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Emma Balkind  
& Edward Dorrian:  
Nothing in Common?

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## Nothing in Common?

29 May 2017

EB Dear Edward, I saw your call out email and I live in Glasgow so I don't think I can make it to London for your public presentations without assistance. However, I wanted to get in touch because I have been working on a number of projects which deal in the promise of groups and togetherness for some years now. At the end of 2015, I passed my viva on a PhD at Glasgow School of Art about the concept of the commons in contemporary art. Within this, I discussed 'the common' in political philosophy, the commons of land and law, and more broadly an open idea of the commons which has been utilised in contemporary art projects and especially during and post Occupy biennials. It was practice based research so as part of my thesis I also brought together artists to produce projects on a broad notion of the commons under the name Estovers and also participated in dialogue with artists projects at sites such as Collective, Transmission, GoMA and the CCA, Glasgow. During this period I also co-produced a reading group on the concept of female subjectivity called Sick Sick Sick: The Books of Ornery Women, at the CCA, Glasgow in partnership with Laura Edbrook and MAP magazine. We ran reading groups for one year and hosted film screenings and a live theatre performance of Katherine Angel's Remastered. The project included online platforms for discussion and was wide reaching and nationally critically acclaimed in the press. More recently, for the past year, I have been incapacitated by an autoimmune related condition and so I have begun to consider what it is to participate and to have a common interaction with others and a creative output while I have been physically unable to attend many forms of art. I have fallen back on theatre and memoir as modes of understanding this lone subjectivity. The concept of immunity has an interaction with some philosophical discussion of the commons, which is interrogated by writers such as Roberto Esposito in his book *Communitas*. I believe there is something to be gleaned from pursuing this concept of the immune in conjunction with womens (and non-binary, effectively non-male) memoir and autofiction but I am still in the midst of thinking about this without a lot of writing or production on the matter and only feeling and studying. I include a link[s] to a piece I wrote for Camera Austria [...] something I wrote for the CCA and [...] and some information about Sick Sick Sick. If you find any of this interesting, please get back in touch with me. Otherwise, I will keep an eye out for the rest of your programming on this topic. Thank you and best wishes, Emma Balkind

30 May 2017

ED Thank you Emma, Everything you're writing about seems to absolutely resonate with how I'm thinking about this project. It would be great to have your involvement in whatever way you would consider. The preliminary event next week was really just a way for talking through a possible process for organizing the project (we've been working on similar projects for sometime now) before starting afresh. So of course I can keep you informed about how the process/ timetable/ details pans out. Incidentally, I do travel up to Glasgow quite regularly (my parents live in Barrhead) so it may be possible to meet if ever convenient? Again, thank you for getting in touch and all the best! Eddy

30 May 2017

EB I'm happy that you are on the same page - I just had a feeling as soon as I saw the callout that it fit very well with the ways I had been thinking and working but you never really know for sure unless you ask! Please keep me updated with how the weekend presentations pan out and the formation of the rest of the project, and I will try to work out a form in which to contribute. Usually I will write or present something in person but it would be interesting to see if there are any points of resonance with other projects before I suggest something in particular. I tend to be more of a reflective worker than a proposer of projects. Writing to you has given me some ideas of what I need to sketch out as the connections between my previous projects in the meantime. I hadn't anticipated a Scottish connection! It would be great to meet if you are up near Glasgow at some point - I am around most of the time so let me know when you will be here and we can make a plan to meet. Look forward to hearing more about the project!

24 Oct 2017

ED My apologies for such a long, long delay in updating you... amongst some personal things... My mother died in the Summer... and I've accepted an offer from Kingston Art School on their part-time PhD programme (I'd applied in December 2016 and the process finally materialized in August 2017. It's provisionally titled - Weak. Weak. Weak. Working out of a contested common ground: A politics of drawing as collectivity and organisation) Anyway, as you may have realised from June's call out, the actual project was planned to take place at Five Years 12-27 May 2018. A (slightly) revised call out has been issued with a deadline set for 1 Feb 2018. You can see it here at <http://www.fiveyears.org.uk/togetherisnotenough.html> Would you consider participating in some way? It could well be something organised remotely? Perhaps to be responded to in the space? As should be clear, the invitation is for an hour-to-two hour event. I would be prepared to meet in Glasgow with you if you thought it was useful... Something I could help you with or collaborate on? Please let me know what you think.

24 Oct 2017

EB Really nice to hear from you and to know that you are continuing with this project, and also to hear about your PhD place which sounds great. I am very sorry to hear about your mum, and I can understand this must have been a very intense year for you. My mum has been unwell this year and it has taken a lot of my focus, but she has improved a lot in recent months. I would definitely like to propose something for this, and can do so for the February deadline. Health wise I am doing a lot better and am about to start tapering the medication I was on, so I expect I will be properly back on form by spring. Have posted the link up on Facebook and Twitter as I have a few friends who might be interested in proposing something too. Since we last spoke, I did a nice workshop on the commons in Glasgow with the artist Simon Yuill and Director of Peacock Visual Arts, Nuno Sacramento for the launch of a text Simon wrote for the Scottish Sculpture Workshop. I have attached the texts in case you want to have a look at them. They might fit in with some of your reading for your PhD. A note on the event is here: <http://www.cca-glasgow.com/programme/edge-effects--on-a-proletarian-soil>. Me and Joe have decided to stay in Glasgow over Christmas this year so I will be around through the winter holidays. Maybe we could meet up around then if you will be up in Scotland during that time? Would be happy to know more about your research too. Anyway, will have a think on how to approach this. I like the short nature of the projects, forces us to crystallise our ideas! [PS]Also, here is a book you might find something useful in with regards to this new project. I bought it for the essay by Gerald Raunig 'Dividuum and Condividuality'. *So even from a historical and etymological perspective, it could be said that the diminishing aspect of the concept of community is an essential component of its use. In this respect, the community can never be understood as a surplus, as a multiplying sharing/ dividing, as solidarity and as gain at the same time. Rather, everything revolves around a logic of obligation and duty, of giving over and sometimes even of giving oneself up. The munus is a minus. Community implies becoming less, in order to become more.* Gerald Raunig 'Dividuum and Condividuality'

25 Oct 2017

ED Thank you so much for your reply... your generous and very welcome reply... Yes... I like the small projects... crystallized... fragile... fragmentary... etc... and my ideas seem to tend towards the not fully formed... Perhaps... this is what I need to listen to... I like the fact that you wrote that we'd spoken... all those speech acts... Are you still thinking in terms of theatre... I feel like I've been involved in things... but am only now trying to organise in a way I've probably been avoiding... or putting off... anyway... let's have a think... and as I said... if there's something you'd like to do and can use my... if I can help... then we can consider... but I'm a slow reader... Even though all the words you sent look very nice... and yes it'd be good to try and meet in the winter for a chat...

5 Dec 2017

EB Just a quick message to say thank you for sending this over. It's very interesting to see the shape of your proposal and there are some surprising crossovers with different points in my own thesis. (When I say different points I mean in the thesis, and in the different times as I was making the thesis.) I will take a bit more time with it and then maybe send you some links to some books... The first things that jumped out at me were the parts about dissensus, and the parts about 'weak' theory. The latter I didn't stick with in the end in an explicit manner but it was in my proposal, where I said in reference to J.K. Gibson-Graham's work: 'This tactic involves the use of non-academic texts as a critical tool, in order to discuss possible outcomes which might otherwise be marginalised by the presence of larger, more assertive, realities.' The main thing that struck me about it from reading your proposal quickly is that there are quite a few different layers to what you have suggested. I think this is good because you will work out over time which of these can become chapters and which might not fit with the direction you end up going in. My own proposal was (as I remember it) just two-pronged and I had to spend quite a lot of time in the beginning doing the lit survey to produce a good basis. It made me think about the difference between coming to the PhD after a number of decades of practice and reflection vs my own which required me to work out what I thought of things as I did them for the first time. I am not sure either of them is an easier approach particularly, but definitely different. With regards to the drawing practice, I thought you might want to look up my GSA colleague Mitch Miller's work - his PhD was a sort of mapping process by sketching. He calls the pieces he makes 'Dialectograms' <https://dialectogram.wordpress.com/about/> Oh and also I had another thing that was funny which is not PhD related. I went onto Facebook the day after we met up and my friend Liz had posted this on her wall: 'In closed-down political climates like this, when it's more appealing to hibernate than to fight, I've been thinking about what people cathect. In the absence of the meaningful or affectionate sociality you might crave, where do you turn your desire? So many people in 1-on-1 conversations will say things like "I'm simultaneously isolated and more visible than I've ever been," or "It's hard to make friends the older you get." But there's still a commitment to antiseptic social rules like suffering in private, keeping what's 'personal' to yourself and so on—even at the level of what people call friendship. I think repulsion for vulnerability does the enemy's work for them; we reproduce our own alienation by adhering to social norms. It's just really hard to be comfortable when yr so busy protecting yrself. I have no idea why I insist on talking into facebook like its format doesn't exist, but apparently I can't help giving whatever away. I love what Fred Moten said in SF earlier this year: "I'm too busy out looking for friends to look for enemies. I don't care what you think about me. The minute I have to wonder what you think about me is the minute we ain't friends." And then: "To say we are friends is to say that we want to be friends." I actually laughed when I read it because of the repeated return in our conversation to this idea of me being disgusted by my own diaristic

notes. I realised maybe it is generational. I also liked that anecdote about friendship. I don't know if you have read much of Fred Moten but I used his Undercommons book in my thesis, and he has a new trilogy of books coming out between now and spring. I find him very enjoyable to read.

3 Feb 2018

EB The last few weeks have been a total whirlwind starting the MLitt teaching. The students are great and I'm enjoying it but there is that start of semester overwhelm, as my involvement it turns out is very front loaded. Hence my total ignorance of your deadline, I'm sorry about that! I'm wondering if my proposal could get that we reflect on '~~Being Together Is Not Enough~~' after the show, but perhaps before the publication. Then the reflection could perhaps itself be a contribution to the publication? It could be a discussion we record and then transcribe for example. I know this sort of falls outside the brief of the exhibition so let me know what you think. I feel like what I've gotten out of contacting you about this project is a longer discussion about our shared research interests and the intersection between discursive duration and a practice PhD. I'm also curious to hear about the proposals you have received. I will forward that PDF of 'In Praise of the Common' by Negri and Casarino when I'm at my computer.

23 Feb 2018

EB Thanks for sending this over. I would like to come and discuss the project with you. I wonder if the end of the run would be best, and that way we can consider what has come before? Let me know what you think about that. Great that you got 50 proposals though, that's exciting! I have been writing that piece on immunity for the Glasgow International project I told you about. I have attached the current draft\* for you to read, if you would like to. Work is going well, the past week has been all the student projects for semester 2 so it has been really interesting to see the results of those.

Emma Balkind: Draft 2 for Self-Service

In the run up to Self-Service, Kirsty sent me some photos of a document from the Peckham Project archives. 'Illness is essentially a subjective condition appreciated by the individual who suffers it.'<sup>1</sup> I had been trying to write from experience and reflections on a concept which I hadn't yet had a window of good health to produce.

I had been reflecting on the subjective since Laura Edbrook and I curated the reading group project 'Sick, Sick, Sick: The Books of Ornerly Women'. The sickness in that title initially concerned the pathologisation of womens writing, but on reflection, I realised that most of our authors themselves wrote from and alongside conditions such as PID, autoimmune disease, cancer and self-explorations into medical gender transition.

In the essay "Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies", Donna Haraway states:

'My thesis is that the immune system is an elaborate icon for principal systems of symbolic and material "difference" in late capitalism... Just as computer design is a map of and for ways of living, the immune system is in some sense a diagram of relationships and a guide for action in the face of questions about the boundaries of the self and about mortality. Immune system discourse is about constraint and possibility for engaging in a world of full of 'difference', replete with non-self.'

Immunity is relatively new as a concept in healthcare relating to the body. Its root however is much older, and concerns politics. It seemed to me what Haraway was suggesting in the above quote, is that even the personal, bodily, situation of immunity is inseparable from whatever political situations that we find ourselves in today.

Arthur Frank, in "The Wounded Storyteller" talks of the modern and post-modern approaches of healthcare and the experience of the sick person in care of the medical community. This evolution of experience could be compared between those involved in the Peckham Experiment where doctors in the early 20th

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1 Innes Pearce, *The Future of Preventative Medicine In Industry* (1926)

century placed expectations of communitarian preventative care as better than cure, against the contemporary experience of patients who can communicate on-line about their subjective experiences of illness. The prevalence of health message boards as a means to make community and survive illness with others in the same position is described in Amy Berkowitz memoir "Tender Points".

While I was ill, the concept I thought of writing about most was that of immunity. A few years before, while writing a PhD thesis on the commons, I referred to the political philosopher Roberto Esposito who described how the root of the word community, and of the commons is the ancient Greek word 'munus'. The munus defines that the common is both a gift and a duty. He defines it as 'the gift that one gives because one must give and because one cannot not give'.

I had become interested in how this concept of 'immunity' which shares the same root of munus, is about defence, while auto-immunity is the body's inability to distinguish itself from an intruder. I got sick two years ago, on Mothers Day. I had just started teaching and I caught a virus, which overwhelmed my body and set it into a cycle of inflammation. My body's ability to distinguish itself became broken, and so my immune system would set off a chain of events any time that it detected a rise in histamine in my body. Any time I ate, slept, showered, caught UV light, was too hot or wore tight clothes, my body responded with a rash of hives on my skin and with spontaneous swelling of my extremities.

The notion of autoimmunity, Ed Cohen reminds us, was coined in the early 1900s when a patient's self-propagating illness was described as a 'horror autoxi-cus', a horror in which one is toxic to oneself.<sup>2</sup> Cohen talked about how he did not understand this about his own condition, Crohn's disease, until the Doctors said 'your body is eating itself'. The lightbulb moment in my own illness came when, after an inflammation flare-up sent me to hospital, I was prescribed an epi-pen as the only shield against potential, spontaneous, death. My body was bringing itself into a state close to anaphylaxis and since the GPs couldn't work out why or what caused it, they offered me a pen.

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2 Self, Not-Self, Not Not-Self But Not Self, or The Knotty Paradoxes of 'Autoimmunity': A Genealogical Ruminaton, Ed Cohen in Parallax Volume 23, 2017 - Issue 1: Autoimmunities, Guest Edited by Stefan Herbrechter and Michelle Jamieson

While my skin was inflamed with hives, I couldn't depilate my legs. Faced with potential self-destruction and an adrenaline device, I wondered what my neighbour would think if I knocked on his door for help — if the time ever came. The embarrassment felt almost as bad as the sudden awareness of my own mortality. I didn't want to die, but I really didn't want to almost die in front of my neighbour with my trousers down, my hairy legs and a needle in my thigh.

In her memoir *The Two Kinds of Decay*, Sarah Manguso remonstrates with herself about her depression and the rare autoimmune disease which is killing her. 'Isn't frailty often a choice? And if frailty is a choice, then isn't an autoimmune disease a semi-intentional suicide?'

When I finally got to see an immunologist for my condition, he laid out a treatment plan for me and told me what each medication was originally used for. Everything he gave me was being used for a secondary function: an asthma drug, some H2 antihistamines, a stomach acid medication, a tricyclic antidepressant. The further we got down the list, the worse the conditions got. I was thankful that he didn't get as far as the leprosy drugs before something worked.

My condition kept me home alone, inflamed. In those long days, I had begun to read about pain. In "The Body In Pain" Elaine Scarry says that:

'...pain comes unsharably into our midst as at once that which cannot be denied and that which cannot be confirmed. Whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language.'

Intellectually I found this dispossession quite interesting, because although we can share our experiences in a community of others, the pain itself and the experience of suffering is entirely solitary. It is the inverse of the commons as described by Esposito: one cannot share in this experience, nor can one be obligated to participate. However, something else I know from my thesis writing is that the commons exists in service to precisely the figure who is immune, what Ranciere called the part-of-no-part. An excluded figure.

In "Dividuum and Condividuality" Gerald Raunig explains that in the concept of community 'everything revolves around a logic of obligation and duty, of giving over and sometimes even of giving oneself up. The munus is a minus. Community implies becoming less, in order to become more.' Where immunity is about protection and collective strength, autoimmunity by contrast is a destructive lone subjectivity.

'immunization alludes to a particular situation that keeps someone safe from the risks to which he or she is exposed (and to which the entire community is exposed)... immune is he who is sheltered from obligations and dangers that concern everyone else. Immune is he who breaks the circuit of social circulation by placing himself outside of it.'

Communitas, Esposito.

I had found that accounts of illness and immune conditions by women were framed as memoir, while those by men were published as philosophy. I know that women and men, and of course trans and non-binary people, experience illness differently. Our physical biologies are different and we experience illness at different times in our lives as a result of that. The ways we are 'allowed' to speak about our conditions or not, and the lengths we go to in order to be heard or believed are also different. In autofiction, the sick woman is seen as an unreliable narrator. So, she takes the position of being unreliable to the extreme and says: well, you'll never truly know if this is memoir!

It is often considered that a key part of art's importance in healthcare is in the provision of meaning, reflection, and solace for the ill person. Douglas A. Martin, a biographer of Kathy Acker, states of her work, 'we will never be far from working and reworking definitions of who is normal, who has value, who is abominable and how and why, who is sick and who is sane, who should be confined, who is made to feel they warrant space, how, who belongs, and who doesn't... It was this work that kept me alive.'<sup>3</sup>

Today, my illness is controlled and I have returned to work. Reflecting on it, my inherited immunity is better for some things than others. I was thinking back, and I remembered that I didn't have a BCG immunization at school, because I inherited a natural immunity to tuberculosis from my grandpa, who had spent much of his childhood convalescing. The disease got into his bones, so he walked with a cane all his life, but he passed his immunity to me... as Esposito would call it, a gift.

Reading the subjective experience of the illness of others kept me going through my own episode of self-destructive autoimmunity and I hope, by offering this here, I might help someone else too.

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3 "To Lie Is to Try": Two Books on Kathy Acker by Matilda Bernstein Sycamore  
<http://bombmagazine.org/article/2360918/to-lie-is-to-try-two-books-on-kathy-acker>

ED Thanks Emma, I'll try and carve a slot nearer the end if possible. But thank you most of all for sending your piece... My overwhelming sense is to... somehow organise... offer a discussion... a shared discursive *event* of sorts... some thing around and through the overlapping of your text... here... in its to be Glasgow International published state... with what we might want to consider within the *Being Together Is Not Enough* context. A presentation, performance consistent with your expressed... aims... ideas. In embodied assembly... the possibility... difficulty of engagement. Of equality... of experience... barely articulated... To be honest... this play between... performance, duty, service, work, gift, illness, pain, death and sharing... of being together... yet not... has been... is... very present. My friend. Died earlier this month. Her husband, her sister and two nieces attended to her in her last few days. Others were closer. But she was insistent about limiting who saw her. And insistent on organising her final... service. Her husband told us... relayed to us. We all went along after the end of life. Ceremony. Service. Celebration. And participated. I'm not sure what I mean. I would have loved to discuss the affect with her. Love to. She chose a friend to read from Wallace Stevens, 'Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour'... You know... Out of this same light, out of the central mind... We make a dwelling in the evening air... In which *being together is enough*. And so. The last service, office to the dead, i.e. burial. Memorial. : pro hominis dignitate amplo munere extulit, Nep. Eum. 4, 4 (dub.; "al. funere): suprema," Verg. A. 11, 25: "supremum mortis," Cat. 101, 3: "debita," Val. Fl. 3, 313: "fungi inani Munere," Verg. A. 6, 885: "cineri haec mittite nostro Munera," id. ib. 4, 624.— I never did Latin at school. No one did. It wasn't there. But just reading Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary around the word *mūnus* as you pointed out is... it's so *intoxicating* to interweave those words... dignitate, teatro, maximo, significat, ludus, spectaculum, etc, etc...? It brings to mind weird things. Perhaps not so weird. Not sure if you listen to Wagner. Parsifal. You may want to take this with a pinch of salt. Anyway. Alain Badiou has a... funny essay in Five Lessons on Wagner... *The Enigma of Parsifal*... where he draws upon Mallarmé in order to talk about Ceremony. Ceremony as both necessary and impossible. Problems are like that he says... both necessary and impossible. And possibility arrives when you no longer expect it. That is, according to Badiou, what an *event* is. At least in our imagination, we should practice Mallarmé: 'the intrusion into future celebrations'.<sup>4</sup> Not sure... An intrusion in... interrupted correspondence... Munus... as last service to the dead? / as exhibition, ludus, spectaculum... Ceremony? Unnecessary work? I would have liked to have chatted to her about it. Quite the potent... cocktail. Anyway. I really *owe* you for drawing all this attention specifically to the etymological and political-theoretical analysis of *munus* and *communitas*. Immunitas. Protection, exemption, resistance. Refusal. The Negative Community. And then the con-fessional. Dialogic

4 Mallarmé 'l'intrusion dans les fête futures'

monologue. Another story. The prefix con- for 'with', 'together'. And/ or from Latin *confessus*, past participle of *confiteri* 'acknowledge', from con- (expressing intensive force) + *fateri* 'declare, avow'. The Unavowable Community. And suffering. Unshareable suffering. Regarding the pain of others. Etc. Could we meet to talk about this with others? Not sure if this is helpful...

A Latin Dictionary. Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary. revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten by. Charlton T. Lewis, Ph.D. and. Charles Short, LL.D. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1879.

*mūnus* old orthogr. *moenus*;

- I. "moenera militiā," Lucr. 1, 29), *ēris*, n. root *mu-*; cf.: *moenia*, *munis*, *munia*, etc., a service, office, post, employment, function, duty (class.; syn.: *officium*, *ministerium*, *honus*).  
I. Lit.: *munus* significat *officium*, cum dicitur quis munere fungi. Item donum quod officii causā datur, Paul. ex Fest. p. 140 Müll. (cf. infra): "munus curare," to discharge an office, Plaut. Truc. 2, 4, 76: "octo munus hominum fungi," id. Men. 1, 4, 5: "administrare," Ter. Ad. 5, 1, 2: "munus atque officium," Cic. Font. 7, 15: "rei publicae," a public office, id. de Or. 1, 45, 199: "belli," Liv. 24, 35: "de jure respondendi sustinere," Cic. Brut. 30, 113: "rei publicae explere," id. Prov. Cons. 14, 35: "vigiliarum obire," to perform, Liv. 3, 6: "officii," the performance of a duty, Cic. Sen. 11, 35: "tuum est hoc munus, tuae partes: a te hoc civitas exspectat," duty, office, obligation, id. Fam. 11, 5, 3: "principum est resistere levitati multitudinis," id. Mil. 8, 22: "vitae," id. Sen. 11, 35: "senectutis," id. Leg. 1, 3, 10.—  
B. Esp., = *onus*, a duty, burden, tribute: "cum hoc munus imponebatur tam grave civitati," Cic. Verr. 2, 5, 20, § 51: "id quoque munus leve atque commune Mamertinis remisisti," id. ib. 2, 5, 21, § 52: "dum ne quis eorum munere vacaret," Liv. 25, 7, 4: "non enim detractationem eam munerum militiae, sed apertam defectionem esse," id. 27, 9, 9.—
- II. Transf.
- A. A work: "majorum vigiliarum munus, Cic. Par. prooem.: solitudinis," a work, book, written in solitude, id. Off. 3, 1, 4.—
- B. A service, favor: huc ire licet atque illuc munere ditium dominorum, Sall. Orat. Licin.; Cic. Fam. 10, 11, 1.—  
2. In partic., the last service, office to the dead, i.e. burial: pro hominis dignitate amplo munere extulit, Nep. Eum. 4, 4 (dub.; "al. funere): suprema," Verg. A. 11, 25: "supremum mortis," Cat. 101, 3: "debita," Val. Fl. 3, 313: "fungi inani Munere," Verg. A. 6, 885: "cineri haec mittite nostro Munera," id. ib. 4, 624.—
- C. A present, gift (syn.: "donum, praemium): bonum datum deorum concessu atque munere," Cic. Univ. 14: "mittere alicui," Cic. Verr. 2, 4, 27, § 62: "mittere aliquid alicui munere," to send one something as a present, Plin. 37, 5, 19, § 74 (al. *muneris*): "quasi totam regionem muneris accepissent," had received as a present, Tac. A. 14, 31: "aliquem munere donare," to present one with a gift, Verg. A. 5, 282: "dare muneris aliquid alicui," to give one something as a present, Nep. Thras. 4, 2: "munera Liberi," i.e. wine, Hor. C. 4, 15, 26: "terrae," id. ib. 2, 14, 10: "Cereris," bread, Ov. M. 10, 74; cf.: "gratae post munus aristae," Juv. 14, 183: "quem munere palpat Carus," i. e. a bribe, id. 1, 35.—  
2. In partic.

a. A public show, spectacle, entertainment, exhibition, esp. a show of gladiators, which was given to the people by the magistrates, and generally by the aediles, as an expression of gratitude for the honorable office to which they had been elected (cf.: "ludus, spectaculum): erat munus Scipionis, dignum et eo ipso et illo Q. Metello, cui dabatur," Cic. Sest. 58, 124: "munus magnificum dare," id. Q. Fr. 3, 8, 6: "praebere," id. Sull. 19, 54: "functus est aedilicio maximo munere," i. e. gave a splendid exhibition, id. Off. 2, 16, 55: "edere," Suet. Tit. 7: "venationes, quae vocantur munera," Lact. 6, 20: "munera nunc edunt," Juv. 3, 36; 4, 18.—  
 b. A public building for the use of the people, erected at the expense of an individual: "Pompeii munera," the theatre, Vell. 2, 130, 1: "aut ubi muneribus nati sua munera mater Addidit (i.e. theatro Marcelli porticum Octaviam)," Ov. A. A. 1, 69.—  
 c. Transf., of the structure of the universe: "effector vel moderator tanti operis et muneris," Cic. Tusc. 1, 28, 70.

5 March 2018

EB The past week has been crazy up here with the red weather alert. Everything was shut down for days, and Joe and I spent most of the time under blankets trying to get over a heavy cold. Today things are finally up and running, and I got my finished essay sent off to Kirsty for GI. I'm really glad you enjoyed reading the draft. I have had quite a few interesting conversations about it already, as I really felt the need to share it with a few people to get feedback as to whether I was writing something that was understandable. I was very sorry to hear about your friend's death. You have experienced a lot of loss this past year and it makes sense to want to reflect on that and make sense of it somehow. I just heard yesterday that a musician from Glasgow the same age as me has passed away and it just seemed so needless to me. Some people making it to their 90s and others barely making their mark. Would be good to use the essay as a starting point for our discussion in May, as you said. Perhaps you'll have some reflections from your own research which might be good counterpoint. I spoke to Joe about going to London together and it definitely looks like the last weekend is best for us as we have a few other things happening that month now. If you let me know how the scheduling works out, I can look at the trains. I've attached the final draft of the essay here. It's not that different but it has the proper referencing etc.

6 March 2018

ED I'll book us for a Sunday 27 May slot in the afternoon...Yes... My dad's been bunkered in... though he always stocks his freezer with Lidl's... and neighbours have handed in milk and stuff... Hope you're keeping well and out of harm's way

13 March 2018

EB I think you would like this book!! [Roberto Esposito: Terms of the Political: Community, Immunity, Biopolitics: Community, Immunity. An image of the book open at the chapter: Melancholy and Community] Do you think you could get hold of it too and we can talk about it later?

14 March 2018

ED Maybe there's a chance we could meet maybe Sat evening? In town... Not late... or maybe tea-time? Just a catch-up? I can't say definitely right now... sorry about the vagueness... Don't worry if not. I'm trying to finish some deadlines today...

EB I'm not sure that I can do this weekend. Maybe best if we don't plan anything just now and if I find things are more flexible than I think over the weekend I'll be back in touch? Our marking for the students got pushed back due to the snow and I had to reschedule a lecture for next week so I am expecting to be working through the weekend. Hope your dad has a nice birthday and you enjoy the trip!

20 April 2018

EB Just a quick message to say Joe and I have booked our trains. Will be in London from late on 25th May til morning on 29th and staying with our friends Ralph and Siobhan. Once the website text is up I will let some other friends know about it. Also, finally remembered to include In Praise of the Common [Cesare Casarino and Antonio Negri: In Praise of the Common, A Conversation on Philosophy and Politics] attached. I will scan the Esposito essay soon.

ED Please see attached draft text for web. Please amend / edit as you wish [Proposal: Sunday 27 May 2018 1-2pm Nothing in Common? Emma Balkind & Edward Dorrian  
 An open and recorded discussion for publication from readings by Emma Balkind in response to *Being Together is not Enough*.  
 Readings: Emma Balkind - Autoimmunity: A Self-Destructive Service (Self-Service\*: 2018) Roberto Esposito - Melancholia [sic] and Community; Terms of the Political: Community, Immunity, Biopolitics; translated by Rhiannon Noel Welch (p.27-36)  
 Emma Balkind is a discursive curator, writer and lecturer based in Glasgow, Scotland. She recently completed an AHRC funded PhD on the concept of the commons in contemporary art. Her current interests lie in the intersection between political philosophy and the literature of transgression in reflections on sickness and the notion of immunity. She previously curated the reading group series Sick Sick Sick: The Books of Ornerly Women with Laura Edbrook in collaboration with MAP. Emma is Associate Faculty on the MLitt in Curatorial Practice at Glasgow School of Art and the University of Glasgow.



\* The text Autoimmunity: A Self-Destructive Service was commissioned as a contribution to Self-Service, a project curated by Kirsty Hendry and Ilona Sagar as part of Glasgow International 2018. Self-Service took the form of a publication and event series (at Centre for Contemporary Art). It was produced in response to the archives of The Peckham Experiment - a radical vision for encouraging health, local empowerment and self-organisation. Edward Dorrian is an artist and member of Five Years (organising *Being Together is not Enough.*) He is currently a candidate PhD student at Kingston School of Art - Working out of a contested common ground: A politics of drawing as collectivity and organisation.

23 May 2018

EB I just scanned the Esposito text and thought I would send it in case you want to print it out on Sunday. If you need the Self-Service one too let me know tomorrow. Will get into London late on Friday night. Staying quite far from the gallery at Nunhead so will have quite a long trip to the gallery on Sunday but will try to get there with plenty of time. I've got my audio recorder out so that I remember to bring it with me. Hope everything is going well so far. I saw some pictures on Instagram and Twitter and it looks like a good variety of projects.

ED I'll try and run a few copies off. Good luck with your traveling... don't exhaust yourself... Archway's not too bad to get to once you find the Northern line... take care and looking forward to seeing you!

24 May 2018

EB had to get some antibiotics from out of hours last night and I'm not feeling so good this morning. If I decide not to travel tomorrow, do you still want to do the readings yourself in our slot? I can let you know by tomorrow afternoon if we'll be coming down or not. If I don't, we can plan to do something on the same topic later in the year.

ED Emma if you have any doubts. Don't. We can do something at a time and place that's possible. So. I don't think you should risk it. Take care of yourself and don't worry. Let me know how you are when you feel better.

EB Thanks for being so understanding... I had thought I could take the medication and feel ok by Friday but I definitely need more rest. I'm gonna cancel the train tickets and Joe and I will stay home this weekend. Sorry to miss you this time, and I hope all the other events this weekend go smoothly.

ED I'll let you know how things go

30 December 2018

ED As was intimated... there is a second part of the call out. The publication. Please see attached what I've sent out to the others who presented at Five Years in May. Most have agreed to participate in the publication. I was wondering/ hoping you could too. In some way? Have a look at the schedule/ timetable and please let me know in there is anything you can imagine you'd be prepared to contribute with. I'd like to be able to meet in the new year sometime if you'd like?

2 January 2019

EB Nice to hear from you. Lots of change over here. Since we last spoke, I got a 3 year Teaching Fellowship at Edinburgh College of Art. I like it a lot, but I'm still in the settling in stage and getting used to the commute from Glasgow. In December, I graduated my PhD and started the PgCert in Edinburgh. I basically need to get the HEA fellowship status so that I can convert to a Lectureship at some point in the duration of my contract. There are some people due to retire, and it seems like they will keep me on. I'll be teaching and marking Jan to mid May and then preparing a commons module for Year 3 to begin at the start of September 2019, and revising the core second year course for semester 2. I have a lot more responsibility, which is enjoyable but quite intensive. We have a new head of school arriving in January too, and we're all waiting to see what changes she will bring. I have already been telling people that I won't be taking on other commitments at the moment. I had a great year last year with getting back to work but I pretty much sank everything I had into work time and getting my PhD corrections approved. I didn't really stop all year. So, best I think I can offer here I think is if you would like to write something about the talks we've had, I'm happy for you to do that. I just don't have the space to produce something for this myself. I hope the others are more able to contribute, and I'm interested to see the publication when it comes together. If you're up in Glasgow let me know, it would be good to catch up.

3 January 2019

ED Very, very nice to hear from you too. I completely understand... about dealing with commitments and conserving energies. I'm glad that you're enjoying all the new opportunities and responsibilities... And congratulations of course on graduating! That's fantastic! Sally is just trying to complete her corrections after passing in the Summer. It's not been easy. Her dad was in intensive care and is currently still pretty weak in hospital after heart surgery in early Autumn has left him with a stroke/ dysphasia and a blood clot in his spine resulting in paraplegia. All coinciding with her full time work, etc. Anyway. I think she's getting there. Just. I think you know the score... Great phrase that... sank everything... Thank you again for all your helpful and insightful correspondences and comments... Thank you for allowing me to work/write about them.



## MELANCHOLY AND COMMUNITY

What kind of relationship exists between these two terms? Is there something essentially "common" in melancholy, and does melancholy have something to do with the very form of community? The answer that the literature on melancholy has offered has often been negative. Within both its pathological interpretation as a sickness of the body and spirit and its positive one as genial exceptionality, melancholy has generally been situated as not only different from community but actually in opposition to it. Indeed, we might say that for much of the interpretative tradition, and most markedly within sociological inquiry, melancholic man has been defined precisely by his opposition to communal life. He has been defined insofar as he is *not* in common: sick, abnormal, even ingenious, but, because of this, outside of the community, if not against it. He may resemble a beast or a god (following the classic Aristotelian definition) but resembles neither humankind in general nor the common generality of men. In fact, no matter how widespread, recurring, and proliferated in an infinite variety of cases and typologies—and no matter how much it is applied to a growing number of individuals—melancholy has always been understood and treated as if it were an individual phenomenon. Only an individual or individuals can be melancholic. Society may not be so, insofar as one of the primary characteristics of melancholy is asociality, isolation, and the refusal of collective life. In its operative and productive intention, in its compulsion toward order and rationality, this collective life is in turn interpreted as that which does not tolerate melancholy within it, to the point that collective life must liberate itself from melancholy through expulsion, repression, or therapeutic inclusion. The oppositional schema remains, as melancholy and community are thought of in

AUTOIMMUNITY  
A SELF-DESTRUCTIVE  
SERVICE

EMMA BALKIND

## The Future of Preventive Medicine in Industry.

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### THE INDIVIDUAL.

If the physician cannot say when full health is attained at least he must be in a position to note the first departure from health. This is something different from the onset of illness. Illness is essentially a subjective condition appreciated by the individual who suffers it. Let me illustrate this for example by reference to rickets in children. A child is irritable, restless at night, fat, pale and flabby. The parents do not know that health demands a happy disposition, quite sleep and good muscular tone. Still more is this the case if each child in the family has been the same. They detect nothing wrong until the limbs become misshapen. The child is then taken to the surgeon for splints or operation for a condition which need never have occurred had opportunity been presented for medical overhaul at an early date. Attention to the food would have adjusted the condition, when it was a case of ill-health, but could not be called illness.

In the run up to *Self-Service*, Kirsty sent me some photos of a document from The Peckham Experiment archives. In the 1926 paper, *The Future of Preventative Medicine In Industry*, Innes Pearse states that 'Illness is essentially a subjective condition appreciated by the individual who suffers it.' When I read this, I had been trying to write from experience and reflections on a concept which I hadn't yet had a window of good health to produce.

I had been reflecting on the subjective since Laura Edbrook and I curated the reading group project *Sick, Sick, Sick: The Books of Ornerly Women*. The sickness in that title initially concerned the pathologisation of womens writing, but on reflection, I realised that most of our authors themselves wrote from and alongside conditions such as PID, autoimmune disease, cancer, and self-explorations into medical gender transition.

In the essay *The Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies*, Donna Haraway states:

My thesis is that the immune system is an elaborate icon for principal systems of symbolic and material "difference" in late capitalism... Just as computer design is a map of and for ways of living, the immune system is in some sense a diagram of relationships and a guide for action in the face of questions about the boundaries of the self and about mortality. Immune system discourse is about constraint and possibility for engaging in a world of full of 'difference', replete with non-self.

Immunity is relatively new as a concept in healthcare relating to the body. Its root however is much older, and concerns politics. It seemed to me what Haraway was suggesting in the above quote, is that even the personal, bodily, situation of immunity is inseparable from whatever political situations that we find ourselves in today.

Arthur Frank, in *The Wounded Storyteller* talks of the modern and postmodern approaches of healthcare and the experience of the sick person in care of the medical community. This evolution of experience could be compared between those involved in The Peckham Experiment, where biologists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century placed expectations of communitarian care as better than cure, against the contemporary experience of patients who can communicate online about their subjective experiences of illness. The prevalence of health message boards as a means to make community and survive illness with others in the same position is described in Amy Berkowitz memoir *Tender Points*.

While I was ill, the concept I thought of writing about most was that of immunity. A few years before, while writing a PhD thesis on the commons, I referred to the political philosopher Roberto Esposito who described how the root of the word community, and of the commons is the ancient Greek word 'munus'. The munus defines that the common is both a gift and a duty. In the book *Communitas*, he defines it as 'the gift that one gives because one must give and because one cannot not give'.

I had become interested in how this concept of 'immunity' which shares the same root of munus, is about defence, while auto-immunity is the body's inability to distinguish itself from an intruder. I got sick two years ago, on Mother's Day. I had just started teaching and I caught a virus, which overwhelmed my body and set it into a cycle of inflammation. My body's ability to distinguish itself became broken, and so my immune system would set off a chain of events any time that it detected a rise in histamine in my body. Any time I ate, slept, showered, caught UV light, was too hot or wore tight clothes, my body responded with a rash of hives on my skin and with spontaneous swelling of my extremities.

The notion of autoimmunity, Ed Cohen reminds us, was coined in the early 1900s when a patient's self-propagating illness was described as a 'horror autoxicus', a horror in which one is toxic to oneself. In *Self, Not-Self, Not Not-Self But Not Self, or The Knotty Paradoxes of 'Autoimmunity'*, Cohen talked about how he did not understand this about his own condition, Crohn's disease, until the Doctors said 'it's like you're eating yourself alive'. The lightbulb moment in my own illness came when, after an inflammation flare-up sent me to hospital, I was prescribed an epi-pen as the only shield against potential, spontaneous, death. My body was bringing itself into a state close to anaphylaxis and since the GPs couldn't work out why or what caused it, they offered me a pen.

While my skin was inflamed with hives, I couldn't depilate my legs. Faced with potential self-destruction and an adrenaline device, I wondered what my neighbour would think if I knocked on his door for help — if the time ever came. The embarrassment felt almost as bad as the sudden awareness of my own mortality. I didn't want to die, but I really didn't want to almost die in front of my neighbour with my trousers down, my hairy legs and a needle in my thigh.

In her memoir *The Two Kinds of Decay*, Sarah Manguso remonstrates with herself about her depression and the rare autoimmune disease which is killing her. 'Isn't frailty often a choice? And if frailty is a choice, then isn't an autoimmune disease a semi-intentional suicide?'

When I finally got to see an immunologist for my condition, he laid out a treatment plan for me and told me what each medication was originally used for. Everything he gave me was being used for a secondary function: an asthma drug, some H2 antihistamines, a stomach acid medication, a tricyclic antidepressant. The further we got down the list, the worse the conditions got. I was thankful that he didn't get as far as the leprosy drugs before something worked.

My condition kept me home alone, inflamed. In those long days, I had begun to read about pain. In *The Body In Pain*, Elaine Scarry says that:

...pain comes unsharably into our midst as at once that which cannot be denied and that which cannot be confirmed. Whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language.

Intellectually I found this dispossession quite interesting, because although we can share our experiences in a community of others, the pain itself and the experience of suffering is entirely solitary. It is the inverse of the commons as described by Esposito: one cannot share in this experience, nor can one be obligated to participate. However, something else I know from my thesis writing is that the commons exists in service to precisely the figure who is immune, what Ranciere called the part-of-no-part. An excluded figure. In the essay *Immunization and Violence*, Esposito describes that:

...immunization alludes to a particular situation that keeps someone safe from the risks to which he or she is exposed (and to which the entire community is exposed)... immune is he who is sheltered from obligations and dangers that concern everyone else. Immune is he who breaks the circuit of social circulation by placing himself outside of it.

In *Dividuum and Condividuality*, Gerald Raunig explains that in the concept of community 'everything revolves around a logic of obligation and duty, of giving over and sometimes even of giving oneself up. The munus is a mi-

nus. Community implies becoming less, in order to become more.' Where immunity is about protection and collective strength, autoimmunity by contrast is a destructive lone subjectivity.

In my readings, I had found that accounts of illness and immune conditions by women were framed as memoir, while those by men were published as philosophy. I know that women and men, and of course trans and non-binary people, experience illness differently. Our physical biologies are different and we experience illness at different times in our lives as a result of that. The ways we are 'allowed' to speak about our conditions or not, and the lengths we go to in order to be heard or believed are also different. In autofiction, the sick woman is seen as an unreliable narrator. So, she takes the position of being unreliable to the extreme and says: well, you'll never truly know if this is memoir!

It is often considered that a key part of art's importance in healthcare is in the provision of meaning, reflection, and solace for the ill person. In the article *"To Lie Is to Try": Two Books on Kathy Acker*, Douglas A. Martin, a biographer of Acker, states of her work:

...we will never be far from working and reworking definitions of who is normal, who has value, who is abominable and how and why, who is sick and who is sane, who should be confined, who is made to feel they warrant space, how, who belongs, and who doesn't... It was this work that kept me alive.

Today, my illness is controlled and I have returned to work. Reflecting on it, my inherited immunity is better for some things than others. I was thinking back, and I remembered that I didn't have a BCG immunization at school, because I inherited a natural immunity to tuberculosis from my grandpa, who had spent much of his childhood convalescing. The disease got into his bones, so he walked with a cane all his life, but he passed his immunity to me... as Esposito would call it, a gift.

Reading the subjective experience of the illness of others kept me going through my own episode of self-destructive autoimmunity and I hope, by offering this here, I might help someone else too.

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Image: Innes H. Pearce – The Future of Preventative Medicine in Industry. Reprinted from the Annual Conference of Industriaio Welfare, Balliol College, Oxford, 1926. Courtesy of Pioneer Health Foundation.

S E L F - S E R V I C E E

