
Session Submission Summary

The Call of Communism, or How to Handle Frail Political Capacities with Care?

Sat, September 2, 4:00 to 5:30pm, Sheraton Boston, Floor: 3, Jefferson



Abstract

Two conferences on “The Idea of Communism” (London 2010, Rome 2016) have galvanized academics and non academics, students and lecturers, and among them STS scholars. Indeed, it is both enticing and relevant for us, STS scholars, to work towards the reclaiming of the commons (Stengers). For years, we discussed how science and technology could be involved in such reclaiming, and unfolded the consequences of scientific knowledge on whom it concerns. Our STS sensibilities might combine with today’s Marxists commoners.

However, we must proceed with caution. For such a connection may as well destroy frail political capacities which cannot be grasped in Marxist terms.

Tentatively constructed, collectively cared for and more-than-human worlds, such as those we are investigating in STS, might fail to live up to the “Idea of Communism”, if such an idea becomes the measure of all commons reclaiming today. In other words, STS must adjust its practice and politics of inquiry so as to add local, popular, traditional, heterodox and non-Marxist reclaimers to the picture. In this panel, we discuss experimentations and struggles which appear trivial through Marxist lenses but which entail powerful reclaiming dynamics nonetheless. We will show how STS allow for grounding the grand revolutionary horizon in situated and frail, but empowering collective constructions; how to account for and strengthen these emerging political capacities by not reducing them to a call’s mantra. In such terms, a combination is definitely possible; which, in turn, might extend the realm of our own STS sensibilities.

Sub Unit

4S Annual Meeting

Chairs

Benedikte Zitouni, Saint-Louis University, Brussels

Alexis Zimmer, Université Libre de Bruxelles

Individual Presentations

“Some commons or I will suffocate!” or How to escape mechanical assemblages in cow genomics? - François Thoreau, Spiral, University of Liege

Kitchen-gardening opens up a sense of belonging in disturbed times - Alexis Zimmer, Université Libre de Bruxelles

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The meaning of commonly cared-for nature according to struggling farmers - Benedikte Zitouni, Saint-Louis University, Brussels

From the Mint to the crypto-currencies: the case of faircoin in the age of cognitive capitalism - John Nève, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne - Université Saint-Louis