

# EDGE EFFECTS DISCUSSION

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This is an edited extract of a discussion around themes within *On a Proletarian Soil* that took place as part of the Edge Effects programme at CCA: Glasgow.

**Simon Yuill:** Thank you first for coming along, it's nice to see you all here. I want to first of all let Nuno and Emma introduce themselves. Four years ago, almost to the day, the three of us took part in a discussion around the commons that Emma organised in Glasgow as part of her project, which we will talk about, to do with her PhD research.<sup>1</sup> I gave a talk at that called *The Uncommonality of the Commons* and that became the first publication of the pieces of writing that I've been doing through the Frontiers project. Nuno will explain a bit more of the context of it, and you can read exactly what I said in that booklet because this is like a verbatim transcript of my talk which includes all my ums and ahs. It's been part of my work that I've been using verbatim transcripts. One project using this, which I did here, that was called *Stackwalker*, was an exploration of self-organisation within crofting and migrant worker communities in Scotland and looking at some of the overlaps between the fishing industry and the crofting industry and how they use migrant labour, and how the Gael was historically constituted as a migrant within Scottish culture in the 18th to 19th centuries, in fact it kind of lasted up until the 1950s, and the western-most Gaels were migrant workers in the East Coast fishing industry.<sup>2</sup> Well, that was a project I did which was exploring some of those issues, and there were all sorts of issues around land and law, which is where I started to get ideas around the commons and crofting as a common space.

Just briefly about the format of the project that I've been doing. It's basically that I've been working on a series of texts over the course of the residency and publishing it in small bits as I go. What were traditionally known as *fascicles*. Back in the early years of the book industry, when publishing a whole book was quite expensive, people used to publish books chapter-by-chapter, so I've been using that approach for the Frontiers project. This partly fits with the kind of practicalities of how I've been able to work on the residency - and I'll let Nuno say a bit more about that - and it also kind

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<sup>1</sup>*Estovers Part 1: Urban and Rural, Historical and Contemporary, Commons and the Common* hosted at the New Glasgow Society, Glasgow, 31st August 2013. Emma's PhD was titled *Estovers: Practice based research on the concept of the commons within contemporary art*.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.stackwalker.org>. See also Yuill, S. (2012). *Stackwalker: Interviews 2008–2010*. Glasgow: Centre for Contemporary Arts.

of relates to another aspect of my practice. I'm not an ecology artist, I don't come from an arts and ecology background and previously I've been working quite a lot from a digital arts background, and I've been involved in the fields of Open Source and hacker-related culture. Open Source software development has this ethos of just publishing stuff as you go, making the software available for anyone in what they call *release versions*. So these *fascicles* are also kind of early release versions and the specific form of the essays that are printed for this weekend, which is this pack here, is basically, erm, one and a half essays, because I am half-way through the second essay. So the first essay in the booklet, *On a Proletarian Soil*, is based on the first of two walks that I did in Lumsden, just on a personal basis, which I used as a starting point to explore issues around the landscape and politics, and that goes to a destination of a pile of stones, and then the second one, which is only half finished, and I've already put it here in a half-finished form, is a walk to a tree, and I am still developing some of the ideas around that.

Somebody put their hand up and said that it's too quiet so I'll try and speak more projected. But maybe now is the time to turn to someone who doesn't have a quiet voice (laughter), who can talk about why you invited me.

**Nuno Sacramento:** A loud voice, but not a lot to say. (laughter) Thanks for the invitation, CCA, SSW, Frontiers in Retreat. I worked at Scottish Sculpture Workshop for almost seven years, between 2010 and 2016 and I am now director of Peacock Visual Arts in Aberdeen, which is a very similar arts organisation that started as kind of a print-makers collective, co-operative, and has a very strong making background, similarly to SSW. When I arrived at SSW seven years ago I was very interested in seeing how this making space, rather than a display or show space, could be the locus of a number of curatorial conversations around social, economic, political and environmental questions. I'd known Simon for about fifteen years, no, seventeen years more or less. So, erm, I've always been, we've been kind of in touch since then. In 2010, Simon was one of the first people that I got in touch with, due to the fact that the programme was based on the idea of expanding the field of sculpture, sculpture in the expanded field, so, to bring all of those other questions from a perspective of a certain rurality, or certain rurality up in the North East. So one thing we started thinking about was the commons, and as always, Simon was not only writing about but was engaging with a number of communities up in the North East, in places like Peterhead and Fraserburgh, with communities that were producing different kinds of commons, contemporary commons. So when the opportunity to put together the project Frontiers in Retreat with six other countries - Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Spain, Serbia, Scotland, Iceland - when the opportunity came up and topics around politics and ecology were really brought to the fore, Simon was one of the first people I obviously had in mind to invite.

I am not going to go in now into the conversations that we had thereafter, but just tell you a little bit on a practical level, we invited six artists for a project that had seven partner countries over a period of five years, so what happened in 2012 as we were writing the project, and what's happening now, you know, there's a kind of continuation there. But, I really feel that the project has managed to open up some really, really interesting conversations around the highly problematic notion of Eco Arts, or whatever you want to call it, so you'll find that most artists will be trying to move away from those sort of pigeon-holes and definitions. Anyway, the six artists that we invited were Simon Yuill, Brett Bloom, Fernando Garcia-Dory, Sylvia Grace Borda, Mari Keski-Korsu, and Carl Giffney. So, all of these artists, you know, engaging on a project that was this long, you know, about topics that were really fluffy at the beginning.

They all had quite specific, kind of peculiar forms of availability to the project, conceptually as well as pragmatically. One of the things that happened at the time, is, as we invited Simon, Simon became a dad as well, round about that time. So in terms of the residencies and the way that it was structured, some artists managed to spend large periods of time at SSW, in rural Aberdeenshire, while other artists just did not, were not able to have the commitment due to family reasons, and other types of reasons. Er, but after fighting Europe — because the rules are so constrained — we managed to accommodate different ways of being in residency, and I just wanted to bring this to the fore because we often talk about the conceptual elements of art-making and don't go into these very, very pragmatic ones. So Simon came up several times, for short periods of time, really, really intense periods of time, and we had conversations, but also Simon brought books up, wrote there, took notes, and yeah, came back down and is now finishing the three texts, I don't know if you want to say anything about the topics that you decided to tackle?

**Simon:** We should let Emma speak next, as there's a sort of mirror. Nuno is now at Peacock. When I was doing the *Stackwalker* project, the curator then was a friend of ours, Monika Vykoukal, and she was working there at the time alongside Emma.

**Emma Balkind:** So yeah, I started working at Peacock in 2008, just after I finished my undergraduate degree and it was like my first gallery assistant job that was paid and I went up there with very high hopes for the job because at the time, as it is now, Peacock was sited in an old school house and they were going to be moving to a brand new development that was going to be in the middle of Aberdeen in some gardens there, and the idea was that I would begin as a gallery assistant and that I would probably progress to be a curator or something to that effect. About two months after I started working at Peacock, we were served a notice by the second richest man in Scotland who decided that he actually had wanted to use that gardens, which

was a piece of common land, it was Common Good land in Aberdeen and that basically just completely threw our plans out of the window.<sup>3</sup> So at the point when Simon started coming up to sort of use the wifi and shelter from the horrible weather, I think it was maybe the winter of 2008?

**Nuno:** The weather's never horrible in Aberdeen!

**Emma:** Never, I mean it only gets dark at 3 in the afternoon. So at that point I met Simon and I wasn't at Peacock for very long, I was in the gig for about eight months and at that point I just kind of ran away because of the situation, it was so bad. But, in 2010 I then decided to go and do an Arts Masters, which was Contemporary Art Theory at the ECA, and when I was there my supervisor, Professor Neil Mulholland, was talking to me about what I would do for my thesis for my Masters, and I said "Well, I really want to revisit this situation in Aberdeen." Because at that point it was still a protracted public debate and the council had got involved, but the council is always split, so you will have like a very difficult mixture of Conservative, SNP, Labour.

**Nuno:** It is actually Labour and Conservative now.

**Emma:** Yes, sometimes a bit of Lib Dem as well, and also Aberdeen as a city, the way that the council works there, is often on the verge of bankruptcy because of, I would say, other people might not say, corruption in the oil industry and business. So it was very, it was a quagmire of a political situation and I became interested in it, in 2010 when I was writing, in 2010 to 2011, when I was writing my Masters Thesis and revisiting this situation and trying to make sense of it in some way. When I was writing it my supervisor said "Well, this is just a very, very big project that you're considering here and there's more to this, you could do some more research on this." So I went away, and I decided that the thing that I was most interested in revisiting was the concept of the commons and I saw that had come up a lot in Occupy, and in discussions around the London riots that were happening, and in discourses talking about various uprisings that were happening in the Middle East, and I just thought well, this seems like the most productive way for me to move forward and for me to disengage from Aberdeen which was somewhere that I was not living any more.

So I had met Simon, and then when I was on my Masters, I had actually gone to probably one of your first events at SSW. You had Jeanne van Heeswijk and someone from *Chto Delat*. It was like an arts conference and we saw some really amazing presentations – and Simon was there too. And so when I was there, working on my PhD thesis which was about the concept of the commons in art, I also am not an ecological artist, I felt a little bit bamboozled by some of the ecological arguments talking about the commons.

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<sup>3</sup>See Wightman, A. (2011). *On the dispute over Union Terrace Gardens: Historic and Legal Status*, available online: [http://www.andywightman.com/docs/UTG\\_AWreport\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.andywightman.com/docs/UTG_AWreport_FINAL.pdf)

Well, obviously it's inextricable from the concept of ecology and I knew that I wanted to invite Simon because I realised that he had been writing about the commons and working on commons projects too and then Kirsteen Macdonald<sup>4</sup> said "Oh, why don't you also invite Nuno, because he's been doing some commons projects too," and I think you had been doing it with Mick from ...

**Nuno:** From *Public Commons*, yeah?

**Emma:** What's his second name again?

**Nuno:** Mick Wilson.

**Emma:** So Nuno had been doing some kind of – was it with the PhD students that you were doing it?

**Nuno:** It was with a group of kind of associate researchers, so it was a project between GradCAM, Dublin, and Scottish Sculpture Workshop.

**Emma:** And I also visited GradCAM for a commons in arts conference at the beginning of my PhD so I had kind of become aware of the continuation of that conversation. So I guess Simon then invited me back here because we had had this conversation in 2013 in the first year of my PhD and I used that as part of my portfolio of research in my PhD. And that's probably the longest project that I've ever been involved with that like, conversation wise, because that's like four years.

**Simon:** Yep, erm, so one of the things I looked at, in the talk that I did for Emma's event was what I called *The Uncommonality of the Commons*. This was to question the whole idea that there was a singular meaning for the commons. The word was being used a lot in very different contexts and I wanted to look a bit at what those different contexts were, so it didn't end up being this word that just pulled everything together and became meaningless. And, in a way, there's a word that's been treated in that way in each of the bits of writing I've been doing with SSW. In *On a Proletarian Soil* I was looking at the idea of nature and politics, but the word that ended up coming in to that was *ecology*. So it was a discussion around ideas of ecology in there, in relation to different political contexts, and then another essay that I'm working on, that has already been published in partial form, which is on the idea of craft, and that is again looking at this idea of craft and different perspectives linguistically. And having come through the English word craft with a 'c' and the German work *kraft* with a 'k', and how these two words, they have the same origins, but craft with a 'c' you think of handicraft, and making things with your hands, *kraft* with a 'k' in German means energy and power, so *kraftwerk* is a power station not craftwork as in woodcarving, for example. And this looks at Ruskin who writes on craft with a c, Marx

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<sup>4</sup>Kirsteen Macdonald is a curator and writer. Her recent projects include Framework, <http://framework.parallellines.org.uk>, and Chapter Thirteen, <http://www.chapterthirteen.info>.

and Joseph Beuys who think with *kraft* with k, and finally Mary Shelley, who kind of brings these two together in her writing.

So *On an Proletarian Soil*, was this writing that I just started doing when I first went to Lumsden. I just started wandering about looking for slime moulds, that was my first activity.<sup>5</sup> And I found two locations where they were, which were both on the peripheries of Lumsden, and I ended up focusing on them, and they're not particularly hard walks, er to get to but some of the locations are quite discrete. One is a pile of stones that was covered in moulds and lichens and the other was an old splayed oak tree that was again covered in slime mould and surrounded by very rich fungus. And I just started off working on texts that were kind of like a walkers' guide, and using that like a starting point to then think about other trajectories. So they go into long-term geological histories of the area, and then they start to look at political theories, taking the idea of stones within politics as the point to talk about nature and politics.

The essay then goes on to consider the stones in more detail, and talks about the relevance of stones in early political theories, kind of jumps to Aristotle. And I initially looked at Aristotle because he's both at the origins of natural history writing, natural science writing, but also one of the first political science writers. And for Aristotle these were one continua, he didn't separate between the two. One of his texts I look at in more detail, *The Athenian Constitution*, was written as part of a natural history of political systems. He gathered information about political systems in the same way that he gathered information about animals and treated them in a sort of equivalent manner, and he has this phrase *zoon politikon* which means the political animal, this phrase comes from Aristotle. Humanity is a political animal, but humanity is not the only political animal in Aristotle, bees and ants and other creatures are also *zoon politikon*. Within this he talks about the idea of the *autochthones*, it means born from the soil, so *chthonic* is of-the-ground. So it's kind of self-creation from the soil and he uses this term in a natural history context to talk about creatures like worms and grubs and things that are found coming out of the mud and that, which he believed — this was before microscopes — were just born out of the soil, so they were self-created out of soil itself: *auto-chthones*. But the myth of the founding of Athens was also based on the concept of *autochthones*. So the first founder of Athens was a guy called Cecrops, who was said to have been born from the soil and was half-man half-fish and he created Athens, and the mythology of the city is those that believe themselves to be the aristocratic families of Athens were all *autochthones*. They all claimed they were born directly from the soil. And this ties into a kind of play on words, the word for people and the word for stone in Ancient Greek are both similar, so they claimed

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<sup>5</sup>The essay began under the working title of *On Slime Moulds and Political Constitutions*.

that they were the stone people, born from the stones of Athens and that's what gave them both their claim for equality amongst themselves but was also used to exclude people. So this concept of *autochthones* was used to structure the democratic dimension of Athenian politics, in that everyone who was *autochthones* was equal, but also it's hierarchical structure, because those who were not *autochthones* were excluded from politics and public life. So that meant foreigners, slaves, and it also meant women, because the myth of the *autochthones* allowed aristocratic Greek men to claim that they were not descended from women but from the soil and through this a kind of legitimisation of the exclusion of women from politics and justification for slavery within this so-called democratic system was established.

**Emma:** So, for me I find this interesting in terms of going to this idea of the commons or of a common good within the physical piece of land, but that also being governmental law and also the fact that it can only be retained in law if it is maintained in the minds of the people, and that they demand that or are given it according to their needs. And I am always surprised, I guess, because going back to things like Aristotle, that that very early politics gives so much credit to ecology and to the natural, because today in politics we try so hard to ignore nature and to sort of cloister ourselves away from that and think of that as either something that we have dominion over or something that is actually too wild for us to control and, therefore, we leave it on it's own. But it's interesting to me if I think about the commons in that way, because I suppose generally when we think about commons theory it tends to go back to the *Magna Carta* and thinking about 13th century politics and how a written constitution such as the *Magna Carta* shaped how our politics stands today in the UK and in its colonial empires.

You were talking about something interesting before about the idea of something that was not translatable between the idea of commons in English and Portuguese, I don't know if that is a thing to bring up?

**Nuno:** One of the things we were discussing at the time around the idea of the commons, when Simon was writing the essay about craft, was whether we could think not only about kind of a land commons, or a political commons, but a commons of craft, a commons of skills. How could we kind of reorganise the space of SSW so that we would produce surpluses? And Simon's other text was also very influential because it kept questioning this, a bit like how five years ago the commons was a recurring concept that a lot of people were working around. I was writing a text, I'd been invited by a magazine in Rio de Janeiro to write a text, you know, and I was translating, I think, erm, part of the introduction of that book but also a kind of reflection on another project that we'd done called *Makers' Meal*, that we'd done about three or four times in different countries, in which we'd tried to establish some kind of commons of skill. And I was, as I was translating that work and that text, into my mother tongue, Portuguese, I came across

this word *baldio*, which was a word I was familiar with but I hadn't been aware at all that *baldio* was enshrined within Portuguese law as commons space. And it's very, very defined, it's something that cannot be appropriated individually, that is managed collectively and cannot be appropriated individually. And we've got within Portuguese law decrees that state a kind of continued occupation of commons throughout hundreds of years. Now when I was translating this word *baldio* to the text in Brazil, the director of the museum said to me straight away, who I was corresponding with, who was Vergara from the Museum of Contemporary Art of Niterói, he said to me "Woah, woah, woah, you can't use that word!" And I'm like "What?" He was like "That word means abandonment, it doesn't mean something that's collective that cannot be appropriated individually." And then I was within my own language, going back and forth, you know having been born in Mozambique, part of the colonial project, this white guy from Lisbon, living in Scotland, doing a project in Rio, going like "Yes, I can use ..." And then like all of the politics that ran from that conversation, you know, it was another white guy on the other side going "No, you can't use it."

So, I kept at it throughout the whole project, so *Makers' Meal* in Brazil – do you mind if I talk quickly about this? *Makers' Meal* in Brazil had another component, whereas here in Scotland we had created this meal but in order to create that meal we had made the table, the crockery, the cutlery, everything, the food itself, and then we had a meal discussing collective making.<sup>6</sup> In Brazil, as a kind of another aspect of the project, we decided that that wasn't going to be enough. We were going to try and create a commons of practice that brings us together but we tried to bring in the element of composting, so that we spent quite a time in the *favelas* picking up leftovers from greengrocers and food sellers and we created a collective composting space. So throughout the project, the notion of that space as a *baldio* became structural. And people in the beginning were doubting that we could create that space in that particular location because, in that space we had to ask the owner of the *favela* if we could work there. The owner of a *favela* is the main gangster that runs each *favela*. So, armed guys. We were working with youth, we were trying to take their potential troops away from them, they could be doing other stuff. So, it's a kind of really delicate kind of tension. The guys who were running the project were saying "No, that stuff is not going to last one day, that thing that you're building there is going to break." And er, last that I heard, it was still there.

So to go back to the idea of *baldio*. The people that were around that conversation, they started thinking through this act of political imagination where we rescue the collective from this notion of abandonment, which was

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<sup>6</sup>The first *Makers' Meal* is documented in Bloom, B. and N. Sacramento (Eds.) (2015). *Slow Prototype, 2011-2015*. Lumsden: Scottish Sculpture Workshop.



in effect what had happened there, you know, we can actually start changing something. So, to finish, that left me with a question that might be a kind of research project, or a five year kind of project: why then did the Portuguese not take the practice of *baldio* to Brazil? And the answer is obvious. The practice, the word *baldio* travelled across but in Brazil it meant solely abandonment, whereas in Portuguese law, *baldio* is still defined as this space that is collectively managed.<sup>7</sup> There is a notion of abandonment also because those were lands that were less fertile traditionally, but still they would be used for a number of other things, so I just want to introduce this notion of the *baldio*.

**Simon:** That connects back to this idea of a proletarian soil, through, the whole colonial project, the European colonial project. Donna Haraway brings this out when she discusses the idea of the plantation and that the plantation creates this space out-of-nature through which the land can be extracted for maximum profit, which is partly coming from a Marxist perspective on it.<sup>8</sup> The thing people associate with Marxist politics is that it views establishing a proletariat as simply the proletariat as the human worker but in Marx's *Capital*, he writes, there's a section on capitalist agriculture, he writes about how capitalist agriculture not only robs the worker but is robbing the soil:

...all progress in capitalist agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the worker, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time is a progress towards ruining the more long-lasting sources of that fertility. The more a country proceeds from large-scale industry as the background of its development, as in the case of the United States, the more rapid is this process of destruction. Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth — the soil and the worker.<sup>9</sup>

So, in a sense, the idea of the proletariat starts with both the soil and the worker. The word proletariat Marx takes from Roman constitutional law. The *proletarii* were the lowest status in Roman society, and they were valued only for their ability to produce children. The word *prole* means off-spring.

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<sup>7</sup>*Lei dos Baldios*, available online: [http://www.pgdisboa.pt/leis/lei\\_mostra\\_articulado.php?nid=618&tabela=leis](http://www.pgdisboa.pt/leis/lei_mostra_articulado.php?nid=618&tabela=leis)

<sup>8</sup>Haraway, D., N. Ishikawa, S. F. Gilbert, K. Olwig, A. Tsing, and N. Bubandt (1991). Anthropologists Are Talking — About the Anthropocene. *Ethnos* 81(3), pp. 535–564.

<sup>9</sup>Marx, K. (1976). *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. p. 638.

So the *proletarii* are those who are only valued for their fertility and what he's saying in that previous passage about the soil and the worker is that they were only valued for their productivity. And Donna Haraway makes an argument that this capitalist model, that this abstraction that we associate with the worker and capital, actually begins with the soil, the land, and through the plantation system which pre-dates the emergence of the factory. And she argues that the plantations had to take place abroad, they had to be a part of colonialism, in countries like, in Brazil, because they had to break those connections, like you were saying about the *baldio*, in order to create abstracted space. And the labour had to be migrant slave labour so that again the labour was abstracted from any local framework or custom. So the plantation system creates this idea of an abstract space out-of-nature, that can be optimised for maximum extraction and worked through, initially through slave and migrant labour, rather than through contracted labour or traditional practices of caring for or farming the land. And it's this construction of the plantations as these self-contained abstract spaces which is where the importance comes for people like Linnaeus to develop what would later become the science of ecology. The word ecology derives from the Greek *oikos* which is often translated as 'the home' but is more accurately the term for a private farming estate.<sup>10</sup> So the *oikos* is related to the idea of the plantation, and the Western study of ecology, comes from the need to create these self-contained abstract ecosystems. So, in a sense, the concept of the proletariat begins within the soil, rather than solely within the worker, and then as land ownership restructuring in Europe itself starts to progress through things like land enclosure and the Clearances in Scotland, and the displacement of peasant communities from the land, this creates an abstract workforce back in the West and an abstracted land from which new models of production are established. In a sense, the plantation is the model both for industrial farming and for the factory.

**Emma:** Going back to the plantation, as what you're calling the *oikos* of capital, so there's a theorist called Yann Moulier-Boutang who I saw speak in Berlin quite a few years ago, and he talks about the people called the *Quilombolas* who were escaped slaves and Maroons in Brazilian plantations, and they developed their own settlements in Brazil, which were referred to as *Quilombo*.<sup>11</sup> And, Moulier-Boutang talks about in terms of those escaped

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<sup>10</sup>See de Sainte Croix, G. E. M. (1981). *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests*. London: Duckworth. For use of the term as 'home' see Moore, Jason W. (2013). *From Object to Oikeios: Environment-Making in the Capitalist World-Ecology*, available online: [http://www.jasonwmoore.com/uploads/Moore\\_From\\_Object\\_to\\_Oikeios\\_for\\_website\\_May\\_2013.pdf](http://www.jasonwmoore.com/uploads/Moore_From_Object_to_Oikeios_for_website_May_2013.pdf)

<sup>11</sup>Moulier-Boutang, Y. "Mental Quilombos in Value Production: Flights and Counter-Forms of Mania in Postcolonial Cognitive Capitalism," published in Neidich, W. (Ed.) (2014). *Psychopathologies of Cognitive Capitalism: Part Two*. Berlin: Archive Books. A video of the talk originally given

slaves that the *Quilombolas* are some of the first commoners, and also some of the first diasporic commoners. And there is a way for us, there is a concept that we can integrate into our concept of a commoner as being in relation to capital, and as being, and as needing the commons, either within their own energies developing the commons as in a space outwith capitalist space, outwith the public, in order to live safely, or as something that's been written into constitutional law, such as the *Magna Carta*, which provides for that person under law. So there's different situations within ex-colonial states as to whether they took on the *Magna Carta* constitution or anything like the *Magna Carta* constitution. Whether they have this idea of the commons or not, but then equally the other thing I thought was interesting was, we talk about this idea of *baldio* meaning abandonment and commons, in English commons doesn't mean abandonment, but it's there for the abandoned person, it's there for that person who, through no fault of their own, sits outside of capital. In my thesis I referred a lot to this commoning right called an Estover and an Estover was a right within the *Charter of the Forest*, which went alongside the *Magna Carta*, for women to go out into the forest and take wood and forage for food like honey and berries, and with the wood they were able to thatch the roofs of their houses and light fires in order to heat, to warm themselves, and to cook.<sup>12</sup> And that was there as a legal exception in order to actually allow women to live. And I think that started with the idea of the abandoned person, it's so deeply integrated into our politics by now from you know, the 13th century or whatever.

**Nuno:** So, sorry, I'm going to say this very quickly. So in a way, although the Portuguese forgot to take the collective, in the *baldio*, into Brazil, the *Quilombolas* who had escaped the plantations, to create new settlements had created commons that ...

**Emma:** Yes, it proves that you don't need the language in order for it to happen, it's something that is so necessary that it becomes itself.

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at ICI Berlin, 2013, is available online: <https://vimeo.com/61677071>.

<sup>12</sup>See Standing, G. (2017). *Celebrating the 800th Anniversary of the Charter of the Forest*, available online: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/neweconomics/celebrating-800th-anniversary-charter-forest/>

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Culture



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