-three in total from five different continents.

With little more than consumer-grade software tools such as Dropbox, Google Docs, YouTube, Skydrive, Facebook and LinkedIn, Joe and the team didn't just learn about building a car. They designed and produced a functioning prototype. What is most astounding is how long it took them. Detroit typically runs on 10-year development cycles. Joe and team cut out 98% of that development time by producing their prototype in three months (Denning, 'WikiSpeed: How a 100 mpg car was developed in 3 months').

Never before have individuals been able to collaborate, coordinate and create with such speed and effectiveness.

So how did a novice team of 44 volunteers achieve what global organizations awash in capital, talent and resources had not? The key was their structure and process.

Joe used what is known as a wiki-production model – hence his team’s name: WikiSpeed. This model allows anyone to contribute to the production of a shared resource, or in this case, a shared product.

Joe recognized that offering anyone the chance to contribute is only a good start. Protocols guiding how contributors collaborate with each other are also necessary. For this, he borrowed a methodology from software engineering: Agile Method. Agile emphasizes short working cycles, self-organizing teams working in a modular fashion and constant iteration based on experience and user feedback. Adhering to this method, Joe and team iterated the entire car every seven days. In other words, they re-evaluated each part of the car and re-designed the highest priority aspects every week. As for the body of the car, the team iterated with small models and built the larger prototype using structural carbon fibre – a process that took three days and a total of \$800 (Denning, ‘WikiSpeed: How a 100 mpg car was developed in 3 months’).

Wikispeed is a microcosm of our new economy.

What has historically required hundreds of people, rigid organizations, centralized leadership, millions of dollars and decades of planning and testing now requires a shared passion, a

Wi-Fi connection, free user-friendly software and personal fabricators.

This is the emerging ‘how’ of the new global economy.

Propelling this shift are networked technologies that lower the costs of participation; personal fabrication technologies that shift physical production from the factory floor to the desktop; a design ethos that favours product modularity; social media that enables productive organizations to emerge as easily and as swiftly as conversations do; and decentralized organizational models that allow collaborators to produce value faster and more efficiently than traditional firms.

Calling such activity ‘the service economy’ downplays – even ignores – the most compelling truth: never before have individuals been able to collaborate, coordinate and create with such speed and effectiveness. This new economy is, at its core, about supporting and incorporating the efficacy of community.

Stiglitz misread this future. It is not the service economy. It is the peer-to-peer economy.

‘Peer-to-peer’ describes the bottom-up process whereby networked individuals collaborate on the production of a common resource, outcome, or good. The process’s central mode of

This peer-to-peer revolution aspires to no Utopia. Rather, it promises an economy where contribution supersedes accumulation.

coordination is neither command (as it is inside the traditional firm) nor price (as it is in the market) but self-assigned volunteer contributions. This concept has inspired (or, in some cases, resurrected) a long list of community-centric models of value creation. That list includes models such as:

1. wiki-production
2. mass customization
3. open-source platforms
4. crowdsourcing
5. commons
6. crowdfunding
7. crowdwisdom
8. collaborative filtering
9. peer-to-peer renting.

Because peer production requires open, free and raw cultural material to use and participative structures to process it, these models have traditionally been limited to the immaterial sphere of digital information. Bytes are much easier and cheaper to distribute, replicate and edit than atoms. WikiSpeed, however, shows that peer production is now expanding into the material sphere.

The work of Geoffrey West, a physicist at the Santa Fe Institute, also shows that community models like WikiSpeed are more efficient at innovating. In a speech at the TED conference, West explained that hierarchies such as corporations scale sub-linearly. Their slope is .75, which means that, at each point

of growth, a corporation generates 25 per cent less innovation than it did at a smaller stage. Social networks (e.g. peer networks) fare better. They scale super-linearly. Their slope is 1.15 meaning that, at each point of growth, these networks have fifteen per cent more innovation than they previously did.

Why?

Social networks have two big benefits over traditionally organized firms:

1. They allow individuals to self-select for tasks that suit them, which more effectively aligns skills with challenges.
2. They have greater variability of human capability and information resources, which results in greater variability of creativity.

The benefits are speed, efficiency and innovation – the same benefits WikiSpeed reaped and the same benefits modern organizations seek.

Forward thinking organizations are recognizing that, in the long run, peer-informed models create the only sustainable and – arguably – most critical competitive advantage left: access. Facilitating knowledge flows, ideas, passions, skills and collaboration among social networks means that one's company has access to them. It means that one's company has a dramatically improved ability to innovate. Any company based on closed IP and rigid hierarchy cannot, in the long run, survive competition with an organization based on peer-to-peer production. The company with the smartest, most involved community wins.

The future for peer models is certainly bright. In many ways, that future is similar to previous technological revolutions. Like them, peer-to-peer brings with it fresh revelations, new possibilities of action and hope. But here's a critical difference: while the manufacturing revolution, for example, promised an Eden of massproduced comfort for all, this peer-to-peer revolution aspires to no Utopia. Rather, it promises an economy where contribution supersedes accumulation. It promises to ennoble the commons by giving space to speak and tools to create. And most importantly, it promises that the most intractable problems of our existence can be solved through open collaboration, networked tools and a shared passion among participants.

This future isn't as far off as one may think. Right now, the crowdfunding model powers IBM's World Community Grid to dramatically improve the way and rate at which scientists discover cures. Right now, open-source hardware enabled a 14-year-old boy in Chile to create an early warning system for earthquakes that alerts people via Twitter (Opam, 'A Chilean Teen Tweets About Earthquakes Better Than His Whole Government'). Right now, the commons model helps Habitat for Humanity build homes for over 100,000 people who lack adequate shelter each year (About Architecture for Humanity). Right now, wiki-production and crowdsource models help the United States government provide aid to disaster victims more quickly and cheaply than traditional methods (Biewald, 'Crowdsourcing Disaster Relief').

The opportunity that lies before this generation is to grab hold of these

blips of hope. To participate in them. To understand them. To share them. To teach them. To copy them. To reaply them. To write about them. To invent more of them.

It is an opportunity similar to the one Marco Polo defined for the emperor Kubla Khan in Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities*: 'There are two ways,' Polo says, 'to escape suffering from the inferno where we live every day. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become part of it so that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not the inferno, then make them endure, give them space' (Calvino, 1974).

Stiglitz would agree.

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Reclaiming the urban commons

WRITTEN BY John ALLAN

Arguably one of the most important and most exploited commons is our atmosphere – the air we breathe. As John Michael Greer so eloquently puts it, ‘the worldwide habit of treating the atmosphere as an aerial sewer into which wastes can be dumped’ needs to be completely rethought.

Thankfully, growing awareness of atmospheric pollution levels means that change is imminent; science has proven many times over that we cannot continue this exploitative behaviour. Our cities have a major role to play in this change and I am currently investigating how a commons-based approach to landscape architecture and urban design can contribute to the reduction in CO² emissions. Additionally, an improvement to a city’s public spaces with small, locally driven interventions can re-invigorate the public life in our cities.

In 2009, the collection of scientists and world leaders involved in the COP15 climate change agreed that ‘deep cuts in global emissions are required . . . so as to hold the increase in global temperature below two degrees

Celsius! More recently, renowned environmentalist and founder of 350.org Bill McKibben addressed this target and has publicised scientific data that shows at the current rate of fossil fuel burning, this increase will occur in fifteen years. Furthermore, there is five times more burnable carbon in supply than it will take to reach the two degree limit in temperature increase.

In New Zealand, the recently re-formed Auckland Council have identified this need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as a high priority, noting in their 30 year plan document (The Auckland Plan) that in Auckland, road transport is the number one contributor to the city’s emissions at 34.8%. National figures show this is a trend across New Zealand. Notably, passenger transport is 84% private motor vehicle and only 10% public. With the population of Auckland predicted to increase by a further million people by 2030, these transport emissions figures need to change, and quickly.

In his book *Rebel Cities* David Harvey reminds us that before the car, streets were the common ground where public life unfolded. Harvey adds that nowadays, city streets are often clogged with traffic, rendering that particular public space almost unusable, even for drivers. Current solutions such as congestion charges mean that these street spaces are no longer a commons. So how can design help us reclaim the urban commons and also reduce transport emissions?

My initial hunch was to look at settlement models that are designed around the idea of living locally and therefore, driving less. Behaviour changes such as working closer to home and living closer to social and recreational opportunities are one way to help citizens stay out of their cars. As political scientist Karen Litfin notes in *The Localization Business*, this localisation ideal is not new and some of the most active and aware groups of 'localisers' are those creating eco-villages.

Auckland based architect Robin Allison, designer and resident of Earthsong co-housing community, defines eco-villages in *A Deeper Shade of Green* as 'fully featured settlements in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world, and can be continued into the indefinite future' (38-9).

So, what can urban landscape architecture take on from the design of an ecovillage?

Earthsong is located in Ranui, Auckland. It is 1.2Ha with 32 households in a terrace apartment style typology. Parking is consolidated, and the buildings are arranged around a central commons that includes a common building, with shared amenities such as kitchen, laundry and guest accommodation. Much of the common open spaces are used for growing food, including a mixed orchard. While it is located very near the rural/urban boundary, it is still well connected to the city by rail and bus routes. It is close to schools, local shops, industry and commercial opportunities, including a vacant lot in the front of the site that the residents are openly seeking development for.

These public spaces, linked with existing streets and lanes can harness the 'web of walkability' concept, and allow city dwellers to reclaim the urban commons.

On a larger scale, Village Homes in Davis (California) is 24 hectares of similar elements to Earthsong, with slightly more traditional suburban dwellings and density. Here open spaces are consolidated and connected by using common backyards with no fences. These areas treat storm water, grow food and are managed by the adjacent eight or so neighbours in what is called a 'Pocket Neighbourhood Cluster'. These clusters are connected together throughout the Village Homes subdivision into a web of walkability – a community connector that allows people to live local. A neighbourhood centre houses the village's necessities and is home to a number of small local businesses.

So, localising is how eco-villagers tackle the emissions issue. They reduce their consumption of energy by providing as many of the essentials of everyday life within easy walking distance. The common spaces in eco-villages provide a web of walkability and act as the connector - the generator of social interaction that leads to resilient and lively communities.

How can this spatial model of an eco-village help the functioning of a city? Clearly Auckland, like most modern cities, was not designed in the manner of an eco-village, however I feel that aspects of this model provide a way to think outside of current planning practices.

My first proposition, and the subject of my initial testing is to manipulate, reduce and consolidate the parking system in Auckland Central Business District to provide more opportunities for common land / public space in an attempt to contribute to the reduction of emissions. These public spaces, linked with existing streets and lanes can harness the 'web of walkability' concept, and allow city dwellers to reclaim the urban commons.

Led by Denmark's urban design guru Jan Gehl, Copenhagen was one of the first cities in Europe to begin reducing car traffic and parking in the city centre in order to create a city for the people. Heavily influenced by Gehl, the aforementioned visionary document 'The Auckland Plan' has similar goals for Auckland. Gehl states in his aptly titled book *Cities For People* that '... in every case, attempts to relieve traffic pressure by building more roads and parking garages have generated more traffic and more congestion'(9). Gehl's analysis noted that the city of Auckland has 150 parking spaces per hectare, and my research shows that parking takes up 13% of the CBD's surface area alone. Meanwhile, public open space in the CBD - the people space for residents - only accounts for 7.5%.

'If they can't park, they won't drive' - this is one of Gehl's many catch phrases gleaned from his favourite traffic engineer. Phasing out and replacing car parking with a network of public open





spaces will provide more interest and sociality to our city streets and more public life to our city dwellers and visitors. Partnered with an improved public transport system fuelled by the proposed new city-rail loop, Auckland will reduce its carbon emissions by becoming more walkable. I believe that to achieve an Auckland that is walkable requires the implementation of a number of 'parklets' on every thoroughfare. In principle, a parklet is gained from the removal of one or two car parking spaces from the streets and the return of this space to public use. These parklets offer the opportunity to relax, pause, or to sit and watch others (one of humankind's favourite pastimes). San Francisco is leading the way with the installation of such parklets on the back of a global movement that began in the city called Park(ing) Day.

Park(ing) Day involves design teams reclaiming a metered parking space for a day, in a peaceful occupation that may even sneak through a loophole in parking laws (see parkingday.org for more). Some of the more loved and utilised 'parklet' creations have been retained beyond Park(ing) Day and proved a valuable resource for local shops and cafes even though (and perhaps because) the space is public, and not exclusively for the use of the adjacent businesses.

Installing a Park(ing) Day parklet in 2012 has fuelled my belief that Auckland no longer needs the title of the most car parks per capita. It is time for us to reclaim the urban commons, take back the streets and regain our public life. These parklets will strategically connect laneways, greenways, bus stops, subways and streetscapes into a network of urban commons. A wonderful walkable and public transport oriented city centre will help drastically reduce Auckland's emissions and begin restoring our atmospheric commons one car space at a time.

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Drug wars: The battle for the commons in global pharmaceuticals

WRITTEN BY Thomas OWEN

All cultures in all times develop systems to manage their intellectual treasures. In our time, knowledge is codified into intellectual property rights (IPRs). IPRs include patents on inventions and discoveries, and copyrights and trademarks on artistic creations. They are the legal mechanisms that seek to strike a balance between public access to human knowledge and private reward for the knowledge creators. Essentially, they are the formal rules that govern the intellectual commons.

IPRs are never static, but are constantly evolving in step with the culture surrounding them. Their evolution is neither random nor pre-determined but is the result of constant struggle between social forces contesting the parameters of social access to knowledge. The state of IPRs at any given point in history is thus a snapshot of the power relations shaping that society.

At our point in history IPRs tell a story of a globalised world where nation-state laws are subsumed to supranational authority; where private corporations disproportionately influence domestic and global policymaking; where IPR governance decisions are based more on power politics than on empirical science; and where civil society organisations act as power brokers and problematisers, often mitigating

the excesses of the profit-driven status quo and leading the way to new avenues of social progress.

More than any other social actor, the global pharmaceutical industry (AKA Big Pharma) has been responsible for tipping the current IPR balance away from public access and towards private reward. This article highlights two major flaws in the current IPR system: where increased patent protections may actually impede innovation in new medicines and where patents render medicines inaccessible to the majority of those who need them. The article ends by citing alternative frameworks that seek to enhance the intellectual commons and to create a more socially just balance between public access and private reward.

Big Pharma

The Big Pharma business model is unusually dependent on IPRs. Their products – medicines – are the result of complex and highly expensive scientific research and development (R&D). Thus, from a business point of view, the elusive IPR balance must be tipped more towards private reward in order to recoup the costs of intensive knowledge creation. However, because the product in question is inherently lifesaving (or at least, powerfully life-improving), from a humanitarian point of view, it is imperative the balance be tipped towards public access. This tension has ensured that pharmaceutical patent protection constitutes the front line in IPR struggles: Big Pharma largely on one side; civil society public health campaigns on the other.

This struggle is nothing new to Big Pharma. In essence, it has been fighting it since before it was born. The nineteenth century European chemical companies – from which the pharmaceutical industry emerged – were the original industrial agitators seeking to influence governmental patent regulation. They played a dominant role shaping the modern era's international patent norms. In turn, when Big Pharma emerged, it continued the tradition and played a dominant role shaping the contemporary era's global patent norms. In the 1980s, US company Pfizer led Big Pharma in a transnational lobbying campaign to integrate patent protections into foreign trade policy. In 1995 they succeeded with the formation of the World Trade Organisation – its IPR component was based almost entirely on blueprints drafted during Big Pharma's lobbying campaign.

Within a few short years, such strategic efforts paid off. By 2002, the top ten Fortune 500 pharmaceutical companies made more profit than all other 490 companies combined. With the global IPR balance tipping further towards private reward, Big Pharma shored up phenomenal wealth from the few blockbuster products it enjoyed global monopolies on. In the last decade such heights have been mitigated somewhat. The top eleven Big Pharma companies made US\$711 billion in profits from 2002-2012, but their relative dominance over other industries slipped from an average of 37 times more profit than all other industries in 2001-2003 to 1.67 times in 2004-2009.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that Big Pharma is still one of the most profitable industries the world has ever seen. Furthermore, recent studies show that Big Pharma spends between two and nineteen times more on promotion and marketing than on R&D; that around half of new drug discoveries come from publicly funded R&D; and that Pharma companies are consistently among the highest paying lobbyists in Washington. It appears the business model responsible for such phenomenal profits is much less about creating new products and more about creating the regulatory conditions to monopolise the products you already have.

Problems with the current IPR system

One of the problematic ironies of the current IPR status quo is that Big Pharma's aggressive approach to increasing patent protection may have actually impeded the innovation of new products. In his 2008 book, *The Gridlock Economy: How Too Much*

Ownership Wrecks Markets, Stops Innovation, and Costs Lives, Michael Heller argues that too many patent protections can actually create obstacles, rather than enablers, for innovation. For example, Heller cites an un-named Big Pharma company that created a potential cure for Alzheimer's but never brought the product to market. According to Heller's sources within the company, the multitude of different patent protections involved created so many 'tollbooths' that it was simply uneconomical for any one company to commercialise the drug.

Heller labels this situation the 'tragedy of the anti-commons' and cites several other industrial examples to prove his point. He is not alone in this argument. The concept of 'patent thickets' is a common idea, whereby dense webs of overlapping IPRs create multiple obstacles which companies must pay their way through in order to bring products to market. A 2011 IPR report commissioned by the British Government noted that such thickets 'obstruct entry to some markets and so impede innovation'.

Further studies support Heller's thesis. For instance, a 2009 project by Andrew Torrance and Bill Tomlinson used computer modelling to demonstrate that increasing IPRs actually decreases net innovation. The authors concluded that the current IPR system:

generates significantly lower rates of innovation ($p < 0.05$), productivity ($p < 0.001$), and societal utility ($p < 0.002$) than does a commons system. [...] The results of this study are inconsistent with the orthodox justification for patent systems.

The 'orthodox justification' for the patent status quo is that strong IPRs create innovation, and, therefore, without strong IPRs there will be no new medicines. Big Pharma have repeated this mantra so many times over that for many it has become an unquestioned truth. If Heller's argument is correct, however, then Big Pharma becomes the emperor without clothes. That is, if increased IPRs actually impede innovation, then Big Pharma's social justification is revealed as fundamentally anti-social, and current IPR policy appears to be shaped far more by power and politics than by science and economics.

A further criticism of the current IPR system is that it excludes too many of the people who require access to medicines. There is no necessary scarcity of medicines. Within the limits of natural resources, any medicine can be manufactured relatively cheaply once the recipe is available. In order to recoup R&D costs, however, IPRs construct an artificial scarcity, limiting the rights determining who can make the product. For millions of people in developing countries in need of medicines – primarily for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis – artificial scarcity means death, sickness, and disintegrating social infrastructure. It is not science that precludes medicines' access to these populations. Nor is it poverty, as Big Pharma maintains. Rather, it is a business model and a legal mechanism that is failing in its role to strike balance between public access and private reward.

Another world is possible

Contrary to Big Pharma rhetoric that strong IPR protection is the only path to innovation, several historic initiatives demonstrate that 'differentiated'

When the balance is right, IPRs can promote innovation, fulfil the commons and benefit us all.

IPR systems indeed provide viable alternatives. For instance, in the heyday of the nineteenth century chemical dye boom, leading industrial players Germany and Switzerland allowed patents on processes, but not on products. This meant that if someone could work out how to make a product by a different means, they could also sell that product – thus fostering great innovation in the race to perfect procedures and refine industrial methods.

India provides a contemporary example of the benefits of IPR differentiation. After inheriting a British patent system over a century ago, India in the 1970s redesigned its patent laws to serve a postcolonial national development agenda. By adopting a similar approach of granting patents on processes, but not products, India helped to foster an innovative and entrepreneurial national pharmaceuticals industry with a high proportion of generics' manufacturers. This strategic approach to IPRs and national development meant that India became pharmaceutically self-sufficient, providing over 70% of its national needs.

Globally, India also plays a key role providing quality generic medicines to poor countries. On recent estimates, the Indian generics industry provides around 80% of donor-funded antiretroviral HIV/AIDS medicines available to developing countries. Supply on this scale has not only ensured millions more HIV/AIDS afflicted receive treatment; it has also dramatically lowered the global price of antiretroviral medicines. India's ability to continue providing this function, however, is now severely in doubt as a European Union free trade agreement seeks to increase patent protections and considerably impede generics' manufacture.

A further option championed by medicines access activists, the World Health Organisation and the United Nations, is the idea of a 'patent pool'. These exist when a number of patents by different owners are made available for nonexclusive use in a communal pool, with access dependent upon a pre-arranged royalty fee. The pool's aim is to lower the barriers for entry for generic companies, thus facilitating generics' production and innovation, and facilitating collaborative research by effectively disentangling the 'patent thickets' and monopolies.

Differentiated IPR systems and patent pools demonstrate viable ways to include commons approaches within the existing IPR status quo. However, that status quo is still fundamentally anti-commons, structurally privileging private reward over public access. What then, would a truly commons approach to pharmaceuticals look like? In a recent article for Nature Biotechnology, Stephen Friend and Thea Norman argue that it would look something like what already exists in the fields

of astronomy, math, physics and software development. That is, it would be an open access system, where massive data sets are shared, and the resultant models deployed as a common resource. Such a 'layer of shared information', they argue, demonstrably 'accelerates information and nurtures the development of commercialisable private goods.' Where the current pharmaceutical IPR system siloes information and rewards non-sharing, a commons approach would open the system and emphasise the mutual rewards of shared resources.

Indeed, Big Pharma need only look to their own recent history to see the benefits of an open approach. In the 1980s at the height of US HIV/AIDS panic, the National Institute of Health (NIH) initiated an international screening of already existing antiviral agents from around the world. The search uncovered the drug AZT - the first effective HIV/AIDS treatment on the market. AZT was synthesised by a US cancer foundation in the 1960s, tested by a German laboratory in the 1970s, and eventually acquired as a potential herpes treatment by Big Pharma company Burroughs Wellcome. The 1980s publically funded NIH search revealed it was also effective against HIV/AIDS, so Burroughs Wellcome patented it and sold it for US\$10,000 per patient per year, one of the highest prices of any drug in history. While the IPR system ensured that Burroughs Wellcome made enormous profits from AZT, the true innovation and discovery of the drug had little to do with patent protection, and everything to do with the simple act of sharing common knowledge internationally between governmental, non-profit, and corporate organisations.

Conclusions

IPRs seek a balance between the public's right to access knowledge and the creators' right to be compensated for their efforts. When the balance is right, IPRs can promote innovation, fulfil the commons and benefit us all. When the balance is wrong, IPRs impede our collective intellectual, cultural, and technological development, and artificially construct scarcity of products and vast inequalities in wealth accumulation.

At this point in history, the evidence suggests we have it very wrong. However, history also shows that IPR governance is constantly shifting and open to influence by various social actors. Big Pharma may currently be the most powerful social actor vying to shape IPR policy, but it certainly does not have a monopoly on the best ideas. Commons approaches provide the most fertile available framework to foster greater innovation, social utility and social justice. The issue now, then, is whether or not the international community of commons advocates can sufficiently exert their influence upon global IPR governance, and create a better balance for all.

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Putting Māori history, society and culture on the map

WRITTEN BY O. Ripeka MERCIER

Maps are spatial representations of our world. Often beautiful, maps are found in the place where art meets science. We rely heavily on digital maps to tell us how to get places and these have now infiltrated our computers, phones and cars. Maps used in our classrooms are often seen as authoritative sources of information about physical and political boundaries. But maps tell stories. Maps have been used to alienate land. So who gets to decide what goes on the map? Can maps be used to tell and share our own counternarratives?

The answer to this is, absolutely! Anyone can record their interactions with place on a map, and free digital applications like Google Earth and Quantum Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have democratised access to map-making. Geography and geology students have long been expected to make maps, and GIS is taken for granted in these programmes. But all student learning, regardless of discipline, can be enhanced through interacting with spatial, visual displays. Now, in a new initiative, students in a school of indigenous studies are learning about and taking control of the map to tell their own stories and the stories of their communities.

The initiative began in 2010, when staff at Te Kawa a Māui (the School of Māori Studies), Victoria University of Wellington, started implementing assignments using Google Earth and map-based activity in order to enhance the learning and engagement of our students. Four years later about 300 students from ten different courses have done a variety of placebased assignments. This work presents Māori knowledge in new and dynamic ways, and gives students the opportunity to record local knowledge in map form. The quality and variety of student work submitted is evidence of the ways that Māori students have taken to the technique as a way of representing

their histories and their connections to place. Furthermore, their work now contributes to a school-wide database known as the Te Kawa a Māui Atlas (the Atlas).

As an example of the work, in 2010 students of first-year course 'Māori Society and Culture' each chose a different poupou (carved figure) in the university's Te Tumu Herenga Waka marae (meeting house). They researched that character and wrote a 'geo-biography' – choosing three events in the life of that person and writing a short essay for each event. Each essay was then geo-located using Google Earth, to produce a global map with more than 250 placemarks depicting events of note in the lives of historic Māori figures. Of this exercise one student reflected 'It's easier to remember events when time and space are linked'. This was an example of individual research that was collated to produce a class-wide map on a particular theme.

Students work together on projects too, for example, in second-year course 'Cultural Mapping' they visit Māori archaeological sites and comment upon their condition in a day-long field trip. Their group observations

contribute to the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) database.

Students also work individually on mapping the projects, with the topics they choose varying widely. For example, in 2011 student Ali Borman mapped her mother's cycle competition routes using the line function in Google Earth. Mariana Whareaitu asked the question 'Can a song be a map?' and to answer this produced a Google Earth flyover choreographed to a recording of a waiata (song) that was rich in local Māori place names and their significance. Kerry Moses wrote alternative histories to those commemorated by colonial monuments and statues. His map reveals what happened behind the scenes of the most visible artefacts of history. Aneika Young mapped traditional food gathering areas of significance to her hapū (tribe). We did not distribute or publish Aneika's project, as her whānau (family) considered the information to be tapu (sensitive). An open access approach is not appropriate in all situations, as making some information freely available threatens the sovereignty of the traditional owners of that knowledge. Māori traditionally governed physical and cultural

Māori are still recovering from the colonial confiscation of land, but while we can't physically occupy our traditional places, in this project Google Earth and other digital mapping technologies allow us to stage an emotional and intellectual occupation.



resources through a commons based approach that centred on stewardship by a community with shared cultural views. The ability to exclude external, unentitled appropriators or provide for differing levels of access to a particular resource where open access would not be in the best interests of the resource or the culture is a core tenet of the commons approach.

In June 2013, some of this work was made publicly available through a Google Maps-based interactive website (see <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/Māori/atlas>) which showcases the work of at least 70 students (only some of which is described here), with the research of up to 100 to be released over the following year. The project as a whole contributes to 'the commons' through making Māori society, culture and history (which is often limited to books, articles and oral sources) more accessible.

Knowledge is regarded as a common resource in academia, but ironically the academy publishes and keeps it in ways that make it hard to access and/or understand. In the Atlas, we present important contributions of the academy online, in an open and visually appealing way. We present book-y information interactively, encouraging the user to explore from their computer or smart device. You can zoom in and out, pan across, change the look of the landscape, observe the distribution and density of themes on the map, hover over placemarks to see an overview of its content, filter placemarks by theme, year or course in which the research was produced, click on placemarks to read a student's research, and search the database. The place-based interactivity of the site is one thing that sets it apart from other map-based databases, as well as the variety of topics covered, and the community of practice (staff and students) feeding the project.

The Atlas gives students an active opportunity to record, store and share academic knowledge, and to explore how the gaps in research are bridged by their own local knowledge, insights and contributions. Knowing their work



might be published gives students motivation to hone their research skills and translate their most excellent work to an online 'common' resource. While the site is meant more as a showcase of student work than a comprehensive research database, we provide lists of further reading that direct users to the best sources in our area of Māori Studies.

The website was financially supported by research funds and awards from Ako Aotearoa, Victoria University of Wellington and Squiz Limited, and it is an open, non-profit venture.

While the Te Kawa a Māui Atlas is having an impact on student engagement and learning, and has produced a publicly available 'common' output, it seeks to do more than just reframe and represent knowledge to the world. Māori are still recovering from the colonial confiscation of land, but while we can't physically occupy our traditional places, in this project Google Earth and other digital mapping technologies allow us to stage an emotional and intellectual

CULTURAL MAPPING STUDENTS REST, AND TAKE NOTES ON THE CONDITION OF AN ANCIENT MĀORI PĀ (VILLAGE) SITE, STRATEGICALLY LOCATED ON A RISE ABOVE TE IKAAMARU BAY, SOUTH-WEST COAST WELLINGTON.

occupation. Through reclaiming and retelling our stories of the land, we restore the balance of wairua (spirit) and perform our duties as kaitiaki (guardians) for all by giving voice to the land in Aotearoa New Zealand.

For further reading please see

O. Ripeka Mercier, Sarsha Douglas, Meegan Hall, Bruce McFadgen, Peter Adds, Maria Bargh, Tahu Wilson (2013) 'Promoting Engagement Through A Student-Built School-Wide Digital Atlas Of Māori Studies.' In Laura Wankel and Patrick Blessinger (ed.s) *Improving Student Engagement and Retention through Multimedia Technologies: Volume 6* of Emerald Publishing's 'Cutting-Edge Technologies in Higher Education' Series.

An interview with Anne Salmond



2013 New Zealander of the Year Dame Anne Salmond is a historian, anthropologist and author who perhaps more than any other New Zealand academic or author has managed to bridge the often disparate worldviews of Māori and European. Freerange's Joseph Cederwall talked with her about the commons.

JC: What is the significance of the term 'the commons' to you?

The Western concept of the Commons is interesting in that it predates private property and the commodification of nature through partitioning and surveying, which bundled nature up within the overarching authority of the law.

In my current work, it is very significant that this concept of the commons appears to interact well with the Māori worldview and its emphasis on ideas such as participatory democracy and the connection of communities and people to the land.

JC: So in your view, how do Māori and Western approaches to what we call the commons differ?

Over the years, in studying the history of exchanges between Māori and Europeans, I've come to realise that European attitudes towards the

commons are driven by surprising cosmological assumptions.

In many ways, one can grasp the colonial history of this country as exchanges between competing philosophies – the relational order of Te Ao Māori on the one hand, and the contradictory, entangled Enlightenment strands of 'the Order of Things' and the 'Order of Relations' on the other.

The Order of Things, which is based on Cartesian logic, divides mind from matter, the observer from the observed, and culture from nature. This model is informed by an even older cosmic model, 'the Great Chain of Being', with its hierarchical model of elite beings at the top of the chain – the divine King, the aristocracy and commoners in 'civilised' societies, who rule over a cosmos in which 'lower' beings – slaves, barbarians, savages and wild Nature with its animals, plants, minerals and rivers

- can be exploited almost without limit. This thinking has defined political arrangements in New Zealand and can be seen as a predecessor to today's neo-liberal theories and ideas of Western superiority over both Māori and Nature.

The supposed inferiority of indigenous cultures as well as plants and animals flows directly from this model, along with the idea that people are in control of the cosmos and can fix any damage that they do. In reality this model is very arrogant, because scientists only partially understand the biophysical systems that govern our lives. Rather than ruling the universe, human beings are one life form among many and the challenges we face can't be understood through the silo approach of seeing science and people as radically separate.

The divisions between mind and matter, the observer and the observed and culture and nature that underpin the Order of Things are contradicted by quantum physics, brain science and the life sciences, for example. Although this model is mythic, it is very resilient and currently people are running the world based on this kind of thinking.

The Order of Relations, on the other hand, bases its forms of order on complementary pairs of elements and forces linked in open-ended arrays, often ordered as networks or webs (for example the internet), interacting in exchanges that drive change while working towards equilibrium. This kind of relational thinking in the



Enlightenment sparked many innovations, including participatory democracy; the emancipation of slaves and later, of women; evolutionary theory, geology and the environmental sciences. Such forms of order are also increasingly dominant in cutting edge science, in the sciences of complex networks and systems, for example.

The resonances between this kind of philosophy and Māori ideas about the world are obvious, including the assumption that the environment and people are intimately interconnected. The Māori worldview can also be termed as relational. Here, people are part of the environment, linked with other forms of life in complex webs of relations. It doesn't see people and the environment as located in separate silos.

Both the relational view and indigenous worldviews are much more adaptive and open to collaboration and incorporation of other ideas than the non-adaptive myths of Western thought which are leading to the destruction and disruption of our biophysical systems.



JC: How did you become aware of this disparity?

I have been working on a waterway restoration project in the East Coast region for the last fourteen years. It became apparent through working on this project how destructive current land use strategies based on the separation of people from the environment and the idea of private property have been.

An example of this destructive approach is the Malaysian company who have purchased land in this region and have a practice of clear-felling large areas of steep lands down to the water's edge, leaving piles of slash that are washed into the valleys and out into the ocean. After large scale logging operations upstream, the river turns to liquid mud each time it rains, sweeping away banks and trees, threatening roads and bridges, and dumping sediment in the port and piles of logs on the beaches. On top of this stock graze along the river banks, and periodically the Council releases sewage downstream into the river. Something is very wrong with the way we treat waterways in New Zealand, as wild elements to be tamed, dump sites or waste disposal units.

This industry is a prime example of voodoo economics. The trees are harvested as raw logs by poorly paid unskilled workers in dangerous conditions and transported on local roads for export as low value commodities. A real cost benefit analysis would show that despite the short term gains for a few people, this is an extremely negative economic activity for local people. Through their rates and taxes, they subsidise the forestry company - paying to dredge the port, repair the roads and other infrastructure damaged by forestry operations, the health costs for injured workers, and by direct subsidies through the East Coast Forestry project. All they gain is a relatively few low paid jobs. Fracking and other extractive industries follow similar extractive models and will present similar problems.

There is a disparity of wealth and power in this exchange as many of the costs are localised while the profits are exported. The problem here is the displacement of the community's role as stewards of their land by overseas shareholders and owners who have no real interest in what happens to the land or the people who live there. They don't have to confront the damage that they do. Similar things are happening in developing countries but the amazing thing is there is not much difference between poverty stricken Māori areas of the East Coast and developing countries.

The false dualisms of Western thinking which see spending on biosystems as

a burden while ignoring the fact that the negative economic costs of ignoring these biophysical systems can in fact seriously disrupt the economy and even make production impossible.

JC: What excites you most about this emergent commons approach?

To me the emergence of this concept of the commons into the mainstream and its compatibility with indigenous philosophies indicates the possibility of a new enlightenment. This approach is exploring ways of co-existing with nature and one another based on balanced exchanges.

I am also excited by the concept of creative convergence as being dealt with by thinkers such as Naomi Klein. This idea of creative convergence looks for the positive middle ground between philosophies, people and landscapes in order to find prosperity rather than division for both. I am excited about what this new thinking could mean for the commons and feel it could rearrange our ideas radically.

I am currently involved with others in developing a foundation called Te Awaroa - a working alliance that aims to generate relationships between people, land and waterways that contribute to prosperous, successful futures. Te Awaroa is inspired by Māori philosophies, along with the legacy of the Order of Relations including the environmental sciences, internet technologies and the science of complex networks. It is about people (including

Indigenous worldviews are much more adaptive and open to collaboration and incorporation of other ideas than the non-adaptive myths of Western thought.

scientists) working collaboratively and getting away from theoretical hyper-space, down to the community grassroots and flax roots level.

JC: You mentioned prosperity, how does the idea of prosperity differ in the Māori worldview?

The Māori concept of ora is a state of peace, prosperity and well-being, based on balanced exchange among life forms and forces – and this can apply equally to individuals, families or ecosystems. It would be interesting to see the changes to our society if this concept of prosperity was applied holistically in place of the current measures used which are driving us closer to collapse.

JC: So this concept of prosperity has a spiritual element?

In the sense that it incorporates the concept of energy or life force, yes, however I prefer to stay away from the dualism which sees indigenous philosophies as mystical and spiritual, and science as empirical. In fact this idea of ora directly relates to sciences such as brain science which talks of living complex systems. The same concept can be applied to ecosystems or a healthy environment.

JC: How would a commons approach differ from the current dominant paradigm?

The neoliberal system poses an extreme threat to nature and people alike in its focus on short-term profits and extractive relations. A more commons based approach would focus on the interest we share in resources and top down command and control models would be replaced with a focus on collaborative decision-making and more local and adaptive approaches.

It is difficult to predict how a more commons based future would look as the whole philosophy of this approach is that it is based on experimental, collaborative inquiry (including civic science) and decision-making. This experimentation is important, as the pathway will be different in every location, in the same way that every river is different.

New Zealand is very privileged to have rich, very diverse landscapes in which to run such experiments. The idea is to

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examine distinct bio-regions including people and communities, and find ways to make each of these different regions prosperous for people, land and various species. Interesting possibilities are being explored already here in NZ. For example in the Whanganui treaty settlement the local tribes demanded that the river be recognised as a legal being, with its own rights and interests. Some observers found that odd, but in fact, a legal recognition that waterways existed before people and that we depend upon them for our wellbeing and survival is scientifically well grounded. Rather, it's the idea that human beings are in charge of waterways and can exploit them without limit that is irrational and mythological.

The commons approach aims to make the similarities between approaches emerge. It is a process of discovery of other people and of applying our energy collectively with others to drive towards shared goals in which all of us have something to gain.

The Cheap and Choice Award

Creative Commons (CC)

Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that develops, supports and stewards legal and technical infrastructure to maximise creativity, sharing, and innovation. Copyright law has traditionally given creators certain kinds of control over their creative work. However, outside of a few copyright lawyers, pretty much nobody knew for certain what they were. Creative Commons works within this existing copyright law and adds to it by providing a free, simple-to-use tool for sharing creative work with the world on specified conditions. This tool enables creators to communicate to others in plain language both how and on what terms they are happy for the work to be used.

The CC online license-choosing tool (available on the website creativecommons.org) can help creators with no legal knowledge select the appropriate license for their music, video, writing, code or other creative works. By simply marking a work with the appropriate



CC license or digital code creators can notify users what uses are allowed and under what terms. The range of uses granted can extend from full commercial uses, remixes, mash-ups and re-uses through to more restrictive licenses simply allowing non-commercial sharing with attribution to the creator. CC digital codes allow users to embed licenses in a creative work released under CC licenses so that it can be searched by engines such as Google and Flickr. (Tip - use the 'advanced search' function to apply CC license filters to a google image search.)

This commons based licensing system provides copyright certainty for both creator and user and allows for creative innovation and collaboration. This simple and cheap innovation has had a revolutionary impact on the creative industries and the open flow of information. Creative Commons is a cheap and choice innovation that will provide exponentially increasing positive impacts as the amount of works available under CC licenses expands.

FOR PROFIT

CORE QUESTION
What can be sold and bought?

IDEA OF THE INDIVIDUAL
Individuals maximize benefits for themselves.



DECISION PRINCIPLE
Majority rules.



DECISION MAKING
Hierarchical, top-down;
command & control.

PROPERTY RELATION
Exclusive private property.
'I can do what I want
with what is mine.'



SOCIAL PRACTICE
Prevail at the expense of others;
competition dominates.

POWER RELATION TENDENCY
Centralization & monopoly.

CHANGE AGENTS
Powerful political lobbies, interest
groups and institutionalized politics
focused on government.

ACCESS TO RIVAL RESOURCES
(LAND, WATER, FOREST)
Limited access; rules
defined by owner.

ACCESS TO NON-RIVAL
RESOURCES (IDEAS, CODE)
Limited access; scarcity is
artificially created through
law and technology.

USE RIGHTS
Granted by owner (or not).



RESOURCES
Scarcity is given
or created
(through barriers and
exclusions).
'Efficient' resource
allocation.



FOCUS
Market exchange
and growth (GDP)
achieved through
individual initiative,
innovation and
'efficiency.'

Depletion/exploitation. IMPLICATIONS FOR
Enclosure. RESOURCES

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS TO
NATURE AND OTHER HUMANS
Separation; either/or;
individualism v. collectivism;
human society v. nature

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIETY
Individual appropriation v.
collective interests. Exclusion.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION
Knowledge regarded as
scarce asset to be
bought and sold.

Adapted from *Logic of the commons & the market: a shorthand comparison of their core beliefs* by Silke Helfrich

CORE QUESTION

What do I/we need to live?

THE COMMONS



IDEA OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Humans are primarily cooperative social beings.

SOCIAL PRACTICE

Commoning; cooperation dominates.

POWER RELATION TENDENCY

Decentralization & collaboration.

CHANGE AGENTS

Diverse communities working as distributed networks, with solutions coming from the margins.



DECISION PRINCIPLE

Consensus.

DECISION MAKING

Horizontal, decentralized, bottom-up.

Self-organization, monitoring and adjustment of resource use.



PROPERTY RELATION

Collectively used possession.

'I am co-responsible for what I co-use.'



FOCUS

Use-value, common wealth, sustainable livelihoods and complementarity of enterprise.



RESOURCES

There is enough for all through sharing (rivalrous resources); there is abundance (non-rivalrous)

Strengthening social relations is decisive for assuring fair shares and sustainable use of resources.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESOURCES

Conservation / maintenance.
Reproduction & expansion.

ACCESS TO RIVAL RESOURCES (LAND, WATER, FOREST)

Limited access; rules defined by users.

ACCESS TO NON-RIVAL RESOURCES (IDEAS, CODE)

Unlimited access; open access is the default norm.

USE RIGHTS

Co-decided by co-producing users.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Knowledge regarded as plentiful resource for the common good of society.

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS TO NATURE AND OTHER HUMANS

Interrelationality; individuals and the collective are nested within each other and mutually reinforcing.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIETY

'My personal unfolding is a condition for the development of others, and vice-versa.'

Emancipation through convivial connections.

Popular food activism and commons possibilities

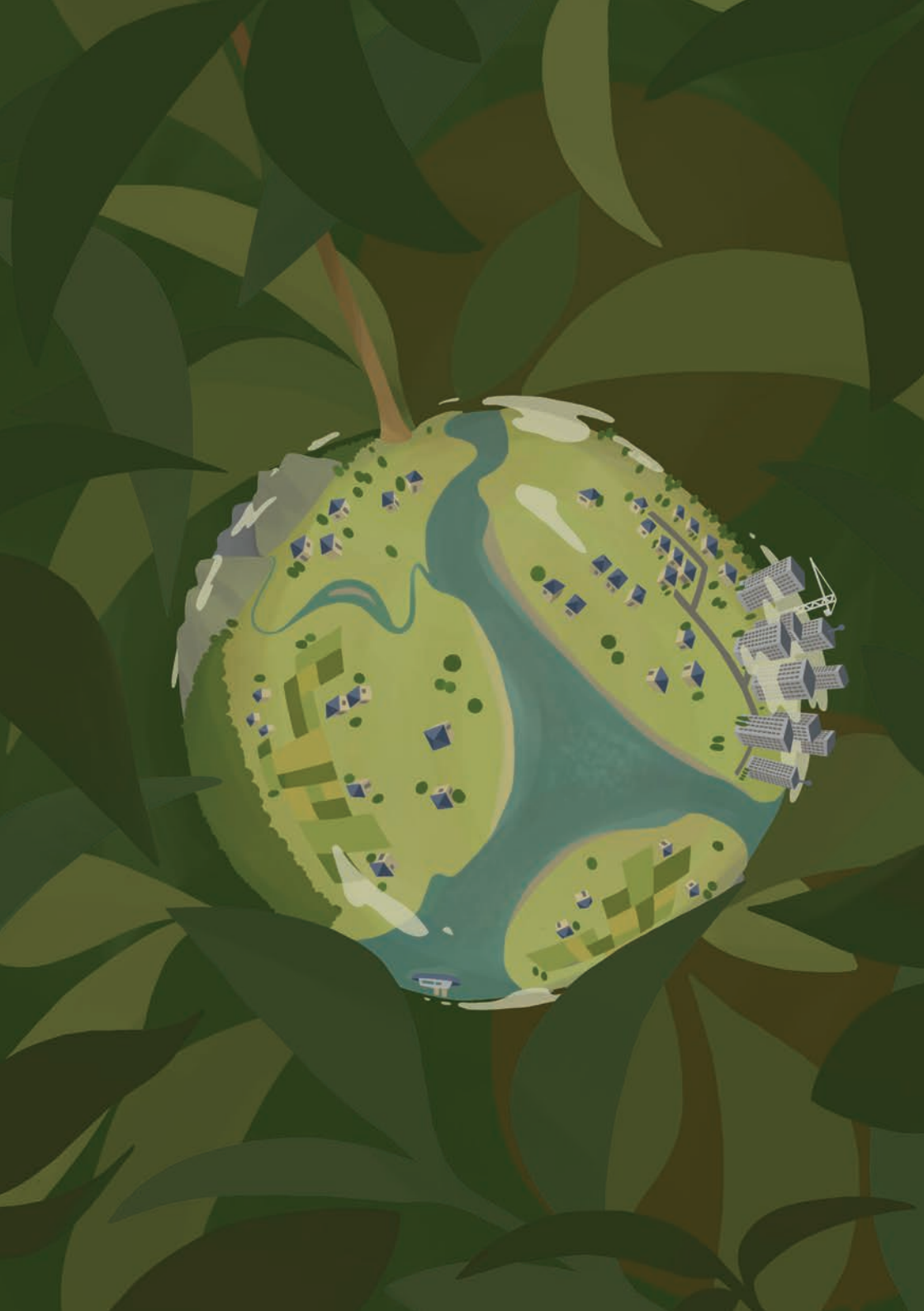
WRITTEN BY Andrea BROWER

What are we to make of Monsanto's sponsoring of organic school gardens? Of local food bike tours made possible by Pepsi? Of unprecedented land grabs, global hunger and corporate consolidation everywhere in the food chain 'co-existing' (a favoured word of the GMO industry) perfectly fine alongside a supposedly thriving alternative food movement?

Though food activism in wealthy countries is becoming more widespread – witnessed by a resurgence of home and community gardening, a proliferation of schemes linking consumers with local farmers, organics rising to the fastest growing food sector in the world, and a flood of films and books alerting the public to Food Matters – the global capitalist food system appears unthreatened in its capacities to enclose, appropriate, exploit and accumulate.

Much mainstream food activism reproduces the capitalist logics that sustain the very system wreaking the devastation it opposes. Most notably, the idea of 'voting with your fork' has become the primary common-sense action of the movement. After 90 minutes of critique of corporate control, subsidy

policy, marketing deception, exploitation of workers, environmental pollution and threats to democracy, the popular documentary Food Inc. leaves us with predictable recommendations about what to buy, assuming without question that our buying will force the industry to behave more responsibly. In general, the food movement reproduces the neoliberal narrative that turning human fate over to the mechanical and objective market is the most effective and efficient way to realise human potential. Individuals are encouraged to modify their lifestyles and perhaps, if they are really dutiful, to press leaders (read politicians and entrepreneurs) to lead. Saving the world from the environmental and social catastrophes of the food system is believed to hinge upon individual preferences best expressed through the market.



A world that manufactures extreme deprivation amongst abundance is made and re-made by our lack of belief that we are capable of something better.

Is this really the best that we can do? How is it that collective political struggle for structural change is aberrant in a movement that seeks justice, sustainability and democracy in the food system? The choices of food activism are situated in a broader context of severely limited imaginations of the possible. Similar to much other progressive activism today, it is believed that the most we can aspire towards is a greener or more ethical version of consumer capitalism, what Slavoj Žižek has called 'capitalism with a human face'. Capitalism itself has become a given, a non-ideological truism to which there is no alternative. When considering options for social change, there is a coding of the possible and impossible, where what is typically disavowed are the very structures that create that which is being challenged in the first place.

This devastation of the imagination underlies the greatest threats we face today, from climate change to militarisation. A world that manufactures extreme deprivation amongst abundance is made and re-made by our lack of belief that we are capable of something better. As Chan and Sharma brilliantly observe of their experimental guerrilla planting on public lands, 'the enclosure of common lands has been accompanied by the enclosure of our imaginations' (184). It is ordinary to accept apocalypse and more 'realistic' to believe in our ability to commit collective suicide than our ability to build systems based on sharing, equality and sustainability.

A most important task, for food movements and all who are committed to a more just future, is the expansion of our imaginations of what is possible. This is not to suggest that we must dream up utopian visions that are not grounded in the material conditions of the present, or to lay out templates to be followed at some unspecified time in the future. Instead, we need to start paying more attention to what is already going on all around us, all the time, and use what we already have to change the social logic in ways that open the possibility of new possibilities.

David Graeber has argued that the very condition of possibility in human society is a 'baseline communism';



or a giving according to abilities and receiving according to needs. Graeber theorises that in all societies, including in advanced capitalism, if people have any kind of amiable relations, there is an assumption that if the need is great enough or the cost small enough, communistic principles apply. In other words, the most fundamental aspects of sociality are based in ethics that are the very antithesis of capitalist apolo-gias of self-interest, greed and competitiveness. Liberatory visions spring from recognising cooperative dependencies and their boundless potentials. By acknowledging our human impulses towards mutual-aid and sharing, we might 'intensify them, by making them more interesting, more compelling, more seductive, more of a lure for feeling or action' (De Acosta 27).

Locating possibility in what exists, but is perhaps denied, negated or invisibilised by the dominant order of things, how might we affirm and

amplify commons possibilities immanent in food activism? While much mainstream food activism produces and reproduces neoliberalism's common-sense that there is no alternative, the movement is also largely underpinned by liberatory visions that refuse those logics that make capitalism the only thinkable possibility. In response to capitalist processes of separation, fragmentation and de-linking, food movements are working to build connections between people and planet. An emphasis on knowing where food comes from, including the resources and people involved in production, expresses an aspiration to de-fetishise commodity production. A rejection of the industrial food system expresses a desire to escape global chains of capitalist exploitation – an aspiration for a food system that is about meeting human needs rather than about the accumulation of profit.

In striving to get beyond the 'profit motive' and 'drop-out' of a 'broken' system (words frequently invoked by food activists), people are attempting to claim modes of agency that capitalism works to do away with. Sometimes initiatives are as basic as growing a sweet potato rather than purchasing imported pasta, while other times they are as ambitious as attempting to build systems of production and exchange that are also structurally accountable to logics that may not be fully alternative to capitalism's but also include people and land. There is an emphasis on valuing ways of being that run counter to neoliberalism's configuring of the human being as *homo economicus*. This includes an ethic of care for the earth and each other that goes beyond personal gain, attention to slowing down on the treadmill of consumption, and a regard for food in terms of sacredness and nourishment rather than simple commodity.

Sometimes initiatives are as basic as growing a sweet potato rather than purchasing imported pasta.

We might locate in some of these ambitions space for reclaiming and widening imagination of the possible. Spaces for seeding dreams and allowing them to 'percolate and mature, in common' (Goldstein 33); for dream-making that unveils new horizons. This is not to be overly-romantic about desire as resistance, but to emphasise the 'clearings, fissures, openings' that are made when worlds that do not fit within the current one are imagined (Latimer and Skeggs 407). There is potential for collective recognition of values, desires and already present practices that are oppositional to capitalist logics – a recognition that itself ruptures the ideological veil of capitalism, revealing there is no alternative to be inconsistent and untenable.

Rupturing the facade of a system that privatises everything for the profit and power of the few is about amplifying and expanding, scaling up and out, the alternatively commons possibilities that are already being enacted in the present. Just a few food-related examples include: indigenous epistemologies and modes of organisation, workers cooperatives, public distribution systems that affirm food as a fundamental human right, radical land reform and communal land models, open source principles and technologies applied to food, community food sharing ranging from public food orchards to Food Not Bombs, public seed-bank initiatives, and food sovereignty practices and discourses. Examples of what we are capable of abound in past and present practices and institutions, as well as ordinary interactions and values, and recognising these is critical to inspiring 'at the root' change.

There is potential for collective recognition of values, desires and already present practices that are oppositional to capitalist logics – a recognition that itself ruptures the ideological veil of capitalism.

There are choices to be made by those who are concerned with the possibility of a more just and sustainable food future. More capitalism will not create lasting and large-scale commons possibilities. The history of capitalism itself is the history of enclosure of the commons – the right and ability to exclude are the foundations of capital accumulation, and capital relies on its capacity to exclude from ever-new domains, be they air and water or ideas and images.

Capitalism accumulates profit by feeding off the common, and can be cut from its life-source in the interest of the common-good. Truly alternative food system(s) for all will only be made by (re)claiming the common, 'the shared substance of our social being' (Žižek 213), from that which would expropriate it. This does not mean waiting for capitalism to be entirely disappeared and replaced, but struggling against its processes and logics while struggling for institutions and logics that take us in the direction of cooperation, sharing, equality, openness, participation, democracy – in the direction of the common. Possibilities that capital negates – of, for the common – exist all around us, and by exposing and energising these we might reclaim the collective imagination of the world we are capable of.



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Early childhood education commons: A New Zealand reality?

WRITTEN BY Jessie MOSS

I was 25 when I gave birth to our daughter. At the time I felt thrown off course as I had planned to spend that year studying teaching in order to advance the 'get-a-career-established-prior-to-having-children' plan in my head. This was suddenly knocked aside and replaced with sleepless nights, the temporary disappearance of my social life and very little spare time.

When Kaahuia was seven months old, I decided to charge on ahead anyway, to be both a mother and teacher. I had wanted to do both for a long time. I greatly underestimated how difficult my partner and I would find that year: me juggling an extra-mural teaching diploma with a not quite yet one year old, and my partner balancing parenting and being a touring musician. We got through it and looking back on it now, I am glad it happened that way. Our new lives as parents were different and challenging, and there was so much to learn. In our peer group we were one of the first couples to have a baby so we actively sought out other new parents for support and understanding.

One place we found parents and young children a-plenty was our local playgroup. When I was studying I would take Kaahuia along to several morning sessions a week where she would

explore new experiences and interact with other children and adults, while I could relax with a cup of tea and talk with parents. We would discuss everything about parenting together, support one another, grow community networks, and subsequently sink our teeth deeper and deeper into ideas about what education was and how our children learned best.

When she was two, I started relief teaching. And on the advice of a playgroup parent, we enrolled Kaahuia into a not-for-profit, parent-teacher run cooperative childcare centre in Newtown, Wellington. At the core of the centre's philosophy is the spirit of cooperation between teachers, parents, caregivers and children. Everyone takes on roles and responsibilities and contributes towards governance and decision making together with the same goal in mind: creating the most supportive, reflective and open learning environment

we are able, as parents and teachers, for the children of our centre community. As a result the centre reflects the community and vice versa.'

Parents know what their children's needs are and early childhood teachers have a deep pedagogical knowledge of how pre-schoolers learn and how to provide opportunities and experiences for them to best meet their needs. At cooperative childcare centres, everyone feels included and valued, and the children have a beautiful time learning and growing side by side. Together there is success. This local community-based educational structure is an example of an education common. German author, activist and international expert on the commons Silke Helfrich defines 'the commons' to include members being co-responsible for use of resources, exercising horizontal and decentralised governance, using consensus decision making, creating networks and collaborating in mutually reinforcing ways. All of these aspects of a 'Helfrich defined common' appear to apply to cooperative childcare centres such as ours.

Our lives felt very balanced at this point, and I knew that we were lucky. I was a relief teacher at the time and




PHOTO: VANESSA RUSHTON

my partner had flexible work hours being self-employed. We found having Kaahuia at the centre three mornings a week, monthly cooperative meetings, parent help days, and taking on roles to run the centre totally do-able. We were flexible, had the time, and all got to spend time together each day.

However, not every family is able to participate in a cooperative childcare centre or other such education common which is flexible and responsive to family involvement and needs. Participating in an education common is difficult when parents face barriers to involvement such as financial and time constraints, a lack of parental education, social networks and cultural inclusiveness, and language barriers.

Newtown, a traditionally lower socio-economic Wellington neighbourhood in the process of gentrification, has a huge variety of education centres whose quality I argue is largely dependent on the income and education of the parents involved in a particular centre. In our case, our centre families



It is dangerous for communities to become disconnected from their children's early education, as it becomes less possible to be engaged with their on-going education and thus the general health and wellbeing of communities.

were overwhelmingly white, very well educated and connected with high social capital and enough disposable income to pay the required fees. My partner and daughter were two of the very few members who identified as Māori at the time. The children who attend this centre have a great start in life: they are warm and fed, with books to read at home and an abundance of new experiences provided for them by their socially mobile parents.

In the hustle and bustle of many parents' lives, there isn't so much accessibility, flexibility or time. I worry that communities are losing out and that education commons such as cooperative childcare centres are fast disappearing. Cooperative centres often run for shorter hours than kindergartens and other commercially run childcare centres that are open for as long as 7:30am to 6pm. Parents are increasingly working longer hours, and subsequently children are being cared for in various childcare arrangements for longer hours with little to no parental involvement. I find this worrying as I argue that the quality of the centre is very dependent on the involvement (or lack thereof) of its community.

I am now working fulltime and Kaahuia, having turned three, has graduated from the cooperative centre to a Māori immersion childcare centre, Te Kōhanga Reo. It is truly amazing to be a part of Te Kōhanga Reo movement and to see her reo (language) jump from strength to strength. However, I am not completely at ease with the hours she spends there and how comparatively little involvement we now have in her education. I feel we have limited options, like so many parents we need her



cared for during the week so that my partner and I can work a reasonable week – all just to pay the bills, rent and food. Thankfully, Māori education is very inclusive and we are able to attend the monthly whānau hui (family meetings), but we still feel that we contribute very little to the day-to-day running of the Kōhanga. My knowledge of how it is run and what they teach is too small. They do their bit to communicate with us, and we reciprocate, but it is still not enough. I wish I could work less, but there is little flexibility in teaching and the New Zealand government doesn't provide nearly enough financial support to families with preschoolers to make it viable for one of us to be a stay at home parent for a longer stretch of time. Nothing can compensate for being there as a parent and participating in day-to-day decision making.

It is now well-known that the early years in children's lives are crucial to their brain development and health, and subsequently to their future success, happiness, and the valuable contributions they are able to make to their communities. I am deeply worried that the more that governments worldwide cut back on social services such as funding for early childhood centres, support for parents with young children to have affordable and flexible work / home arrangements, and accessible healthcare, the less community members are able to build strong

connections with each other, create holistic and healthy lives for themselves, and therefore build successful and functioning communities – where all manner of commons can exist and thrive. Currently we are seeing more instances of education commons struggling to exist as more for-profit centres emerge. These centres tend to be very homogenous and less responsive in their teaching approaches and communities cannot be as involved or connected as they can in cooperative, commons based centres.

It is dangerous for communities to become disconnected from their children's early education, as it becomes less possible to be engaged with their on-going education and thus the general health and wellbeing of communities. I believe education to be a common good and that communities should have the power and resources to educate their children as they see best according to the needs and distinctions of their children's lives. Furthermore, the social connections parents and caregivers make in their children's preschool years plant the seeds for very strong communities where education commons can thrive. Here, learning is part and parcel of life. Education can be found everywhere in everything, for the benefit the common people. We really need to take stock of the state of our eroding education systems and fight for the right to maintain our own commons of education.





Christiania: Reclaiming the right to the city

WRITTEN BY Joseph CEDERWALL

Copenhagen's Christiania or 'Freetown' as it is known by the locals is an ostensibly autonomous and self-governing community or 'micronation'¹ of around 500 fulltime residents. Set on 84 acres of prime real estate within a regenerating forest landscape in the heart of Denmark's capital city, Christiania is an ideal space for an alternative urban experiment.

¹ A micronation is an entity created and maintained as if it were a nation and/or a state, and generally carrying with it some, most or all of the attributes of nationhood.



PHOTOS: JOSEPH CEDERWALL

DWELLINGS SIT UNOBTUSIVELY ON THE CANAL.

In this historic seventeenth century naval garrison fortified by canals and historic ramparts where banners of war once flew, now only Christiania's sovereign flag and the blades of a co-operative wind farm pierce the sky. I visited Christiania to see what could be learned from this alternative solution to organising an urban society.

Christiania has been essentially free from state interference and controls such as regulation, planning laws and police for the last four decades. Here, a group of ordinary people have managed to reclaim their ability as inhabitants to determine the future course of development of their urban space and resources. Christiania presents

a commons-based alternative to the neoliberal norms of 'enclosure' and valorisation of all available common space and resources. It is in this sense an outlier and a highly valuable case study for those of us concerned with the future of our cities.

The founding manifesto of November 1971 declared Christiania a free and autonomous territory stating: 'It is the objective of Christiania to establish an autonomous society where people are able to express themselves individually and at the same time take responsibility for the community at large. Economically this society must be self-sufficient and endeavour to demonstrate how physical and psychological pollution can be avoided!'



BIKES ARE THE MAIN FORM OF TRANSPORTATION HERE.

PHOTO: STIG NYGAARD (FLICKR)

This emphasis on autonomy and freedom has allowed residents to collectively build a liveable and flourishing urban community complete with a participatory decision making and governance apparatus and internal economic and social support systems. The resulting city has grown in a spontaneous and organic manner with self designed and constructed eco-dwellings scattered in a low-impact manner amongst the historic buildings, cobblestoned squares and forests.

Here one can now find everything required to live a reasonable sort of a life. Many services are free for residents and cooperatively run and most are also open to outsiders. Facilities include a community health centre, building recycling centre, free childcare centres and playgrounds, theatres, a political theatre troupe, world class music venues, bars, a fine dining restaurant, art workshops and galleries, a smithy fabricating internationally distributed Christiania bikes, a free clothing stall, a bath house, cooperative cafes and grocery stores, a gay house, a Greenlanders house, sports facilities (including canoe polo) and even eco-friendly energy generation and sewerage treatment systems.

How this state of affairs came about and why it has been allowed to continue only minutes from the Danish Parliament smack bang in the middle of a Western capital city firmly in the grip of advanced capitalism is a puzzle to many. One must however consider that Denmark has a long and rich history of cooperative economic activity which makes them uniquely predisposed to this type of cooperative endeavour. This history of village communes and cooperative agriculture, retailing and living has necessarily entailed robust community level governance systems and participatory decision making.

The time of Christiania's genesis was a tumultuous era of social discontent and protest much like today. 1968 saw simultaneous student uprisings in Paris, Copenhagen and other cities worldwide. The Cold War and its hot offspring in Prague and Indochina were in full swing as was the global peace movement. In Copenhagen, as elsewhere, there was a lack of affordable housing caused by urban migration, gentrification, speculative property development and corruption and incompetence in local Government. In short this era saw the beginning of the neo-liberal experiment which has ravaged our cities for the last 40 years.

It is this empowerment and opening up of creativity through participatory and cooperative governance which makes Freetown a validation of a commons approach to development.

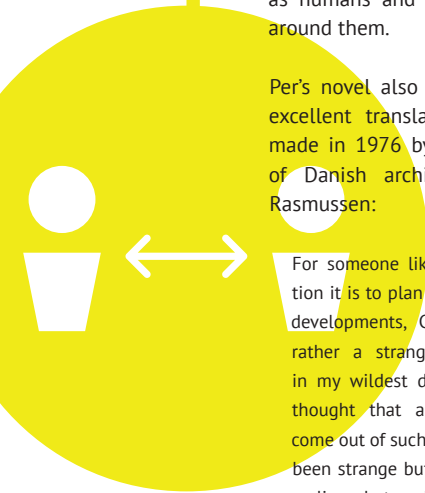
Amidst this social environment ripe for explosion in 1969/70 the Danish government closed the Boatman Street Naval garrison without making plans for its future. It was not long before various vagrants, drifters and homeless people scavenged everything not tied down. Two buildings were burned to the ground before more organised squatters put a stop to the vandalism and commenced preserving and even refurbishing the dilapidated historic buildings. In a remarkably short time these industrious ‘Slumstormers’ and other arrivals had banned hard drugs, evicted or rehabilitated the junkies and implemented the foundations of today’s functioning society – a manifesto and a participatory governance structure.

One founding resident who lives with his family in a co-housing complex in one of the historic stone ramparts took a break from sanding his hardwood floors to talk with me about the founding of Freetown. He said it was inspired by ideologies as diverse as Native American and Norse tribal culture, the hippie movement and anarchist ideology and that they took this land in order to experiment with an alternative way of living. Sick and tired of governments which denied their seemingly reasonable requests they took it into their own hands to create such an

environment for themselves and their children and were willing to protect it by force if required.

Christiania has been described by Anders Lund Hansen in *Space for urban alternatives* as ‘an excellent example of a struggle by marginalised social groups to claim the right to the city’ (307). This concept, first proposed by French taxi-driving Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre in his influential 1968 essay ‘The Right to the City’, shares much philosophically with the idea of the commons and according to social theorist David Harvey depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanisation (23–54). The core of Lefebvre’s concept is that the inhabitants of the city should have the right to participate in the development of the city and to appropriate, occupy and make full use of the various spaces of the city.

Per Smidl, now a bestselling Danish author, spent a few years living in Christiania in the early 70s writing and driving a taxi by night. Per writes in his novel *Wagon 357 Christiania* that the reason this community came into being and the reason it still exists is ‘the release of creative energy that occurred when people who had been patronized and subjected to tight regulation were let loose’ (165). Echoing the philosophies of fellow taxi driving writer Lefebvre, Per told me that Freetown was formed when a group of people dissatisfied with a society that saw them as numbers whose only utility was as fodder to feed the hungry beast of an eternal growth philosophy, had the opportunity to set the conditions of their existence by living in a way which was harmonious for them



as humans and for the environment around them.

Per's novel also provides us with an excellent translation of a comment made in 1976 by the 'grand old man' of Danish architecture Steen Eiler Rasmussen:

For someone like me whose occupation it is to plan housing and housing developments, Christiania has been rather a strange experience. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that anything good could come out of such chaos. It has not only been strange but also encouraging to realize what positive strength there is in people – even in those who seemingly are the weakest – when they are allowed to show it (165).

This comment on the positive development of Christiania recognises the importance of community members being free to participate in decisions about the future shape of their community and to get down to creating it rather than waiting for others to do so. It is this empowerment and opening up of creativity through participatory and cooperative governance which makes Freetown a validation of a commons approach to development.

The Danish authorities were understandably not so impressed with this community which rejected notions of private land ownership and centralised authority in favour of residents' rights to self-determination and participation. Government policies over the years have sought to 'normalise' the community through both legal and more forceful methods such as police raids, harassment and

intimidation. The Conservative Party's Christiania spokesman Christian Wedell-Neergaard revealed the inherently anti-commons ideology behind these attempts to gentrify Freetown in his somewhat comical statement in the *Politiken Newspaper* of 29 January 2006: 'We (the government) have emphasized that there should be varied ownership-models, such as private ownership' (6).

Last time I checked there was plenty of private ownership in Copenhagen, so variety is hardly the issue. The counter argument the community has long maintained is that allowing partial privatisation of the community would in effect undermine the whole commons experiment by creating divisions and internal conflicts. A combination of court battles, strong public support, and physical resistance with the assistance of hash dealers and their dogs has allowed this community to essentially retain uninterrupted possession and continue to operate on their own terms.

Christiania remains a valuable case study as to how a commons-based society can function and thrive outside of state control. I have discussed below how Christiania has applied a number of key features of the successful commons design approach identified by Elinor Ostram:

Defined boundaries and an ability to differentiate between entitled and unentitled parties

Christiania is well defined by home-made road blocks, anti-police graffiti and inward looking buildings. Within the boundaries ordinary laws and

social conventions are replaced by a whole new set of rules. There is a conspicuous absence of automobiles; wild looking dogs and children run free and a pungent Moroccan aroma fills the air as cannabis is traded and consumed openly. Visitors and tourists are welcome so long as they obey these rules which include no hard drugs, guns, gang patches or bullet proof vests. There is however a clear distinction between residents and these unentitled visitors who have no rights to build or occupy a house or to utilise common resources. Freetown is not a free for all – to gain one of the sought after places for in the community, new residents must be considered and approved by the common meeting. This is an essential provision as it maintains a sustainable population level as well as a necessary level of trust and community amongst the residents.

Rules regarding the appropriation and provision of common resources

Christiania residents have free access to an array of common resources. There are rules which define the rights of residents to access resources such as land for housing, wood, common facilities and support from the rest of the community. There is an emphasis on respect for the wider community which prevents abuse of these privileges.

A participatory decision-making process

Christiania is governed by a highly democratic and distributed consensus decision making system. The core institution is the common meeting in which all residents may speak. The residents themselves are involved in creating the rules for the community as all

major decisions must go through this process. The rules that govern the community today have evolved over time through this system but are flexible and open to change with the changing desires and needs of the community.

Effective self-monitoring by the community

In the Freetown community no one makes claim to the role of leader. There are committees of residents responsible for monitoring the compliance with rules and the level of satisfaction of residents. There are also area representatives who act as contact groups for the fourteen geographic units and monitor compliance, mediate conflict and ensure satisfaction of residents in their areas.

A series of graduated sanctions for violation of community rules

Graduated sanctions for violation of community rules exist and in the most serious cases they are either a temporary ban from living in the community or permanent exclusion. For instance once, due to overindulgence or sheer enthusiasm for his automatic weapon, a resident randomly fired off rounds into the night from his rooftop at 5am. Not surprisingly that person was asked to leave, however I am informed he was also well liked and was invited to return to visit so long as he left his gun behind.

Mechanisms of conflict resolution which are cheap and easy to access

The first port of call for any conflict is the local area level - anything that cannot be resolved there can be taken either to a committee dedicated to a certain topic or to the common meeting

THE CHILDRENS' MEADOW
PLAYGROUND AND CHILDCARE CENTRE.

(open to all residents). Skilled facilitators can assist to mediate in these cases, however the people living closest together and most affected have the first chance to deal with the matter and resolve it in a way acceptable to all in that area. The beauty of this system is that compromises are freely reached and decisions do not need to be enforced as they are made by and in conjunction with the people involved.

Self-determination of the community is recognised by higher-level authorities

Recognition by the Danish state has always been a contentious issue for this community with its roots firmly planted in anarchist ideology and its steadfast rejection of private property ownership. Ongoing negotiations between Christiania and the government culminated in a 2012 agreement which finally gives legal recognition to the community as collective owners of the land. The elegant solution which enabled this was the purchase of the land by a Community Land Trust which holds it in trust for the common benefit of all current and future residents. This solution will hopefully prevent any privatisation or partition of the land under the government's 'mixed ownership' plans which would have created inequality and allowed an elite to form thus fragmenting the delicate social cohesion.



PHOTO: MARCO ZANFERRARI



PHOTO: ZAIRON (WIKIMEDIA)



PHOTOS: JOSEPH CEDERWALL UNLESS SPECIFIED

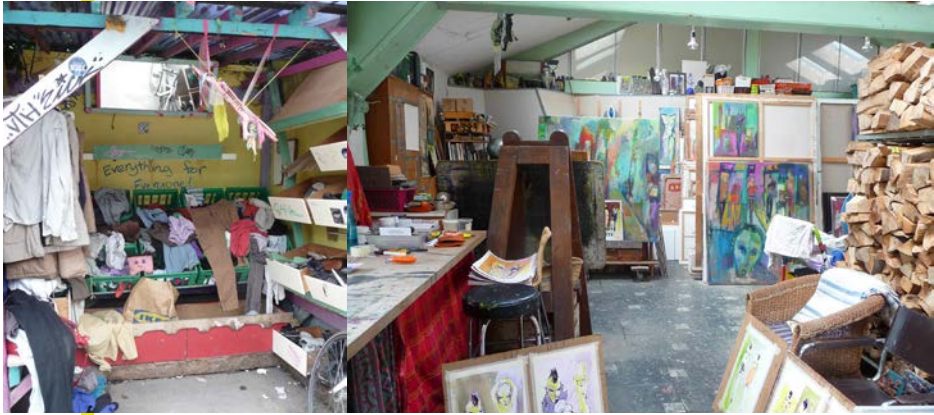




CHRISTIANIA HOUSES (MANY CONVERTED FROM WAGONS) ARE BUILT FROM LOCALLY SOURCED AND RECYCLED TIMBER.

CONVERTED FORMER MILITARY BUILDINGS

PHOTO: SEIER+SEIER (FLICKR)



PHOTOS: JOSEPH CEDERWALL

THE FREE CLOTHING EXCHANGE AND INSIDE AN ARTISTS STUDIO.

The future of Freetown

While hesitant to gloss over major issues or over idealise this community, I would say that on the whole the future for Christiania looks bright. The community are the proud new owners of a massive resource base in central Copenhagen as well as a pretty hefty debt to accompany it. A second generation Christianite I met who studied Law joked that as a Trustee he is now essentially the head of a multimillion Krone dummy corporation. Despite the serious challenges presented by joining the global financial system, the Trust is essentially still governed by the community. The true power lies with the uniquely participatory and democratic governance structure of the common meeting which ensures that whatever happens in the future the residents are in control of their collective destiny and are in the situation together.

In today's heavily controlled societies it may no longer be so possible to take or occupy our own Christianias, however we can take the Freetown spirit as an inspiration. With a weakened state sector and the implosion of global

financial capitalism, new possibilities abound for collective ownership and commons-based development of our neglected or abandoned urban resources. Through legal workarounds such as community land trusts, cooperative enterprise and participatory governance structures we can achieve a commons-based lifestyle in our own communities. By collaborating and 'commoning' together under such systems we can unleash the creativity and human potential of our communities to reassert our collective right to the city.

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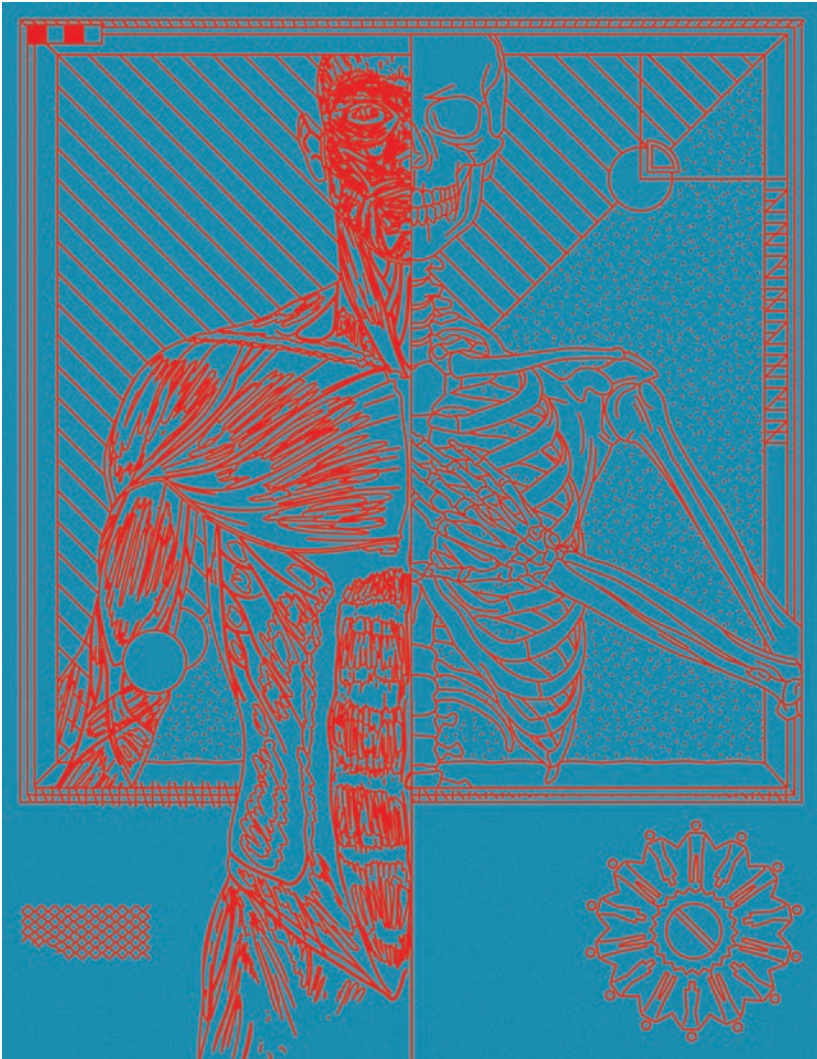


12 Essays on the commons

EDITED BY Leland MASCHMEYER

Although previous centuries were concerned with protecting society from the tragedy of the commons, this century offers the opportunity to redesign society to promote their triumph. However, achieving this requires an understanding of why the commons triumph.

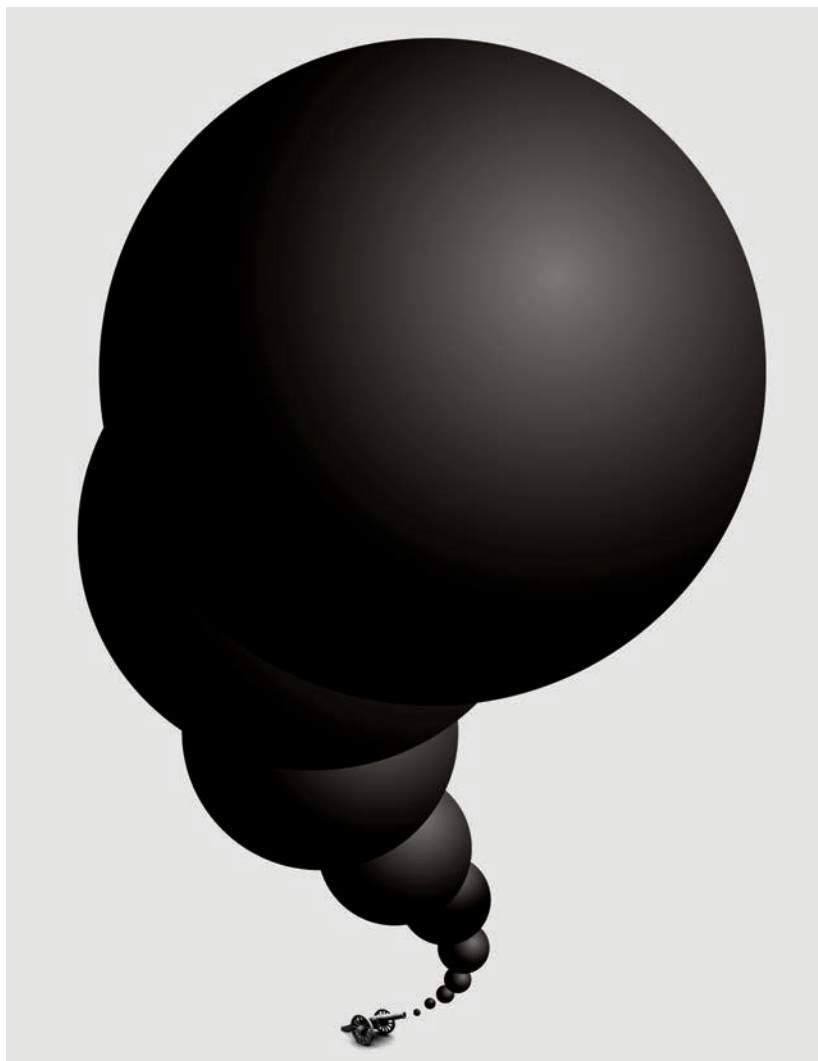
What follows are 12 theses and their accompanying artwork – selected from the book *Triumph of the Commons: 55 Theses on the Future*. These theses are suggestive truths and viable proposals devised to aid all of us in understanding and concretizing a future built upon the commons. On an abstract level, this mash-up of words and images make clear the notion that only through collaboration can the commons work. Combining image and word symbolises the joining together of two (or more) entities for a common goal – a common artwork that might work for the common good.



Thesis 1

Some people see the world as a battleground,
while others see it as a commons.

ARTWORK: NIKOLAY SAVELIEV



Thesis 9

Those who see the world as a battleground strive to suppress surprise from others. 'Loose canons' are dangerous.

ARTWORK: THOMAS POROSTOCKY



Thesis 10

Those who see the world as a battleground revel in what they've made impossible for others. Those who see the world as a commons revel in what they have made possible with others.

ARTWORK: THOMAS WILDER



Thesis 18

Therefore, those who see the world as a commons see the world and the people in it as source; as that which gives forth. In giving forth, a source is profuse in its self initiated production. One does not engage a source to harness it to one's personal agenda, but to involve it in the genesis of one's own future.

ARTWORK: JIYUN HA



Thesis 19

Those who see a battleground see others as mere resource. A resource is anything converted from its original form into that which is useful for perpetuating someone's past. To see others as a resource is, therefore, to expect them to surrender to your continued past.

ARTWORK: MILAN ZRNIC



Thesis 21

Because those who see the world as a commons see others as peers in play, they create heterarchies – structures of collaboration, pluralism, distributed intelligence, and constantly evolving patterns of relation. While hierarchies structure themselves to suppress surprise, heterarchies structure themselves to bring surprise.

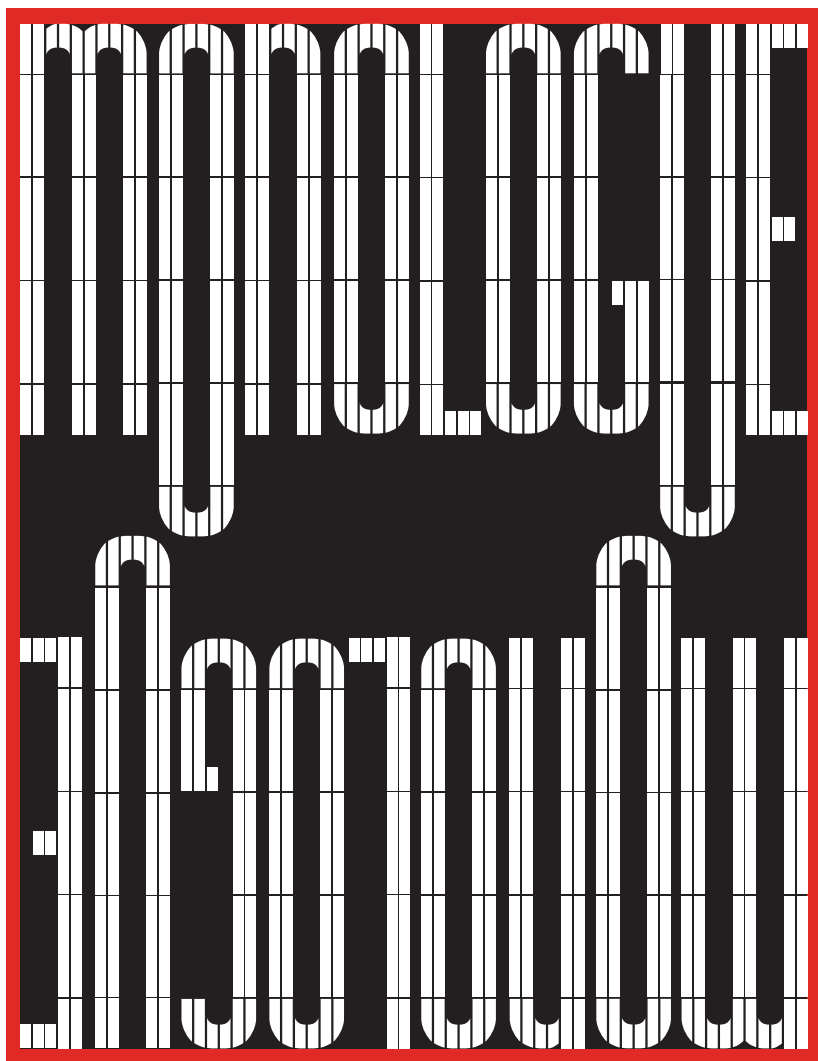
ARTWORK: ISIDRO FERRE



Thesis 34

This is the difference between monologue and dialogue.
Monologues do not invite surprise from others. Dialogues do.

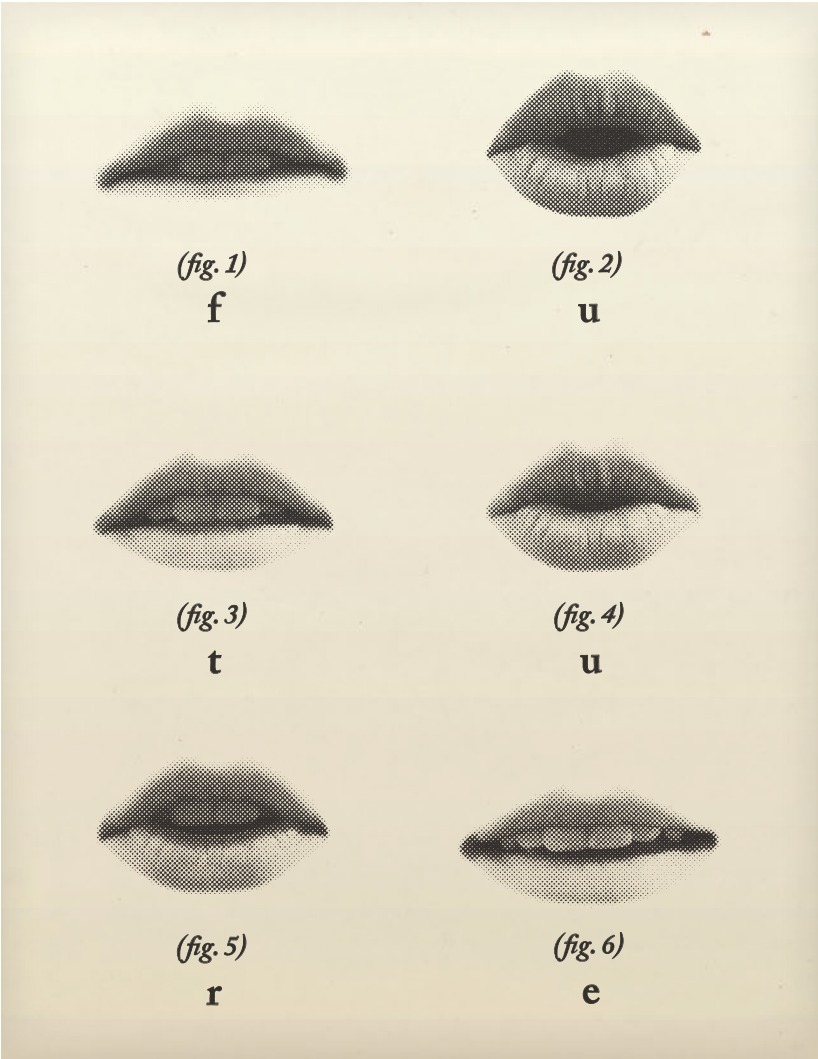
ARTWORK: BRAD BARTLETT



Thesis 35

Monologues seek to convince an audience of a defined worldview that the audience had no part in creating.

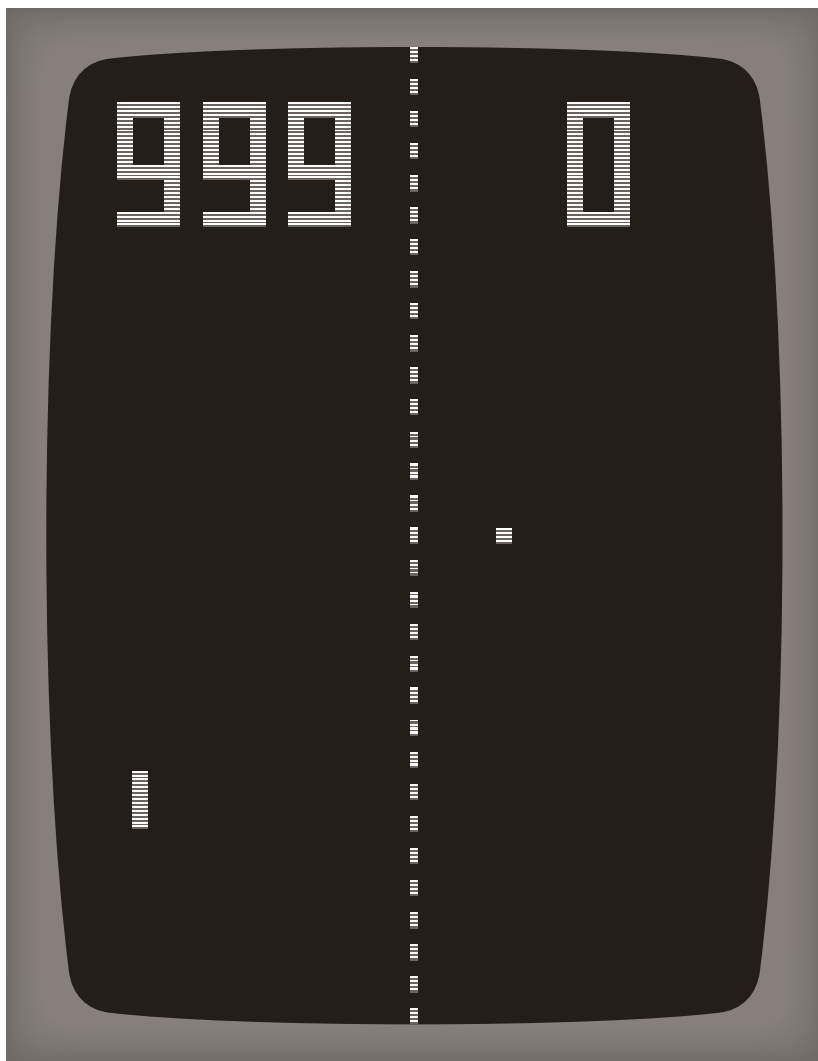
ARTWORK: GAIL ANDERSON



Thesis 36

Dialogues invite people to participate as peers
in the birth of an unfolding worldview.

ARTWORK: STEVE HASLIP



Thesis 51

He who sees the world as a battleground
requires an opponent. Lacking an opponent, he
lacks an identity. And a future for his past.

ARTWORK: DAVID RICART



Thesis 52

This is the tragedy of war: by eliminating duality,
the victor eliminates himself. Buckminster
Fuller: 'Either war is obsolete or men are.'

ARTWORK: SEYMOUR CHWAST



Thesis 55

Thus, the vision of the world as a commons reveals itself to be the protean vision of life. For only the commons accommodates all visions—even those that see the world as a battleground. 'It is the taut composition which contains contrapuntal relationships, equal combinations, inflected fragments, and acknowledged dualities,' observes Robert Venturi. 'It is the unity which 'maintains, but only just maintains, a control over the clashing elements which compose it. Chaos is very near; its nearness, but its avoidance, gives ... force.' In the end, the commons is the only choice that actually encourages our growth.

ARTWORK: GUSTAVO CORDOVA

The commons that can't be named

WRITTEN BY Barnaby BENNETT

A defining characteristic of life is the ability to make distinctions between things. This is critical to being able to identify how some things are different to others and to develop behaviours and systems based on these differences. A simple cell has a wall that lets in some nutrients while keeping others out; at an early age we learn to discern the difference between our own and our parents' bodies. As children we learn to paint and draw by understanding inside and outside of lines, as architects we collect materials to make subtle divisions between inside and out.

Expert knowledge can easily spot a fake from an original or a pinot from a cabernet, and so on.

This observation is mundane, and yet it is crucial to reconsidering our relationship with the world around us. The Western world and its modern project have performed superbly at making such distinctions. We live in a society that is a great big distinction-making machine. The arts and sciences of maps, manuals, dictionaries, wikipedias, encyclopaedias and classification systems are dizzying lists of reality that excite, entice and inspire.

Yet attachment to the alluring content of these lists has profound consequences:

1. Distinction requires definition and naming and this creates the conditions for claims of ownership. Ownership implies the existence of things that can be transferred by sales, deals, and theft. This is the character that joins the impressive scientific search for knowledge and the subsequent capitalist enclosure of these new domains. This process operates on that which is already understood and known, such as land and material resources, and the newly discovered such as airwaves and DNA.
2. What remains camouflaged by this description and characteristically lost within our distinction-system is the awareness of the commonality that underpins the world. We intuitively characterize things into objects and stuff into materials, and by doing so we realise meaning and purpose in the world. But we also establish a veil between our lives and that which-is-not-named, the things and stuff that are too big, too small, too complex, too profound, too obvious, too complete or too ubiquitous to see. In doing so it is too easy to forget the common grounding of reality. Preoccupied with what we own, what we have, what we look like, what we identify with, what we see, what we perceive, what we know, and what we understand, we easily forget that lying not only beneath all of this but also within and without everything is a commonality that is just as true as our careful and clever distinctions.

By becoming aware of the common we also become aware of the work that is involved in making it distinct and naming it. Through the endeavours of cataloguing, archiving, labelling, indexing, critiquing, tasting, testing, and accounting we manage, control and stabilise these distinctions. Through the work of creating, improvising, urbanising, making, synthesising, problem solving, innovating, and inventing we realise new and undiscovered commons.

As collectives of people and assemblages of materials and objects what would happen to our economic and social systems if we became more sensitive to these three factors: the common from which everything emerges, the work both creative and analytical that we use to engage and experiment with it, and the powerful distinction making-machine that dominates our way of being.

We need a new community of pirates. Men and women committed to defending the commons and standing up to the excesses of enclosed wealth. So put down your ipads and put on your eye patches and let us work to enlarge that stage of the commons upon which we must all play our part.

—KESTER BREWIN

By becoming aware of the common we also become aware of the work that is involved in making it distinct and naming it.

The Christchurch that can be named

WRITTEN BY Barnaby BENNETT

As you'd expect after a major natural disaster, Christchurch has been awash with crises: damaged houses, broken sewerage systems, destroyed neighbourhoods, shifting demographics, the removal of democratic systems, schools shifting, overwhelmed councils, a disregard for heritage, damaged roads and footpaths, insurance delays, complex bureaucracies, closed parks and pools, environmental damage, land sinking, fears of climate change induced flooding, massive gender shifts, broke universities, conflicting visions for the city, a lack of talent in key areas, consenting issues, overlapping power structures, disrupted routines, dealing with grief, long-term stress, businesses forced out of the cbd for over two years, inconsistent urban planning, a lack of consultation, the removal of the regional council, broken bridges, damaged roads, and so on and so on.

Each of the things in this list is evidenced by many individual examples – it is a list of lists. It is easy to think that each of these problems is a tidy and discrete entity that is remediated by the application of effort and resource to return it to normal. That normality is

achieved when the roads are fixed by a road fixing team, and the democratic problems by elections, and the insurance problems by more effort. There is some sense in this, and these technical solutions are naturally important. But to think that this massive rolling muddle of nature, economics, and politics can be 'fixed' through technical means is to miss the underlying issues creating the various situations.

The first step is to realise the interconnectedness of the problems and crises. They are crises for the very reason that they cannot be fixed through normal means. The problems are large and complex enough to transcend the normal operations that drive cities. Each problem relates to a thousand others, and these to a thousand others again, and it is only when the city has the time to carefully pick through each in the right order that progress starts to happen. The various overlays that drive our society such as property rights, business ownership, mortgages, and political representation are threatened by the fact that the problems transcend the boundaries that keep these things functioning in normal life.

The second is that this interconnectedness represents the commons. Not only are the natural and cultural resources

They are crises for the very reason that they cannot be fixed through normal means.

that underlie our world common to us all, our common world, but the large events that happen have meaning because they affect all of us, perhaps not evenly, but commonly. The waves of crises are difficult and not evenly distributed - inevitably the mobile and well-off are better prepared to rebound and take advantage of the new opportunities - but they are spread through networks of commonality, of shared roads, rivers and communities. The incredible response from people outside of Christchurch after the quake and the on-going internal support networks struggling now represent this shared commonality.

Lastly, crisis presents new opportunities and leads to the creation of new commons. Technical solutions are problematic because they are based on the idea of returning to a past romanticised by its rude destruction. When new cultural, social and economic structures have formed in response to the problems of the quake, these in turn lead to more new things. The commons produced by these new cultural forms will be enclosed by the frames we use to operate our society. This is the way we chose to live, and it isn't without its problems. The least we can do is remember the resources we use and create that flow through us - our bank accounts, our houses, our bodies, our relationships, our wallets, our fridges - are part of a much bigger chain than we conventionally imagine. We might have developed some clever ways to sell or exploit our common world, but it is from this common ground that everything we will ever know emerges. It was around long before us and will be here doing its emergent thing long after we leave.

EXAMPLES OF THE COMMONS

The sky
National parks
The airwaves
The internet
Urban spaces
Town square
Genetics
Blood banks
Community gardens
Scientific knowledge
Library
Museum
Artistic traditions
Fire departments
Indigenous societies
Sports
Biodiversity
Topsoil
National Health System
Herbal medicines
Social customs & local traditions
Government-funded research
Wildlife
Youth trends
Wind power
Polar ice caps
Spiritual beliefs
The blogosphere
Neighborhood groups
Open source
Crafts
Public health & sanitation
Literature
The oceans
History
& much more

A case for the commons

WRITTEN BY William SHANNON

My home town of Christchurch, New Zealand, has been shaken by a series of earthquakes and aftershocks since 4 September 2010. The devastating effect that this has had upon Christchurch's urban landscape pales into insignificance when compared to the tragic loss of life that occurred as a result of the most destructive earthquake, which struck on 22 February 2011.

However, buildings and their fate still matter.

Many buildings have been demolished in Christchurch. Some had been left irreparable with demolition the only viable option. However, many more had this fate imposed upon them by their owners or the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, an organisation that was specially created to lead the recovery effort in Christchurch and the wider Canterbury region.

My intention here is not to criticise each and every decision to demolish a building. Tough decisions had to be made and I do not possess the information, expertise, foresight or objectivity to pass judgement on whether the right decisions have been made in each case or not. Rather, this is a criticism of the fact that these decisions have been made behind closed doors.

Those who do not enjoy the privilege of ownership have largely been excluded from the process.

My wife and her family operated a cafe in a central city building that has now been demolished.

This building was left untenable following the February earthquake, but it was by all accounts easily repairable and in a good position to once again be safely tenanted. The more than twelve months that passed before the decision was made to demolish it was a period of misinformation and no information for my wife and her family.

They were left feeling largely helpless and deeply frustrated.

Despite this, the building remained standing while most of those around it fell. It stood with just a few others – the remnants of a once thriving neighbourhood that could seemingly be incorporated into any future plans for the area.

The decision to demolish it for unknown reasons was hard to take.

The building had been chosen and renovated with great care and consideration. The cafe that operated within it was a labour of love, not a mere means for profit. It had hosted a wedding and many other celebrations. It had been a site of great joy, much laughter and many tears.

This building meant a great deal to us all. Not because of its aesthetic, historic or architectural value – although a strong case for its preservation could have been made on all three counts. It was important to us because of the significant role it had played in our lives.

This does not mean that it should not have been demolished, but our voices at least deserved to be heard in the decision-making process, along with those of the many others like us who cared about the building for one reason or another, but did not enjoy the privilege of ownership.

It might be argued that the circumstances were exceptional and that to include more voices in the discussion would have only prolonged matters

...this is a criticism of the fact that these decisions have been made behind closed doors. Those who do not enjoy the privilege of ownership have largely been excluded from the process.

at a time when there was a need for quick and decisive decisions. However, as I write this, almost a year after the building was demolished, the land upon which it once stood remains vacant. It seems that there was no great need to rush.

This experience has made me acutely aware of a problem identified by Peter Marcuse, a prominent Professor of Urban Planning, who argued that 'The lack of control over one's environment, the difficulties of participating actively in the decisions about the future of the city in which one lives, is a major issue.'

It has also hardened in me a resolve to fight to make my city a common, something that is treated as the shared property of its inhabitants.

There are many more decisions to be made with regards to Christchurch's future. Each provides an avenue to demand a more open and deliberative decision making process.

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Freeranger of the edition



PHOTO: ANDERIES JM

OBITUARY

Elinor Ostrom.

Born August 7, 1933,
Los Angeles, California.

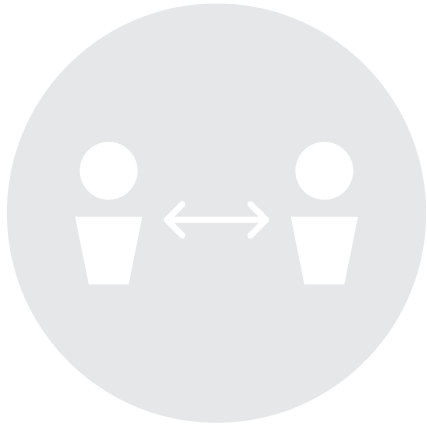
Died June 12, 2012 (aged 78)
Bloomington, Indiana, U.S.A.

Elinor Ostrom is the only woman to date to have won the Nobel Prize in Economics – an achievement all the more remarkable because she was not an economist. In fact, on hearing the announcement of her prize, most economists had to google her name and many naturally assumed it was a typo and that the real recipient was well-known male economist Bengt Holmstrom.

Ostrom's main contribution to the academic world and the reason that she won this prize was her identification of eight 'design principles' of common resource management. Her prolific body of work effectively debunked the harmful myth of Garrett Hardin's famous 'Tragedy of the Commons' essay. While economists and journalists were still dancing puppet-like to the tune of Hardin in their justification for privatisation, neo-liberal colonial land grabs and 'free' trade polices, Ostrom was quietly proving them all wrong.

Her work gave commons practitioners and researchers around the world inspiration as well as a framework for understanding and improving the co-management of resources. Ostrom's view saw people not as helpless peasants trapped in a destructive free-for-all of overconsumption but rather it recognised that communities had often developed complex and common sense systems for managing common resources.

Ostrom studied schemes as diverse as community managed forests in Nepal, common irrigation systems in Spain, mountain villages in Switzerland and Japan and sustainable fisheries in Indonesia and Maine. These systems



Ostram pointed out that co-users thrived if they worked together but that even the best communal schemes still failed once people began to act only as individuals ...

displayed the common features of being mutual and reciprocal, not being imposed from above and had often worked well for centuries without the interruption of the market or government. Ostram realised that over time these communities had been sharing, farming, fishing, woodchopping, irrigating and generally getting along just fine by negotiating co-usage rights and rules, boundaries and shares and by monitoring for rule-breakers. Such infringements in successful commons were dealt with by communities internally through fining and eventual exclusion from the resource.

Her research led Ostram to firmly believe that the governing of the commons needed to be organised from the ground up by communities, shaped to cultural norms and based on trust. Ostram pointed out that co-users thrived if they worked together but that even the best communal schemes still failed once people began to act only as individuals, or formed an elite. Ostrom put no faith in governments, the free market or the neo-liberal dominated

development industry but rather in the power of communities themselves to find workable solutions. 'What we have ignored is what citizens can do and the importance of real involvement of the people involved – versus just having somebody in Washington ... make a rule,' Ostrom said when her Nobel was announced.'

Ostram's was a life lived in a non-conformist way. She often spoke of her impoverished upbringing in a single parent household dominated by World War II austerity measures and how this had influenced her interest in cooperative institutions. She carried this approach into her own life by collaborating extensively with other academics from a range of disciplines as well as treating the subjects of her studies as real people. She is survived by her ever supportive husband Vincent with whom she worked closely over the years to set up a number of interdisciplinary study institutions.

– JOSEPH CEDERWALL

All hands on deck



EDITORIAL CREW



Joseph Cederwall

Joseph hails from the windswept South Coast of Wellington and studied Law and Anthropology. He is currently investigating the diverse participatory governance structures used by communities globally to collectively manage common resources.



Jessie Moss

Jessie grew up along the banks of the Avon river in Christchurch with the Moss' and Lockes and now resides in Newtown, Wellington, with her young family. As a mother she works hard to create strong resilient communities where raising children is everyone's business. She is also a teacher committed to inclusive education practices, where teaching and learning is reciprocal and equitable for all, for the common good.



Barnaby Bennett

Barnaby grew up in Whangarei and now lives in Christchurch. He doesn't really know where his home is anymore. Freerange was started to keep-in-common some of the many beautiful places, people and ideas floating around the planet at the moment.



Tim Gregory

Tim Gregory's local commons are the blacksands, subtropical rainforests, fertile foothills, and many peaceful streams and waterways that make up Waitakere, west of Auckland, in New Zealand. Tim is focused on the meaning-making activities that can inspire such a cultural shift and bringing together the many brilliant creative minds that can execute it.



DESIGN CREW



Beba McLean

Beba is from the misty hills of Wellington. She is a freelance designer/creative director and is interested in building strong, inclusive and environmentally conscious communities. Beba founded and currently runs a charity providing clothing to underprivileged children in Wellington.



Rebecca Walthall

Hailing from Auckland but now planted firmly in Wellington, Becca is constantly inspired by the ways that good design can encourage us to positively engage with others and our surrounds. www.rebeccawalthall.co.nz



CONTRIBUTING CREW

Andrea Brower

Andrea Brower is from the ahupua'a of Waipouli, on the island of Kauai. Her activism and academic work focuses on seeing and freeing the commons in order to make the possibilities of a more equitable, sustainable and democratic global food future a reality.

Silke Helfrich

From Jena Germany, Silke Helfrich writes and edits books and blogs about the commons. She travels internationally to connect groups who all see the necessity and value in living commonly. She informs political parties about the strategic benefit in discussing commons possibilities. www.commonsblog.de

David Bollier

American author, activist and policy strategist David Bollier, has spent the last decade promoting the commons internationally, notably with the Commons Strategy Group which he co-founded. He works tirelessly to reclaim the commons, fight against excess intellectual property laws and to encourage citizen action globally by writing, speaking and actioning. www.bollier.org



CONTRIBUTING CREW

Hannah Hopewell

Hannah Hopewell thinks, writes and makes art about the spaces marked by belonging. She dwells between the lumpy terrain of San Francisco and muddy shores of Auckland, where she is a doctoral researcher, and tutor of Spatial Design at Auckland University of Technology.

Leland Maschmeyer

Leland Maschmeyer is a designer in New York City and author on the philosophy of the commons.

Thomas Owen

Thomas Owen is from the shores of the Manawatu river, New Zealand. He researches, writes, and teaches about commons issues in global news media, intellectual property rights, HIV/AIDS medicines and indigenous education.

John Allan

John Allan is a student and practitioner of Landscape Architecture, Urban Design and Urban Permaculture who hails from Arch Hill in the centre of Auckland, the very city he is researching. John is passionate about the role of design and the commons in preparing cities for a post carbon society.

O. Ripeka Mercier

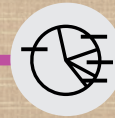
Ko Hikurangi te maunga, ko Waiapu te awa, ko Ngāti Porou te iwi, ko Ocean Ripeka Mercier te tangata. As a lecturer in Māori Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, Ocean feels a responsibility to present students with information, knowledge and heritage that is rightfully theirs; and sees the joy in her job as sitting back and enjoying how students engage with that academically, professionally and personally.

William Shannon

William Shannon is from Christchurch. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Australian National University in Canberra.



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