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Prefigurative Politics, Utopian Desire and Social Movement Learning: Reflections on the Pedagogical Lacunae in Occupy Wall Street

Abstract

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. The paper suggests that the pedagogical lacunae within OWS demonstrate the need within social movements for organised pedagogical direction. Without concerted pedagogical intervention, alternative 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 utopia is being enacted 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.

Keywords

Prefiguration Utopia Critical Pedagogy
Social Movement Learning Occupy Wall Street

Introduction

Social movement learning is now an established field of educational research (Niesz, Korora, Walkuski and Foot, 2018). SML scholarship focuses 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). Attention is also paid to the need for un-learning (Motta and Esteves, 2014). As Sarah Amsler puts it:

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, 143).

This paper 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 as movement actors learn in and through struggle while un-learning hegemonic ways of being and relating. Part of a wider project exploring potential sites of utopian pedagogy, the paper focuses on Occupy Wall Street not only because of its obvious significance as a movement but also because of the utopian possibilities that are said to have emerged in and through movement participation.

What I argue, however, is that in pedagogical terms Occupy Wall Street was largely a staid and static space. Occupy has, of course, received criticism before, often for its lack of political organisation and strategic vision. The present paper offers something slightly different and raises issues of wider significance for educational theory and practice. What I focus on here are the pedagogical lacunae in OWS and what we as educators, working in and with social movements, might learn from these. What the experience of OWS points to is the need to avoid romanticising the notion of cracks in capitalist space-time, fetishising the creation of alternative spaces of learning, and making blithe assumptions about the pedagogical possibilities opened up when people gather together and occupy a space. Taking note of Holst's concern that the radical potential of education might be getting lost amidst the focus on social movement learning (2018, 81), I conclude with a discussion of the role of utopian pedagogy within movements for social change.

Occupy Wall Street and Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy

The paper forms part of a wider project exploring potential sites and instances of utopian pedagogy (Webb, 2013; 2017; 2018). Utopian pedagogy can be characterised as a counter-hegemonic project striving to shatter contemporary common sense and challenge the ideology of 'there is no alternative'. It is concerned with creating spaces for the exploration of desires, longings, and hopes, and for drawing out utopian possibilities within concrete experience. It is a pedagogy of transformative hope; a pedagogy aimed at liberating the imagination as to the possibilities for systemic change. Utopian pedagogy is underpinned by a profound confidence in the capacity of human beings to construct (both imaginatively and materially) new ways of

organising life. It seeks to cultivate an awareness that human beings are self-organising and self-determining historical agents and a confident belief in the transformative power of collective action. Not content merely with stimulating the desire for a new society, utopian pedagogy—utopia as a pedagogical project—is concerned with developing subjects equipped to create and inhabit this new world.

Occupy Wall Street (OWS) was selected as the focus of the paper for four reasons. Firstly, its significance as a movement. Lauded by Chomsky as both ‘spectacular’ and ‘unprecedented’ (2012, 24), others have argued that ‘OWS represented a kind of kairos moment—a quickening, a turning upside down, a heterochronos, a time of difference’ (Bolton, Welty, Nayak and Malone, 2013, 1). Secondly, Occupy is often referred to as a ‘space of learning’ (Jaffe, 2012; Rowe and Carroll, 2015). Writing at the time, Neary and Amsler argued that ‘the Occupy movement is explicitly pedagogical... it is certain that the movement educates’ (2012, 111-12). Thirdly, gaining a sense of Occupy as a pedagogical experience is made relatively easy by the sheer volume of first-hand accounts and materials available. Finally, and significantly, because Occupy is said to have signalled a rebirth of ‘utopian politics’ (Chrostowska, 2016, 291). For many of the movement’s supporters, OWS shone as a ‘utopian moment of opening’ (Solnit, 2016, 120), an ‘eruption of utopian possibility’ (Alexander, 2013, 341). Occupy is thus presented as an unprecedented pedagogical event through which a glimpse of utopian becoming was momentarily caught in the here-and-now.

On one level, of course, the pedagogy of OWS operated in a very conventional and didactic sense, through various outward-facing tactics of awareness-raising and persuasion. Holst (2002, 81) identifies two forms of education in social movements, a first which seeks to educate politicians and the wider public and a second which is internal to the movement itself. With regards to the first, almost every account of OWS, whether sympathetic or critical, contains some version of the claim that We are the 99% helped transform the terrain of American politics and change the national conversation, shifting the focus from austerity to inequality and placing class politics firmly on the table. For Jodi Dean (2011), the slogan named and claimed a gap, not only the gap between exploiters and exploited but ‘the gap of communist desire, a collective desire for collectivity’. While fully acknowledging that the pedagogical ‘afterlife’ of the movement and its slogan stretches far beyond the events of 2011-12 and remains with us still (Arditi, 2012), this paper focuses on the occupation itself and what we can learn from the experience of prefigurative politics as pedagogical practice. The focus is therefore placed firmly on the second form of education identified by Holst.

In this regard, the pedagogy of OWS was grounded in the lived experiences of its participants. It has often been argued by the movement’s supporters that a transformed (utopian) subjectivity emerged in and through the process of participation (Sitrin, 2012). Prefigurative politics became ‘a generative, iterative and educative process’ of dialogic interaction (Amsler, 2015, 81), ‘a moment of self-education’ through struggle (Campagna and Campiglio, 2012, 5). The movement served to open the radical imagination, unleash political desire and extend the horizons of possibility (Graeber, 2013; Haiven, 2014). This was a moment of revolutionary self-realization, mobilising

and transforming desires, capacities, ways of thinking and being (Sitrin, 2011b; Van Gelder 2011). The pedagogy of OWS was also grounded, of course, 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; Harvey, 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, xi).

OWS has been read as a moment that made possible ‘a critical pedagogy of space and time’ (Schwartz-WeinStein, 2015, 7), a pedagogy grounded in experience—the experience of occupied space—but moving beyond it in and through the process of participation. Indeed, it could be argued that Occupy offered a concrete enactment of Paula Allman’s revolutionary critical pedagogy. For Allman, revolutionary critical education is ‘aimed at enabling people to engage in an abbreviated experience of counterhegemonic social relations within which they can learn to “read” the world critically and glimpse humanity’s possible future beyond the horizon of capitalism’ (2001, 219). Critical education is ‘not only intended to prepare people to engage in social transformation, but it is also meant to serve as a prefigurative experience of the type of social relations that would lie at the heart of a transformed society’ (2001, 163). For Allman, critical education is nothing less than enacted ‘critical utopianism’ (2001, 220). In the rest of this paper, then, I want to offer some reflections on the pedagogical operation of prefigurative politics, focusing on OWS as a putative site of utopian pedagogy.

A Prefigurative Experience of Transformed Social Relations

A prefigurative experience of the type of social relations that would lie at the heart of a transformed society. This is how Paula Allman characterises revolutionary critical pedagogy; a pedagogy of human being and human becoming, a collective process of learning how to live and be otherwise. This is also how many participants, observers and commentators characterised the experience of OWS. Claims regarding the forging of ‘new’, transformed, reconfigured, social relations abound within the literature (Graeber, 2012a; Kinna, 2016; Risager, 2017; Sitrin and Azzelini, 2014; Szolucha, 2015). Hammond argues that ‘by modelling the desired social relations’, OWS ‘attempted to create extraordinary social relations’ (2015, 298, 309). For Happe, Occupy offered ‘the experience of egalitarian social relations’ (2015, 221). Bray adds that Occupy sought ‘the elimination of all hierarchical social relations’ and the enacting of ‘revolutionary’ social relations (2013, 39, 45).

This process of forging new social relations is sometimes referred to as ‘resubjectification’, or the construction of new, radical subjectivities in and through movement participation (Harrison, 2016, 496; Schram, 2015, 74). One occupier said of the encampment in Zuccotti Park that: ‘We have come here...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’ (Anon, 2011). The official Communiqués from OWS duly tracked the progress of this relationship building. The Third Communiqué tells us that ‘We are building the world that we want to see, based on human need and sustainability, not corporate greed’ (Flank, 2011, 27). By the time

of the Sixth Communiqué, disparities had seemingly ceased to exist in the park and the occupiers could boast that ‘Everyone’s needs are taken care of’ (ibid., 35). In the Ninth Communiqué we find that the process of building new social relations was complete. ‘We have made a new world, a new city within the city’, we are told (ibid., 43). For Marina Sitrin, ‘peoples’ subjectivities had changed’ as the occupiers created new ways of relating and new ways of being (2012, 93).

Coining the term long ago, Carl Boggs (1977, 100) defined prefiguration as ‘the embodiment, within the ongoing political practice of a movement, of those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience that are the ultimate goal’. 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). The prefigurative politics of Occupy was what drew many people to it. As one of the activists interviewed by Hammond remarked, ‘what attracted me about Occupy Wall Street was the utopian dimension: trying to model and alternative way of living’ (Hammond, 2015, 298).

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, 194).

This notion of a school of struggle is widely shared. For Campagna and Campiglio, ‘prefigurative politics is at the same time the putting-into-practice of precedent imaginations, and the continuous exercise of testing the imaginary landscapes against the necessities and the subterranean flows of daily life...struggle becomes a moment of self-education’ (2012, 5). What is being suggested here is something like a pedagogical feedback loop: an aggregate of individual “I”s becomes a collective “we”, gaining 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). Stronzake (2012) refers to this as a praxeological process of education, a process of collective learning through struggle and participation that is at the same time a process of revolutionary collective self-actualisation.

In all of this, the occupation of physical space is crucial. As every geographer knows, social relations become real, become embodied and enacted, in and through space (Massey, 2005). Within OWS, occupation became both the terrain and the objective of struggle as the building of institutions of care, mutual aid, solidarity and horizontalism was heralded as ‘a genuine attempt to create the institutions of a new society in the shell of the old’ (Graeber, 2011a). For Ingram (2016), the utopianism of Occupy was a utopianism of practice, not planning. A more common phrasing suggests that Occupy engaged in a here-and-now utopianism (Chrostowska, 2016; Kinna, 2016). As OWS

itself declared: ‘we are literally laying the framework for a new world by building it here and now—and it works’ (Ruggiero, 2012, 17).

The space of occupation is where the pedagogical operation of prefigurative politics is 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; Walia, 2012). And it is precisely because Zuccotti Park is said to have become a ‘twenty-four-hour-a-day experiment in egalitarian living’ (van Gelder, 2011, 8) that OWS has been read in terms of ‘the production of new radical subjectivities’ (Neary and Amsler, 2012, 109). Returning to Allman’s revolutionary critical pedagogy, many would argue that OWS provided participants with exactly what Allman describes, namely, an abbreviated experience of counterhegemonic social relations within which they can learn to ‘read’ the world critically and glimpse humanity’s possible future beyond the horizon of capitalism. This process of learning was far removed from any formal institutions of education, however. As Gitlin remarks, Occupy became ‘its own school. It learned from itself’ (2012a, 226).

The (Extra)ordinary Social Relations of Occupy Wall Street

What did the new, transformed, extraordinary, revolutionary, egalitarian social relations of OWS look and feel like? In what ways was life lived differently and what new ways of being emerged? If radical subjectivities were forged through a process of learning-in-struggle, how did this pedagogy operate and how did such subjectivities take shape? As Happe rightly notes, given the claims regarding here-and-now utopianism, one would expect to find in the first-hand accounts of the occupation:

the emergence of a transitory, ephemeral utopia of sorts; a set of living arrangements that came close to realizing communal relations that are radically suggestive of an alternative to the exploitative, transactional logics of capitalism. Yet [one finds] nothing of these things (Happe, 2015, 215).

The realities of OWS were quite at odds with the claims made by the movement’s leaders and its champions. Returning to Amsler’s definition of social movement learning, there is little evidence to suggest that a process of un-learning and un-becoming took place and less still that points to the learning of new ways of thinking, being and doing that opened up transgressive possibilities. Rather, so many of the first-hand accounts highlight the stubborn persistence and reproduction of existing social relations. 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 and Lewis, 2013; Singh, 2012; Welty, Bolton and 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, 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, 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, 68; Milkman, Luce and Lewis, 2013, 31-2; Schneider, 2012, 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; Kaufmann, 2011; Kang, 2013; Rowe and Carroll, 2015; Singsen, 2012; 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 and Lewis, 2013, 31).

In terms of Zuccotti Park as a re-commoned space of radical conjoining, a physical space of mental liberation, a space in which new social relations could take root and grow, claims to this effect were wildly exaggerated. Although OWS often presented itself as a home for the homeless, the actual homeless were far from welcome. Discussions within Occupy mirrored the wider discourse of ‘deserving’ and ‘underserving’ poor, reproducing existing forms of structural violence and exclusion (Herring and Gluck, 2011; Phillips, 2012; Roth, 2011). More pointedly still, divisions and power relations came to be mapped out onto the physical space of Zuccotti Park as Occupy enlisted a host of urban planning practices that constrained and enclosed the commons—mapping, zoning, gridding, noise regulation, zero tolerance policies

and uniformed security patrols (Bolton, Froese and Jeffrey, 2013). An East-West axis emerged, reproducing the city's class and ethnic divisions in microcosm as life in Liberty Square became both increasingly regulated and riven with class and racial tensions (Writers for the 99%, 61-66). Organisers thought nothing of excluding participants from Zuccotti Park if they were deemed to be disruptive, difficult or dangerous (Graeber, 2013, 225; Maclean, 2012). This served to enforce adherence to the principle of horizontalism, which was policed as 'an article of faith' beyond criticism, and to further entrench racial divisions within the movement (Kaufmann, 2011, 49).

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. How might we account for—and what might we learn from—this 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? In the following section I suggest that the failure of Occupy—in the sense that it functioned as a site for the reproduction and reinscription of existing social relations—can be traced at least in part to the ways in which the inner core of the movement embodied and enacted a certain understanding of revolutionary space-time and subjectivity.

Utopian Ruptures in Capitalist Space-Time

Gitlin (2012a) estimates that the inner core of Occupy comprised 10-50,000 people across the U.S. This core dominated the working groups, facilitated the General Assemblies, edited and produced the journals, engaged with the media and generally set the tone and direction of the movement (Hammond, 2015; Kang, 2013). Although the movement attracted a wide range of Left activists, the core largely comprised anarchists and autonomists. The 'small-a' anarchism of David Graeber was hugely influential, as were the ideas of autonomists such as Antonio Negri and John Holloway (Bray, 2013; Hammond, 2015; Milkman, Luce and Lewis, 2014; Rowe and Carroll, 2015). The Situationists were occasionally cited as an influence and the insurrectionary anarchism of *The Coming Insurrection* informed the ideas of some (Brown and Halberstam, 2011; Disalvo, 2015; Gitlin, 2012b; Livingston, 2012). Many of the younger graduates within the core had been active in the student occupations two years earlier, and the tactical sensibilities of OWS resonated with *Research and Destroy's* *Communiqué from an Absent Future*, the seminal text emerging from the occupations (Clover, 2012). Across the various Occupy encampments, 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 and Azzelini, 2014, 164).

Without wishing to gloss over their many significant differences, 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—key to understanding prefigurative politics as pedagogical practice—refusal as a constitutive act. 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, 2012a; Happe, 2015; Rira, 2011; 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 and 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, 17).

The NO screamed loudly creates ‘cracks in the texture of capitalist domination, cracks in the rule of money’ (Holloway, 2012, 203), ‘no-go areas where the writ of capital does not run’ (Holloway, 2010, 30), ‘momentary openings in capitalist time and space’ (Research and Destroy, 2010, 11), spaces ‘autonomous from, and indeed opposed to, dominant relations and institutions of the state and capital’ (Shantz, 2010, 8), ‘spaces entirely outside the system’s control’ (Graeber, 2013, 237), spaces in and through which one escapes real subsumption and the social factory (Invisible Committee, 2009), spaces for ‘the autonomous human production of subjectivity’ (Hardt, 2010, 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, 2012a, 4).

The spaces opened up though moments of rupture are not empty, however, for the cracks get filled in the very process of their opening. The spaces nobody knew existed are ‘spaces of negation-and-creation’, spaces in which ‘out of our negation grows a creation’ (Holloway, 2010, 20, 4). For Hardt and Negri, ‘we construct a new mode of life and above all a new community’ through and as part of the refusal of wage labour (2000, 204). Central to these claims 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. Many autonomists locate it in the changing composition of labour (Hardt, 2010; Hardt and Negri, 2000, 2004; Lazzarato, 1996; Marazzi, 2012; Negri, 2010). The argument here is that the cooperative, collaborative, associative, networked, creative, self-organising, autonomous, entrepreneurial, affective dimensions of immaterial labour produce new social relations, 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, 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 an other-doing. This is the dignity that can fill the cracks created by the refusal’ (2010, 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, 141). Negri tells us that ‘Communist being is realized’ in these transformed subjectivities (Negri, 2010, 160). Indeed, ‘Communism is possible because it already exists’ (ibid., 160). All we need is a ‘will to affirmation’ to release it (ibid., 162), ‘a political project to bring it into being’ (Hardt and Negri, 2004, 221). What one finds here, as Holloway puts it, is a shift in the temporality of rebellion as the future is collapsed into the present (2010, 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, 73, 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. It is there in the small-a anarchism of Graeber (Shukaitis and Graeber, 2007), Solnit (2016) and Schantz (2010), in the insurrectionary anarchism of Research and Destroy (2010) and The Invisible Committee (2009), and in the autonomist Marxism of Holloway and Hardt and Negri as illustrated above. Noys notes that ‘there is no transition to communism’ and thus no need to ‘build’ it (Noys, 2011, 9). This is because, of course, communism already exists and has simply to be set free. Rather than build communism, all one need do, using Holloway’s phrase, is assert it.

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, 4). In Graeber’s words, it is ‘the defiant insistence on acting as if one is free’ (2013, 233). And of course, if OWS did indeed constitute a rupture in neoliberal hegemony through which an opening in capitalist space-time had been created, and if this opening did indeed release and bring into being the positive content of communism and the transformed human subjectivities of the revolutionary surplus, then why would not participants act as if they were free? They 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, 303) while Arun Gupta celebrated the creation of ‘a non-commodified space in the heart of global capital’ (Milkman, Luce and Lewis, 2013, 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, 89).

Nor were they joking. As Gitlin notes, the core activists inhabited ‘a subculture of seriousness’ in which ‘the premium style was *earnest*’ (2012a, 64-65). 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 and Pole, 2016; Ciccariella-Maher, 2012; Smucker, 2012). They ‘felt it in their bones’ (Gitlin, 2012a, 238). They felt it in their bones that they

had succeeded in wilfully carving out a different society and a new way of being, that they had ruptured capitalist space-time and were asserting another form of social relations. This willfulness 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 benefitted 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 Pedagogical Lacunae in Occupy Wall Street

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 and 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), Rebecca Solnit's 'Here We Stand' (2011), Judith Butler's 'Bodies in Alliance' (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).

This created what I term pedagogical lacunae in Occupy Wall Street, a claim I will illustrate with two examples. The first concerns 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 (Ashraf, 2011, 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, 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, 39). Maharawal (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, 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’ (2012b, 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-valorization 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 willful 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 colourblindness (Bray, 2013; Khatib, 2012; Olson, 2012; Spence and 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’.

The second example draws attention to the shallow focus within OWS on the political and the fact that concrete instantiations of here-and-now utopianism 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, xviii, 237, 297). His discussion of prefiguration focuses 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 way of relating’ supposedly unleashed by the rupture of Occupy in terms of political organisation (2012, 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). This focus on the political is a common feature of the commentaries on OWS (e.g. Bray, 2013; Wright, 2012). As Žižek rightly highlights, however, ‘the question of freedom should not be located primarily in the political sphere’ (2012, 85). The key to freedom does not reside in the politico-legal structure 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.

Research and Destroy argued that if OWS offers any hope, ‘it lies in the forms of mutual aid that exist there, the experimentation people undertake in providing for their own needs’ (2012, 91). But this is precisely what the core activists and theoreticians of Occupy neglected. 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 the space-time of utopia 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 colourblindness 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 on site were merely reproducing existing social relations.

The activist core of OWS were prone to ‘self-gratulatory’ narratives and stuck to ‘the dogmatic belief that by collectively coming together we have already won’ (Ciccariella-Maher, 2012, 39). Pace what the core had taken from anarchist and autonomist theory, communism had not been realised in Zuccotti Park. The crack opened by Occupy had not released or brought into being a host of communist subjects lying in waiting within capitalist production. Indeed, the suggestion that communist being is always-already present within immaterial labour has been dismissed as ‘a flight of fancy’ and ‘the most blatant form of wishful thinking’ (Bates, Ogilvie and Pole, 2016, 352; Balibar, 2013, 31). Honest reflections too have been offered on the problems posed by Occupy for anarchist theory, both in terms of the depth of personal and societal damage people bring with them into ‘liberated’ spaces and the lack of patience displayed by core activists when faced with the reality that movement participants were not, in fact, ‘already free’ (Fithian, 2012; Haiven, 2014; Milstein, 2012).

Holloway defines a crack as ‘a moment in which relations of domination [a]re broken and other relations created’ (2010, 31). Other relations are not created simply by asserting them, however. New social relations cannot simply be decreed (Haiven, 2014; Stronzonek, 2012). In the case of OWS, new, transformed, revolutionary, egalitarian social relations did not emerge in and through the very process of refusal. The No! did not bring forth, in and of itself, a wealth of Yeses. There is a broader question here, of course, about the extent to which autonomy is possible within spaces still encased by capitalist relations of production. As Caffentzis and Federici (2011) put it, ‘it is illusory to think that we can place ourselves outside of capitalist relations whenever we wish and from there build a new society’. The more specific question is the extent to which the other-doing and transformed social relations—scarred as they inevitably will be by the capitalist relations of production from which they emerge—

are created spontaneously within the movement. Hardt and Negri seemed to suggest that the sheer facticity of bodies coming together in a space of refusal would be sufficient to birth new modes of communist being. So too many of the movement's core activists. This, however, turned out not to be the case.

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, 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' (2012b, 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 Radical Imagination and the Need for Pedagogy

Together with the claim that Occupy constituted a 'crack' in capitalist domination through which 'transformed social relations' emerged, another ubiquitous notion within the celebratory accounts is that OWS opened up 'the radical imagination' (Graeber, 2013, xv; Haiven, 2014, 74; Happe, 2015, 214; Hayduk, 2013, 233; Prashad, 2012a, 204; 2102b, 18; Premo, 2012, 320; Rira, 2011). This links to the pedagogical feedback loop referred to earlier. The activist core, informed and inspired by anarchist and autonomist theory, believed that bodies coming together in occupied space would ground an organic pedagogy—the enacting of transformed social relations would ignite the radical imagination which in turn would feed back into the social relations and transform them further as the occupiers experimented with new forms of being.

In her study of Occupy London, Cassie Earl (2018) makes the interesting claim that the pedagogical operation of the movement 'defied theory' (102). The kind of feedback loop described above did not occur and 'there was a duality at play, that people wanted to believe the movement was one thing even though they knew it was not' (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 (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 (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' (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 (102, 99). I want to argue for a more expansive form of pedagogical direction that seeks to engage the radical imagination in the project of utopia-building.

As a starting point, I suggest here that OWS gave expression to ‘the utopian impulse’. I am well aware of the complex and often fraught discussions of ‘utopia’ within Marxist theory (Webb, 2000a; 2000b; 2002). Rather than referring to ‘fantastic pictures of the future structure of society’ (Marx and Engels, 1969, 376) conjured up by individuals in a spirit of messianism—‘deliberate deception on the part of some; self-deception on the part of others, who give out the world transformed according to their own needs as the best world for all, as the realisation of all revolutionary claims’ (Marx, 1979, 122)—‘utopia’ here denotes both a mode of immanent praxis and a collectively elaborated guiding vision, each feeding off and reinforcing the other in an iterative pedagogical process (Webb, 2013; 2016; 2017).

The term utopian impulse is neither teleological nor essentialist. I am not implying that a utopian impulse is inscribed within our ‘anthropological specificity’ (Mandel, 2002), nor am I presenting this impulse in terms of some inchoate future calling to the present (Bloch, 1995). Rather, I suggest that 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, 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.

OWS signalled such a shift and such a moment. However, as Karl Mannheim argued long ago, ‘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, 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, 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, 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 and Khasnabish, 2014, 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’.

There is, as Earl indicates, a role for the pedagogue in social movements. More than simply calling out oppressions, however, this role involves ‘convoking’ 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 and Khasnabish, 2014, 61). Biss refers to this as ‘the specifically imaginative excellence required to bring inchoate experience to conceptual consciousness’ (2013, 937). 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. This should be seen as a collective endeavour and iterative process within which the pedagogue plays a crucial facilitating role.

Towards a Utopian Pedagogy

Ruth Kinna describes the utopianism of OWS as a kind of anti-utopian utopianism (2016, 210). It was a here-and-now utopianism of immanent praxis, a utopianism that rejected utopian ‘visions’ of the traditional kind and proclaimed No Future, Utopia Now! (Out of the Woods, 2014). Time and time again, one finds utopian visions, designs, plans and blueprints rejected in the name of immanence (Chrostowska, 2016, 306; Graeber, 2013, 281-2; Lewis, 2013, 162; Schragger Lang and Lang/Levitsky, 2012, 25). While it is certainly true that utopia without embodied practice remains a stale abstraction, what the experience of OWS demonstrates is that utopia without a guiding vision risks becoming a depoliticised fetish. As David Harvey rightly points out, utopia shorn of vision and goal remains ‘a pure signifier of hope destined never to acquire a material referent’, an infinitely circulating self-referential process that has ‘the habit of getting lost in the romanticism of endlessly open projects’ (2000, 189, 174).

In defending the need for utopian ‘visions’, the work of Paulo Freire is instructive (Webb, 2010; 2012). Freire defines utopia as ‘the dialectical process of denouncing and announcing—denouncing the oppressing structure and announcing the humanizing structure’ (1976, 225). In stressing the need for utopian annunciation, Freire argues that a ‘blueprint’ of the world in which we would like to live is needed in order to ‘propel’ us along the path toward a better future (1996, 187). Freire argues repeatedly that human beings are unfinished and that we are ontological wayfarers travelling the path to ourselves (1972b, 56-7; 1998, 51). In order to travel the path to ourselves we as purposive creatures need a clear design or ‘blueprint’ to serve as our guide (Freire, 1994, 78). A substantive utopian vision is also required to counter the

conservative drive to domesticate the future and render it merely ‘a repetition of the present’ (Freire, 1972a, 72). When so much ideological weight is placed behind the proclamation that There Is No Alternative, utopian pedagogy needs to depict such an alternative to rouse homo viator from a state of ontological paralysis. For Freire, liberatory pedagogies ‘cannot exist without being driven by fundamental visions of a utopian society’ (Freire and Rossatto, 2005, 17).

For many Occupy activists and commentators, utopian visions were synonymous with totalising closure, prophetic elitism and the indignity of speaking for others. Freire’s unabashed use of the term ‘blueprint’ would have raised hackles too given the longstanding association between blueprint utopianism and the politics of coercion. These fears and associations are misplaced, however (see Webb, 2009; 2013). Architectural blueprints do not spring from the head of a single individual who imposes their design on inhabitants and forces all to live in a building that stifles and constrains them. Blueprints emerge through a long and protracted process of consultation, collaboration and dialogue. During the building process itself, the blueprint gets amended in light of new circumstances, changed preferences and unintended consequences. The final blueprint will therefore have been designed in the very process of working towards realising an original blueprint that emerged through collaborative dialogue and served as a starting point and a guide. This collaborative, iterative and dialogic process is what Freire had in mind when he described his project as ‘a pedagogy of desire’ and ‘the education of longing’ (2007a, 5; 2007b, 25).

For Freire, rather than signalling a descent into messianism, the pedagogical value of utopian visions is that they help create the conditions through which movement actors themselves emerge as dreamers of utopia. Utopian visions liberate the imagination as to the possibilities for change and help to generate and shape dreams, yearnings and desires. Freire emphasised repeatedly that: ‘What is implied is not the transmission to the people of a knowledge previously elaborated, a process that ignores what they already know, but the act of returning to them, in an organized form, what they themselves offered in a disorganized form’ (1978, 24-5). This key point is phrased differently at different times—teaching better what the people already know or transforming knowledge based on feelings into knowledge based on critical understanding (Freire, 1994, 273). With regards to the design for a new way of being that illuminates the path toward a better future, this, for Freire, emerges from movement actors’ reality in confused form and at the affective level. The role of the pedagogue is to work within social movements to provide the design with a deeper cognitive foundation and a sharper, more precise shape. In other words, to convoke the radical imagination.

A Role for the Activist- Scholar?

The nature and role of organic or movement intellectuals is beyond the scope of this paper (see Holst, 2002, 80-93). Rather, I want to offer some brief thoughts on the potential role of ‘the activist-scholar’ (Motta and Esteves, 2014) in the utopian pedagogy described above. For Chomsky, the privileges enjoyed by the scholar (the training, resources, facilities and opportunities to speak and act) conferred a responsibility to put them to use in the service of movements for social change (Chomsky, 2010). For Bourdieu this made perfect sense because:

We are dealing with opponents who are armed with theories, and I think they need to be fought with intellectual and cultural weapons. In pursuing that struggle, because of the division of labour some are better armed than others, because it is their job (2001, 53).

This is not to afford authoritative status to scholastic knowledge, nor is it to suggest the parachuting in to social movements of a few left-leaning academics armed with their privileges. As I have argued elsewhere (Webb, 2018), traditional calls from within critical pedagogy for educators to ‘reach beyond the boundaries of the classroom into communities, workplaces, and public arenas’ are simply not enough (Darder, 2009, 158). Any pedagogical strategy that centres the academy as the space from which educators ‘reach out’ merely reproduces the colonial logics of the academy itself. Social movements as spaces for ‘experiments in knowledge production, radical imagination, subjectification, and concrete alternative-building’ (Khasnabish, 2012, 237) are not sites into which activist-scholars should be ‘reaching’ but rather the primary sites in which activist-scholars collectively should be operating.

Haiven and Khasnabish argue that the activist-scholar should be seeking ‘to occupy and mobilize the weird space of academic privilege to produce something new’ (2014, 251). This ‘something new’, I have been suggesting, is a vision emerging from a collective, collaborative, iterative project of utopia-building. The much-noted lack of a vision within the Occupy movement (Dean, 2012; DiSalvo, 2015; Harvey, 2011; Smucker, 2014; Žižek, 2012) can be traced in part to the pedagogical lacunae discussed in this paper. Within the movement, the inchoate yearnings and desires that were expressive of a utopian shift lacked an organised pedagogical response. There was a role in the movement for utopian pedagogy. 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, 5-6). Crucially, as McKenzie Wark (2011) stresses—and this cannot be stressed enough—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

Social movement learning comprises ‘a rich and varied area of theorizing and research’ (Klutz and Walter, 2018, 91). Much of this has been positive, highlighting the various forms of learning and unlearning taking place within movements as participants develop a collective identity and sense of transformative agency (Niesz, Korora, Walkuski and Foot, 2018). Critical accounts exist too, however, highlighting instances where movement practices mirror and reproduce dominant logics that serve to silence and exclude (e.g. Luchies, 2014). This paper has sought to explore the counter-hegemonic, and putatively ‘utopian’, pedagogies operating within one particular site of learning. In line with more critical accounts, it points to a lack of both unlearning (unlearning racist, patriarchal and colonial logics) and learning

(learning new ways of relating, being, seeing, doing). The conclusions, however, have wider significance.

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 utopian 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 demonstrate the need within social movements for organised pedagogical direction. This is not to suggest that ‘the Occupy movement demonstrates why something like a Party is needed’ (Dean, 2012, 238-9), nor is to offer a belittling critique of its supposed ‘folk politics’ (Srnicek and Williams, 2016). Rather, it is to warn against romanticising the pedagogical possibilities opened up by alternative spaces of learning. Without concerted pedagogical intervention, alternative 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 utopia is being enacted 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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