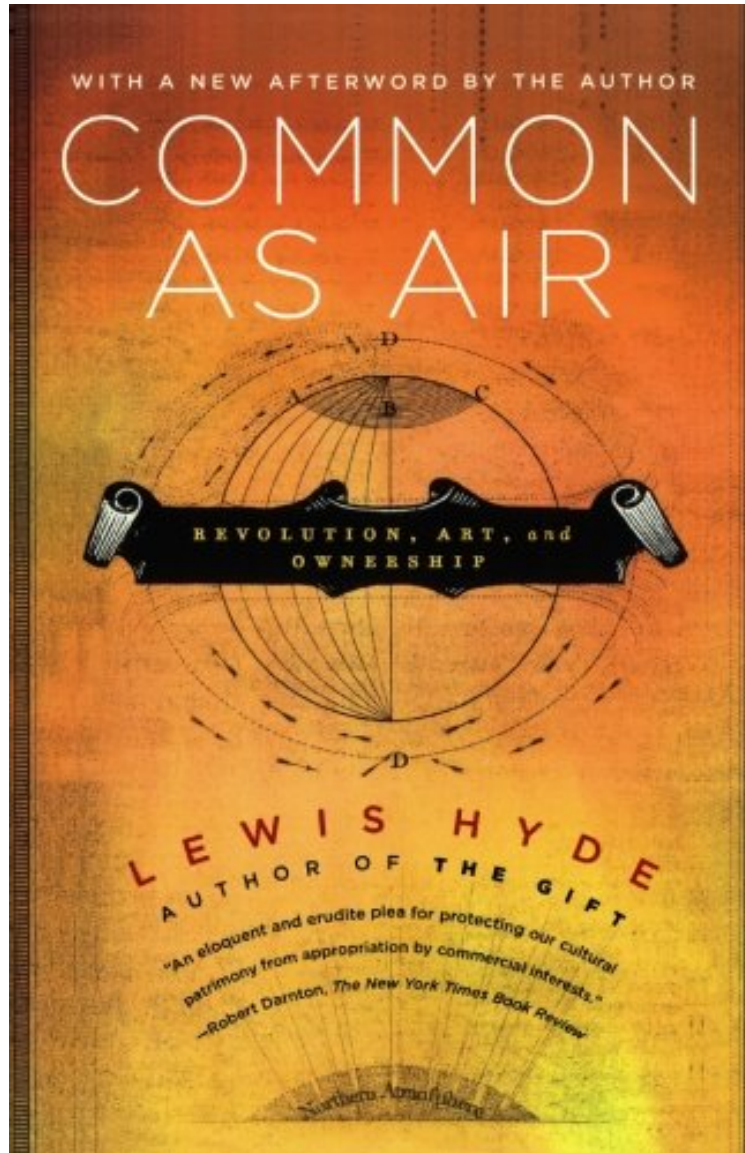


Common as Air: Revolution, Art, and Ownership

Lewis Hyde

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#941268 in Books Lewis Hyde 2011-10-25 2011-10-25Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .3 x 5.50l, .69 #File Name: 0374532796352 pagesCommon as Air Revolution Art and Ownership | File size: 56.Mb

Lewis Hyde : Common as Air: Revolution, Art, and Ownership before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Common as Air: Revolution, Art, and Ownership:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Thought provoking... but why doesn't the author practice what he preaches?By Brad PrittsHyde provides an interesting perspective on the current controversies with intellectual property rights. Several elements of the historical perspective from England and the U.S. Founding Fathers are interesting additions to the discussion, illustrating the perspective of information as a "commons", and explaining the

invention of patent and copyright as a limited monopoly, intended to allow the creator to profit ... but with limits. As was pointed out by reviewer ShortBaldYogi, the author, while advocating free access to information through such means as Creative Commons copyright, chose NOT to do so for his own work! I would put greater weight on his argument if he'd followed it himself. One area which the book doesn't address, but might be helpful, would be some further development of the legal history of IP law in the USA. Hyde discusses the Founding Fathers' philosophy, ending with the Constitution. However, like all important aspects of constitutional law, the document itself is a beginning, not an end.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. TerrificBy CustomerThis book explains the true meaning "commons" in the context of the public good. This is critical to an understanding of the development of copyright, both in terms of the law and also in terms of critical thinking about this complex subject. Further, the writing style is excellent. The writing is readable, clear, and direct. I recommend this book highly.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Time for Common GroundsBy Damagev2And extremely well written book that provides a lot of insight to how copyright laws in America are otherwise restricting our ability to learn. Lewis Hyde is able to blend an vast amount of facts that would seem unrelated into a coherent book that enlightens more than tells. He often sights the work of famous individuals such as Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Locke that have expressed there opinion on patents and copyright laws. Overall Hyde's approach to these matters is very moderate displaying a rather calm tone through out that doesn't overpower the reader with his emotions leaving only the reader to determine how they feel on the matter. While I am still not a supporter of heavy patents, Common has Air has taught me that patents are important, but rather in the short term such as the 19 years limit on patents' that Thomas Jefferson purposed. Bravo, Hyde.

Common as Air offers a stirring defense of our cultural commons, that vast store of art and ideas we have inherited from the past and continue to enrich in the present. Suspicious of the current idea that all creative work is "intellectual property," Lewis Hyde turns to America's Founding Fathersmen such as Adams, Madison, and Jeffersonin search of other ways to imagine the fruits of human wit and imagination. What he discovers is a rich tradition in which knowledge was assumed to be a commonwealth, not a private preserve. For the founders, democratic self-governance itself demanded open and easy access to ideas. So did the growth of creative communities such as that of eighteenth-century science. And so did the flourishing of public persons, the very actors whose "civic virtue" brought the nation into being. In this lively, carefully argued, and well-documented book, Hyde brings the past to bear on present matters, shedding fresh light on everything from the Human Genome Project to Bob Dylan's musical roots. Common as Air allows us to stand on the shoulders of America's revolutionary giants and thus to see beyond today's narrow debates over cultural ownership. What it reveals is nothing less than a vision of how to reclaim the commonwealth of art and ideas that we were meant to inherit.

From Publishers WeeklyThe question of how our cultural commons, our shared store of art and knowledge, might be made compatible with our modern age of stringent copyright laws, intellectual property rights, and restrictive patenting is taken up with considerable brio by Hyde (*The Gift*). Moving deftly between literary analysis, historiography, biography, and impassioned polemic, the book traces the idea of commonage from its English pastoral manifestations and pays particular attention to the American founding fathers' ideals of self-governance and civic republicanism grounded in the vision of a public realm animated by openly shared knowledge and property rights that functioned for the benefit of society rather than individuals alone. Hyde leaps nimbly, if sometimes too hurriedly, from the Ancient Mariner to the human genome project, ultimately offering a vision of human subjectivity that is fundamentally social, historical, and plural. If the book is perhaps not wholly successful in showing how we might concretely legislate for a cultural commons that would simultaneously allow for financial reward and protection from monopoly, it is nonetheless a fascinating and eminently readable attempt to coordinate commerce and creativity in what he sees as an increasingly restrictive economy of ideas. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From BooklistIn his seminal book *The Gift* (1983), Hyde invited us to bridge the chasm between the values of the artist and the pressures of the marketplace by considering traditional economies based on reciprocal gift giving. With his latest selection, the poet/translator/cultural anthropologist/public intellectual again examines the intersection between creativity and commerce, in particular, the question of whether the fruits of creative labor can or should be privately owned. As before, Hyde's impetus in writing is in part fear of the constraints unrestrained capitalism seems to impose on artists and cultural innovators; a considerable portion of this account is devoted to chronicling the recent corporate land grab of knowledge and the thorny bramble of intellectual property law. But this is less a manifesto of the misleadingly named copy-Left movement than it is a search for cultural consensus on which meaningful rules can be based. Finding inspiration and precedent in the concept of the commons in English land-tenure law (as well as the examples of Benjamin Franklin and Bob Dylan, among others), Hyde argues that art and ideas constitute an inherently public cultural commons that is most fertile when authors have only limited permission to enclose their works from unauthorized use. Deeply researched and powerfully felt, this book presents a compelling case for an alternate paradigm, and showcases the originality that readers cherished in *The Gift*. --Brendan

Driscoll Lewis Hyde has written a stunning book. Drawing from science, law, and art, and looking deep into the intentions of the founding fathers, *Common as Air* is essential reading, no matter where you stand in the ongoing debate about the ownership of art and ideas. Anna Deavere Smith Lewis Hyde's *Common As Air* [is] an eloquent and erudite plea for protecting our cultural patrimony from appropriation by commercial interests . . . Hyde builds his argument by telling stories, and he tells them well. His book brims with vignettes, which may be familiar but complement one another in ways that produce original insights. Instead, he tells stories with a moral. If we reassessed our history, he teaches, we would reassert our citizenship in a Republic of Letters that was crucial to the creation of the American Republic--and that is more important than ever in the age of the Internet. Robert Darnton, *The New York Times Book Review* Lewis Hyde, MacArthur Fellow and professor at Kenyon and Harvard, offers a brilliant and absorbing account of the development of restrictive and enduring private ownership of shared experience . . . His argumentation is dazzling, dense with lucid ideas, erudition, wry humor . . . Like his elegant 1983 underground bestseller, *The Gift*, about social codes of giving and accepting, *Common As Air* will surely inspire thoughtful responses for even longer than its own copyright endures. Matt Kramer, *Star-Tribune* Drawing on deep historical research, *Common As Air* discusses the reasons why Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and their peers were wary of perpetual patents and copyrights. The Founders viewed them as state-sanctioned monopolies that deterred the progress of learning, creativity, and innovation. This is the reason why they carved out room in the U.S. Constitution for intellectual property, the first country to do so. Kembrew McLeod, *The Atlantic* In [*Common As Air*], Hyde discusses the property we once held in common--from land to books to certain kinds of scientific discoveries--and demonstrates how this arena has steadily eroded. Bill Eichenberger, *The Plain Dealer (Cleveland)* Deeply researched and powerfully felt, this book presents a compelling case for an alternate paradigm, and showcases the originality that readers cherished in *The Gift*. Brendan Driscoll, *Booklist*