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Editorial: (Un)Commoning Continued

The Commoning Ethnography Editorial Collective
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After a year of publication break, *Commoning Ethnography* is back not only with a new issue, but with a new editorial collective. We would like to begin this issue by acknowledging the labour and care of Lorena Gibson and Eli Elinoff who founded and have shaped the journal so far. Since its first issue in 2018, *Commoning Ethnography* has been more than just a platform for ethnographic writing: it has been an experiment in collaborative knowledge-production and bringing forth the possibility of commoning academic practice itself. Lorena and Eli established a journal that challenged the transactional and hierarchical models of blind peer-review, committing instead to ethos of a peer-engaged review process grounded in collegiality, collaboration, and intellectual care. We value and honour their labour and their vision and see our work not as a departure, but rather as a continuation of the political, ethical, and methodological trajectories they set in motion which consistently foregrounded attention to power, affect, and the unequal circumstances under which knowledge is produced.

The contributions in this issue reflect precisely this orientation: they are situated, collaborative, and committed to tracing various forms of commoning across everyday life, sometimes tentatively, sometimes through tension, and sometimes in opposition. At the same time, they remind us that commoning always coexists with practices of uncommoning and enclosure. This tension between possibility and fracture, between solidarity and struggle, is central to both

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ethnographic inquiry and the politics of publishing, and it remains at the heart of this journal. In that spirit, we invite future contributors, collaborators, and readers to continue commoning with us, both through writing and through the collective care required to maintain open and accessible knowledge spaces.

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In this issue, we bring together reflective and engaged writing that challenges norms of ethnographic writing and explores the boundaries of ethnographic knowledge. This issue features papers from authors based in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Norway who present a rich diversity of content on different focus regions including Canada, Italy, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, the United States, and New Zealand. The authors' ethnographic and theoretical accounts shed light on the multiple commoning projects that exist within contemporary life, spanning from social movements to medical spaces, from folklore to the politics of consent, and from creative practices to various intimate areas of social life.

Some of the papers invite reflection on commoning projects that are anchored to meaning-making process of space and time. For instance, Chelsea Rozanski and Sara Rodriguez Huenchullan examine the prefigurative politics of a Grower Activist Collective in Calgary, Canada, where, as they suggest, 'critical urban gardening functions as both ecological care and political resistance'. Using participatory methods, their study explores how the very actions of sharing seeds alongside knowledge establish the foundation of communal solidarity, arguing that in an era of environmental degradation and social inequality, the concept of the 'commons' offers a framework for reimagining resource management through shared stewardship and collective care.

Leotta and Tiné examine the legacy and contemporary significance of Petru Fudduni, a semi-legendary Sicilian folk poet of the 17th century, among local people in the Sicilian town of Palermo. Building upon archival and field research conducted in January-February 2025, they argue that Fudduni is a 'floating signifier' that acquires different meanings depending on the socio-cultural values of the people who remember him and his stories. And yet, rather than creating further divide across the social actors involved, the authors suggest that through these multiple processes of signification, local people appropriate the figure of Fudduni, more or less consciously, as one that is able to reconcile the different souls and characteristics of Palermo, 'working class and aristocracy, the sacred and the profane; low culture and high art'. They suggest that remembering Fudduni is an act of 'commoning' the local heritage, and that 'in such a stratified context, the memory of Fudduni as a symbol of Sicilianness transcends divisions and unifies the local people under a common cultural heritage.'

Megan Gette theorizes 'incoherence' as a mode of attuning to wind as an atmospheric process. In the oilfields of the Permian Basin (a geological region of West Texas/New Mexico, USA), she makes 'listening devices' from debris collected at refinery and well sites. As she writes, 'these instruments figure a relation between the toxicity of oil and gas emissions and the rhythms of everyday life downwind, where exposure often evades regulatory legibility. The sound traces wind's patterns and evasions, foregrounding the ephemeral and fragmentary textures through which atmospheric relations are sensed and lived.'

But if the notion of commoning emphasizes the relationships and shared activities that bind a community together, what can be done by researchers and activists when these communities are highly divided and 'uncommoned', with all the issues that this might cause, or when projects of commoning have a negative impact on communities? Some of the papers in this issue present some thought-provoking perspectives on these very issues.

For instance, Maksuda Khanam examines how middle-class women in Bangladesh experience health-seeking support within biomedicalised maternity care, highlighting tensions between women's embodied knowledge and technology-driven medical authority. Within this biomedical framework, she argues, 'women's bodies are treated as machines requiring technological monitoring, with mind and body separated and only clinical symptoms prioritised.' Through her examination, she demonstrates that economic privilege does not shield middle-class women from inadequate support. She highlights 'how systemic reliance on technology and standardized protocols can inadvertently overshadow professional judgment and diminish attention to women's embodied experiences.' Here, 'uncommoning' is still the norm, as poorer women's experiences remain impacted by limited access to care, and at the same time, middle-class women who have more access to resources and information face resistance from health care practitioners. In this context, then, there seems to be a 'negative' effect of commoning health practices, where standardisation and biomedicalization of practices impact women's agency and well-being.

Paola Tiné's paper focuses on the case study of 68-year-old Dhriti, whom she met in Nepal during fieldwork in 2018-9. Her story invites reflection on the condition of poorer households – which in most cases still nowadays belong to those from lower caste families backgrounds – in the context of urban Nepal today. Tiné portrays here a case study of 'non commoning', showing the reality of a divided society where the consequences of centuries of class divisions and discriminations are still visible, and where familial flows of care are impacted by conflicting and clashing needs dictated by capitalistic logics. Such situations raise questions on the many commoning possibilities and challenges we must deal with to produce engaged ethnographies that take into account the diversities of our contexts of study and each time revise and readjust our lenses of investigation.

In a different vein from the commoning and uncommoning projects, some papers in this issue show perspectives on resistance to social norms. For instance, in the context of conflicting marriage ideals and non-marriage choices among women in Pakistan, Ayesha Chaudhry examines how women's 'emotional introspection leads to empathic dissonance due to the perceived realisation of diverging trajectories of temporal striving' among kin members, in other words showing a situation of what could be seen as uncommoned emotions which leads women who don't conform to social expectation to experience a sense of loneliness (*tanhai).*

Finally, the reflections by Ijaana Moir on the 'privilege' of refusal in her essay on sex work in New Zealand, reveal another perspective on how non-conforming behaviour and resistance could lead to societal change. She frames refusal as an act of resistance to dominant power structures, which can foster change at multiple levels. As she notes, 'the privilege of refusal is not a burden to bear alone, but a tool for collective liberation'.

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