INTRODUCTION

The Queer Commons

Nadja Millner-Larsen and Gavin Butt

From one vantage point, "the commons" today might look like the proverbial dodo, facing extinction as a result of neoliberal privatization across the globe. The conventional idea of the commons, as a resource managed by the community that uses it, might appear hopelessly anachronistic in the twenty-first century. At present, increasing amounts of so-called public spaces are actually PoPS (privately owned public spaces), with all the restrictions on access and use that implies; oil industry pipeline incursions threaten indigenous peoples' long-standing use of land and water; and communal spaces are lost to gentrification at alarming rates in cities from London and New York to Jakarta and Johannesburg. When a mere 3 percent of English land, for example, can currently be considered common, and community resources are either threatened or bulldozed, or retained only at the cost of being price-tagged, gated, and policed, it could be said that the commons are running out of time as a category of political economy (Caffentzis 2016: 96). Some might say that they are quite literally *out-of-time*, as an ailing residuum of a precapitalist historical period, and now all too vulnerable to expropriation or removal by rapacious present-day economic forces.

This sense of a commons under threat, or as historically receding, has been paralleled in recent years by the rising power of a populist political cadre in the United States and Europe, seen by some to be acting in the interests of a "common" people alienated by decades of globalization and centrist governments (Garcia 2016). Right- and left-wing populist politicians have fashioned different images of "the people" they claim to represent, but have been united in doing so by distinguishing them from an "elite" class. With the success of the Brexit poll and the US presidential election in 2016, such a politics has come to be variously accompanied by egregious enactments of racial, national, and gendered forms of violence and exclusion. We hardly need to write that in Donald J. Trump such a

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politics finds its most lurid expressions, whether in the form of executive orders or tweets, whose purpose is to denigrate or curtail the rights of, for example, Mexican, Sudanese, Haitian, or Iranian migrants; Muslims; Native Americans; women; and trans people. If the history of the commons is also a history of attempts to *enclose it* through fences or other boundaries, then Trump's rhetoric exemplifies how building walls has also come to be a particularly resonant trope for his supporters, among whom are a significant number of conservative white nationalists and supremacists. That the interests of *these* people are presented as those of *the* people within Trump's discourse should be immediately obvious when considering who it attempts to shut out, whether in keeping them on the wrong side of the president's proposed border wall or outside the bathroom door (as a result of a 2017 directive rescinding federal protections therein for trans people). Indeed, Trump's recourse to an ideological notion of a "common people" is yet another symptom of the fact that, as Cheryl Harris (1993) famously argued, whiteness is a form of property that wields its power through claims to a natural (e.g., common) order.

If both the commons and the political solidarity of commoners are being enclosed and distorted in such ways, why bother with the commons as an idea or a thing today? And why the *queer* commons? Answer: because queer activism—not to mention queer life—is a particularly rich resource for imagining, experimenting with, and enacting the improvisational infrastructures necessary for managing the unevenness of contemporary existence.[1] Moreover, while not always labeled as such, grassroots politics in the past decade or two, and queer activism in particular, looks to have been significantly shaped by commons-forming initiatives. As Peter Linebaugh notes (2014: 24), radical activism across the globe from the Arab Spring to Occupy has comprised varied attempts to "common" city squares, from Tahrir Square to Gezi and Zuccotti Parks, and has involved antihierarchical forms of sharing (of food, space, knowledge) and of making decisions. Indeed, much of the encampment politics of Occupy and Gezi were *already* queer and coalitional in their building of a body politic, as some of the contributors to this volume and others suggest.[2] Such collectivized, horizontal forms of organization have also been significant in recent queer activism, from very different groups like FIERCE! in New York and Gay Shame in San Francisco to queer anarchist communities, like those associated with Bash Back! or the Queeruption festivals throughout the 2000s.[3] In the context of the privatizing and commodification of the gay agenda in the twenty-first century—through the mobilization of an individual rights-based politics, the rise of the nonprofit industrial complex,[4] or the enclosing of formerly free Pride festivals quite literally behind pay walls—such groups have worked

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to build broader political commonalities and establish resources that serve queer communities marginalized by mainstream LGBT politics.

FIERCE!, for example, was founded in 2000 in response to increased criminalization of LGBT youth of color in the gentrifying areas of the Christopher Street Piers in New York City. As a membership-led organization, it seeks to be run *by*, as well as *for*, its users, in order to encourage leadership-in-common and to trouble the divide between a professionalized body of "staff" and "members." This is an organization that emerged in the wake of 1980s and 1990s urban regeneration projects that targeted queer publics and the housing insecure, among other vulnerable populations, in its privatizing drive to subject urban space to a regime of "new enclosures."[5] We should also mention here the trans and queer feminist energies that shape the work of groups like Sisters Uncut and DIY Space for London in the UK, which, though not explicitly or narrowly queer in their political orientation, are notable for mobilizing issues of queerness through campaigning work on domestic violence and decolonization, and through the production of shared social spaces. In general, such instances of "queer commoning"—if indeed that is what we can call them—can be taken as varied ameliorative responses not only to the failures of mainstream LGBT politics but also to twenty-first-century austerity and gentrification: namely, to cuts in the state provision of social services and social housing, and the vanishing of urban infrastructures for the production of contemporary culture.

Crises of capitalism demand such responses, but they also provoke reactionary impulses. As a "cluster of promises," the commons offer a "frame for belonging" in the present whose anachronistic quality appears appealing on all sides (Pardy 2009: 195).[6] And embedded in that sense of a commons under threat is the presumption that the commons did in fact once exist. Indeed, the contemporary strain of leftist thought on the commons certainly revivifies a particular historical formation of English land management predating the rise of capitalism, one whose organizational form, in Silvia Federici's (2011) terms, offers a "historical alternative to both State and Private Property," thus "enabling us to reject the fiction that they are mutually exclusive and exhaustive of our political possibilities." If left-wing political theorists look to the commons as a recoverable site ruined by the spoils of capital, right-wing appeals project a reparative desire for a putatively organic unity lost in the *longue durée* of modernization. It was in his remarkably prescient attempt to develop a Marxist theory of fascism between the world wars that Ernst Bloch articulated his concept of the noncontemporaneous as a contradiction itself produced via the uneven development of capitalism. Such contradictions can be put to either progressive or regressive purposes—as witnessed in the rise of so-called

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new populism(s) in recent years. The commons might thus usefully be understood as what Bloch (1991: 101) called a "crooked remnant" of the past whose anticapitalist dimension must be harnessed for a critique of "the now." Furthermore, the work of more recent thinkers, including Jean-Luc Nancy, J. K. Gibson-Graham, and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, press upon us the idea that we have never, in fact, been common, if we take the common to entail a multiplicitous "quality of relations" whose form of community is not singular, pregiven, or circumscribed by the property regimes of capital.[7] They make the argument, in quite disparate ways, that the very idea, even *ideal*, of a commons when instanced within historical formations is entangled with, or compromised by, relations of power that imperil it.[8] Given the contested historical, geographic, and ontological foundations of the commons discourse that these authors survey, we propose to think the commons, following the late José Esteban Muñoz (2009: 1), as an ideality "not yet here." In positioning the commons as a horizon not yet here—that in fact never has been here in any fixed way—the concept's conceptual power is orientated toward the potentiality of a future in which more might be had by the many rather than by the few.

This special issue of *GLQ* takes its lead from some of the initiatives discussed above in order to explore the tentative relation between the *common* and the *queer*. How might the category queer open up a discourse that has emerged as one of the most important challenges to contemporary neoliberalization at both the theoretical and the practical level? Of course, this has proved a difficult task, largely because, as Lauren Berlant (2016: 397) has recently pointed out, the "commons concept" remains "incoherent, like all powerful concepts." So by way of introducing this special issue, we have chosen to pose a number of perspectives on the very queerness of "the commons" and to speculate on how those perspectives might be productively thought through the prerogatives of sexuality studies. If, since the early 1990s, the term *queer*, as George E. Haggerty and Molly McGarry (2007: 1) have argued, has "seemed almost magically to animate both the streets and the academy," activism and critical theory, the club and the literary journal, we have—somewhat remarkably—found the same to be true for the discourse of the commons. Circulating among guerrilla gardeners, prison activists, in DIY spaces, as well as within political philosophy and ecological policy, the concept of the commons has activated a diversity of social, cultural, and critical practices.

Genealogies of the (Queer) Common

Recent cultural theory has variously foregrounded the commons as a resource with nonexclusive rights of access or use, and it has turned to radical ontologies of the

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common in order to reconsider the essential multiplicity of personhood—a multiplicity (arguably) at the root of queer theory's refutation of the singular subject. Meanwhile, queer studies has also deepened its account of political economy by taking on the sexual economies of neoliberalism, global migration, and the intimacies of social reproduction.[9] But even while the discourse of the commons has developed in concert with feminist theorizations of labor and antiwork politics, the relationship between queer theory and queer life, on the one hand, and accounts of communization, on the other, have typically been held apart.[10] This segregation further disarticulates queer liberation struggles from that of anticapitalist politics and hinders efforts to sustain fugitive models of social reproduction already in practice.[11]

This is all the more curious for, as many of the contributions to this issue attest, sex is *already* central to the discourse of the commons from the perspectives of both its promoters and detractors. On the side of the former, for example, Federici's work has placed sexual demarcation at the root of the commons discourse. Federici's writing, and the activist struggles from which it emerged—the wages for housework movement and the Zerowork collective—provides us with an invaluable set of tools for the issue.[12] The groundbreaking *Caliban and the Witch* traced how the devaluation of women's labor (and communal knowledges) were a direct result of the loss of the commons in the enclosure of the open fields system. Federici (2014: 97) has thus made the extraordinary claim that the long, bloody process that Karl Marx called "primitive accumulation" had the effect of robbing women of communal lands while producing the female body as itself a common "natural resource." This recasting of the history of primitive accumulation, and of reproduction as a site of value creation and accumulation, also accounts for the politicization of multiple forms of sexuality in the middle ages, predating Michel Foucault's assignment of the discursive production of sex in the seventeenth century.[13]

At the center of political philosophy's "return to the commons" has been Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's influential book *Commonwealth*. Hardt and Negri here famously posed a turn to the singular "common" as opposed to "the commons." The focus on the common emerged from an analysis of the shift in the capitalist economy from industrial production to biopolitical, or immaterial, forms of production alongside the generalization of precarious working conditions. For Hardt (2010a: 135–36), this entailed a shift in the hierarchy of forms of property that has allowed the common to take a central place in economic relations: the productivity of immaterial goods depends on their reproducibility rather than their exclusivity, so their value increases the more it is shared, or "commoned." But Hardt and Negri (2009: 62–63) also lean on the category queer to articulate their

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concept of the multitude: "The biopolitical event," they write, "is always a queer event, a subversive process of subjectivization that, shattering ruling identities and norms, reveals the link between power and freedom, and thereby inaugurates an alternative production of subjectivity."

Certainly, these thinkers understand the discourse of the commons as one that presents a challenge—or at least an alternative—to the property relations of global capital, and one that might therefore offer us a useful framework for rethinking identity formations beyond what Judith Butler (2005: 136) has called "the self-sufficient 'I' as a kind of possession." If the beginnings of proletarianization are at the root of sexual demarcation, then we might also see the project of abolishing the wage contract (central to those activist struggles in which Federici has been embedded, and Hardt and Negri draw on) as a precondition for abolishing normative sexual identities.[14] Indeed, *Commonwealth* situates the queer critique of identity as a crucial ground to launch the project of the abolition of identity at the core of the common's "abolition of property and the abolition of the state" (Hardt and Negri 2009: 333–34)—a critique mobilized across numerous strains of "communization theory."[15] But beyond mere critique, Hardt and Negri, like other Autonomist thinkers, are indebted to the black radical tradition's conceptualization of revolutionary transformation as essentially abolitionist—a project of both tearing down and building up that is crucial to any queer engagement with the discourse of the commons.[16]

On the side of the commons' detractors, Garrett Hardin's infamous "Tragedy of the Commons" (1968) is also cut through with preoccupations regarding sexual reproduction and the ruination of public resources. For Hardin, the category of the open pasture serves as a placeholder for a certain "sex panic" induced by a racialized and gendered anxiety over the purported excesses of the US welfare state.[17] This is an anxiety that, as Beth Capper and Arlen Austin discuss in their contribution to this issue, prefigures the "welfare queen" myth produced and popularized in the Reagan and Clinton presidencies. This image of the oversexed and unwed black mother (one recently resurrected by Trump[18]) promoted the fantasy that, as Angela Mitropoulos (2012: 192) has argued, "welfare had catastrophically supplanted the labour market as a source of income, just as it had displaced the normative family as the appropriate site of care and support." With the welfare queen as its figurehead, the notion of a "culture of dependency" trumpeted by a neoliberal war on the poor reveals a deep preoccupation with forms of intimacy on the part of the state—a complex domopolitics that has been expertly traced by queer scholars of neoliberalism including Dean Spade, Lisa Duggan, David Eng, and Lauren Berlant, among others.[19] Moreover, as Spade has shown, these antipoor preoccupations went hand in hand with gentrification and the expansion of impris-

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onment in the United States. This sex panic (prefigured by Hardin) has resulted in a literal enclosure of life in the prison system and the continued targeting of the poor, sex workers, migrants, people with disabilities, those of color, and trans people.[20] Contemporary thinkers have paid close attention to how "the escalating onslaught of violent, state-orchestrated enclosures following neoliberalism's ascent to hegemony has unmistakably demonstrated the *persistent* role that unconcealed, violent dispossession continues to play in the reproduction of colonial and capitalist social relations in both the domestic and global contexts" (Coulthard 2014: 9).

In his contribution to this volume, Eric Stanley traces the devastating effects of such violent neoliberal policies for the city of San Francisco. Writing about the campaigns of Gay Shame against the dispossessions caused by white cis-normative urban privatization in the 2000s, Stanley highlights the complicity of LGBT organizations and municipal authorities in developing "public" spaces requiring the enforced removal of undesirable bodies. Drawing out the importance of critiques of settler colonialism for trans/queer activist responses to gentrification, Stanley also calls our attention to another significant aspect of thinking the common as a category distinct from the private or the public. Indeed, as Marina Vishmidt (2015) points out, "the category of 'the public' . . . was only ever established through contracts of exclusion (women, racialised or migrant others, the poor)" and "access to 'public goods' has never been simply defined in terms of universal rights . . . resources are allocated on the basis of particular kinds of legal status, themselves the result of the classification of people into ethno-nationalistic categories."[21] Such a perspective makes clear—again—how the accumulation and demarcation of difference is central to the development of capitalism, and the enclosure and reenclosure of the commons on which it depends. Considering the discourse of a queer commons thus demands an examination of how identity formations continue to be produced and reproduced through racialized and gendered "property statuses" that accompany legal infrastructures such as the marriage bond, but also function through the historical organization of "chattel slavery, land theft, and genocide" (Spade 2011: 31).

The category of the commons is further tricky to mobilize because it is not, in some contexts, *necessarily* incompatible with the interests of capital. As many critiques of Hardt and Negri's thesis have pointed out, if cognitive capitalism produces conditions of communization, so too does it create new conditions for capital accumulation. The more policy-oriented leftist discourses of the commons (such as those of Elinor Ostrom and David Bollier) view the commons not as a determinate negation of the state and the market but as a way to temper some of neoliberalism's most rampant forms of marketization. At a more nefarious level, the discourse

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of the commons has also been appropriated by various corporate and governing bodies—from the World Bank to the UN—to justify, for example, the "protection" of lands previously managed by those who lived on them.[22] To take a particularly violent example, the Israeli state has turned to the category of public land to justify the continued dispossession of Palestinian commons.[23] As Ash Amin and Philip Howell (2016: 5-6) have written, issues of migration, of "the free movement of labor, not to mention the rights of refugees and exiles have become . . . source[s] of grievances over entitlements to shrinking common-pool resources." A politics of the commons, they argue, can be quite easily mobilized in the service of neoliberal/neoconservative interests where any "'common' reduced to the 'public' becomes wholly complicit" in such practices.

Such systems of appropriation dovetail with another important critique of the commons central to our endeavor. A number of articles included here point to the problem of the discourse's tendency to occlude forms of land dispossession central to settler colonialism. Both the concept's "capitalocentrism" and its tendency to overlook the particularities of indigeneity arise from the centrality of the theory of primitive accumulation to the "resuscitation" of the commons.[24] As capital's foundational drama, Marx's theory proposed a formative link between violent acts of dispossession ("conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder") and the emergence of capitalist accumulation. In the forced removal of commoners (peasants, women, indigenous peoples) from their land, once collectively maintained territories and resources are opened up for enclosure (and privatization). This process establishes the precondition for the institution of capitalist relations, which produces a "class" of workers "free" to enter the wage relation in order to ensure their survival—a process otherwise known as proletarianization. In privileging the production of the proletarian worker, this narrative tends to occlude forms of access, use, and dispossession that both pre- and postdate capital's origin story. Both Glen Coulthard and Federici provide an important conceptual shift in thinking the history of capitalism away from the perspective of the (white cis) male waged worker toward that of the colonized. Coulthard (2014: 12) cautions against a "blanket 'return to the commons'" when "the 'commons' not only belong to somebody—*the First Peoples of this land*—they also deeply inform and sustain Indigenous modes of thought and behavior that harbor profound insights into the maintenance of relationships within and between human beings and the natural world built on principles of reciprocity, nonexploitation and respectful coexistence." Such an approach to the commons would not only downplay histories of colonial dispossession but also risk overlooking the kinds of practices that might actually invoke a repatterning of the social in an ethical and just way.

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The centrality of land—as a site of belonging, topography, or ordering of space—to the discourse of the commons might in fact aid us in recentering issues of indigenous sovereignty into queer responses to state power.[25] In this issue, Macarena Gómez-Barris identifies what she calls "an extractive view" of land and territory that "empties the land of Native peoples . . . to assert the legitimacy of dominant modes of seeing that divide nature from the human." Exploring the photography of Laura Aguilar, a queer Chicana artist who pictures her body in the landscapes of New Mexico and California, Gómez-Barris elucidates the artist's queer challenge to this "view" of such lands. In using her naked body to echo the folds and contours of the landscape, Aguilar shows us "that it is still (in)visibly saturated with Indigenous and Mestiza presence." And in their analysis of resistance to the gentrification plans announced in 2013 for Gezi Park, Istanbul, Cenk Özbay and Evren Savcı draw attention to the difficulties of modern-day claims to commons ideals once "uneven histories of dispossession" of a particular space or territory are unearthed. Indeed, part of the task of establishing a queer commons, they argue, is to "intervene in the erasures neoliberalism performs on collective memories of public space," thereby allowing potentially competing claims and grievances—historic and contemporary—to animate and inform future uses made of it. All these contributors agree that such a difficult reckoning with past uses (and abuses) of space, in relation to present-day realities, is an ethical and political requirement for any queer commons worth pursuing. Rather than dismiss the discourse altogether, Coulthard (2014: 8) argues that "when placed in dialogue with feminist, anarchist, queer and postcolonial traditions, it can be useful for analyzing the relationship between white settler states and indigenous peoples."

A similar rewiring of the commons concept's problematic reliance on a normative idea of the resource might also be possible when entered into a dialogue with queer studies. Many engagements on the part of environmental justice movements tend to think of the commons as one or another "natural resource"—from land to air, oceans, or forests. For Hardt, there are two contrasting versions of the common resource—if ecological movements tend to envision commons as inherently limited and thus in need of protection, those focused on social forms of the common (movements for net neutrality, for example) tend to see their object as a limitless sphere of production. Nevertheless, even while Hardt (2010b: 266) argues that both forms of the common "defy and are deteriorated by property relations," they are dominated by the concept of the resource. Such an understanding of the commons, in Linebaugh's (2008: 279) terms, is "misleading at best and dangerous at worst[, for] the commons . . . expresses relationships in society that are inseparable to nature. It might be better to keep the word as a verb, an activity, rather than

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as a noun, a substantive. But this too is a trap. Capitalists and the World Bank would like us to employ commoning as a means to socialize poverty and privatize wealth." The rejection of a notion of the commons as an object to be found in the world dovetails with the Midnight Notes Collective's contention that commons are actually relations of solidarity—a contention that echoes the influence of more anarchist practices such as mutual aid and prefiguration (Caffentzis 2016: 101).

But we would caution against dispensing with the resource version of the concept quite so fast—for it has been a great province of queer activism and queer life more broadly to transform what is normatively perceived as lack (of capacity, able-bodiedness, decorum, or representation) into a shared resource.[26] Douglas Crimp's argument, for example, in "How to Have Promiscuity in an Epidemic" (1987) revalued sex as itself a resource to be mined, valued, proliferated, celebrated—and creatively managed by its community of users—during the continuing AIDS crisis. The beginnings of the AIDS crisis figure strongly in what few previous mentions of a "queer commons" predate this volume.[27] Both Kevin Floyd (2004) and Gavin Brown (2015) have looked to gay cruising sites in areas such as Christopher Street or Jackson Heights in New York and sites of "common ground" like "forests, heath and beaches," respectively, where queer uses of space revalue them as resources that are not reducible to property ownership (Brown 2015: 208). In these pages, Amalle Dublon's examination of Ultra-red's *Second Nature* offers us a reading of sex's unrepresentability as an *aesthetic resource* for the production of a queer pastoral imaginary. Exploring the sexual commons of black and Latinx queers in Griffith Park, Los Angeles, Dublon critiques the ideals of pastoral art that have contributed to received imaginaries of the commons and foregrounds instead Ultra-red's "contrarian noise" of sexual contact and policing.

The late 1980s and early 1990s is an era that looms large for other contributors to this volume. Christina Hanhardt, and the collective of writers comprising Julie Tolentino, Leeroy Kun Young Kang, Tara Hart, Vivian A. Crockett, Amira Khusro, and Dragon Mansion, consider the troublesome question of how, if at all, a queer commons might be representable, especially as a heterogeneous and maligned body politic. For Hanhardt, in her detailed study of the needle exchange programs of ACT UP, the problem is one of how, if at all, differently maligned groups within a single activist organization could join political forces. The maligning of addicts as a "throwaway class" of persons causes Hanhardt to speculate on the "lumpen" character of ACT UP's political constituency—as an under- or nonclass. Tolentino et al. draw on Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's important thinking on "the undercommons" to characterize the kinds of sensual, sexual, and social connections made at New York's sex-positive Clit Club throughout the

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1990s. The club became renowned for its openness to varied forms of gender presentation and oft-decried sexual practices, as well as welcoming people from racial groups and economic backgrounds otherwise denigrated by other gay clubs and negatively affected by policing and gentrification in New York City at the time. In trying to "get with the undercommon sensuality," the authors collectively draw on Harney and Moten's ideas about a fugitive blackness to riff the multifarious and somewhat unmanageable object that Clit Club appears to be when viewed through the retrospective lenses of "history" and "scholarship."

These examples of queer organizing—and pleasure—also underscore the fact that the commons discourse is not only about envisioning new models of public, collective, or common ownership. It is also, importantly, about transforming the modes of social reproduction on which such mechanisms depend, for, as Federici (2011: 6) points out, "the 'commoning' of the material means of reproduction is the primary mechanism by which a collective interest and mutual bonds are created." In this sense, the verb form "commoning" also refers to a performative project (Joseph 2017: 212). As Rana Jaleel (2013) has usefully argued in one of the few previous efforts to articulate a queer politics of commoning, this "would place the politics of social regeneration alongside queer efforts to belong to, care for, and be dependent on others in ways that endure."

Beth Capper and Arlen Austin turn to a slightly earlier history in order to take up the politics of social reproduction. In their examination of two specific autonomous groups within the 1970s Wages for Housework movement—Wages Due Lesbians and Black Women for Wages for Housework—Capper and Austin take up two lines of inquiry that further trouble any reading of Federici's feminism as narrowly heteronormative. First, they probe Federici's provocation about how coming out as a lesbian might be understood as a kind of "going on strike" (in refusing reproductive labor). Second, they explore nonnormativizing claims on the figure of the housewife by black feminist activists agitating for political alliances between black sex workers and domestic laborers. Braiding both of these together, Capper and Austin return to the scene of 1970s feminism in order to identify within it political tendencies from which to articulate a queer "uncommon" theory and praxis.

While many political theorists of the common discussed above draw on Marxian categories to articulate ongoing forms of what David Harvey (2003) calls "accumulation by dispossession," those more indebted to the trajectories of critical race theory, queer theory, ethnic studies, black studies, and cultural studies more broadly have reclaimed the category of *dis*possession as a site of radical un/reworlding in the face of ongoing crisis. Muñoz's own articulations of a "brown

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commons" are indebted to this strain of critical thinking that includes, among others, the work of Lauren Berlant, Moten and Harney, and J. Jack Halberstam and Tavia Nyong'o. In common with Berlant (2016: 395), these thinkers all emphasize "*non*sovereign relationality"—a radically *dis*possessed self—as "the foundational quality of being in common," and recast politics itself as a site that is, fundamentally improvisational, potentially antagonistic, and even extralegal.[28] In this volume, Ashon Crawley draws on this trajectory of contemporary thought in his experimental address to thinking and feeling the queer relationality of black Pentecostalism. Here he uses the form of an epistolary exchange between "A" and "Moth" as a way to allegorize "the renunciation of the subject for the entangled folds of blackness" as itself a revaluation of dispossession. As Crawley (2017: 24–25) writes, in another context, "Otherwise names the subjectivity in the commons, an asubjectivity that is not about the enclosed self but the open, available, enfleshed organism."

Contributors to this issue thereby draw on multiple trajectories to provide analyses equally attuned to the material conditions of colonial dispossession and the possibilities of a nonaccumulative repossession through the trajectories of queer worlding. Yet our best resource for such a project is still the work of Muñoz, the only scholar to date who has repeatedly brought the queer and the common together in his late thinking on the punk rock commons and the brown commons.[29] Muñoz's scholarship offers us an important engagement with another genealogy of the commons concept—that developed by Jean-Luc Nancy. In this late work, Muñoz describes queerness as a mode of "being-with" emergent in the forms of encounter that animate punk rock sociality. The queer commons, for Muñoz, is a nonexploitative utopian collectivity that is nevertheless grounded in punk's politics of the negative. By mining Nancy's concept of the singular-plural, Muñoz develops a notion of community as one that is aleatory, improvisatory, and essentially multiplicitous rather than homogenized and holistic. Crucially this community is always in the process of becoming, orienting itself toward future, potential queer worlds (Muñoz 2013b: 96).

Muñoz's summoning of the singular-plural calls on us to creatively explore radical ontologies of the common from the scene of the punk club to that of the network. This call is answered in this issue by contributions from Zach Blas and Diarmuid Hester, who explore social, technological, and imaginary communities made possible through encounters within DIY queer networks.[30] Punk is a touchstone for Blas and Hester, as it is for Muñoz, underscoring its importance as a generative cultural moment and set of cultural practices for thinking through the shape of a queer commons, specifically in the figuring or creating of anarchist or

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quasi-anarchistic, self-organizing communities.[31] Riffing on Derek Jarman's dystopian imagining of a punk future in his 1978 film *Jubilee*, Blas renders a twenty-first-century update of this vision, looking forward to 2033: the date of the internet's silver jubilee. Blas's point is to imagine a future for queer sociality *after* the internet, indeed "contra-internet," as he terms it, where an "infrastructural commons" exists beyond the corporatized web. Hester explores the fraught autonomy of a queer commons in his exploration of the blog of a gay poet and novelist, Dennis Cooper. Looking back over the removal of Cooper's blog by Google in 2016, he highlights the vulnerability of queer contacts to corporate erasure while reminding us of their ability to persist in the most inhospitable of places.

The attempt to conceptualize a new discourse of commoning signals, at bottom, a search for alternative models of organizing life beyond those produced by the state and the market. This is a question that has remained at the heart of queer studies since its inception. Reestablishing dispossession at the core of the commons concept as a central feature of our critical engagements with contemporary capitalism opens up the possibility of developing a critique that is equally attentive to the foundational "we" of personhood as it is to the climate(s) within which we navigate our social lives.

Always Been Common

To return to the present conditions from where we began this introduction, right-wing populism defines the "common people" as a culturally homogeneous grouping whose interests are posed in contrast to those of "others" whose false threat of encroachment is continuously reimagined as a fantasy of the unruly exterior. Trump's rhetorical reversals pose the nation as a "surrounded fort" facing threats from all manner of outsides—the migrant, the black, the brown, the queer. But as Harney and Moten (2013: 17) begin *The Undercommons*, this is not, in fact, a "false image." The "fort" really is "surrounded, is besieged by what still surrounds it, the common beyond and beneath—before and before—enclosure." The wall must be built because the common has already made its way through it before enclosure, the bathroom must be privatized because it has already been made public. We have never been common and we have always been common, but our task remains: to disturb "the facts on the ground with some outlaw planning" (ibid.).

"We cannot represent ourselves. We can't be represented," write Harney and Moten (ibid.: 20). These words have reverberated for us in multiple ways as we have put this issue together. It is, in part, why we have solicited multiple forms of writing from our contributors, from long-form scholarly essays and collectively

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authored writings mixing analysis with community testimony to shorter writings presented here in a "Dossier." In the latter, contributors have written speculative futural imaginings, tightly focused case studies, and experimental epistolary exchanges. Our hope is that across this collection of diverse works, the promise of the "we" of a queer commons might begin to be heard, even if, ultimately, it is infested with dissensus and in excess of what these pages contain. The queer common is not yet here, but it has also already been happening in the "experiment of the hold," in the "engaged dispossession" of study, in the queer encampments from Gezi Square to Oakland, and in the underground networks of hormone exchange.[32]

We begin this special issue with an excerpt from Muñoz's forthcoming book *Sense of Brown*, which the author was working on at the time of his death in 2013, and which is a crucial complement to his work on punk and critical utopianism. Growing out of Muñoz's work on the queer world-making practices of queer artists of color, he formulates an understanding of a *brown* commons as ways of being-together forged by people surviving, even thriving, in the face of racist, neocolonial, and capitalist forms of subjugation and control. Importantly, this politicized "sense" of brown here is not only avowedly intersectional across categories of identity—of ethnicity, linguistic use, gender, sexuality, class—but also *more than human*. It is an affective continuum arising out of people *and* things, "of feelings, sounds, buildings, neighborhoods, environments, and nonhuman organic life." Moreover, it is made up of relations *between* these things, encounters among them that cannot be known in advance. "Brownness is about contact. . . . [it] is a being with, being alongside."

The brown commons also entails a particular turn to the material of the past. As "an homage to the history of Brown Power," this is a commons born from an insurrectionism embedded in "the sense of brown in the Chicana walk out of 1968" and in the brown of "the brown berets." This is a relationship to the liberationist past that is not enclosed by nostalgia. Rather, Muñoz turns to the past to make "the point that the world is not becoming brown but has been brown." It is in this materialist spirit that contributors to this issue approach the past—not as a site from which to imagine a commons free from social antagonism but in order to wrestle with the material traces of insurrectionism from which to build urgent political imaginaries for the present. From the dance floor of the Clit Club to the tracts of Wages Due Lesbians and Black Women for Wages for Housework, to the runway rage of Gay Shame and the coalition building of ACT UP's needle exchange—these histories challenge us "to touch queer and trans history," in an attempt not to authorize or master it as a grand narrative but to aid us in realizing a critical utopianism borne from the realization "that one is not starting anything

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but [is] instead fortunate enough to be a participant in something vaster, something common."[33]

Notes

1. Lauren Berlant (2016: 394) has recently addressed the role of the commons in the context of "the infrastructural breakdown of modernist practices of resource distribution, social relation, and affective continuity." At such moments of crisis, the political, as Berlant suggests, comes to be understood as the reinvention of infrastructures for managing the violent contingencies of contemporary life. Alternative infrastructural practices of association and care have been one of the great provinces of queer life and activism.
2. See Özbay and Savcı, this issue. See also Jaleel 2013; Pérez Navarro 2016; Vivian 2013; and Millner-Larsen 2013.
3. On Queeruption, see Brown 2007. On Bash back!, see Baroque and Eanelli 2011.
4. See Spade 2011: 28.
5. This is the Midnight Notes Collective's term (1990). On the impact of "Quality of Life" campaigns on queer sociality, see Delany 1999.
6. Maree Pardy (2009) uses these terms to describe the affective texture of multiculturalism.
7. Federici (2012) has warned that the concept of "community" must be intended not "as a gated reality," or as a social grouping based on race, ethnicity, religion, or exclusive interests, "but rather as a quality of relations, a principle of cooperation and of responsibility to each other and to the earth, the forests, the seas, the animals."
8. As Jean-Luc Nancy (1991: xxxix) has warned, "The community that becomes *a single* thing (body, mind, fatherland, Leader . . .) necessarily loses the *in* of being-*in*-common." Where J. K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, and Stephen Healy (2016: 196) contend that "the community that commons is not pregiven . . . [but] constituted through the process of commoning," such modalities of being-in-common are occluded in the kind of community touted by the populist right. To frame the noncontemporaneity of the commons within a discourse of nostalgia is, ultimately, yet another form of enclosure, for, as J. Kēhaulani Kauanui (2013) has argued, the concept is itself "historically racialized and gendered." By tracing the discourse's entanglement in the history of the North American expropriation of indigenous land by English settlers, Kauanui shows that the commons is *not* an ideal space outside the violence of property relations.
9. See, especially, Eng 2010; and Duggan 2003. The *GLQ* special issue "Queer Studies and the Crisis of Capitalism" (Rosenberg and Villarejo 2012) provides an important set of tools in this regard.
10. While less widely acknowledged, Autonomist discourses of the commons are also

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indebted to the black radical tradition as well as feminist Marxism(s). See James, Lee, and Chaulieu 1974.

11. We are thinking here of the networks of care that have flourished in queer communities in the absence of state provisions as well as the fugitivity of "undercommon appositionality" that Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013) locate in the practice of black study. The trajectories traced here would be impossible without the important work of Harney and Moten which we discuss further toward the end of this introduction.
12. In *Wages against Housework*, Federici ([1975] 2012) famously points to the fact that neither heterosexuality nor homosexuality eliminate work. Both, for her, imply particular working conditions, where if homosexuality signifies worker control of the means of production, it cannot in itself realize the goal of overcoming the wage relation.
13. "The witch trials provide an instructive list of the forms of sexuality that were banned as 'non-productive': homosexuality, sex between young and old, sex between people of different classes, anal coitus, coitus from behind (reputedly leading to sterile relations), nudity, and dances. Also proscribed was the public, collective sexuality that had prevailed in the middle ages" (Federici 2014: 194). Carolyn Dinshaw's (1999) work on medieval sexualities is also instructive here.
14. Hardt and Negri echo the argument of Théorie Communiste, that the abolition of the value-form would require a process of self-abolition. See Mattin 2013: 53–67. It should be noted that the discourse of self-abolition often overlooks the "standpoint," in Harney and Moten's (2013: 93) words, "of those who had already been abolished and remained."
15. Much communization theory (Tiqqun and the Invisible Committee, Théorie Communiste, and others) is critical of Hardt and Negri's position, but the role of self-abolition in the contestation of capital is nevertheless central to this radical strain of contemporary thought, and one that has recently been mobilized within queer anarchism and Marxist feminism(s). On the potential intersections of communization theory and "anti-essentialist critiques of raced and gendered identities—gender abolitionist feminism, queer insurrectionism, and Afro-pessimism" (Palace 2012), see *LIES: A Journal of Materialist Feminism*. On communization theory more broadly, see Noys 2012.
16. Angela Davis (2005: 73) describes W. E. B. DuBois's concept of an "abolition democracy" as not only "a negative process of tearing down, but it is also about building up, about creating new institutions." On abolition as "already and of necessity the struggle for the promise of communism, decolonization, and settler decolonization," see Jared Sexton (2016: 593). On Italian Autonomism's relation to the black radical tradition in general, and the work of C. L. R. James in particular, see Harney and Moten 2013: 65.
17. For more on the logic of the sex panic, see Duggan 2006: 71–76.
18. See Chang 2017.
19. Dean Spade (2011: 112–19) describes how the Reagan presidency mobilized this

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mythic image as part of its campaign to dismantle social assistance programs in the 1990s.

20. See Spade 2011: 53–55.
21. For a parallel argument on gender as property in the field of critical legal studies, see Katyal 2017.
22. See Caffentzis 2016: 99.
23. See Wolfe 2013: 257–79.
24. See Harvey 2003. On the "capitalocentrism" of the commons concept, see Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy 2016.
25. On indigenous sovereignty and land use, see Byrd 2011.
26. Thanks to Park McArthur, Constantina Zavitsanos, and Jeannine Tang for helping us to articulate this point.
27. Here, Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner's foundational essay "Sex in Public" (1998) is a resource on the radicality of queer sexual culture, as is Warner's (2014) important work on counterpublics.
28. For more on the extralegality of revolutionary politics, see Harney and Moten 2013: 18.
29. This special issue of *GLQ* was initially conceived by Gavin Butt and José Esteban Muñoz in 2013. As has been widely acknowledged, Muñoz's untimely death that year robbed contemporary study of a uniquely dynamic and campaigning voice. It also brought to a sudden end his pioneering work on the commons. This issue, we hope, albeit belatedly, recognizes the generative importance of Muñoz's work in this area. The guest editors dedicate this special issue to his memory.
30. Blas is part of a collective of writers who have also previously considered the "queer commons." See Barrett et al. 2016.
31. See Butt 2016.
32. On "the experiment of the hold," see Harney and Moten 2013: 99. "Engaged dispossession" is Halberstam's term (2013: 5). On genderhacking, see Mary Maggic's DIY biohacking project, "Open Source Estrogen" (2015), Ryan Hammond's "Open Source Gendercodes (OSG)" (2016), and Preciado 2013. Contemporary biohacking projects also have roots in queer activism's campaigns for access to knowledge from the beginnings of the AIDS crisis.
33. All above quotes in this paragraph are taken from Muñoz 2013a.

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