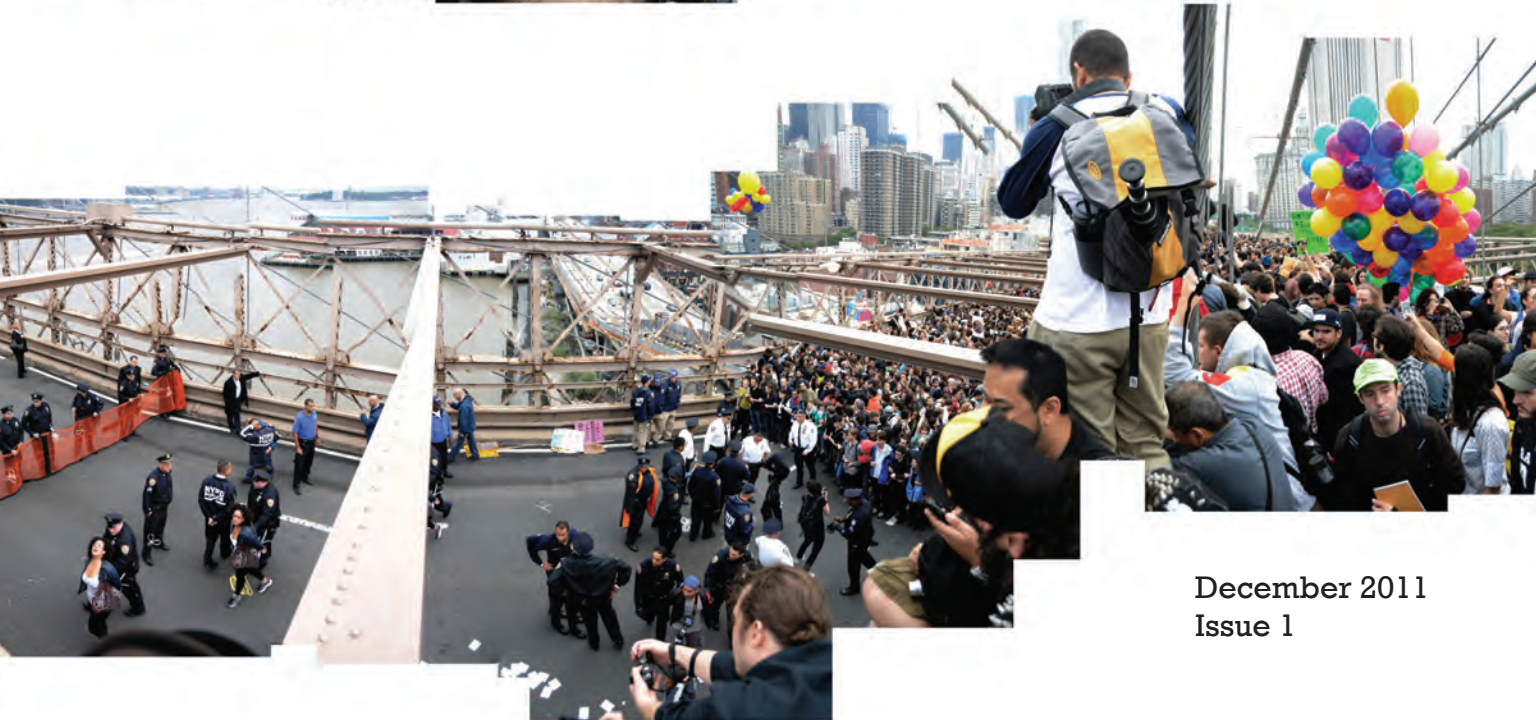


# tidal

— occupy theory, occupy strategy —



December 2011  
Issue 1



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We have come to Wall Street as refugees from this native dreamland,  
 seeking asylum in the actual. That is what we seek to occupy.  
 We seek to rediscover and reclaim the world.

# Communiqué 1

We were born into a world of ghosts and illusions that have haunted our minds our entire lives. These shades seem more alive to us than reality, and perhaps by some definition are more actual, hyper-real. We grew up in this world of screens and hyperbole and surreal imagery, and think nothing of a long-dead actor appearing on a wall in our homes to urge us to buy or live a certain way. Some generations ago, we might have all been burned, perhaps rightly, as witches. After all, who knows where these images really come from?

We have no clear idea how life should really feel. The mind adapts itself quickly to commonplaces and absurdities alike, so that a child raised in a phantasmal funhouse will assume it is normal, especially if she can't find the door. We sense something is wrong only through the odd clue. The power cuts off from an unusually violent storm; when we look away, confused, from our dark screens to an actual person, we're told something about the climate deteriorating. We notice a vague spiritual nausea, hard to discuss in a world where most serious, hard-working people have little time to believe in the existence of the soul. The ghosts that come to us offer no vocabulary to describe the emptiness they helped create within us.

We have come to Wall Street as refugees from this native dreamland, seeking asylum in the actual. That is what we seek to occupy. We seek to rediscover and reclaim the world. Many believe we have come to Wall Street to transact some kind of business with its denizens, to strike a deal. But we have not come to negotiate. We have come to confront the darkness at its source, here, where the Big Apple sucks in more of the sap from the national tree than it needs or deserves, as if spliced from some Edenic forbearer. Serpent-size worms feast within, engorged on swollen fruit. Here, the world is chewed and digested into bits as tiny and fluid as the electrons that traders use to bring nations and homeowners to their knees.

At Wall Street we see that the basic quantum of experience has become the transaction; that life's central purpose is to convert all of existence into tradable currency. The significance of the phantoms from our childhood becomes

clearer. We understand them as souls detached from their former selves and meanings, and reduced to messengers. They were sent to us by people intent on grounding life into a hoard-able quintessence, who have urged us merely to buy and "do our part" in the constant monetization of life.

Television, one of the chief culprits of our spiritual vacuum, has revealed that the central action of our time involves rending together experiential units: families, atoms, meaning, psyches. Advertising campaigns have become the central art of our generation. The artistic imagination, previously occupied with translating heaven and listening quietly for the intangible within and around us, has traded these idylls for steady employment producing fetishistic car commercials. It all seems to be of a part: the images crowding in on us as cheap and lifeless as the products they represent, built in factories owned by hollow men trying to fill their emptiness with mansions and treasures that they drained from us. In so doing they make the rest of the world as dark and dead as they are. And unsurprisingly, as the world has become too polluted with junk to live, our imaginations colonized by banalities and our souls sucked dry, we have become infatuated with vampires. Wall Street tells us, it has always told us, that there is a plan and that it is our duty to follow that plan. We have come here to doubt and to dispute that plan. When we peek at the blueprints made for the project, we see drawn there a fantastic land of gaudy castles surrounded by a protective fence of broken glass, and outside this territory a vast denuded plane scribbled with the words "Rabble," "Suckers," "Consumers," "Them."

What do we want from Wall Street? Nothing, because it has nothing to offer us. We wouldn't be here if Wall Street fed off itself; we are here because it is feeding off everyone. It is sustaining the phantoms and ghosts we have always known and whose significance we now understand. We have come here to vanish those ghosts; to assert our real selves and lives; to build genuine relationships with each other and the world; and to remind ourselves that another path is possible. If the phantoms of Wall Street are confused by our presence in their dream, so much the better. It is time that the unreal be exposed for what it is.

# Step 1: Occupy Universities

## Step 2: Transform Them

BY **Conor Tomás Reed**

We've reached a month and a half into Occupy Wall Street—a movement catalyzing millions into decisive action around the world. For many of us, 'occupy' has become a verb to be sung. This rowdy crowd word, at once descriptive and prescriptive, aims to body-flip the logic of imperialism on its head. A radical people's occupation of public space doesn't erect checkpoints; it tears them down. Instead of usurping others' resources, we heartily pool our own for free distribution. The call to occupy now reverberates from Oakland ports to NYC Department of Education hearings, from garish Sotheby's art auctions to rush-hour subway ciphers. The wealthy are now hounded at public appearances, while banks begin to dance the frantic backpedal. The results are in, folks: A poor people's movement is once again changing the course of history. So how can we apply such electric tenacity to occupy our schools? Initially, education activists did well to look beyond the immediate horizon of campus grounds and help transform public squares—the movement's major first act. The recent "People's University" and "#occupyCUNY" teach-ins at Washington Square Park demonstrated, along with each

OWS assembly and Open Forum, how to re-shape public places as free venues for collective education, places where each of us can actively make meaning in a range of critical discussions. With the goal of shaking prevailing school priorities inside out, these wide-open counter-classrooms have been essential. But for our second act (and just in time for winter!), we need to boomerang the "occupy" movement back to where our power was latent all along: our college environments. Teachers and students reoccupying our schools means jettisoning many failed tenets of higher education's current operation. Competitive individualized learning, rigid demarcation of disciplines, shallow celebration of difference, grading systems that all-too-viciously distort self-worth—these are the pedagogical tools of the 1%. Instead, let's host at each campus OWS-style General Assemblies that welcome the surrounding community and put educationally marginalized voices at the top of the speaking list and the top of resulting activities. Let's collaborate via write-ins to produce "People's Dissertations" about the Occupy movement's significance, with public writing times, committees of peers and involvement across disciplines. After each dissertation is created, we can hand out P(eople)h(ave)D(dreams) certificates en masse, thus rupturing the emblems of intellectual prestige. The point is to occupy our schools with clear political purpose. It's not enough for a tiny band of adventurous students and teachers to take a school building and hoist a flag. We need to gather vast networks of resonant support if school occupations and strikes are to succeed. We need to line up a panoply of actions for the exact moment when business as usual is disrupted. We can see how in Chile, Puerto Rico, California and around Europe, educational activities *proliferated*, rather than halted, when people effectively shut down campuses. Labor historian Paul Johnston also suggests that "we start seeing the strike not as an 'off button'—put down your tools, walk out, stand in front of the worksite, keep people from crossing the lines—and instead see it as an 'on button,'" in order to galvanize a huge influx of participants into concrete action. To dig deeper: What does it mean for us to "occupy theory"? Although some cozily ensconced radical scholars

**BLOCK !!!**

Hold hands  
Link Arms  
Sit Down  
Lock Down  
LIE DOWN

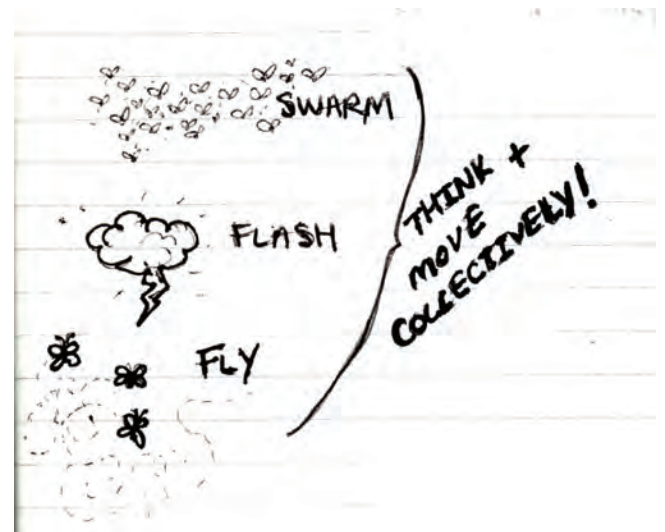
ESCALATION \*

The diagram consists of two vertical lines with arrows pointing downwards. The left line is labeled 'BLOCK !!!' at the top and has five steps listed between the lines: 'Hold hands', 'Link Arms', 'Sit Down', 'Lock Down', and 'LIE DOWN'. The right line is labeled 'ESCALATION \*' and has an asterisk at the top. The text is written in blue ink on lined paper.

**The point is to occupy our schools with clear political purpose. It's not enough for a tiny band of adventurous students and teachers to take a school building and hoist a flag. We need to gather vast networks of resonant support if school occupations and strikes are to succeed. We can see how in Chile, Puerto Rico, California and around Europe, educational activities proliferated, rather than halted, when people effectively shut down campuses.**

would bray otherwise, we must be clear that liberatory education is a means, not an end. Radical books that are disconnected from social action are lone flags rippling atop an otherwise unchallenged edifice. As Paulo Freire, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o and others persist, we have been inculcated in an imperialist banking model of education. The more we gain by climbing the education echelon, the more precarious becomes our resistance to it. However, the late people's historian Howard Zinn understood the exigencies of radical scholarship: While at Spelman College, after class he and his students marched together to desegregate lunch counters. In such moments, the high walls of theory become miraculously porous; we test the learning process by leaping off the page and into lived social experience. The relationship between ideas and currency is another target for occupation. Pierre Bourdieu calls attention to the French word "louer," which can mean both "to praise" and "to rent." I'm reminded of the time-worn practice of the first day of graduate seminars, in which each student goes around to share her "interests": "I'm interested in this field, I have an interest in that methodology," etc., etc. The word "interest" connotes somewhat of a detached, dispassionate gaze, but also contains clear economic ramifications. We borrow ideas throughout school, duly paying interest to those who own them, which thus accrues value for certain kinds of knowledge. With this inaugurating tradition of sharing one's interests (like a banker-in-training, or otherwise like a collector of possessions), we practice the cool ownership of ideas. To liberate our education must include, then, expropriating our ideas from systemic hierarchical mis-evaluation. Moreover, we would do well to incorporate Occupy Wall Street's methods of discussion in our classrooms and communities. How often do we carefully strive to create consent about complex positions and concepts? We've been taught to theorize like starving hyenas—tearing the throat out of each other's ideas. Instead, an interrelated educational community that listens to one another, repeating word for word if needed, can inscribe the social work of scholarship with a shared sense of critical *construction*. In doing so, we can attempt to

break out of the last few traumatic decades' fixation on the dis-abys: Our social movement's trajectory now requires re-empowerment, re-orientation, re-combination! We will abundantly expand the global Occupy struggle if clear alternatives to this utter failure of a system are presented, debated, attempted, assessed, re-worked, and attempted again, with each stage in the process promoting wider varied ways for people to join these spectacular efforts at social change. Ultimately, such an expansive project will entail changing our conceptions of school altogether. Fred Moten and Stefano Harney urgently address the present underside of education, arguing, "The university contains incarceration as the product of its negligence." Paradoxically, then, our role in transforming schools will include striving to abolish their function as the official sites of knowledge production, just as we will in connection strive to abolish prison systems that maintain colonialism by other means. To liberate schools is to liberate a society in which education codifies and contrasts people's needs and dreams to each other's. To this effect, the people's class is now in session, with guaranteed free tuition and open admissions. We're making up the syllabus as we go.





**Creating new autonomous community zones is necessary for the survival of the movement. We must project our vision of a just world onto the blank paving stones of public parks and into the silent hallways of abandoned schools. Now it is time to shift our communities — to turn our collective imaginary into a collective reality.**

# An Occupier's Note

BY Suzahn E.

Interviews or articles about Occupy Wall Street eventually lead to one question: “What does a just world look like?” We need only to look at Liberty Square, or at any people’s occupation from around the world, for an answer. Although these sites are microcosms, they are nevertheless worlds where we aspire to achieve mutual aid and solidarity, autonomy and horizontality. The overarching belief seems to be, however, that a just world is a world without conflict, and that the occupations are too chaotic to embody the world we work towards. This stumbling block is a dehumanizing sentiment that stunts our ongoing critique of how we interact with one another and confront the baggage carried over from generations of oppression. We are not as concerned with utopia as we are with justice, meaning that we as occupiers do not avoid confrontation. On the contrary, the greatest distinction between our community and the society around us is that we approach conflict with revolutionary priorities.

A world is built and propelled by aspiration and priority—the universals that define who we are as a collective and what values shape our lives and communities. We at the square have adopted priorities of community, empathy, reconciliation, and empowerment, intent on keeping the collective ability in balance with individual need. This does not mean that the world we are creating is perfect, or that perfection is something we aspire to. A world without centralized rule does not mean a world without conflict; a world without hierarchy does not mean a world without power. It means a world where we all become powerful, as individuals and as a collective.

Occupiers are faced with the call to champion individual empowerment as necessary for collective functioning. There are no police. There is no state, no law, and no jail to turn to within the occupy community. There is only individual responsibility and accountability, with a counterweight of faith in the process of mutual aid. The empowering sense that we are all connected through commonality of work and all forms of survival—be they physical, mental, or spiritual—is embedded in our processes and our search for alternatives. We both illuminate and embody the obsolescence of the police and the state when we harness our skills to solve community issues and needs.

The state and the police have been presented to us as necessary, bolstered by the absurd idea that people themselves are not equipped to solve their own problems. Through au-

thority we have been cast into perpetual dependence and infantile immobilization. Eventually, we are forced to accept violent repression of mind and body for a false sense of order. We occupy because we refuse to conflate stability with subjugation and oppression. A stable world is not necessarily a just world. The 1% warns against criticism and interference with a free market, promising that de-regulation will give us a stable economy. Tyranny is stable. Dictators rise on the promise of constancy and the security of permanence.

At the square, everyone is empowered to become mediators, to ask about each others’ needs and boundaries, to communicate honestly, and to learn to accept conflict as possible points of community construction. Some may perceive this as chaos. But they should look closer, for we are rebuilding ourselves by building a community based on liberty. Real liberty—which means trust in the individual in direct contact with the unknown—is a liberty that gives us a chance to define ourselves in conjunction with those around us rather than in opposition to others. As a great anarchist thinker, Voltairine de Cleyre, once wrote, “Liberty and experiment alone can determine the best forms of society.”

The chaos of experimentation breeds new possibilities. Occupiers must allow themselves the possibility of positive internal conflict in order for the experiment to grow. To deny this struggle is to deny ourselves the ability to directly construct a just world; it is to flatten our complex humanity. The Occupy Movement is an experiment, but the worst possible mistake would be to let that word detract from our legitimacy and validity as a revolutionary moment.

Creating new autonomous community zones is necessary for the survival of the movement. We must project our vision of a just world onto the blank paving stones of public parks and into the silent hallways of abandoned schools. Now it is time to shift our communities—to turn our collective imaginary into a collective reality. We must occupy, regardless of the mass of unknowns and fears that might be tied into the act of liberation.

Our collective liberation rejects the authority stolen from the people. We reject your oppressive stability in favor of our chaotic liberty fueled by self-empowerment and self-determination. We will be solving our own problems while you, who have solved none of them, become obsolete. Now it is about human creativity and the power of action.

All power to the imagination. Occupy Everywhere.

# GENERAL STRIKE!



Today the global workforce stands deeply divided as globalization operates through a system of finance— trading in uneven currencies— that has little to do with that workforce. This division is why it is once again time to reclaim the General Strike.

**BY GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK**



When the entire workforce of a city lays down its tools and refuses to resume work until certain demands are met, it is called a General Strike. The idea first came from the nineteenth-century anarchists, who did not constitute a workforce but were people of anti-statist convictions. Rosa Luxemburg, the Polish revolutionary thinker (1871–1919) murdered by German reactionary troops, rewrote the concept of the General Strike and claimed it for the workforce (proletariat) after witnessing the great General Strikes in the Russian Empire that began in 1896 and ended in the tremendous General Strike of 1905. Georges Sorel (1847–1922), a French thinker who moved from the political Left to the political Right, also conceived of the General Strike as a way to energize the workforce.

The African-American historian and sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963) described the exodus of the slaves immediately after Emancipation as a General Strike, because slavery had not allowed the “Black Proletariat” (plantation workforce for the cotton industry) to form itself as a regular workforce. In the same era, Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), the Indian national liberationist, rewrote the General Strike once again and claimed it for the colonized, regardless of class, thus shifting it from a working-class movement to a mixture of civil disobedience and boycott politics. He called it “Non-Cooperation.” development of thinking

Today the global workforce stands deeply divided as globalization operates through a system of finance—trading in uneven currencies—that has little to do with that workforce. This division, which is why it is once again time to reclaim the General Strike. It is already being reclaimed by those disenfranchised by a system whose benefits flow constantly upward: toward bailouts for banks and away from healthcare, education and all the places that need them most. Labor now has a chance to join hands in this redefinition of the General Strike as a collectivity of disenfranchised citizens: the 99%.

Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) defined those who had no access to the welfare structure of the state, and those who played no role in the state, as the subaltern; the poorest of the poor. Today this story too is being re-written. What we are witnessing is the subalternization of the middle class—the largest sector of the 99%. The General Strike, as Du Bois and Gandhi once envisioned it, is becoming a powerful symbol that exceeds the neatly matched worker/master fight of old. And to this point, there are several features of a General Strike to keep in mind.

(1) A General Strike is undertaken by those who suffer actual day-to-day injustice, not by morally outraged ideologues.

(2) A General Strike is by definition non-violent, though the repressive apparatus of the state has used great violence against the strikers.

(3) A General Strike generally consists of demands focused on reforming or re-writing laws, ie. the length of the working day for Russian workers, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments (in substance if not in discourse) for the former slaves, a decolonized legal structure in the era of Gandhi, etc.

If one recognizes the connection between the General Strike and the Law, one realizes this is not *legal* reformism but a call for social and economic *justice*. Banning bank bailouts, instituting legal oversight of fiscal policy, taxing the rich, de-corporatizing education, lifting fossil fuel and agriculture subsidies, and on and on. The intense commitment to legal change and its implementation is a bid for justice. And remember: unlike a political party, the movers of a General Strike need not co-operate until they see things actually change. Already the pressure is working: witness the 5% victory over debit card charges last month.

General Strikes are always in a sense against “Wall Street,” more broadly described as capitalism. But, because revolutions have also been against bad regimes represented by single dictators or kings, our idea of “revolution” is confused with armed struggle, violence, and regime change. In Russia, the Czars. In China, a decadent feudalism and Euro-colonialism. In Latin America, the latifundia system in France, the Bourbon monarchy. In America, the Hanover monarchy and later the slaveholding system. today in the Arab world, Zayn al-Abidin Ben Ali in Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Muammar Gaddafi in Libya.

By contrast, in the Occupy movement, the spirit of the General Strike has come into its own and joined forces with the American tradition of civil disobedience: citizens against an unregulated capitalist state, not against an individual and a regime. Therefore, in the short-term, we must change the laws that currently make the state accountable to business and banks, not to people. And in the Long-term, establish and nurture an education that keeps the will to justice alive.

# Notes

## ON POWER

An institution gains power when people surrender their individual agency to the institution. The more people that do this, the more powerful the institution. Power can be thought of as a gathered pool of people's individual agencies. Our movement is about trying to make people take their agency back and fully engage with themselves and reality. Surrendering agency is the opposite of that. In this movement, institutions should not have power. They should be for facilitating the coordination of individuals. The General Assembly (GA) can be seen as functioning this way. It facilitates coordination and action. People follow consensus decisions of the GA because they agree with them. However, we should resist the idea that people must follow the GA's decision, or that you need the GA's permission to do anything. The General Assembly is not a parliament. It doesn't pass laws. People *must* retain their individual agency, meaning they can chose *not* to follow the GA's decisions. We have focused a lot of energy on not having entitled leaders, which makes sense because leaders also exercise power that has been surrendered to them. It doesn't make sense to substitute another power body in place of leaders. We will end up with the same problem. Individuals are always free to act without GA blessing. This is a fundamental human right. —*Anteant*

## ON OUTDOOR SPACE

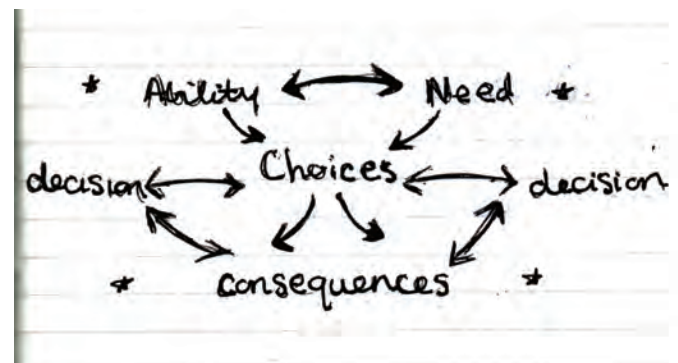
After the raid on Liberty Plaza, the absence that opened up in the center of our movement was greater than the size of the physical space in that tiny, concrete park. For us, space is not a mere necessity—a place to lay our head, to eat our meals, to congregate and assemble—it is also a symbol and a direct action. Literally, vacant lots are voids that we fill with physical representations of our concerns, hopes, fears, and dreams. We invite others to join us and create an infrastructure that liberates minds. We must reassert our rights to occupy public spaces. Privatization has created a dichotomy of those with and those without, those with being landowners—a fraction of the population. We must partner with communities, artists, educators, not just taking for ourselves, but opening locked gates for all to occupy.

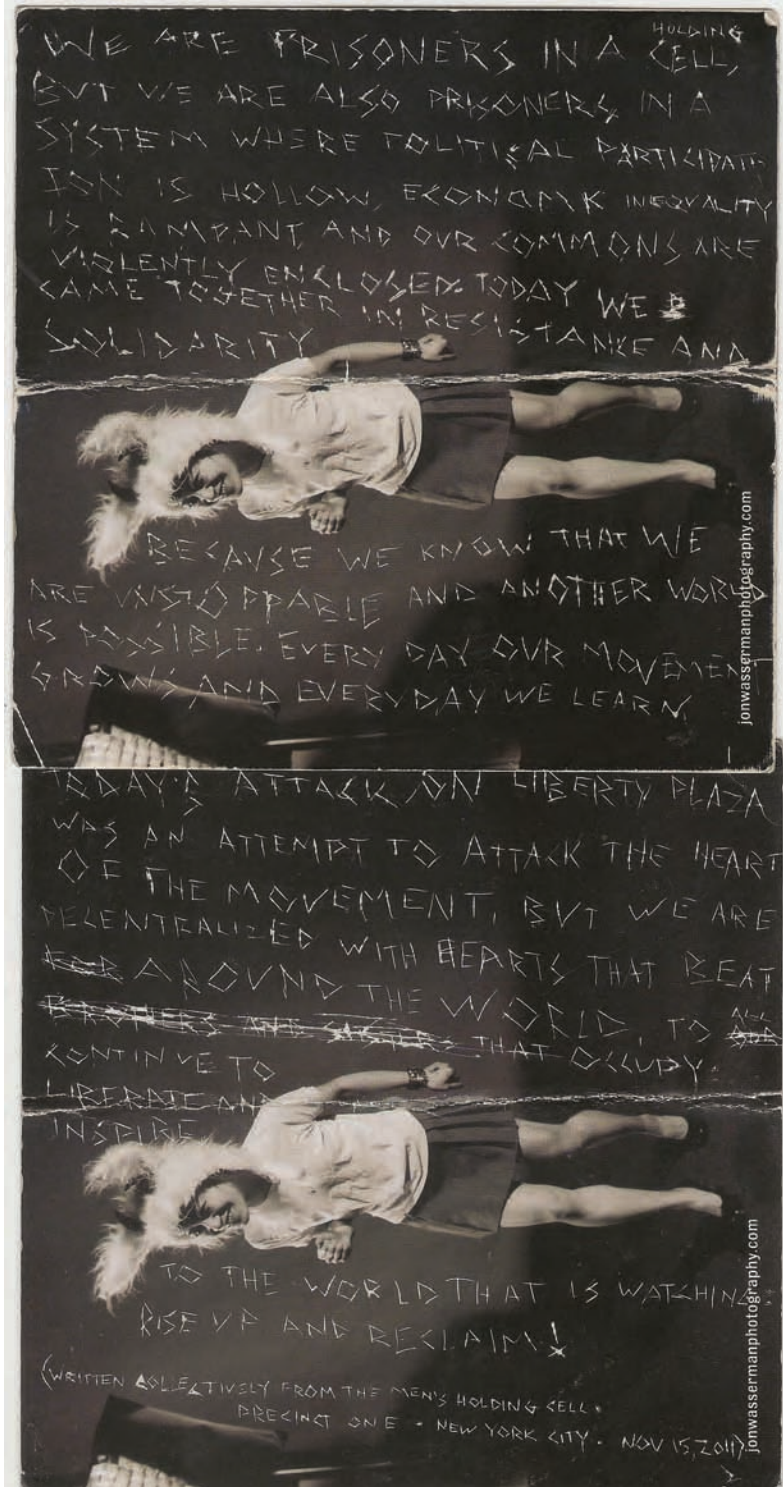
Now that we are rebuilding, some say that it is in our best interest to occupy indoor spaces. The reasons for this are various. Occupying indoor spaces such as foreclosed houses and abandoned buildings politicizes individual struggles. It answers the question of how to survive through the winter and how to create a life outside of the spectacle of this revolutionary project. It allows the message of our movement to enter communities through individual voices. But occupying indoor space is fundamentally about reclaiming

private space, a shift from our notions of what it is to be public, transparent, inclusive and collective. Outdoor spaces symbolically oppose Wall Street in a manner that directly threatens its stability, and maintaining our presence in opposition is crucial to enfranchising more supporters moving forward. Indoor spaces are an important compliment to whatever we do, but we must remember that outdoor public spaces embody the heart of this movement. With each space we consider, we must ask whether it gives form to our collective desires. This is our metric. We will not wait for channels of bureaucracy to gift spaces to us. We will liberate them. —*Thomas Hintze and Laura Gottesdiener*

## ON CELEBRITIES

The list of celebrities that want to throw benefits, concerts, events, etc., is endless. We should use celebrity status as a resource that gets coupled with a strategic objective. We should first ask whether they are arrestable for an action? We should ask celebrities to participate in direct actions, throw concerts in neighborhoods without permits, mobilize their followers for actions. We should ask them to tweet and facebook messages we draft for them. We do not want our movement mainstreamed in order to make activism cool for people to join. Our movement should radicalize people to act in a civil *and* disobedient manner. It shifts consciousness and empowers. When we do an event, we should create space for marginalized voices to be heard. Bruce Springsteen is a privileged voice. He can make himself heard anytime. So maybe he speaks less. Maybe there are testimonials from the marginalized. Maybe the event has a radical educational component. In any event, the artists participating should be sufficiently informed of what OWS is through discussion, questions and exchange. That's one way to spread the movement, to those who craft the culture. —*Natasha Bhagat Singh*





## COLLECTIVE STATEMENT

from General Assembly  
1st Precinct Men's Holding Cell

NYC — Nov. 15, 2011

## 3 poems

BY Jed Brandt

### OCCUPY CAIRO

Vassals fear new words,  
When we tire of whispering  
And say our own name.

### QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNISTS & LOVERS

How can you love that?  
Kids unborn? Worlds yet to be?  
Proletariat?

Sway opinion,  
Or change minds? Tilt at windmills?  
So many questions.

### OCCUPY OAKLAND

This state is not law.  
Don't forget that. And they ask,  
'What are your demands?!'

# For and Against

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# PRECARITY

BY Judith Butler

In this time, neo-liberal economics increasingly structures public institutions, including schools and universities, as well as public services, in a time in which people are losing their homes, their pensions, and their prospects for work in increasing numbers, we are faced with the idea that some populations are considered disposable. There is short-term work, or post-Fordist forms of flexible labor that rely on the substitutability and dispensability of working peoples, bolstered by prevailing attitudes toward health insurance and social security that suggest that market rationality should decide whose health and life should be protected, and whose health and life should not. And this was, for some of us, keenly exemplified at that meeting of the Tea Party in which one member suggested that those who have serious illness and cannot pay for health insurance would simply have to die. A shout of joy rippled through the crowd, according to published reports. It was, I conjecture, the kind of joyous shout that usually accompanies going to war or forms of nationalist fervor. But if this was for some a joyous occasion, it must be precisely because of a belief that those who do not make sufficient wages or who are not in secure enough employment do not deserve to be covered by health care, and that none of the rest of us our responsible for those people.

Under what economic and political conditions do such joyous forms of cruelty emerge? The notion of responsibility invoked by that crowd must be contested without, as you will see, giving up on the idea of a political ethics. For if each of us is responsible only for ourselves, and not for others, and if that responsibility is first and foremost a responsibility to become economically self-sufficient under conditions when self-sufficiency is structurally undermined, *then we can see that this neo-liberal morality, as it were, demands self-sufficiency as a moral ideal at the same time that it works to destroy that very possibility at an economic level.* Those who cannot afford to pay into health care constitute but one version of population deemed disposable. Those who are conscripted into the army with a promise of skills training and work, sent into zones of conflict where there is no clear mandate and where their lives can be destroyed, and are sometimes destroyed, are also disposable populations. They are lauded

as essential to the nation at the same time that their lives are considered dispensable. And all those who see the increasing gap between rich and poor, who understand themselves to have lost several forms of security and promise, they also understand themselves as abandoned by a government and a political economy that clearly augments wealth for the very few at the expense of the general population.

So this leads to the second point. When people amass on the street, one implication seems clear: They are still here and still there; they persist; they assemble, and so manifest the understanding that their situation is shared, and even when they are not speaking or do not present a set of negotiable demands, the call for justice is being enacted. The bodies assembled “say” we are not disposable, whether or not they are using words at the moment. What they say, as it were, is that we are still here, persisting, demanding greater justice, a release from precarity, a possibility of a livable life.

To demand justice is, of course, a strong thing to do. It also involves every activist in a philosophical question: What is justice, and what are the means through which the demand for justice can be made? The reason it is said that sometimes there are “no demands” when bodies assemble under the rubric of “Occupy Wall Street” is that any list of demands would not exhaust the ideal of justice that is being demanded. We can all imagine just solutions to health care, public education, housing, and the distribution and availability of food—in other words, we could itemize the injustices in the plural and present those as a set of specific demands. But perhaps the demand for justice is present in each of those demands, but also necessarily exceeds them. We do not have to subscribe to Platonic theory of Justice to see other ways in which this demand operates. For when bodies gather as they do to express their indignation and to enact their plural existence in public space, they are also making broader demands. They are demanding to be recognized and to be valued; they are exercising a right to appear and to exercise freedom; they are calling for a livable life. These values are presupposed by particular demands, but they also demand a more fundamental restructuring of our socio-economic and political order.

In some economic and political theory, we hear about pop-



**When bodies gather as they do to express their indignation and to enact their plural existence in public space, they are also making broader demands. They are demanding to be recognized and to be valued; they are exercising a right to appear and to exercise freedom; they are calling for a livable life. These values are presupposed by particular demands, but they also demand a more fundamental restructuring of our socio-economic and political order.**

ulations that are increasingly subject to what is called “precaritization.” This process—usually induced and reproduced by governmental and economic institutions that acclimatize populations over time to insecurity and hopelessness (see Isabell Lorey)—is built into the institutions of temporary labor, of decimated social services, and of the general attrition of social democracy in favor of entrepreneurial modalities supported by fierce ideologies of individual responsibility and the obligation to maximize one’s own market value as the ultimate aim in life. In my view, this important process of precaritization has to be supplemented by an understanding of precarity as a structure of affect, as Lauren Berlant has suggested, and as a heightened sense of expendability or disposability that is differentially distributed throughout society. In addition, I use a third term, precariousness, which characterizes every embodied and finite human being, and non-human beings as well. This is not simply an existential truth—each of us could be subject to deprivation, injury, debilitation or death by virtue of events or processes outside of our control. It is also, importantly, a feature of what we might call the social bond, the various relations that establish our interdependency. In other words, no one person suffers a lack of shelter without a social failure to organize shelter in such a way that it is accessible

to each and every person. And no one person suffers unemployment without a system or a political economy that fails to safeguard against that possibility.

This means that in some of our most vulnerable experiences of social and economic deprivation what is revealed is not only our precariousness as individual persons—thought that is surely revealed as well—but also the failures and inequalities of socio-economic and political institutions. In our individual vulnerability to precarity, we find that we are social beings, implicated in a set of networks that either sustain us or fail to do so, or do so only intermittently, producing a constant spectre of despair and destitution. Our individual wellbeing depends on whether the social and economic structures that support our mutual dependency can be put into place. This happens only by breaking with the neo-liberal status quo, enacting the demands of the people through the gathering together of bodies in a relentlessly public, obdurate, persisting, activist struggle that seeks to break and remake our political world. As bodies, we suffer and we resist and together, in various locations, exemplify that form of the sustaining social bond that neo-liberal economics has almost destroyed.



# The Power of the People To Stand and Be Counted

BY Michael Premo

We have been brought to this moment through centuries of struggle and resistance, fighting to create alternatives to the accumulation of power and wealth by a minority who horde the resources of our finite planet for their personal profit and pleasure. Our so-called “modern” societies are intentionally structured to maintain deep imbalances of power in terms of race, gender, class, sexuality, and our natural environment. We’ve marched, voted, petitioned for laws, maxed out our credit, and played the game. But it’s naive to think that a government and economic system built on the backs of genocide and slavery would ever hear our cry. So we rose up, again and again and now we rise once more to continue the liberation of our minds and lives. This current moment of resistance is growing into a global movement devoted to reclaiming and building free societies.

Occupy Wall Street has captured the global imagination. It began with the literal occupation of the heart of global capital, and, just as the arteries and veins of the system stretch to every part of our lives, so must our occupation. We need a Liberty Square in every neighborhood in America – strategic occupations that fundamentally challenge existing power structures and create a forum for the community to address its own concerns, free from the corruption of exclusionary economics and elite government systems.

I reject the notion that this is a leaderless movement, because I know that the opposite is true. In the so-called West,

we are socialized to play our position, marginalized to lanes of professional specialization, as if we are only as good as our job. But in this movement we are all leaders, no longer defined merely by our education, “profession”, the things we can buy, or our contribution to the economy. This idea is given its greatest expression through the assembly process. The process of friends, neighbors and members of our broader community coming together in public space to engage in meaningful dialogue about the issues that matter most to us: this is what democracy looks like.

I have voted in every national and local election since I turned 18. I continue to vote out of a deep sense of devotion to the ideals of democracy. Several years ago I was privileged with the opportunity to collect and produce stories as part of the largest oral history project of its kind dedicated to recording the stories and experiences of African-Americans for StoryCorps Griot, The Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African-American History and Culture. Our group traveled the country in the spirit of Zora Neale Hurston and the Lomax family, creating a space for people to let their stories be heard for posterity. I heard devastating and awe-inspiring stories of struggle, survival and resistance, like listening to Ms. Theresa Burroughs in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, who remembered having to guess the number of black jelly beans in a jar in order to vote. Or Johnny L. Flowers who told his 13 year old grand-

son about what it was like to stand on the Edmond Pettus Bridge in Selma on March 7, 1965, a day that became known as Bloody Sunday for the vicious attack on nonviolent protesters marching for their human rights.

On that trip, I promised myself that I would continue to vote for all those who have fought and died for this fundamental right. And yet I have no illusion that my vote really counts—at least not as much as the wealthy individuals and corporations that back their vote with money and the power to influence legislation that places profit over people, corporate personhood over human rights. It is the checkbook of the 1% that is heard, not the vote of the 99%. I'd even go as far as to say I feel my vote only counts for three-fifths of all other "corporate-persons."

It is with this understanding that I believe that the power of this growing movement is in the practice of people gathering together in peaceful public assemblies and agreeing on how to address our grievances, not least of which through acts of nonviolent civil disobedience targeted at strategic objectives. Creative radical direct action is integral to this phase of the movement.

Currently the movement is organized through General Assemblies (GA's), which are public forums for people to come together to address concerns and make decisions through collective agreement, also called consensus. Since we are socialized to understand leadership and power centers as the legitimate decisions makers, there is a misconception that this is some type of hierarchical governing body. On the contrary, this is simply a fluid process that attempts to create a forum for the inclusion of anyone who chooses to participate. As is the case with any community, these forums have developed their own culture in the form of hand gestures and other habits that emerge from group settings. But these are just subtleties of circumstance that can, and must, change and adapt to reflect the cultural expressions of the community engaging the forum process. For thousands of years societies around the world have engaged in variations of democratic decision making. The beauty of this movement is it is implicit that these distinct histories and cultural ethos will evolve the General Assembly's method of consensus building. The GAs are ours to make our own as we see fit.

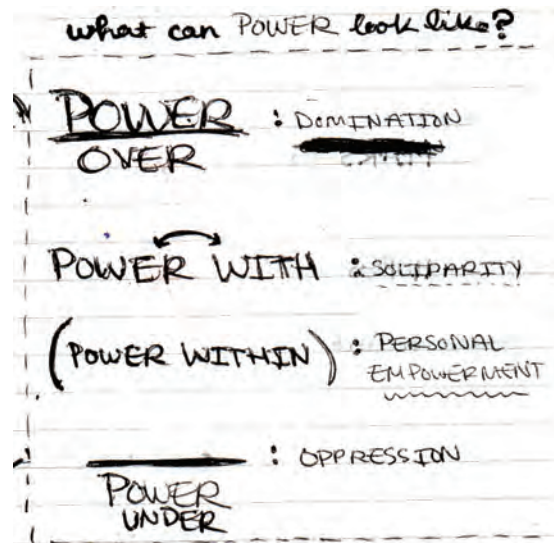
Because our minds are not yet free, this space is also not free of the frictions and misunderstandings that result from inherent privileges associated with race, class, gender, ableism, and sexuality. These are the growing pains of a new society. Of course these realities still exist, but now is a moment to stretch our imaginations with an open mind and an open heart, and dream new ways into the world through positive participation and active engagement.

Two months into the occupation General Assemblies are spreading across the country. In New York City, GAs have sprung up or are on the verge of forming in the Bronx (Borough-wide), Washington Heights, Central Harlem, East Harlem, Brooklyn (Borough-wide), Sunset Park and Bed-Stuy. And I'm sure there are others.

The beauty of neighborhood GAs is that they provide a forum for a variety of local constituencies within a community to come together. And in light of so-called anti-gang laws and State terrorism against black and brown communities the act, alone, of peaceably assembling in mass numbers can be an act of defiance. But communities have been divided as much through state terror as subtler forms of co-option. One of many forms of division is often supported by the proliferation of the non-profit organizing model that has segregated organizations and community groups into issue silos, often excluding potential allies as similar groups begin to compete for funding, and similar members for resources. Now is the time for those silos to give way to renewed opportunities for mutual collaboration. There are a lot of people doing a lot of good work but since we still seem to be facing the same old problems, why not try something different?

One example of the spreading GAs is Occupy Sunset Park. The first meeting was a gathering of about 10 residents, activists and parents from the immediate and surrounding community captivated by the energy of the moment and interested in taking action to find creative solutions to stubborn problems. At the first planning meeting it was decided that the community would begin regular weekly General Assemblies to establish continuity. Participants were encouraged to bring at least one friend to each meeting. The following week, at the first official Occupy Sunset Park General Assembly, participants discussed facilitation processes, alternative banking options, local gentrification and housing issues, and they even made plans towards their first direct action. The sheer simplicity, inclusiveness, and adaptability of this process is what makes its potential energy so powerful. In America we believe that bigger is better, but all it takes is a small group of committed individuals working together to begin to change the world.

It would be amazing to see General Assemblies spread to every building, neighborhood, town and city evolving and adapting the collective agreement process as it grows. Liberty Square is just the beginning. The act of peacefully assembling to reclaim what has been taken, making decisions about our collective future through direct democracy and engaging in nonviolent direct actions of occupation and liberation must continue to spread until a new day dawns. This is a demonstration of the power of the people to stand and be counted.



# Power in the Movement

BY Alex C.

Power is the ability to actualize; to bring potential to fruition, to make things happen. But where does it come from? What are the conditions that build power and how do we trace its movement? Then, perhaps most importantly: How do we multiply its sources to make power available to more people?

These are fundamental questions that every occupier must entertain, because their answers will prevent us from replicating the asymmetries found in society. Injustice happens when power is unevenly distributed, creating explicit or invisible hierarchies. Occupy Wall Street is not immune to this injustice because *power behaves just the same* in families, schools, churches, governments, companies, working groups, affinity groups, and so forth. Therefore, how do we guard against bias and distortions in the revolution?

First, we must shed the invincibility complex. No—we are not immune to corruption. We must humbly acknowledge that there is always a risk of occupiers becoming exactly what they are fighting against. This subtle deformation process happens without us realizing. Therefore, listening to dissent and how people feel is ever more important. Paying attention to which voices carry more weight and questioning “why” and “how” is essential to the distribution of power. If group decisions are being determined by the same few voices, Houston!—we have a (democratic) problem.

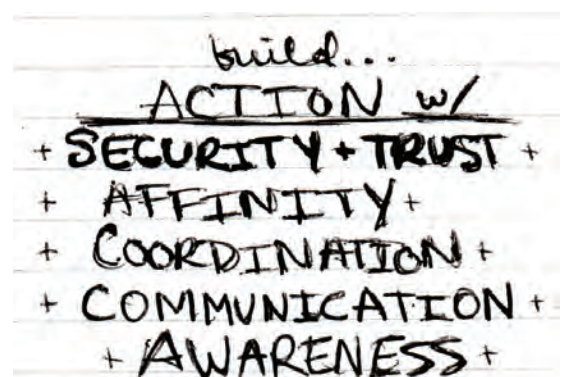
This awareness must be actualized not to police each other but to dynamically map how decisions are made and to evaluate if they are indeed an amalgamation of all voices. The objective is to have not a single center of gravity that people magnetize toward (leader/follower pattern), but to have as many centers of gravity as there are individuals. To give an example, we can see this rhizomatic structure in contemporary music when compos-

ers subvert traditional Western tonalism and experiment with rotational tonalism, pluritonalism or atonalism.

Second, a thought model may come in handy. We can view the goal of social justice as necessarily passing through a *Feng Shui of Power* with flows shaped by human action and intentionality. With this paradigm we can proactively push the movement to a place where all feel empowered and not left out. Concretely, radicals must make use of “tracing”—i.e. recognizing power and tracing it back to its origins—to build a cartography of power. With that knowledge we can actively shape the conditions for it to flow harmoniously throughout all occupiers and society.

To begin this project, key steps are:

- (1) Recognizing and identifying “springs” or sources of power - e.g., information, connections, access to resources, history, etc.
- (2) Mapping how these power flows are distributed in space, people and time.
- (3) Acting upon the cartography to shape the flow of power in a way that benefits all.





# Matrix as the Core Element

BY RIRA

OCCUPY WALL STREET has sparked a wave of assemblies and occupations at the doorsteps of the very financial and political elites that profited from the recent global economic crisis. This article will briefly present several components that have emerged not in isolation, but as an interconnected matrix. The article will elaborate on how this matrix should evolve as the core element of OWS. Such components are open-ended with the hopes of further scrutiny and radical departures towards new perspectives.

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## THE PROCESS

At first glance of an occupation, placards, tents, and work stations clutter the view. Yet the true face of OWS in the General Assembly. Through rules and a group of rotating facilitators, the General Assembly reclaiming one of the most deprived elements of our society—the voice! Instead of money or objects, the voice is the ultimate form of exchange. It is the starting point that connects us in almost endless web. Its strength is in its diversity.

The long legacy of adapted forms of direct democracy, especially in the Global South, has greatly influenced OWS. One important lesson from those movements has been that no matter how radical or sincere allies, politicians, or intellectuals are, their contributions are only as relevant as their degrees of involvement as equal participants within the assembly. We must prevent the threat of cooption by having participants disclose affiliations with outside organizations that may in any way use the assembly to benefit an exclusive agenda.

It is unreasonable to expect that outside experts can provide ‘quick-fixes’ to the challenges facing an assembly. In such instances, the burden is on us to educate ourselves, develop working group, and revise our practices. As we create an international network of assemblies that are horizontal and accountable, we must continue to ask ourselves: How do we embolden new participants to step-up and take on initiatives? How we can safeguard against internal conflict, cooption, and provocateurs?

## THE SPACE

The resurgence of popular uprisings has again highlighted the decisive confrontation between the elite, who has benefited from the historical shift towards ever-increasing wealth and power consolidation, and the urban lower class, which has been marginalized spatially, economically, politically and culturally from a decades-long reign of structural violence. Neoliberal economic policies and traditional power structures have eroded basic human rights and left major areas of today’s cities in ruins and surveillance. Even formerly

radical spaces have been coopted, eliminated, or reinscribed with oppressive hierarchical relations. Suburban sprawl and home ownership have deceived us into debt and a twisted sense of control, success, and identity. Under constant attack, we abandoned our historical obligation to the collective ownership of the commons. While international uprisings such as Tahrir have been inspiring, Americans too have a long legacy of domestic occupations. Hooverville, Resurrection City, Rosa Parks, SNCC occupations of segregated businesses, and the recent occupation of Madison’s capital building by state workers all demonstrate our long struggle against injustice.

Today, Wall Street is the critical site of intervention because we are now directly confronting the institutions of global capital. London, Frankfurt, Shanghai, and other financial capitols are havens of the world’s elite who ruthlessly consolidate power with neoliberal-driven economic policies. At Liberty Square, it is no surprise that what was initially designated as a protest space has ended up housing so many of neoliberalism’s living victims. The occupation addresses people’s right to safe shelter, food, health, space, education, and sanitation. The homeless and mentally ill, two groups who have suffered the worst forms of exclusion, are welcomed by working groups who are trained to address their grievances in a manner that is reciprocal and empowering. Our occupation is both a symbolic and functional space that—as the slogan goes—serve human needs, not corporate greed.

## IMAGINING THE MOMENT

This moment did not start with academics, activists, or political leaders—and it did not occur in their domain. Instead, a network of concerned individuals in a public park initiated this now-global dialogue. We rejected the initial discussions of quick-fix legislation and third party candidates because such demands are the lingering remnants of a narratives that left us powerless, voiceless, and depressed. In this empty fairytale, our ‘experts’ identify the problem, provide us with false alternatives, and leave us more pacified than before. They tell us to elect politicians, save starving children with Starbucks,



eat organic, boycott one multinational for another, buy an acre in the Amazon, whatever. Engaging in these 'legal' alternatives makes us ever more powerless while strengthening the legitimacy and power of capital.

So how can our working groups and assemblies imagine the moment the real alternative? To start with, a successful action is only as effective as the radical imagination that precedes it. We must constantly remember the revolution's requisite components and imagine how they interconnect as a constantly evolving matrix. For example, is our group following progressive stack, step-up/step-back, and encouraging everyone to have a voice? Is our occupied space (whether temporary or indefinite) confronting and transforming private property into a nonhierarchical space that encourages solidarity, learning, and mutual dependency?

When defining the group's agenda, we must constantly scrutinize the role power structures have in shaping existing injustices and clarifying what choices exist (or should exist) to alleviate these injustices. The problem is then understood by assessing the disparity between the needs of the community and self-interests of state/capital in order to fulfill those choices. For instance, if a city's housing board is collaborating with private developers to gentrify subsidized housing, the demand should not be to increase compensation to the evicted residents. Rather, we must explore how the residents could form an assembly that will replace the housing board and developers to address their own functional needs. Regarding health needs in the space, the first step would be to provide charitable care. However, the real alternative is to organize HIV positive occupiers, addicts, and the homeless to form their own working groups. Then, as an autonomous and empowered voice, these groups could approach the healthcare workers with their needs in a reciprocal manner, go to the GA to utilize resources that would

improve their living condition, and engage in actions that will reclaim power from existing institutions that profit from their exclusion. No matter how perfect the assembly process, true social justice is restored through human practice and collective ownership. This ensures that in such a space, even the most marginalized are given a basic means of production (i.e. their participation), which inevitably results in a more just distribution of power.

The third step is imagining the moment or situation that may or may not cross legal-hegemonic boundaries in order to liberate power. It is worth highlighting the value of the exceptional event or shock against the continuity of life, social conservatism, and all the instruments of structural violence the system has at its disposal. This is the critical rupture, reformulation, and launching of alternative models that will transform existing 'systems/technologies' into other modes that will redistribute power to the assembly in order to serve human needs. Occupy the Department of Education has already united teachers, students, and parents to challenge the city's institutions with its own assembly that is formulating more effective educational alternatives.

Our historical significance is dependent upon how this matrix transforms itself as the spheres of direct democracy, participatory economics, radical education and other sites of interference intersect as functional horizontal forms of human relations. It must constantly evolve beyond the occupation to establish protest spaces within all of our existing institutions.

We must not become fixed to particular spaces or actions. Instead, we must unleash a radical imagination that will liberate the collective consciousness of every sector of society to challenge the ruling institution, and replace them with civilized, horizontal, and humane alternatives.

# Possibility, Universality, & Radicality



## A Universal Chorus for Emancipation

BY Isham Christie

### I. RADICALITY

It began in mid-July. A call went out to Occupy Wall St from a leftist magazine. A handful of NYC anti-austerity activists, who had just weeks before ended a two-week encampment outside City Hall, decided to announce a general assembly at the Charging Bull near Wall Street. On August 2 about 200 people came, broke out into working groups and started to build for the occupation of Wall Street. Serious doubts plagued my mind, as I am sure they did others, from the very beginning. Will people show up? Will Sept. 17, the first day of the occupation, be no more than a fight with cops? Will we be strong enough to actually take a space? Does this organizing model exclude the most marginalized and oppressed people in society?

Most of us who organized the lead-up to September 17 also questioned the project seriously. I almost left the movement a couple of times. I sat through five-hour-long general assemblies on multiple occasions. Most of us had no idea if Occupy Wall Street would work or not, we simply acted in such a way as to realize the potentials for success and mitigate the possibilities for failure. Even now as I reflect, it could have failed on September 17 or 18, or fizzled out a little later. But by chance, dedication, police brutality (oddly enough), and a lot of daring, Occupy Wall Street turned into something so large that politicians from the Ayatollah to the Greek prime minister to President Obama are weighing in.

People met the initial uncertainty of the outcome not with inaction but, instead, with persistence: a basic premise for radical action. All radical action is by its essence an opening of possibility. And it is this radical opening, giving hope to a fundamental transformation of social orders, that liberals and conservatives fear most. Radical openings, or revolutionary situations, like the one we find ourselves in now, present a multiplicity of possibilities, some better and some worse. Without faith in the inevitability of historical progress, which sustained the radicals of the past, we have to reinvent radicalism without inevitability.

Radicals do not shirk when confronted with open possibility, but see it as an opportunity for dramatic social change not allowed within existing institutions. We acknowledge that social orders are subject to historical change, and that all social orders eventually transform due to their own internal contradictions. This acceptance helps dispel the anxiety of uncertainty that lies at the heart of a radicalism without faith in historical inevitability.

During the lead up to the occupation of Wall Street, the words of Friedrich Nietzsche further served to dispel fears about acting within an open situation. Nietzsche writes, “Cheerfulness, [...] belief in the future, the joyful deed—all depend, [on knowing] the right time to forget as well as the right time to remember, and instinctively see when it is necessary to feel historically and when unhistorically [both being] equally necessary to the health of an individual, a community, and a system of culture.”

The forgetful sense, the ability to act in spite of uncertainty of consequence, the courage to put aside reasons why something won't work: these all become necessary for authentic, radical action. And ultimately, our hope in the possible outweighs the doubts.

## II. CONDITIONS OF POSSIBILITY

We inherited hope from the movements that have begun in 2011. Occupy Wall Street could not have occurred without the conditions for its possibility existing in the social conditions and social imagination of people elsewhere. A major touchstone of inspiration was Tunisia and Tahrir Square. The revolts in Egypt and Tunisia stimulated the political imagination and renewed a sense of hope in mass collective action. In a similar way, the uprising in Madison made collective action possible for America. The other encampments and occupations around the world gave us hope, examples, and at times an overlap of organizers. Now we see that Occupy Wall Street was a spark that lit the Occupy movement, which in turn re-inspire some of the movements that inspired us in the first place. Calls to Occupy have since sprouted up around hundreds of cities and campuses, in all regions and states. The rapid development of the movement shows “the force of an idea whose time has to come.” But what made such a rapid development possible besides the other movements from which we drew inspiration?

One answer is that the long process of neo-liberalism reached a tipping point with the economic crisis of 2008. What characterizes neo-liberalism – cuts to social services, attacks on union power, privatization of public services, deregulation that allows the mass accumulation of capital in private hands – is being challenged by Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Together. The Occupy movement (in addition to similar movements in Europe, North Africa, etc.) is creating an actually existing social movement that unifies the sense of outrage people feel toward politicians and the economic elite. At its heart, it is challenging economic and social oppression.

This movement was long awaited. Union density and power has dropped significantly in recent years. Taxes on corporations, banks and financial institutions have shrunk dramatically. Accessibility to education has declined while costs and student debt have risen sharply. Unemployment, underemployment and employment in jobs that don't pay a living wage have grown steadily. Mortgages and credit card debt meanwhile chain us to ever growing burdens as foreclosures, unpayable rent and homelessness every day become a reality to more people. From all this we find ourselves in a serious crisis of legitimacy for the current social order, and this is the basis for the spread and support for the Occupy movement.

Three years of the Obama presidency has crystallized for many, including myself, the dead-end hope of voting to enact social change. A historical hope in electoralism goes far back

to elements of powerful and inspiring political struggle, including working class political parties, the women's suffrage movement and the Civil Rights movement. But despite such genuine hopes, and the victories gained along the way, electoralism is now in steep decline. Yet as socio-economic conditions continue to deteriorate and dissatisfaction in representatives grow, the response we are seeing is not cynicism or apathy. It is the beginning of an awakening toward radical social change.

The Occupy movement embodies a rejection of cynicism, electoralism and neo-liberal austerity. It does so by acknowledging that a liberal response to appease unrestrained capitalism *and* people's interest is impossible. Both profits and people cannot be pursued in tandem especially given the crisis of profitability underway in global capitalism. Electoral liberalism will persist, but a new and increasingly dominant form of political participation is emerging—localized participatory democracy, horizontalism, and the encampment-form. These are not only alternatives in terms of social structure, but interesting enough they are the means by which social structures can be transformed. We are seeing the fusion of means and ends to a large extent in the encampment movements.

The activity of taking over public space, holding general assemblies, setting up camp and building infrastructure for the needs of the camp is becoming the new and prevalent form of organized opposition. The previously dominant forms of political opposition—the party-form, the membership-form, the union-form, cadre-form, voting-form, etc.—still play a role in the encampment movement. But it's this novel form of political and social organization, the encampment, that has come to blossom.

## III. SPACE AND UNIVERSALITY IN GROUP-FORMATION

The encampment-form of political activity highlights a central characteristic in the formation of a group—space. The distinction between a class-in-itself and class-for-itself bears considering. A class- or group-for-itself consists of:

- 1) social agency - the possibility for a given group to change society and history,
- 2) self-consciousness – some degree of awareness of itself as a movement for social change and mechanisms for collective thought, and
- 3) the prerequisite class-in-itself characteristics – common interests, similar analysis of society, and proximity either physically or digitally.

The industrial working class had emancipatory potential partially because those workers had a site of struggle, the factory. Workers=factories/workplaces, Students=Schools,

etc. One important characteristic of emancipatory potential is the existence of a dense site out from which struggle can arise. If people with similar interests or conceptions of society share the same space, they become a group-for-itself. The enclosure of the commons and public space, particularly in NYC for political causes, minimizes the coming-together that is necessary for group-for-itself formation. Reclaiming the city, taking the square, or holding public space allows for the density to spill into. A space for struggle is thus a key determination in the formation of group-for-itself as opposed to a group-in-itself. What the Occupy movement allows for is the opening up of social space in which a variety of different and hitherto largely isolated social struggles can converge.

The convergence of isolated social struggles signals the greatest hope for this movement and clarifies (if we needed further clarification) that the notion of universality in relation to social struggle and emancipation has changed as history and society developed. The classic single emancipatory subject (the proletariat) has taken on another shape. It is no longer that a single social subject will emerge to emancipate itself and with it the general interests of all those in society. Multiple social subjects which in-itself, or themselves, have emancipatory potential can unite in a universal movement to abolish and/or challenge social oppression (implying emancipation beyond economic determination). How will this occur? How is this occurring at Occupy Wall Street?

As each social struggle amplifies the voice of the other, a chorus takes shape. Housing rights groups, workers, students, unionists, Haitians, police brutality groups, American Indians, environmental groups, etc, etc.. all come and speak in the open space, and as one speaks we all recite, and thus form a universal chorus for emancipation. The people's mic can be openly heard; the very openness of the space allows for shades of universality to emerge. Divisions of class, race, gender and sexual identity (while being respected as autonomous and self-defining movements) are brought into a broader and more universal movement for emancipatory social change. No one single social subject will emancipate us all. We must join in the chorus together. It is our task to create a movement where the emancipation of each is a condition for the emancipation of all. Only then will emancipation from all forms of social oppression be realized.

# 99%

by Najaya Royal  
Age 14 • Brooklyn, NY

What if the sky was yellow and the sun was blue?  
What if money did not affect if you  
have a home the same time next year?  
Impossible, right?  
We are the 99% that are not rich  
We are the 99% who do have to worry about bills getting  
paid each month  
But are the 99% with a voice that can be heard all  
around the world  
Even though we are frowned upon by the 1%  
Though we are the reason that the 1% are rich  
I mean who else lunch money would they steal and be  
able to get away with it  
We are all against bullies  
So it's about time we stand up to the biggest bully  
of them all  
We were born free  
So why can't we all live free?  
Why cant we all be equal?  
It is not a racial thing  
It is more like a money thing  
But when did green paper decide where and how should  
we live  
When did green paper become a barrier and seprate  
mankind  
This movement right here  
Is going to change the world for the better  
This movement will finally make us a whole

## STREET SAFETY

- SCOUT!
- KNOW THE GEOGRAPHY!
- BE AWARE OF VULNERABILITY!
- HAVE AN EXIT STRATEGY!
- IDENTIFY ROLES!
- FIND SAFE SPACES!
- RESPECT CHOICES!
- GET CONSENT!

} Building trust  
confidence  
affinity

PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE

# The Ninety and Nine

BY **Rose Elizabeth Smith**

There are ninety and nine that work  
and die,  
In hunger and want and cold,  
That one may revel in luxury,  
And be lapped in the silken fold;  
And ninety and nine in the hovels bare,  
And one in a palace of riches rare.

From the sweat of their brow  
the desert blooms  
And the forest before them falls;  
Their labor has builded humble homes,  
And the cities with lofty halls;  
And the one owns the cities and houses  
and lands,  
And the ninety and nine have empty  
hands.

But the night so dreary and dark  
and long  
At last shall the morning bring;  
And over the land the victor's song  
Of the ninety and nine shall ring,  
And echo afar, from zone to zone:  
"Rejoice, for labor shall have its own."

From the *Machinist Monthly Journal*,  
November 1931

[working]

THESIS ON NON-VIOLENCE:

“throw cops  
at the cops”

editorial statement

## We believe we can't have radical action without radical thought.

Tidal offers theory and strategy as a means of empowering occupiers, whether actual or potential, to envision actions that ultimately transforms existing power structures.

In Tidal, theory means an assumption based on limited information or knowledge. Strategy means the art of devising or employing plans or stratagems towards a goal. Action means this. This moment; This struggle. many voices. history. and process. collectively, imagine.

We are an ongoing horizontal conversation among those who have spent most of their lives thinking about this moment, and the people in the Occupy Movement that are making decisions every day about its future. Aware that ability is a privilege, Tidal endeavors to offer challenging ideas in language that's accessible to the common person. We hope these writings positively impact the Occupy Movement, propel it forward and clarify its goals.

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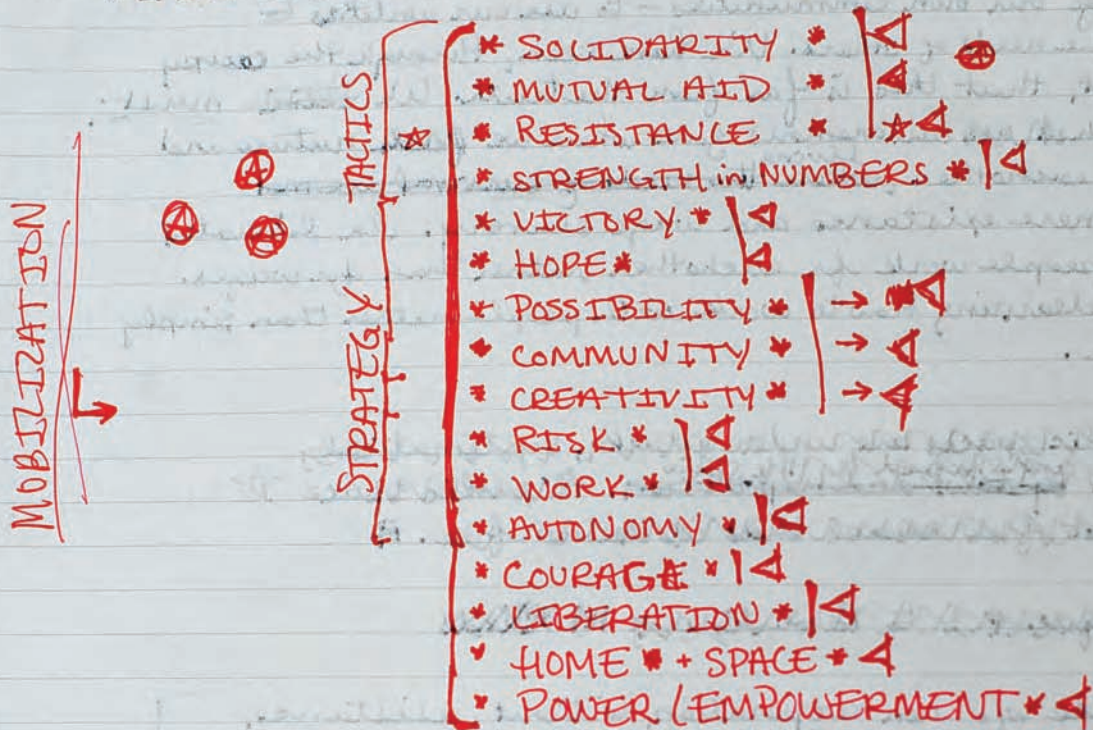
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- **LIBERATE OUR SPACES!**
- **TACTICS + CIV. DIS. (BLOCKADES)**
- **NON-COOPERATION** + NON VIOLENCE: **ANTI-VIOLENT!**



The State has cornered you!

- \* FEAR
- \* DISEMPOWERMENT
- \* INACTION
- \* CONTROLLED
- \* ISOLATED
- \* DISILLUSIONED

**★ PUBLIC SPACE ★**

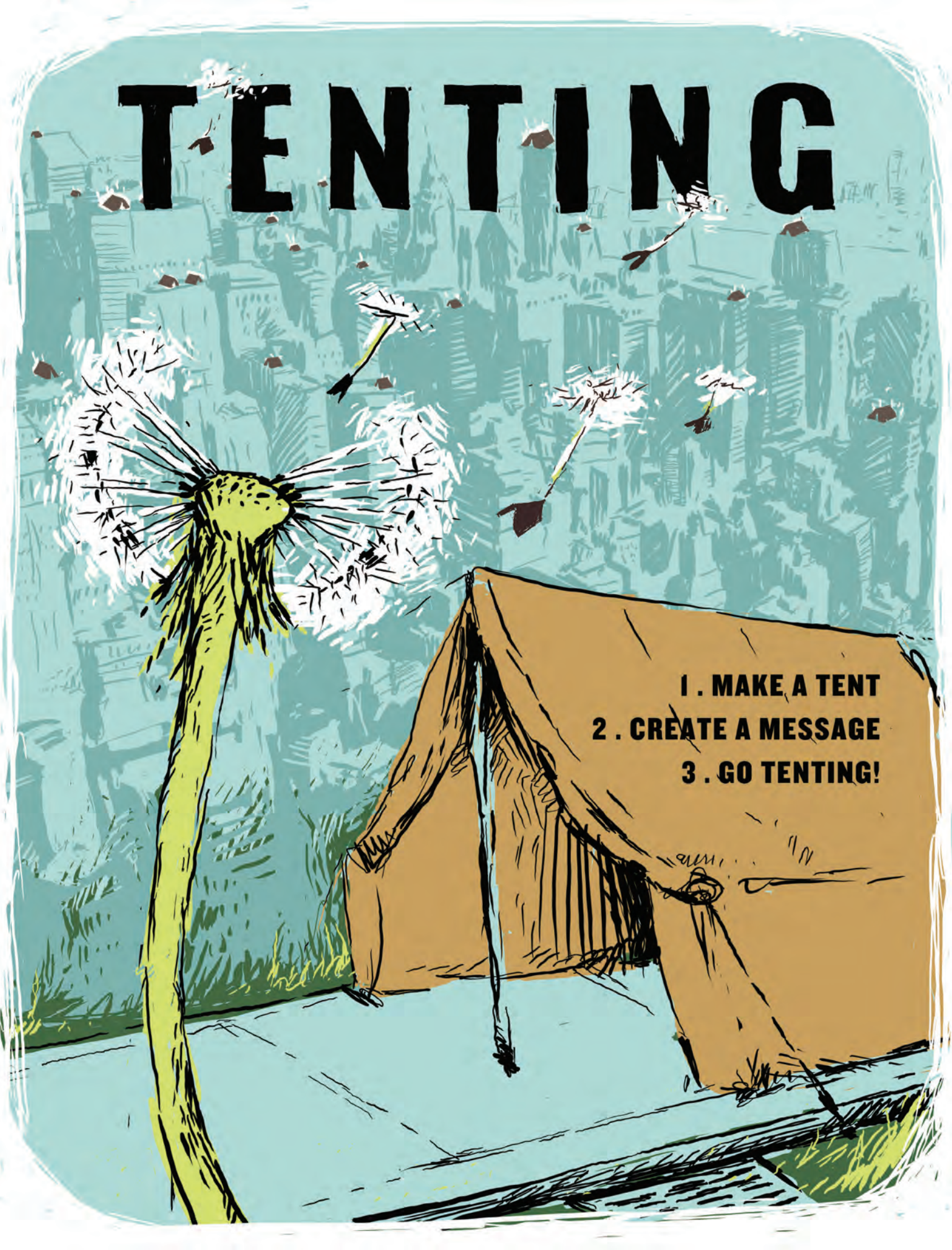
- (It's Already Ours!)

[OPENING SPACES]

**CALL TO ACTION!**

↓  
**GLOBAL MOVEMENT**

# TENTING

- 
1. MAKE A TENT
  2. CREATE A MESSAGE
  3. GO TENTING!