Tending to seeds of civic activity

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Stephen Leitheiser – PhD Propositions

1. "*Within the crises that have brought us to the precipice lie the seeds of hope and freedom, the seeds to renew our humanity and our earth citizenship*" (Vandana Shiva, 2020, Oneness vs. the 1%).

2. Opening up smart city platforms to caring and engaged people could make smart cities (and 'smart' technologies more generally) more wise (this thesis).

3. Food Policy Councils represent citizen efforts to claim a more active role in democracy, beyond roles as consumers or voters (this thesis).

4. Applied to practices of governance, commoning is a process of (re-)designing institutions to facilitate the creation and maintenance of commons (qua shared resources), based on democratically defined notions of the common good (this thesis).

5. Promising approaches in sustainability science, such as creative methods, transdisciplinary research, and participatory action research all clash with the dominant academic culture of hyper-mobility, precarious working conditions, and 'publish or perish' (this thesis).

6. Practical and experimental knowledge needed to confront contemporary crises is largely being generated outside of the halls of academia and government. The question remains whether or not the latter institutions will join in as co-producers and facilitators of this knowledge, or serve as gatekeepers and administrators of the *status quo* (this thesis).

7. 'Objectivity' is, far too often, used as an "*academic uniform of moral cowardice: one who is 'objective' never takes a stand.*" (Wendell Berry, 1977, The Unsettling of America).

8. A major barrier for peri-urban agroecology is that municipal zoning plans often restrict multi-functional land use, and in particular do not allow for the combination of agricultural land use with residential function (this thesis).

9. "*Wild fermentation is going on everywhere, always. Embrace it. Work with the material resources and life processes that are close at hand. As microorganisms work their transformative magic and you witness the miracles of fermentation, envision yourself as an agent for change, creating agitation, releasing bubbles of transformation into the social order*" (Sandor Katz, 2003, Wild Fermentation).