Two Volume Special Issue of The Commoner: Property, Commoning and Commons

~~ Call for Contributions to Volume 2 ~~

Introduction.

In legal and philosophical terms the organisation of a commons is encoded into property protocols, which structure its use, access and decision-making rights and responsibilities. Property, then, is central to debates about commons and commoning: how do commoners relate to each other with regard to a given resource and how is a commons defined vis-a-vis the rest of the world?

As discussed in Volume 1, property relations are not only exclusive, private property rights as instantiated within capitalist democracy (a *particular* conception of property). As a jurisprudential concept, property can be used to understand, analyse, reflect upon and organise social relations with regard to things in any context (the *general* conception of property). The conflation of the general with the particular conceals the historical and anthropological fact that property can be and is understood (very) differently and hence consolidates existing property regimes.

The purpose of this two volume Special Issue is to instigate further debate about property, commoning and commons. The call for contributions to the second volume continues on page two, following details about the first volume.

Volume 1: Property, Commoning and the Politics of Free Software, Issue 14, Winter 2010.

The first volume features a three chapter essay derived from a PhD thesis titled "Property, Commoning and the Politics of Free Software" and was published in The Commoner as Issue 14, Winter 2010. In three closely connected chapters - (i) 'Free Culture in Context: Property and the Politics of Free Software' (ii) 'Properties of Property: A Jurisprudential Analysis', (iii) 'Free Software as Property' – this volume contextualises the political economy of Free Software (and Free Culture) within a wider analysis of property relations through a philosophical and political inquiry into the materiality of immateriality from a commoners perspective within a framework of intergenerational struggles for self-determination, autonomy and community-led development.

See http://www.commoner.org.uk and http://commoning.wordpress.com for further details.

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For Volume 2 we are inviting two kinds of contributions.

On the one hand we are calling for stories about existing or emerging commons. Are you involved in a community-supported agriculture project, a Free Software project, a permaculture eco-village, a housing co-op or any other form of commoning and would you like to share a max. 5-10 pages story about how your group came together and how your commons is structured? We are looking here for practical insights into how social relations with regard to things can be configured in ways that are not dictated by capital. We are particularly interested in accounts that illuminate how communities share, develop and use resources and land in common. This will be helpful for other commoners by providing inspiration – a form of skill-share. It offers a platform to publicise your commoning project (of course anonymous stories are welcome for obvious reasons) and maps the territory of social relations with regard to things that are not defined by the measure of capital.

On the other hand, we are calling for academic pieces, theoretical musings and also responses and critiques to Volume 1, which aims to come to terms with property, commoning and commons in the context of Free Software.

The central purpose of this two volume Special Issue is to enrich and reanimate the language of property and explore the extent to which it is useful for projects of commoning, however we also welcome arguments for why property should *not* be applied to commons, in order to diversify the debate and open up for all critical questions concerning property, commoning and commons.

The deadline is – loosely as always - May First, 2011. Feel free to get in touch if you have suggestions for contributions: m.pedersen -at- lancaster.ac.uk