Here we stand: The pedagogy of Occupy Wall Street

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Social movement learning is now an established field of educational research. This paper contributes to the field by offering a critical case study of Occupy Wall Street (OWS). The paper surveys the claims made by the movement's supporters that transformed utopian subjectivities emerged in and through the process of participation, the prefigurative politics of the movement becoming an educative process of dialogic interaction and a moment of self-education through struggle. Drawing on the extensive range of first-hand accounts, and analysing the anarchist and autonomist ideas animating the movement's core activists, the paper highlights the pedagogical lacunae in OWS and reflects on what we as educators, working in and with social movements, might learn from these. What the experience of OWS points to, the paper argues, is the need to avoid romanticising the creation of alternative spaces of learning and overstating the pedagogical possibilities opened up when people gather together and occupy a space.

Keywords: *Occupy Wall Street; social movement learning; critical pedagogy; prefigurative practice; utopian pedagogy*

Increased attention is being paid to spaces, places, languages and processes of learning that exist outside the walls of formal educational institutions. A host of terms have been used by researchers to describe these spaces and processes: informal education, passive education, collective learning, social learning, anomalous spaces of learning, public pedagogy and pedagogy otherwise, to name but a few. While these alternative languages and spaces of learning and not always presented as being 'better' than conventional understandings and institutions, more often than not this is the position being advanced. The notion of pedagogy otherwise, for example, is explicitly counterposed to formal systems of education characterised as colonial, patriarchal, Eurocentric and oppressive. Pedagogy otherwise, by contrast, is concerned with creating 'autonomous zones of learning' and 'self-organised networks … where sharing knowledge differently is a way to create a different world' (Pomarico, 2018).

Burdick and Sandlin argue that 'critical public pedagogies offer us glimpses of the *pedagogical Other* — forms and practices of pedagogy that exist independently of, even in opposition to, the commonsense imaginary of education' (2010, p. 117). Describing the notion of social movement learning, Sarah Amsler argues that:

> *participating in any movement for radical social change requires unlearning hegemonic definitions of authoritative knowledge, un-becoming the kinds of people that perpetuate or desire these parameters and learning new ways of thinking, being and doing things in the world that open up possibilities for transgressing present limits of possibility … What matters most in these spaces is not the learning of particular knowledge, but the cultivation of alternative political subjectivities (2015, p. 143).*

This is a paper concerned with pedagogy otherwise. Following Burdick and Sandlin, it seeks to catch a glimpse of the pedagogical Other as it plays out in spaces, sites and languages of learning that exist independently of formal educational institutions. In Amsler's terms, it offers a case study of a particular example of social movement learning (Occupy Wall Street), exploring the pedagogical processes at play in the cultivation of alternative political subjectivities.

Social movement learning (SML) is now an established field of educational research (Niesz, Korora, Walkuski, and Foot, 2018).

SML scholarship focusses on the kind of informal learning that takes place through movement participation, and in particular the counter-hegemonic understandings that emerge as actors learn in and through struggle (Choudry, 2015; Foley, 1999). One of the notable features of Occupy Wall Street (OWS) as a social movement was the emphasis placed by participants and commentators alike on its educative, pedagogical dimensions. Time and again one finds Occupy referred to as a site or space of learning (Chomsky, 2012; Gitlin, 2012; Jaffe, 2012; Nader, 2011; Rowe, & Carroll, 2015; Stronzake, 2012; Yassin, 2012). As Neary and Amsler stressed at the time, 'the Occupy movement is explicitly pedagogical … it is certain that the movement educates' (2012, pp. 111–12).

In what sense, however, was the movement pedagogical? In what ways did it educate? How did Occupy Wall Street operate as a space of learning? Drawing on the vast array of first-hand accounts and materials available, these are the questions explored, and problemetised, in this paper. In contrast to much of the celebratory rhetoric accompanying the movement, the paper suggests that in pedagogical terms Occupy Wall Street was largely a moribund space. The experience of the movement points to the need to avoid exaggerating the pedagogical possibilities opened up when people gather together and occupy a space. While an event such as Occupy might create the *possibility* for the emergence of new forms of life, cultivating these requires concerted pedagogical intervention and direction.

The paper begins by surveying claims made by the movement's supporters regarding the pedagogical operation of prefigurative politics, focussing in particular on the claim that Zuccotti Park became a site for the forging of revolutionary social relations. Attention then turns to the anarchist and autonomist ideas animating the movement's core activists, and here the paper explores the ways in which movement actors came to regard themselves as being already 'free'. The paper then notes the disjuncture between the rhetoric and reality of Occupy Wall Street and highlights the reproduction and reinscription of *existing* social relations that took place during the occupation. The central argument of the paper is that there was in Occupy Wall Street a significant *pedagogical lacuna*, a *lack* of movement learning, stemming at least in part from the understanding of rupture, autonomy and refusal held by the movement's core. The paper concludes with a discussion of the role of utopian pedagogy within movements for social change.

The pedagogy of prefiguration

Prefiguration was key to the pedagogy of Occupy Wall Street (OWS). Prefigurative politics, we are told, operated as 'a moment of self-education' through struggle (Campagna & Campiglio, 2012, p. 5) and grounded 'a generative, iterative and educative process' of dialogic interaction (Amsler, 2015, p. 81). The movement is said to have opened the radical imagination, unleashed political desire and extended the horizons of possibility (Graeber, 2013; Haiven, 2014). The pedagogy of OWS was also grounded in a concrete physical space. Occupy explicitly positioned itself as a pedagogical project of commoning public space and transforming it into a site of utopian experimentation. For many participants and commentators, the occupation of physical space was crucial (Butler, 2011; Klein, 2011; Solnit, 2011). Marazzi refers to the occupied squares and plazas as 'physical spaces of mental liberation', sites in which the commons were recreated as new social relations took shape (2012, p. xi).

The literature abounds with claims regarding the forging of 'new', transformed, reconfigured, social relations (Graeber, 2012a; Kinna, 2016; Risager, 2017; Sitrin, & Azzelini, 2014; Szolucha, 2015). Happe argues that Occupy offered 'the experience of *egalitarian* social relations' (2015, p. 221). Hammond suggests that 'by modelling the desired social relations', OWS 'attempted to create *extraordinary* social relations' (2015, p. 298, p. 309). Bray adds that Occupy sought 'the elimination of all *hierarchical* social relations' and the enacting of '*revolutionary*' social relations (2013, p. 39, p. 45). A process of *resubjectification* is said to have taken place at Zuccotti Park as new, radical subjectivities emerged in and through movement participation (Harrison, 2016, p. 496; Neary, & Amsler, 2012; Schram, 2015, p. 74; Sitrin, 2012).

Prefigurative politics seeks to create, within a movement itself, social relations and forms of life that embody the kind of society movement actors wish to create (Hammond, 2015; Yates, 2015). For Occupy activists and participants, these forms of life included solidarity, mutual aid, free association, cooperation, community, autonomy, horizontalism, empathy, empowerment, dignity, love, respect and care (Bray, 2013; Flank, 2011; Hayduk, 2013; Suzahn, 2011). There is a clear pedagogical operation to the practice of prefigurative politics. As the South London Solidarity Federation put it:

> *a prefigurative approach ... mirrors the new world we want*
> *to build through our actions in the here and now. This acts as*
> *a school of struggle, with participants learning as they go and*
> *becoming aware of their own power (2012, p. 194).*

A pedagogical feedback loop is in operation here: by coming together and acting here and now, participants gain confidence in the scope for collective human action and the capacity of human beings to enact new forms of life, this growing confidence in turn deepening the yearning for a different way of being, feeding the radical imagination, extending the bounds of what is considered possible and extending in turn the range of new forms of life that can be lived and experienced in the here and now (Graeber, 2013; Sitrin, 2011b; Solnit, 2016; van Gelder, 2011).

The occupation of physical space was, of course, crucial. Within OWS, occupation became both the terrain and the objective of struggle as the building of institutions of care, mutual aid, solidarity and horizontalism were heralded as 'a genuine attempt to create the institutions of a new society in the shell of the old' (Graeber, 2011a). The space of occupation was where the pedagogical operation of prefigurative politics was situated. The process of 'radical conjoining' (Lawler, 2011), of 'bodies in alliance' (Butler, 2011), of staying put and growing roots (Klein, 2011), is precisely what enabled putatively new 'extraordinary' and 'revolutionary' social relations to emerge, develop, and deepen (Fithian, 2012; Marazzi, 2012; Risager, 2017). Underpinning all of this, however, and *creating the very conditions* for 'radical' or 'revolutionary' pedagogy, was a conviction amongst its core activists that OWS had created a rupture in capitalist space–time.

A rupture in capitalist space–time?

It is well documented that the activist core of Occupy was dominated by anarchists and autonomists. The 'small-a' anarchism of David Graeber was hugely influential, as were the ideas of Antonio Negri and John Holloway (Bray, 2013; Hammond, 2015; Milkman, Luce, & Lewis, 2014; Rowe, & Carroll, 2015). The insurrectionary anarchism of *The Coming Insurrection* informed the ideas of some (Brown, & Halberstam, 2011; Livingston, 2012) and the tactical sensibilities of OWS resonated with Research and Destroy's *Communique from an Absent Future*, the seminal text emerging from the student occupations of 2009–10 (Clover, 2012). As Matt Presto put it:

> *anarchist and autonomist ways of doing things were part of the zeitgeist, and people had to just accept it (Sitrin, & Azzelini, 2014, p. 164).*

The anarchist and autonomist positions referred to above share three conceptual claims of relevance to an understanding of OWS and prefigurative politics in general: rupture, autonomy and refusal. Regarding the first of these, it is standard practice to refer to OWS as a 'crack' in the domination of capital or a 'rupture' in the symbolic structures of neoliberal hegemony (Christie, 2011; Dean, 2012; Gitlin, 2012; Happe, 2015; Ruggiero, 2012, Sitrin, 2011b; Szolucha, 2015; van Gelder, 2011). Whether one calls it a crack (Holloway), a moment of rupture (Graeber), refusal (Negri), exodus (Hardt, & Negri), communization (Research and Destroy) or insurrection (The Invisible Committee), common to anarchist and autonomist theory is the notion of a revolutionary No! As Holloway puts it:

> *We scream 'NO' so loud that the ice begins to crack … The break begins with refusal, with No (2010, p. 17).*

The NO screamed loudly creates 'cracks in the texture of capitalist domination, cracks in the rule of money' (Holloway, 2012, p. 203), 'momentary openings in capitalist time and space' (Research and Destroy, 2010, p. 11), 'spaces entirely outside the system's control' (Graeber, 2013, p. 237), spaces for 'the autonomous human production of subjectivity' (Hardt, 2010, p. 243). This is certainly the sense shared by many of the key activists within OWS, who were convinced that through having said NO to wage labour and money an opening in capitalist space–time had been created. As Yotam Marom remarked:

> *Something has been opened up, a kind of space nobody knew existed. Something's just got kind of unclogged (Gitlin, 2012, p. 4).*

These spaces nobody knew existed are 'spaces of negation–and–creation', spaces in which 'out of our negation grows a creation' (Holloway, 2010, p. 20, p. 4). Central here is the notion of an 'excess' or 'surplus' that is carried forward and begins to inhabit the spaces of autonomy as soon as the No is screamed. The nature of this excess is subject to various interpretations. Italian autonomists tend to locate it in the changing composition of labour, suggesting that the cooperative, networked, creative, self-organising, entrepreneurial,

affective dimensions of immaterial labour produce a new social being, new subjectivities, a 'subjective excess' and 'revolutionary surplus' that exceeds the capacity of capital to control and subsume it (Negri, 2010, p. 161). Anarchists tend to locate the revolutionary excess in the social rather than the productive sphere, in the relations of love found in everyday life (Solnit, 2016) or the subjectivities formed through collaborative participation in infrastructures of resistance such as housing cooperatives and radical bookshops (Fithian, 2012; Shantz, 2010). For Holloway, the excess resides in nothing more and nothing less than human dignity. There will always be a 'residue' of subjectivity that cannot be subsumed completely, he suggests, and thus the scream of 'the No is backed by another–doing. This is the dignity that can fill the cracks created by the refusal' (2010, p. 19).

The notion of a revolutionary surplus underpins some powerful claims. Hardt argues that 'the positive content of communism' is already present in the composition of immaterial labour, in 'the human production of humanity—a new seeing, a new hearing, a new thinking, a new loving' (2010, p. 141). Negri tells us that 'Communist being is realized' in these transformed subjectivities (Negri, 2010, p. 160). Indeed, 'Communism is possible because it already exists' (ibid.). All we need is 'a political project to bring it into being' (Hardt, & Negri, 2004, p. 221). What one finds here is a shift in the temporality of rebellion as the future is collapsed into the present (Holloway, 2010, p. 26). Communism becomes an immediate reality, not a future stage of development:

> *The validity of a rupture does not depend on the future ... We ask no permission of anyone and we do not wait for the future, but simply break time and assert now another type of doing, another form of social relations (Holloway, 2010, p. 73, p. 141).*

The notion that a rupture makes possible, *immediately and in the very process of the rupture itself*, the assertion of another form of social relations, is common to all the anarchist and autonomist positions held by the OWS core.

This makes it possible to live out, in earnest, one of the defining characteristics of prefiguration, namely, *prolepsis*. This is usually defined as enacting the alternative society created in the present 'as though it had already been achieved' (Yates, 2015, p. 4). In Graeber's words, it is 'the defiant insistence on acting as if one is free' (2013, p. 233). And the OWS

core certainly thought they were. Shawn Carrie proudly declared that OWS was an 'autonomous zone … free from the domination of capitalist power and state power' (Hammond, 2015, p. 303) while Arun Gupta celebrated the creation of 'a non-commodified space in the heart of global capital' (Milkman, Luce, & Lewis, 2013, p. 26). Core activists repeatedly refer to OWS as an opening, a puncture hole through which new subjectivities had been liberated and untapped human becomings had been released (Grusin, 2011; Marom, 2012a, 2012b; Premo, 2012; Suzahn, 2011). On this basis Charlie Gonzalez could proclaim that:

> *we are already free and we do not need to demand anything from anyone to realize our own liberation (Writers for the 99%, 2011, p. 89).*

Nor were they joking. Many participants record the profound self-righteousness that characterised the OWS core and the sheer will to believe that they were the living solution to the crisis of capitalism (Bates, Ogilvie, & Pole, 2016; Ciccariella-Maher, 2012; Smucker, 2012). This wilfulness had profoundly damaging consequences. For the conviction that Zuccotti Park had already, immediately, here-and-now, been transformed into a free autonomous space meant that activists and participants were relieved of the responsibility of exploring their own privilege and the ways in which they had benefited from patriarchy, white supremacy, class domination, heterosexism and ableism. This in turn meant that the park was not, for all the assertions that it was, a site of learning, self-education, revolutionary self-cultivation and collective self-actualisation. For the activist core, there was simply no need for it to be.

The reproduction of existing social relations

Accounts of OWS tend to be heavy on rhetoric. The realities, however, were quite at odds with the claims made by the movement's leaders and its champions. Rather than 'transformed' social relations, many of the first-hand accounts highlight the stubborn persistence and reproduction of *existing* ones. The daily realities of full-blown racism, misogyny, classism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia are widely noted and it is commonly argued that OWS was dominated by the voices and interests of heterosexual white men (Appel, 2012; Hammond, 2015; Milkman, Luce, & Lewis, 2013; Singh, 2012; Welty, Bolton, & Zukowski, 2013; Writers for the 99%, 2011, 111–118; Yassin, 2012).

One of the key claims regarding the pedagogy of OWS relates to institutions of mutual aid. It was through these (the kitchen, library, medical tent and so on) that the occupiers were embodying, here and now, newly transformed social relations of care, equality and solidarity (Crabapple, 2012). OWS was building the infrastructure of 'a new commons', and the forging of radical subjectivities occurred in and through the process of experimenting with new ways of being (Jaffe, 2012). The OWS Kitchen is often singled out for praise and heralded as a genuine example of mutual aid in action (Balkind, 2013). Its success, however, lay in the fact that it fed up to 5000 people a day, not in the 'extraordinary' or 'revolutionary' social relations that underpinned it. One participant interviewed by Yen Liu (2012, p. 79) recounted a common tale:

> *He remembered being in the OWS kitchen one day, where a young woman of color asked a white man to clean the dishes he left in the sink, 'The young white man said to her, "You do it, I'm doing important work." But who's going to do the important work of washing dishes?'*

The gendered division of labour within institutions of care was commonplace. The Jail Support Group attracted virtually no interest and consisted entirely of women (Hammond, 2015) and the same was true of waste disposal, a role so under resourced that the women who did volunteer were reduced to tears of exhaustion and frustration (Halvorsen, 2015). While it is often suggested that the hope offered by OWS lay in 'the lived practice of mutual aid and care' (Clover, 2012, p. 98), the reality is that institutions of care were afforded low priority, were neglected, and the social relations they embodied were predictably traditional.

Another key claim regarding the pedagogy of OWS relates to horizontalism and consensus decision-making. These were linked to a pedagogy of collective self-actualisation, the suggestion being that the experience of participating in a leaderless and non-hierarchical process of decision-making would help cultivate an awareness of human beings as self-organising and self-determining historical agents. Egalitarian relations of association, cooperation and empowerment would supplement the revolutionary relations of love, care and dignity embodied in the institutions of mutual aid, and together these would nurture a confidence in the capacity of human beings to construct new

ways of organising life. In reality, however, a small group of de facto leaders emerged from within the movement, mainly white, male and highly educated, and often referred to as a 'vanguard' (Kang, 2013, p. 68; Milkman, Luce, & Lewis, 2013, pp. 31–2; Schneider, 2012, p. 255). Meetings of the General Assembly, far from modelling radical democracy, were variously described as exclusionary, alienating, cultish, elitist, and profoundly undemocratic (Appel, 2012; Disalvo, 2015; Gessen, 2011; Kang, 2013; Kaufmann, 2011; Rowe, & Carroll, 2015; Szolucha, 2015; Taylor, 2011; Yen Liu, 2012). A common complaint was that 'in practice, horizontalism often marginalized people of color, women, and sexual minorities' (Milkman, Luce, & Lewis, 2013, p. 31).

The myriad interviews, ethnographic studies and first-hand accounts of OWS point to the ways in which power, exclusion, hierarchy, silencing, and marginalisation operated within the movement, and to the ways in which patriarchy, white supremacy, heterosexism, and ableism become inscribed within the very processes that were supposed to be enacting a new way of being. There was a profound disjuncture between the claims made on behalf of OWS as a radical pedagogy of human being-and-becoming and the more insidious realities of the situation on the ground. This is, of course, a criticism levelled at many social movements. In The Progressive Plantation, for example, Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin notes that 'white racism works inside all social movements' and that 'Leftists make the worst kind of racists, because they posture as anti-racists' (2011, pp.16, 9). Even within this incendiary damning of all anarchistic social movements, however, OWS receives particularly vitriolic treatment for its sheer refusal to even acknowledge the nature and degree of internal racism operating within the movement (Ervin, 2011, p. 38). This can be traced at least in part to the ways in which the inner core embodied and enacted a conviction that the movement represented a revolutionary rupture in capitalist space–time. Driven by such a conviction—a conviction that Gitlin tells us they 'felt in their bones' (2012, p. 238)—core activists adopted a pedagogy of Here We Stand.

The pedagogy of Here We Stand

> *This is a form of political response that does not announce itself as politics, instead it enters quietly into the public sphere, sits down and refuses to leave (Brown, & Halberstam, 2011).*

Because the occupiers were already free—by virtue of having opened a crack through which transformed subjectivities had been released—the simple facticity of the occupation was regarded by many as enough. For Marina Sitrin, the occupiers' only demand was to be left alone so they can meet (2011a; 2011b). If left alone, free bodies gathered together in the space opened by the Scream would live and enact transformed social relations and real democracy (Sitrin, 2012). This sense that simply being together is enough was reiterated by some of the superstar speakers who visited the park: Naomi Klein's 'We found each other' (2011), Judith Butler's 'Bodies in Alliance' (2011), and Rebecca Solnit's 'Here We Stand' (2011). A feeling permeated the park that the bodies in alliance formed 'a chorus', a 'universal movement' transcending divisions of class, race, gender and sexual identity (Christie, 2011).

Serious pedagogical significance was attached to the facticity of Here We Stand. Standing together as a We, in the midst of a rupture, an opening through which new subjectivities had been liberated and untapped human becomings had been released, was all that was required in order to forge transformed revolutionary social relations. The genuine belief that the occupiers were already free—had been liberated in and through the act of refusal—meant that all they need do, to use Holloway's phrase, was *assert now* another way of doing. As Noys notes, 'there is no transition to communism, no stage of socialism required before we can achieve the stage of communism, and so no need to "build" communism' (Noys, 2011, p. 9). This is because communism already exists and has simply to be set free. Rather than *build* communism, all one need do is assert it.

This created what I shall term 'pedagogical lacunae' in Occupy Wall Street. A clear example of this can be seen in the debates surrounding the Declaration of the Occupation, a hugely significant document discussed and finally agreed by the General Assembly on September 29th 2011 (NYCGA, 2011). The original text of the Declaration had been drawn up by a group of white male activists and the text was put before the General Assembly (GA) for approval. What happened next entered movement folklore as a small group of people of colour fought to have the opening sentence removed. The sentence read:

> *As one people, formerly divided by the color of our skin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or lack thereof, political party and*

> *cultural background, we acknowledge the reality: that there is*
> *only one race, the human race, and our survival requires the*
> *cooperation of its members (cited in Ashraf, 2011, p. 33).*

Facing considerable resistance, Hena Ashraf and Manissa Maharawal repeatedly took issue with the phrase 'formerly divided by', which made it sound as if racism, classism, religious oppression, patriarchy, homophobia and trans-phobia no longer existed; that these had been overcome within the movement and in Zuccotti Park (Maharawal, 2011). In a critical intervention, Ashraf and Maharawal battled against the intransigence of the white facilitators who argued that the movement was *living now the change it wanted to see* and that the phrase 'formerly divided by' should stay (Ashraf, 2011, p. 34).

The GA eventually agreed to remove the sentence but the discussions and disagreements continued long after the GA had dissolved. Meeting with the white male facilitators, Ashraf and Maharawal gave 'a crash course on white privilege, structural racism, and oppression … colonialism and slavery' (Maharawal, 2011, p. 39). Marahawal (2012a) recalls how much this hurt, how exhausting it was to explain how women of colour experienced the world, and how angry she felt that it was women of colour who had to do this work. The movement lacked 'self-understanding' and seemed to refuse to acknowledge how racism, oppression, homophobia, sexism and ableism worked within it (Maharawal, 2012b, p. 178).

Looking back on his time in the movement, Vijay Prashad notes that: 'It is of course true that some silly people at the heart of OWS made the claim that racism is now over' (2012, p. 17). There were, in fact, a lot of silly people making this claim, and they were making this claim because they genuinely believed that they had opened a crack in capitalist space–time through which liberated subjectivities had emerged, that they had created an autonomous zone for the self-valorisation of the Multitude and had established the conditions for non-alienated life. They felt it in their bones. They were acting *now* as if they were already free. For the duration of the movement, people of colour were confronted with the wilful assertion that divisions within the liberated space of OWS had been overcome and that power, privilege and oppression no longer existed (Appel, 2012; Singh, 2012). The core activists' earnest belief that they were occupying, here and now, the space–time of utopia, gave rise

to a persistent white left colour blindness (Bray, 2013; Khatib, 2012; Olson, 2012; Spence, & McGuire, 2012; Writers for the 99%, 2011; Yen Liu, 2012). There was in OWS a *significant pedagogical lacuna*, a profound *lack* of movement learning, a stubborn refusal to learn from itself, an unwavering adherence to the grandiose belief that in Liberty Square 'we are already free'.

A second example draws attention to the shallow focus within OWS on the political and the fact that concrete instantiations of 'the new society within the old' were largely confined to consensus decision-making, the GA, the People's Mic and other paraphernalia of horizontalism. This applies both to activists on the ground and to the theoreticians of the movement. David Graeber, for example, talks of Occupy almost exclusively in political terms, as 'a new conception of politics', a space for 'self-organized political activity' and 'the unleashing of political desire' (2013, p. xviii, p. 237, p. 297). His discussion of prefiguration focusses narrowly on the decision-making process, on presenting the General Assembly as a model of genuine direct democracy (2011b; 2012b, 2013). Marina Sitrin, too, conceptualises the 'new ways of relating' supposedly unleashed by the rupture of Occupy in terms of political organisation (2012, p. 86). The new 'social relations' enacted by the occupiers are discussed almost solely in relation to horizontalism as a new form of politics (Sitrin, 2012).

The key to freedom does not reside in the political sphere, however, but in everyday social relations. Just as anti-discrimination legislation does not prevent discrimination in the processes and practices of everyday life, so too a General Assembly using consensus decision-making does not eradicate social inequalities, hierarchies and oppressions within the movement. For all the thousands of words written by Graeber and Sitrin, little is said about how the movement reproduced itself on a daily basis. And as we saw earlier, the activist core gave this precious little thought. The institutions of care and mutual aid were largely abandoned and ended up reproducing a very traditional gendered and racialised division of labour. I would point again here to a *pedagogical lacuna* rooted in a certain understanding of revolutionary space–time and the way this encouraged a focus on the political at the expense of the social. The conviction that Zuccotti Park had already, immediately, here-and-now, been transformed into an autonomous zone populated by liberated subjectivities, meant not only that white supremacy was reproduced

through left colour blindness but also that the reproduction of everyday life within the park was taken for granted and became marginalised. While Graeber and Sitrin were waxing lyrical about the utopian possibilities being opened up by consensus decision-making, the everyday practices onsite were merely reproducing existing social relations.

New, transformed, revolutionary social relations did not emerge during the occupation of Zuccotti Park. No positive revolutionary surplus was released or brought into being by the act of refusal. The No! did not bring forth, in and of itself, a wealth of Yeses. Halvorsen points to the tension in social movements 'between *moments of rupture*, lived space–times of intensity' and *'everyday life*, the routines and rhythms through which social life is reproduced' (2015, p. 402). Within OWS, the activist core became fixated on the excitement of the rupture and neglected the sphere of everyday life. It is in the sphere of everyday life, however—in the sphere of social reproduction—that the pedagogy of the occupation operates. It is through the mundane reproduction of everyday life that radical subjectivities are formed, not through attending meetings of the GA. As Prashad remarks: 'Social life does not automatically emerge. It has to be worked for' (2012, p. 8). A rupture might create the *possibility* of new forms of life, but cultivating them requires pedagogical work in the sphere of everyday reproduction. This is what was missing in OWS. There were profound pedagogical lacunae.

The utopian impulse and the need for pedagogical direction

In and through the process of social life (the process of creating and sustaining families, friendships, communities, commitments and forms of co-operation), imaginary landscapes take shape. These landscapes comprise complex, fluid and often contradictory patterns of desires, needs, fears, hostilities, dreams, ethical norms, symbolic meanings, etc., and the landscapes emerge through a collective process of engagement, struggle, contestation and shared learning. The utopian impulse—we might also call it the utopian *moment*, the utopian *shift*, the change in momentum implied by the word 'impulse'—arises when utopian desire and a utopian horizon are located and *felt* within these imaginary landscapes. I emphasise the affective dimension because we might describe the utopian impulse as 'the discovery of a new structure of feeling' (Williams, 1991, p. 266); a structure of feeling that emerges when the imaginary landscapes born of the processes

and struggles of social life point to the reconstitution of the *totality* of material conditions giving rise to experiences of alienation, exploitation, degradation, minoritisation and oppression.

Occupy Wall Street signalled such a shift and such a moment. OWS was a significant revolutionary event, an expression of the *utopian impulse*. As Karl Mannheim argued long ago, however, 'it is a very essential feature of modern history that in the gradual organization for collective action social classes become effective in transforming historical reality only when their aspirations are embodied in utopias appropriate to the changing situation' (Mannheim, 1940, p. 187). For Mannheim there is a crucial role for the pedagogue here in giving clear utopian form to popular aspirations. The utopian conceptions of the pedagogue seize on currents present within the imaginary landscapes of group members, give expression to them, flow back into the outlook of a social group and are translated by this group into action. Rather than corresponding directly to a concrete body of articulated needs, the active utopia 'transmits' and 'articulates' the amorphous 'collective impulse' of a group (1940, pp. 185–6). Kelley refers to this as 'poetic knowledge', collective efforts to see and map the future that circulate at the level of poetic evocation (2002, pp. 9–10). Within the imaginaries of social groups and movements, one may talk of utopian desire and a utopian horizon, 'even if movement actors can't fully or completely articulate what it might look like' (Haiven, & Khasnabish, 2014, p. 126).

Within OWS, the utopian impulse was never fully articulated and mobilised. Instead, it circulated at the level of poetic evocation, as an inchoate amorphous collective desire. There were pedagogical lacunae in Occupy stemming, as I have argued, from a focus on the political at the expense of the everyday—an obsession with consensus decision-making and a neglect of those very institutions of care within which utopian desire and a utopian horizon were to be found—and the stubborn insistence that the occupiers were 'already free' and that no pedagogical work was required to tease out and give shape to the inchoate needs and desires of participants. The overriding sense was that 'we are already free and we do not need to demand anything from anyone to realize our own liberation'.

In her study of Occupy London, Cassie Earl makes the interesting claim that the pedagogical operation of the movement 'defied theory'

(2018, p. 102). Earl notes 'a duality at play, that people wanted to believe the movement was one thing even though they knew it was not' (p. 106). Core activists stuck rigidly to the 'theory' that Occupy represented a crack through which a community of saints was emerging while the reality on the ground 'defied' such a notion as existing relations of oppression were reproduced (pp. 79–80). Theory peddled 'political fictions' which acted as a 'façade' behind which the privileges, hierarchies, discriminations and oppressions of the old world went unchecked in the new (pp. 101, 99). Earl concludes from all this that Occupy singularly *failed* to learn from itself and that the movement needed 'some kind of organised pedagogical direction' (p. 161). For Earl, the pedagogue would act as a 'critical friend' engaged in monitoring the movement, calling out oppressions and using these as 'teaching points' to help nurture critical self-awareness among participants (pp. 102, 99).

I want to argue here for a more expansive form of pedagogical direction that seeks to engage the radical imagination in the project of utopia-building. Understood in this way, the role of the pedagogue in social movements is to 'convoke' the radical imagination, animating, enlivening, drawing together, and building on the amorphous utopian imaginings of community or movement members. To 'convoke' is 'to call something which is not yet fully present into being' (Haiven, & Khasnabish, 2014, p. 61). For Mavis Biss this requires the radical moral imagination, or 'the specifically imaginative excellence required to bring inchoate experience to conceptual consciousness' (2013, pp. 937, 948). The radical imagination is required to articulate movement actors' strong if inchoate emotions, crystallise them and present them back in the form of a vision.

Within Occupy the inchoate yearnings and desires that were expressive of a utopian shift lacked an organised pedagogical response. Some noted a profound anti-intellectualism in OWS, a refusal to take advantage of the knowledge, skills and resources offered to them by academic participants (Bolton, Welty, Nayak, & Malone, 2013). For Campagna and Campiglio, what the pedagogue can offer is 'the ability to travel through, and simultaneously to construct, possible alternative landscapes for social composition', something 'they used to call utopian thinking' (2012, pp. 5–6). Crucially, as McKenzie Wark (2011) stresses, the pedagogue's role is 'an adjunct one', providing 'a language for what the movement already knows'. The movement was bursting with inchoate, unarticulated, amorphous desires but lacked the language

and imagery to fully articulate them. In contexts such as these the role of utopian pedagogy is to piece together a vision from the fragmented, disparate and inchoate yearnings of community members, and to put historical, theoretical and social understandings to work in developing an articulated alternative.

Conclusion

Anarchist and autonomist ideas hold sway within many movements of the Left and provide the dominant frame within which anti-capitalist struggles are currently being fought. A number of figures and texts have attained particular prominence, and some of these—Graeber, Sitrin, The Invisible Committee, Holloway, Hardt and Negri—were key influences animating the core activists in Occupy Wall Street. What I have tried to do in this paper is explore OWS as site of radical pedagogy and evaluate the claims regarding the learning that took place there. The analysis is relevant, however, to broader claims about the radical learning that takes place when bodies come together in occupied space and engage in transformative critical pedagogy by virtue of the organic dialogic interactions arising from their very being there.

The paper has argued that the *pedagogical lacunae* within OWS warn against romanticising the possibilities opened up by alternative spaces of learning and demonstrate the need within social movements for *organised pedagogical direction*. Without concerted pedagogical intervention, 'autonomous' spaces run the risk of merely reproducing existing relations of power, privilege and oppression. Movements heralding themselves as cracks in capitalist space-time through which transformed social relations are emerging here-and-now might just end up becoming dead spaces in which the inchoate utopian desires that originally gave them life wither away through neglect.

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